

At last the posing came to an end, and Stephen, fully recovered, succeeded in finding work again. Janet had laid down her brushes feeling that she could do no more, and that the portrait must now meet its fate. She felt at once proud and humble as she stood before her easel and knew that for her the work meant progress, even if the longed-for success should not follow, for it was the best she had ever done. 'But I don't deserve much credit,' she mused, 'for if I'd had my own way I would have worked away at Amy's beautiful color, and never stopped to think that there wasn't much else to admire in her. "Art for art's sake" is all very well, but I guess it pays to let conscience help a little, too. "Paint what you see, and count it crime to let one truth slip," Browning says; and I should have let a pretty big truth slip if I had let Stephen go;' and Janet went with a light heart to order her packing box.

The jury of award stood in a solemn group in one of the galleries of the Art Institute. The doors were closed and guarded, and against the walls leaned a legion of canvasses, alike in size, but vastly different as to color and treatment. Some displayed pathetic ignorance, some made their bid for favor with a brave show of color and knowing brush work alone, while the majority represented sincere, studious effort, coupled with various degrees of ability. The jury itself exhibited a certain variety, being composed of a very great artist, a great artist, a few lesser local lights, and a sprinkling of respectable elderly citizens, some of whom were trustees of the institute. Four pictures had finally been selected from the number submitted, and now stood up against the end wall. One of these was a lavishly-executed study of a pretty girl in a pretty yellow gown; next to it stood an interesting portrait of an old, white-bearded man, while Janet's head of Stephen was the third. The fourth represented a pink and white infant—its features were as expressionless as those of a wax doll, and, it must be confessed, even less symmetrical. The scrap-picture smoothness of its style, however, endeared it to a few mild and conservative members of the jury, who begged that it might be considered when the final vote was taken.

'That's a clever bit of work,' said a local artist with an air of conviction, indicating the girl in yellow.

'Ye-es, it is,' replied the great artist, slowly. 'It's too clever, in fact. I don't know who painted it, but I know who must have taught the student; but it strikes me that he or she has managed to catch the man's mannerisms without the knowledge and feeling which should go with them. It's all surface, and one thinks of the paint rather than of the subject.'

'How about the old man next to it,' asked another member. 'That shows a good deal of sincere feeling for character, I think.' A murmur of assent went round, and then the very great artist spoke:

'Yes, it's good—very good,' he said; 'but just a bit crude in color and self-conscious in manner, don't you think? That model is such a picturesque old fellow that even an indifferent study of him is generally rather interesting. Now, I like this boy's head. It shows straightforward ability, and grasp of character, too; and there's something more—something fine and elusive, which, I suppose, must be called idealism for want of a better word. That student has taken a model whom nine people out of ten might call commonplace and uninteresting, and has found and expressed the boy's soul. That's a task worth undertaking; and the

technique and color are good and at the same time unconscious. It's decidedly above the average of student work, on the whole;' and the great man waved an explanatory thumb and backed away, looking at the study with half-closed eyes.

The others who had been listening as respectfully as artists ever listen to each other, began to break up into small groups for a few final discussions on minor points before the vote was taken. The admirers of the rosebud infant gathered in a corner and shook their respectable heads sadly, as they spoke of the decline of art, and realized that they were hopelessly in the minority.

At last the great day has come, when the competing portraits are exhibited and the name of the prize-winner made public. We will take leave of Janet, as she stands with happy eyes before her picture, the frame of which bears a significant blue card. Her cheeks are still flushed with the pleasant remembrance of the encouraging words from the man whose name heads the jury of award. In her pocketbook is folded the cheque which stands for two more happy years of study, and in her heart is a song of thanksgiving.

'You have done well. There is no reason why you should not be an artist, if you work hard,' echoes the voice of honest pride, in the words of the master.

Little Ned.

(C. V. Chippendale, in the 'Sunday Companion.')

I.

Visitors who flocked in their thousands to St. Hilary Cathedral from all parts of England and America, and who were lost in admiration of its glorious architecture, its historic associations and venerable beauty, had little idea that within a stone's-throw of all this grandeur and splendor there existed dens of hideous squalor.

