

Sarah Louisa's Boy.

The screens had been up around the next cot all day since The Boy was brought in, but they were down now, and Sarah Louisa, turning restlessly upon her pillow, met a pair of bright, dark eyes fixed upon her. There seemed to be a voice attached to the eyes and it was saying in friendly tones:

'Ain't it jolly here? I've never been to a hospital before, have you?'

'No,' answered Sarah Louisa, looking her amazement at this view of affairs; 'I haven't, and don't want to again. I've been here as long as ever I want to be.'

'Why, I think it's fine! There's winders; I ain't never had winders in the room—not real ones, only teeny—an' oh, my! don't this bed feel good an' soft! All the beds I ever seen is hummocky, an' there ain't no white things on 'em, either.'

His listener drew a long breath. Oh, dear! she had always had windows and white things at least.

'I got all smashed up this morning,' went on the voice, cheerfully; 'I was comin' out of the alley, an' there was a carriage with a little girl in it 'bout as big as me, but my! wasn't she a queen! a reg'lar picture. Couldn't take my eyes off'n her, an' while I was lookin', another team got right on top of me. I don't remember nothin' more till I woke up here.'

'Where did it hurt you?' asked Sarah Louisa, forgetting the pain of her hip.

'I dun'no. I guess it's all of me. Can't seem to move nothin' only my hands. I don't care much, though; I been movin' pretty lively ever since I was born, I guess I can afford to take a rest. I'm glad you're here, it'll be comp'ny.'

For the first time since her arrival, Sarah Louisa felt a faint gladness herself. She secretly resolved to be as entertaining as possible and began casting about in her mind for ways to accomplish it.

'Maybe Susie'll come to-morrow,' she reflected, 'and bring some flowers. If she does, he can have 'em. I don't s'pose he ever had flowers, either.'

'Did you ever go up to the country, Boy?'

'Nope. I was goin' onct—Fresh Air you know—but Billy didn't have no ticket, so I gave him mine. Billy's only seven, I'm eight, you know. Did you ever?'

'I live there—Susie and me. She's my sister, that takes care of me. Mother's gone to heaven.'

'I ain't got none, nor any sister, neither; there ain't nobody but just me, only Billy. Billy's my chum, lives in the next alley. He's got a grandmother—he lets me give her things sometimes, like she was mine. Billy's awful good. He said the country was grand that time he went.'

'Oh, it is! The sky's as blue! and there's trees and grass and chickens, and—oh, everything! I wish you could see 'em.'

The little country girl felt a curious enthusiasm over these things at this minute, quite different from the feelings when she had been among them. They grew suddenly dear by contrast.

'I wisht I could,' The Boy said, wistfully. 'Pr'aps there'll be another chance some time, when I get mended up. I should think you'd be awful happy, livin' there for always. I guess I would be. But then, I'm pretty happy anyway. There's some sky there. If you go out in the middle of the street, you can see it.' Sarah Louisa had plenty of food for deep thought the rest of the afternoon. It had never occurred to her to be particularly thankful for her country home or for the loving care bestowed upon her by a devoted older sis-

ter. The perpetual pain in her hip seemed to overshadow all that. Now, as she lay there thinking of this other one who had nobody, and who was thankful for a glimpse of sky between roofs, it dawned upon her that there might be worse things than pains.

The friendship thus begun progressed rapidly. Sarah Louisa came to regard The Boy with a peculiar sense of possession. Her twelve years of life had been mostly spent in thinking of her small suffering self and she had never loved anyone with a real unselfish love before. Now, when Susie brought her flowers and fruit from their tiny farm, she lavished them all upon The Boy, watching his delight with eager eyes. If the sweet-faced nurses found time to read to their little charges, it was always his favorite story that she chose. When the doctors were forced to hurt his poor, bruised little body, she cried in her pillow; and one day, when it seemed he must slip away from them altogether, she nearly broke her heart with grieving.

After that came brighter days, when The Boy found that he could move not only his hands but his arms, and predicted with un-failing optimism: 'I'm a-limberin' up. It'll strike my feet next.'

In these days, also, came Billy, to stand, red with shamefaced joy, fingering a ragged cap, and delivering in astonishing English such news of the street as he deemed calculated to please his chum.

