

marched, an invasion of infants, to the immense delight of Pat.

Of course he was severely scolded and told to go, never to return; but the picture had to be finished, so Pat had to be forgiven. He knew that I was to a very considerable extent "in his power," and he proposed to exercise it.

My paints and brushes disappeared. It was unsafe to leave him alone in the studio. Before he quitted the house I always had to search his pockets; and invariably I drew out ends of charcoal or pencils, tubes of paints and ends of brushes; and Pat invariably assumed an air of great innocence and astonishment, just like the conjurer when he draws an egg from his elbow, or finds a coin in an orange.

If I sorrowfully remonstrated with him, "O Pat, how could you! I have been so kind, so patient!" he would shed easy tears, and attempt to minimize his guilt.

"Well, laidy, see; I take them things quite honest-like; there aint no sneaking in me. These here pockets are big—any one can see them. I just put those old bits of things into these pockets and—walk out as clear as day. I wouldn't pretend nuffin; you feel in my pockets and find the things there all right and honest. There's no taking away them bits of rubbish," he added, contemptuously eying the things he had hoped to carry off.

Pat spoke with such a sense of being wronged—there was a glow of such honest indignation about him—that I really felt apologetic.

But the climax had yet to come, when we were to part sadder and wiser. I had returned to my studio after a fortnight's absence, eager to recommence work on a new picture of boys wrestling. So of course I sent for Patrick Mahoney; but Pat sent word by his little sister that he was ill in bed, and did not know when he should be well enough to come.

I had my doubts about Pat's illness. Every assertion he made suggested doubts. So I kept his little sister, that I might make a study of her head.

She was a knowing little girl, with Pat's bright eyes and sparkling white teeth.

"I hope your brother will soon be well enough to come back to me," I said, after painting some time in silence.

"Ah! but he won't," chuckled the imp-like child. "Pat says he won't never come back any more. No," she continued, noting my surprise with evident enjoyment. "I heard him tell mother he didn't like you, and he said as how he wouldn't keep your present. He got half a crown for it, he did. He said he would have been glad to get rid of it for a shilling."

"What present?" I cried, impulsively. "I never gave Pat a present. It must be something of mine he took, and has sold! What was it? Tell me directly!"

Here was a mystery. But I had by this speech warned her that something was wrong, and lost my chance of finding out about the "present." The little imp was silent. She wouldn't "tell on her brother."

No persuasion or bribes availed anything; and Miss Mahoney finally left me with the uncomfortable belief that Patrick, her brother, had taken something of mine, which he had disposed of for half-a-crown.

I sat alone in my studio, musing on the ingratitude of ragamuffins, when my eyes chanced to light on an empty space on the wall. I missed something familiar; surely a painting had hung there—a little painting of mine.

I rose and hunted about. Where was my study of Patrick "doing the wheel?" It had disappeared. It was one of my favorite sketches, too.

Pat had no doubt taken it, and sold it for half-a-crown. I reported the matter to the authorities, and to make a long story short, the painting was recovered at the cost of five shillings, and Patrick Mahoney had to be given up as a model.

Some months later I met him, very ragged, very muddy, very impudent, sweeping a crossing most vigorously.

"Chuck us a copper, laidy!" he cried, pattering after me with bare feet.

"Patrick," I said, quickly looking at him from head to foot, "I want to help you, somehow, if you will let me help you? Will you go to a boys' home? A home where you will be taken care of and taught a useful trade."

"Catch me!" cried Pat, adding with a

twinkle in his eyes. "It would break mother's art to part with me—and—and—dexterously balancing his broom on his chin, "I like doing nuffin best!"

There, alas! you have the ragamuffin. He likes doing nothing best; it is so much pleasanter, so much easier.

Every year that passes work becomes more of a hardship; the ragamuffin trusts more and more to the changes and chances of street life, and every year that passes the ragamuffin loses some of his charm, some of his little-boy innocence. He even loses the power of learning, and the wish to grow better.

He goes on from bad to worse, and too often becomes a hardened criminal.

But the dirtiest, naughtiest, ugliest little ragamuffin is precious. In the state there is nothing more precious than the child.