Yet so it was. There was little public spirit in St. Hilary, and the respectable, well-to-do people who lived in the best parts of the city were not likely to worry themselves about Middlerow Passage and Simmondsbury Place as long as the filth and distress of their inhabitants were considerably hidden from their observation.

There was, however, one civilizing influence at work, over and above the self-sacrificing labors of the poor parish clergyman who labored amongst them. He, good man, was outside the ring of the cathedral clergy. He was not seen on public platforms as they were; he was not good at making speeches, bringing forward resolutions, and proposing votes of thanks to 'his lordship, our beloved diocesan, for so kindly taking the chair on the present occasion,' etc.

But he was good at one thing. He worked—quietly and persistently. But he could effect little. He was kindness itself, but he did not see that you can do little for the temporal or spiritual welfare of the destitute until you can raise them a little from their degrading surroundings. The civilizing influence to which I have alluded as more than supporting this worthy man's work was the school.

The school—or rather schools, for there were all departments included in it—stood in an open space at the north end of Middlerow Passage. The master of the boys' school was a certain Mr. Bayly, an excellent fellow. To one who met him for the first time he would appear rough, perhaps uncouth; but he had a warm heart and immense energy.

During the few years he had been at the

Bishop's Schools, as they were called, this devoted man had worked wonders with the boys. Perhaps his work was not appreciated as it ought to have been by the managers of the school, who took little more than a perfunctory interest in it; but he did not care about that. He was above desiring the praise of men who thought little and cared less for him; still, it was a genuine pleasure to him that Mr. Crouch, the clergyman, showed him friendliness.

In spite, however, of the united labors of clergyman and schoolmaster, the boys were still rough, dirty, half-savage. It was not entirely their fault, poor children; they came from homes which were rough, dirty, and half-savage. Mr. Crouch, with dogged perseverance, was still working on. He had been cheered lately by a gleam of hope. The owner of one half of Middlerow Passage had had his conscience awakened, and had begun to recognize that his responsibilities to those who dwelt in his wretched tenements did not begin and end with collecting the weekly rent. There seemed to be some chance of improving the condition of things.

But there was one man who lived at No. 10, at the farther end of Middlerow Passage—which, by the way, was a blind alley and no passage at all—who was the terror of the place. He was known as Billy the Boss, his real name being Mottle. His occupation, when he chose to follow it, was selling fish. He was an inveterate gambler, the whole of Sunday and a large portion of most days of the week being devoted to pitch-and-toss. When he won he drank; when he was intoxicated he became irascible, violent, and even dangerous—in fact, a maniac.

His influence was a most demoralizing one, even in Middlerow Passage. He was like a plague-stricken person; infection spread from him as a centre, and many in those dirty little cottages received from him their first temptation to drink and their first initiation into the mysteries of pitch-and-toss.

Billy the Boss had a boy who went by the name of Little Ned. He was a small boy for his age, with a big round head and merry, black eyes and red cheeks. He went to the Bishop's Schools not because the law compels children to be educated—for there was no fear of the school-attendance officer in Middlerow Passage—but because his father was glad to have him out of the way. Besides, did they not give free breakfasts, and, in the bitter winter weather, free dinners as well, at the school?

Little Ned got on well at school. He was an intelligent boy, and learnt easily and rapidly. He was a great favorite with Mr. Crouch, who came to the school four mornings in the week to hold his class from nine o'clock to half-past. No one knew his Catechism half as well as Ned. He could say his duty towards his neighbor without a mistake. It was quite refreshing to hear him as he took breath at the words, 'to keep my hands from picking and stealing.'

But, for all that, he was a troublesome boy. Mr. Bayly would often say that Mottle was a thorn in the flesh. The boy had good parts; but his riotous, headstrong, undisciplined ways, coupled with his neglected body, exercised a harmful influence in and out of the school, and counteracted much of the good work of the master.

II.

Billy the Boss had lately been in low water. The fish trade had been bad, and he had been less lucky than usual with his gambling. As he had earned less, by that strange paradox of squalor he had drunk