Sarah Louisa could sit in a wheeled chair now for a little while at a time. She was chiefly glad, because she could get closer to The Boy's cot, and, looking with him at pictures in the ward scrap-books, make up wonderful tales which made his eyes widen with interest.

After an especially happy afternoon spent in this way, she lay resting in a half dose. Night had spread her wings softly over the ward, lulling to sleep those who might sleep, and quieting even those who must suffer. At intervals the night-nurse made her rounds, soothing one, giving medicine to another, always noiseless and tender. Sarah Louisa wondered drowsily if angels were like that, ministering angels, you know, that the Bible tells about. She watched her white cap fade into the dim distances beyond the ward door. The hall light gleamed hazily, like the evening star over Bennett's Hill, when there was a fog.

The next Sarah Louisa knew she was wide awake, sitting straight up in bed. The haze had deepened in the room, she could hardly see the door, and a queer strangled feeling was in her throat. Confused sounds came up from below. Outside, the bells of fire-engines mingled with cries and shouts. Steps came bounding up the stairs, and the doctors and nurses began to drag patients from the cots nearest the door.

Sarah Louisa sat fairly paralyzed with terror. Not for herself—she did not think of herself at all—but for The Boy. Would they ever get to him? His bed was nearest the wall at the extreme end from the entrance.

The rescuers had reached the lower hall with all the patients but these two, when the stairs fell in with a sickening crash. The children did not understand what had happened, but they knew that no one came after that. Only tongues of flame curled around the doorway, and licked greedily across the floor. All at once the girl's brain cleared, when she realized that she alone, weak and crippled, must come between her dear one and swift destruction.

Making an intense effort, she put her feet to the floor and stood upon them, her lame hip rebelling at every move. A few painful steps brought her to the wheeled chair, stand-

ing against the wall. She threw herself into it and wheeled to The Boy's side.

'Put your arms around my neck,' she directed, bending over him.

'You can't never do it, Sarah; you can't!' cried the poor child, shrinking back.

'Yes, I can, too. I must. Put 'em up, quick!' and this time he obeyed.

Exerting all her slender strength, she drew his helpless little figure—pitifully light—but to her so heavy—into her lap.

'Hold on tight,' she told him, encouragingly; 'I'll get you out somehow.'

Choked and blinded by the dense smoke, she turned the wheels with trembling hands, and finally succeeded in reaching a window. Thank heaven, it was open! Struggling up toward the welcome air to breathe, she screamed very loudly for help. Even through the din without, her shrill, childish voice was heard. Looking up, the crowd became frantic at the sight revealed by the fire's glare—white faces of children doomed to a horrible death. Already the walls of the building trembled, while crackling flames hissed and seethed behind them.

'Come on, Jim,' called one fireman to another, 'put up a ladder there quick. We've got to save 'em or die tryin'. Who'll go up with me?'

'I will!' came ready response. Up—up—they crept, the spliced ladder swaying beneath them. It seemed to Sarah Louisa, quivering with agony under the strain of her precious burden, that they would never reach the window. At last, a helmeted head rose above the sill, and a pair of strong arms were held out to her.

'Him first,' she gasped, thrusting The Boy into them.

The crowd held its breath for an instant till it saw him passed along to the man just below, and his brave little companion drawn out also, then, as the descent to safety began, burst into mad cheering.

Sarah Louisa wears a silver medal presented to her for courageous action in danger; but she is not half so proud of it as she is of a certain small boy who accompanies her halting walks around the farm, and who, though not too strong himself, is her faithful body-guard and Susie's right-hand man.—'The Advance.'

The Love of God.

Like a cradle rocking, rocking,
Silent, peaceful, to and fro,
Like a mother's sweet looks dropping
On the little face below,—
Hangs the green earth, swinging, turning,
Jarless, noiseless, safe and slow;
Falls the light of God's face bending
Down and watching us below.

And as feeble babes that suffer,
Toss and cry, and will not rest
Are the ones the tender mother
Holds closest, loves the best,—
So when we are weak and wretched,
By our sins weighed down, distressed,
Then it is that God's great patience
Holds us closest, loves us best.

O great Heart of God! whose loving
Cannot hindered be nor crossed;
Will not weary, will not ease,
In our death itself be lost,—
Love divine! of such great loving
Only mothers know the cost,—
Cost of love, which, all love passing,
Gave a Son to save the lost.
—'Waif.'

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