

The Tale-Telling Bird.

It's wonderful how boys' mothers
Can find it all out as they do.
If a fellow does anything naughty,
Or says anything that's not true!
They'll look at you just for a moment.
Till your heart in your bosom swells,
And then they know all about it—
For a little bird tells!

Now, where the little bird comes from.
Or where the little bird goes,
If he's covered with beautiful plumage,
Or black as the king of crows;
If his voice is as hoarse as a raven's,
Or clear as the ringing bells,
I know not; but this I am sure of—
A little bird tells.

The moment you think a thing wicked,
The moment you do a thing bad,
Or angry, or sullen, or hateful,
Get ugly, or stupid, or mad,
Or tease a dear brother or sister—
That instant your sentence he knells,
And to mother the whole in a minute
That little bird tells.

And the only contrivance to stop him
Is just to be sure what you say—
Sure of your facts and your fancies,
Sure of your work and your play;
Be honest, be brave, and be kindly,
Be gentle and loving as well,
And then you can laugh at the stories
The little birds tell.

TIM'S FRIEND.

By Annie M. Barton.

CHAPTER VIII.

"ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD."

After his very unexpected meeting with John Wilson, Tim no longer dreaded sitting days at the hospital; on the contrary, not even Dick Rogers looked forward to them more eagerly.

The two little friends, from their respective beds, had a great deal to say to each other upon that eventful afternoon, when their visitors had departed.

Tim told Dick of the way in which he got to know the kind steward on board the Argus, and also of the splendid breakfast, every detail of which still dwelt in his memory.

"I always hoped I would come across him again, but I never dreamt it would be here. Has your father known him a long time? I quite forgot to ask if he came to see you."

"No, he didn't," cried Dick eagerly. "Father told me it was in this way he just met Mr. Wilson in the street, they used to be shipmates long ago, and he said, 'Come along with me as far as the hospital, I'm going to see my little boy'; and Mr. Wilson hadn't anything to do, so he said, 'All right,' and they came together. Now, wasn't it queer, 'cause if he hadn't come he wouldn't have found you?"

Tim did not answer, he was pondering the matter in his own mind, and that night, as the Sister was passing through the ward, asked if he might speak to her.

She came at once, and the boy told her what had happened that afternoon.

Then he paused, and she, answering the unspoken question in his eyes, said gently: "Yes, little Tim, I do think it was Jesus who sent your friend here to-day."

Some weeks passed on, until at last the time arrived when Tim must be discharged from the hospital. During his illness he had grown quite tall, though very thin and lanky, and the old rags he used to wear would have been much too small. Fortunately he did not need them, for John Wilson had provided a strong tweed suit and a warm, thick overcoat, in which Tim looked—to use his own words—"a reg'lar masher!"

The boy felt very sorry to leave the beautiful ward where he had been so happy, and the kind nurses who had attended to his needs with so much care and skill. But the prospect before him was so bright and hopeful, that this sorrow was only a passing cloud.

Dick Rogers had been sent home, well and strong, a fortnight ago; now it was Tim's turn. He had thrown aside his crutches, but was still obliged to use a stick. In a few weeks, the doctor assured him, he would be able to dispense even with that.

John Wilson came for him, and actually brought a cab, so, after a most affectionate leave-taking of his hospital friends, Tim drove away in state.

A very dingy-looking house and shop, close to the docks, with the sign, "Wilson's Dining Rooms," over the door, was Tim's future abode.

But if the outside was dingy, the in-

side was as bright and clean as hands could possibly make it, and Mrs. Wilson's motherly face and warm welcome made Tim feel that he was indeed at home.

She was not a very old woman, though her hair was white, and her face wrinkled and lined, she moved about with quick, busy steps, and had a brisk, decided way of speaking, especially when business was in question. Tim fell in love with her at first sight, and she, after a few days, adopted him as a younger son, insisting he should call her by the title of mother.