We are beginning to understand this serious fact; we are trying to lift our ragamuffins from the mud, where they are trampled under foot, soiled and destroyed.

Some day it will seem to us a strange, incomprehensible thing that little children were ever forsaken, neglected or ill-treated in civilized Europe or America.

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CONVICTION.

A minister was one day called upon by one of his congregation, a young man, who professed to be dissatisfied with what he had heard on the Sunday before. "I was not satisfied with your reasoning," he added: "I have some points which embarrass me. I wish for an explanation." The minister listened patiently to his difficulties, which were of a deep and metaphysical character; and, when he had done, the minister inquired, "But are you prepared for death and judgment?" "I cannot say I am," was the reply. The pastor remained silent for a short time, and then said solemnly, "Let us pray." In his prayer he brought all these difficulties before God; and asked, in the most earnest manner, for God's saving grace. The young man retired; and complained afterwards to his friends that the minister had evaded his difficulties, and that as a subterfuge he had resorted to prayer. But that prayer was more powerful than argument would have been. That young man confessed so afterwards. He afterwards wrote to that minister, and said, "I was displeased with your sermon because I felt it to be true. I hoped to perplex you by a discussion, and thus to ease my own conscience. But the Holy Spirit triumphed; and I am now a brand plucked out of the fire."—Clayton.

CLOSELY OBSERVED.

"It is reported that Robert has become a Christian, do you know anything special about the matter?" Thus asked one business man of another, while chatting together.

"Yes, I heard so, too, but do not know the particulars."

"I shall observe him closely and see if he holds out, for I need a reliable young man in my business and such are hard to find. If Robert holds out he is just the man I must have. I have already had an eye on him for some time, and I shall continue to do so."

Robert attended to his duties unconscious of the fact that he was specially observed. He spoke to his comrades without ever a thought that he was watched, but even if he had known it, he could not have acted otherwise than he did.

That business man saw how Robert sometimes endured ridicule on account of his religion; he observed more than once how Robert admonished his fellow-clerks and pointed out to them the dangers besetting the path which they chose to pursue. Although the employer himself was not a church-goer he was always anxious to find out if Robert had been there. The business man had much more faith in dollars and cents than in prayer-meeting, and yet it delighted him to receive the cheery answer from Robert upon inquiry where he was going, as he passed him on the street, "To the prayer-meeting, sir." The same interest was manifested by Robert's employer as regarded the former's activity in the Sunday-school.

Thus a year passed. The man of business was elated over the results of his ob-

servations. "That young fellow," said he, "is a Christian, him I can trust, and no wages are too high for him. I'll offer him the position, for such young men are not found every day."

Others observe you without your knowing it. They try to find out, if you are true, whether an important position can be entrusted to you, and whether you are an honor to your profession. The world has its cold, critical eye upon you, in order to see if your religion is genuine.

But more than this: God's eye also rests upon you. He not only sees your misdeeds, but also your earnest endeavors to do your best in his service. God, too, has places of importance, honor and trust to fill. He seeks for men and women. He can only use you if you have stood the test, and have been found faithful.

It is not written in the Bible, "Thou good and successful servant," but "thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Is not faithfulness the greatest success?—*Sunday School Messenger.*

THE STORY OF THE LITTLE LAD.

BY M. E. KENNEY.

What is this that my darling is saying?
You think that your gift is so small,
Though it's all that you had to offer,
It can surely do no good at all?

You forget then that sweet Bible story
Meant for little ones, yes, even you,
Of the dear little lad who brought gladly
His gifts, though so small and so few.

Five loaves and the two little fishes
Were all that the little lad brought.
What were they among hungering thousands
That thronged where the Master had taught?

Yet he brought them, not doubting or fearing
But that Jesus the offering would own:
And lo! when the Master had blessed it,
To abundance the small gift had grown!

So to-day you may take to the Saviour
Your childish gift without fear
But that he will own and receive it,
Since you bring to him what you hold dear.

And his blessing will add what it lacketh,
Till perchance it may do great good,
And carry the news of the gospel
To a hungering multitude.
—*Child's Paper.*

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