Part of the boy's sad story was already known to Mrs. Wilson; but he had a great deal yet to tell, a great deal that roused her keenest sympathy.

One evening, after the shop was closed, the three—John Wilson, his mother, and Tim—sat together in the little parlour kept for their private use. A bright fire burnt cheerily in the grate, for the spring evenings were cold, though the days were warm and sunny. Very cosy and home-like looked the little room, with its shabby furniture and faded carpet, and Tim, who had been sitting silent a long time, said suddenly: "Sometimes I'm just afraid that I'm dreaming, and I'll wake up to find myself in the cold street, or, worse still, in Granny Brown's collar. It doesn't seem as if it could be true as I've got such a home as this, and a mother and a brother as well," he added, shyly taking a hand of each. "I mind so sore the time when I hadn't a friend in the world."

"Stop a moment, little Tim," said Mrs. Wilson, smoothing his thick mop of hair with a very gentle hand; "stop a moment. Was there ever a time when you hadn't a friend in the world? Let us talk about it and see. You know I'm not a good scholar, so I can't make head or tail of the queer things people believe in nowadays; it is quite enough for me to stick to the old Bible truths I learnt when I was a girl, such as, 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' Why, those words have been an untold comfort to me many a time, when I've been cast down by trouble and difficulties. And you, my little laddie, when you were so poor and miserable, and thought nobody cared what became of you, had this same loving Father, this same kind Friend, close beside you, guiding your footsteps along the dark and dangerous path you had to tread, and bringing you into peace and safety at last. Think it over, Tim, and tell me what chance as sent my John to the hospital, with little Dick's father? or was it God as put it into his heart to go, knowing he would find you there? Some folks would say it just happened so, but I believe God sent him," she added reverently.

"And so do I," cried Tim, "and Sister at the hospital thought so as well. She talked to me a long time the night afore I came away, and I promised her I'd never forget Jesus is my Master and my Friend. I've got the three things they sang about in the mission school that Sunday afternoon,—a Friend, and a home, and a rest,—and the best of it is they're not 'above the bright blue sky,' but down here right in Sunderiand, where I needed them most."

"You will find plenty of work as well as rest, once you get into harness," said John Wilson, who, much as he loved his old mother, did not care for what he called "religious talk," and was anxious to turn the conversation.

"All right," was Tim's brisk reply. "I'm 'shamed of being idle so long; see how well I can walk without a stick." He took several turns up and down the room, and, in answer to his earnest petition, was pronounced fit to begin work the following day.

As Tim grew strong and well and resumed his active habits, he became of great use to Mrs. Wilson and her son. Under John Wilson's skillful management the business rapidly increased, and in two years' time was transferred to larger premises.

Tim's ready wit, and pleasant, obliging manner made him a great favourite with the customers; and many were the sixpences and threepenny bits bestowed upon him by the rough, kindly sailors who frequented the place.

This money he wished to hand over to Mrs. Wilson; but she insisted he must save it for future days, when a little stock of cash might be useful to start him in life.

Thus the once ragged and penniless little Tim became the proud possessor of a bank book, and a steadily increasing capital in the Post Office Savings Bank.

Tim's new life was not, however, all sunshine. There were gloomy days, as well as bright ones; days when Mrs. Wilson was laid aside by rheumatism, and John Wilson was cross and snappish and difficult to please, and when Tim him-

self longed for the freedom from restraint of his old vagabond life. These were, however, only passing clouds. As the years rolled on, Tim became more and more satisfied with his lot in life. He never lost sight of his old ambition, some day to become a steward on board ship, and for this purpose learnt as much as possible from John Wilson about the necessary duties of such a post. He also attended a night-school, and studied hard to perfect himself in the simple branches of education taught there, until he became what Mrs. Wilson proudly termed "a wonderful scholar."

In all these years no news had reached Tim of his first little friend, Johnnie Dodds; but the silver shilling with the hole in it, bright with much polishing was still his most treasured possession. It no longer hung by a string round his neck, but was attached to a steel watch-chain, in the sight of all beholders.

Tim had fully entered upon manhood when a great sorrow fell upon the little household of which he was a member. Old Mrs. Wilson, after a very brief illness, died, and her loss was bitterly felt both by her own and her adopted son. She died, as he had lived, in full assurance of faith, and the last words she spoke were a blessing and a prayer for her "two dear lads."

A year after his mother's death John Wilson married, and brought home his wife, a cheery, helpful little body, who treated Tim exactly as a brother; but Tim felt the time had now arrived for him to make an independent start in life. John Wilson and his wife were very reluctant to agree, but at last gave their consent, for it was evident Tim was no longer required in the business.

"I see the Argus is due in Sunderland next week," said Tim one evening, as he looked up from the paper containing shipping news which he was intently studying. "I wonder if Mr. Dodds is still chief officer?"

"Captain, most likely," answered John Wilson. "But, I say, Tim, what a queer chap you are! I believe there isn't a steamer in the world you think as much of as the Argus."

"And haven't I good cause to think well of her?" asked Tim, smiling. "Remember, it was aboard the Argus I first met you, such a wretched, miserable little kid as I was then, and look at me now—standing up and stretching his tall, well-developed figure to its full height."

"What do you say, John? shall I try next week if there's a vacancy?"

John only laughed, but Tim was in earnest.

And, strange to say, Tim did obtain the post of steward on board the Argus, with Captain Dodds, once chief officer, now for many years master of the vessel.

And, stranger still, little Johnnie, little no longer, but a tall stripling, invested with the dignity of a second mate's certificate, was going his first voyage as an officer under his father's command.

He could hardly believe it possible that Tim was the once ragged and destitute boy to whom he had given the precious shilling many, many years ago, and was both surprised and touched to find the coin had been so carefully treasured.

Thus Tim entered upon his new life with fair prospects of success; and though it proved in some respects both arduous and toilsome, never regretted the choice he had made. Amongst the sailors he was very popular, and in his own quaint, bright way seized every opportunity to drop a word in season. Tim did not forget he was pledged to the service of a greater Master and Captain than any earthly one, and in the midst of many temptations tried always to walk uprightly.

His sympathy for and desire to help poor, destitute children grew stronger as he advanced in life, and every voyage a large proportion of his earnings was set aside for that purpose.

His happy, genial disposition won for him many friends, and Tim loved and took pleasure in them all. But the great supreme love of his heart and life was given to the Lord Jesus Christ, that wonderful Friend whose hand had led him, step by step, out of poverty, wretchedness, and crime, into joy, and peace, and rest.

The End.

THANK YOU.

It is so easy to say, if you make it a habit; often difficult if you do not. Any slight favour or courtesy, even the seemingly smallest, may be appropriately acknowledged with a "Thank you." And why not say it to your younger brother or sister, to the "small boy" sometimes described as so "dreadful," and to the little sister who has served you. They perform for the older ones hundreds of unacknowledged courtesies. A small errand is to be made, you want a thimble,

or a spoon of thread from upstairs, a door is to be closed, a window to be opened, a glass of water to be brought, you daily want numberless undescribed little services performed for you. And what is more convenient than to summon the nimble feet or the quick little hands of the small boy or girl to execute your wish? And why should you not acknowledge the service done by a hearty "Thank you"? Besides being better for you who receive the favour, it will make it so much easier for the little ones to be polite. You are mortified when the younger brother or sister appears awkward or ill-bred. What have you done to help them to refined manners? Perhaps you have rebuked their blunders in the presence of company, and imagine that in so doing you have discharged your full duty. It may be a fact that they have only reflected your own ungracious example. The example of coarseness and bluntness is contagious, as well as that of politeness. Therefore, if you wish the little folks to be polite you must train them by the force of your own superior example rather than by numerous exhortations and occasional rebukes.

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