

Tom laughed. 'Then you own it would be a trouble?'

'I don't own any such thing. You know I didn't mean that. It wouldn't be any trouble, but of course I wouldn't smoke unless I enjoyed it, and I do not propose to give up the pleasure of a good smoke without reasons for doing so.'

'I could give you several good reasons,' said Tom, quietly.

'Well, let's have them. You have been aching to preach ever since you came, and now let's have it out.' Karl spoke half angrily, and Mrs. Webster, fearing a quarrel, said:

'Now, boys, don't get into an argument. I wish Karl wouldn't smoke; but I can tell you, Tom, it will not do any good to argue with him, and you will both get excited and end in a dispute.'

'Oh, no, Aunt Nannie, don't worry; we won't quarrel, but since Karl has given me a chance, I am going to tell him a thing or two.'

'It's all right! Mamma, we promise not to quarrel; I want to hear what kind of a sermon this young academic can preach! Go ahead, Tom!'

Tom left the hammock, and stood leaning, boy-fashion, against one of the veranda pillars, and I must confess that his hands were thrust into his pockets. He looked straight at the floor for a moment as if he expected to find the heads of his sermon written out there, then he looked up with a queer smile and began:

'Well, in the first place, it is an expensive habit. It costs like everything—you complained the other day that you were out of pocket money, and to my certain knowledge you have spent more for cigarettes since we came here than I have for everything else, and I don't think I have been very saving, either. A boy can't afford to smoke unless he has a pile of money; and the worst of it is, the habit grows, and the more you spend the more you have to!'

'Go ahead! You are making out quite a sermon!' and Karl shifted his position slightly, so as to turn his face away from his mother's gaze.

'Well, in the second place, it is a very injurious habit.'

I don't see how you make that out. There is my father—he smokes, and he is the very picture of health. If I am not strong, it does not follow that it is because I smoke a little. There's baby Bess—next thing you'll be saying she smokes, for she is as thin and pale as I am. Clara and Lillian take after papa, they are strong and rugged, while Bess and I are like mamma.'

'Hold on!' said Tom, 'I have something to say on that point. I have heard my father say that Uncle Chester never smoked until he went into the army after he was grown up, and it does make a difference whether one smokes before he gets his growth and his manhood's strength.'

'Well, you have a very ingenious way of putting things, I must say; got any more arguments?'

'Oh, yes! I am saving the strongest for the wind-up! Cigarette smoking has caused a great many boys and young men to die miserable deaths. And you know as well as I do that several great men have died of cancer in the throat or mouth, caused by smoking. And, Karl—another thing; mother never lets Daisy be with any one who smokes, and I have noticed that baby Bess is always hanging about you; you hold her while you smoke and she breathes the smoke of your cigarette

—maybe that has something to do with her being so thin and pale as well as you.'

Mrs. Webster's face wore a troubled expression. Was this which her nephew was saying true? If so, it was time for her to interfere. Tom continued: 'Now, Karl, just one thing more. It is a habit that is disagreeable to a great many people. Once in a while you hear some one say that they like the odor of a cigar, but, as a rule, people who do not smoke, especially ladies, dislike it very much. For my part, I am too fond of the good opinion of other people to run the risk of disgusting someone to whom I would like to be agreeable, by getting steeped in tobacco.'

'Well, I must say you are a plain-spoken fellow! Where did you get all that knowledge on the subject? Seems to me you are talking rather beyond your years—pretty well for a Sophomore in the academy!'

'Karl, interrupted Mrs. Webster, 'I wish you would go and look up Lillian. I feel anxious about her; it looks as though we were going to have a storm, too.'

'Oh, Aunt Nannie. You needn't send him off; I won't talk any more.'

'I do not mean you to, my dear; but I really feel quite worried about Lillian.'

Karl caught up his hat and went off across the field in the direction Lillian had taken half an hour before. Across the meadow, along by the edge of the wood and down into the pasture he went. Presently he saw a pretty sight. The little girl was seated upon the ground, wild flowers all about her; her bag lay beside her, and so absorbed was she in old Czar that she did not notice that Don Pedro had his nose in the bag. Czar was trying to get bites of her doughnut, and she was shaking her head at him and expostulating. Coming up behind her quietly, Karl heard her say:

'Down, Czar! down! Can't you let me eat my cake in peace? Bridget told me to go around to the side piazza and eat my luncheon, but my! there's always so much tobacco smell there, and I hate tobacco! I wish Karl didn't smoke. I should like to kiss my big braver once in a while, only he smells so of tobacco. Clara does not like it, either! Get down, Czar! Cousin Tom don't smoke—so now I know boys don't have to smoke—I thought they did have to until Tom came. Czar—do dogs ever smoke? Say, doggie, I'll give you half my cake if you'll never, never smoke! Promise?' Evidently the short bark of the dog was taken as a pledge, for at once the cake was broken, and Czar received his share, together with considerable patting and childish words of commendation. 'Good doggie, you are sweet and clean; I'd just as soon hug and kiss you as not!' and the chubby arms went around the dog's neck in the most affectionate way, and in a way which Karl could not remember their being clasped about his neck. Karl was a loving brother, fond of his little sisters, and he had sometimes been pained at Lillian's seeming want of affection for him. Could it be, he now asked himself, that it was a fact, as Tom had hinted, that he had made himself disagreeable to his own sister?'

'Lillian!' he called, as if he had just spied her, 'mamma wants you; come, let's have a skip and a hop, and run for the house.'

That evening Karl stood alone on the veranda when his mother, coming out to him, laid her hand on his arm, and began to speak.

'Karl, I have been thinking about what Tom said this afternoon.'

'Mother, you needn't think about it—I had

two sermons this afternoon and I'm converted. My cigarette case lies over there somewhere in the brush heap they are going to light some of these evenings. I'll own to you that it will be hard work, but I can and I will.'

And he did.—'Temperance Banner.'

## The Question.

However the battle is ended,

Though proudly the victor comes  
With fluttering flags and prancing nags  
And echoing roll of drums,  
Still truth proclaims this motto,  
In letters of living light—  
'No question is ever settled  
Until it is settled right.'

Though the heel of the strong oppressor  
May grind the weak in the dust,  
And the voices of fame with one acclaim  
May call him great and just,  
Let those who applaud take warning,  
And keep this motto in sight—  
'No question is ever settled  
Until it is settled right.'

Let those who have failed take courage;  
Though the enemy seems to have won,  
Though his ranks are strong, if he be in the  
wrong,  
The battle is not yet done;  
For sure as the morning follows  
The darkest hour of the night,  
'No question is ever settled  
Until it is settled right.'

O man bowed down with labor!  
O woman young, yet old!  
O heart oppressed in the toiler's breast,  
And crushed by the powers of gold!  
Keep on with your weary battle  
Against triumphant might;  
'No question is ever settled  
Until it is settled right.'

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

## The Watchful Father.

(The Rev. Dr. Louis Banks, in the 'Christian Age'.)

I often recall an incident in my own boyhood. I was a very young boy, but I was in college and felt myself very large. I got in touch with some rather reckless young fellows, and they persuaded me to slip out of my home one night and go off with them some three miles to a neighboring frolic, of a sort that was utterly out of harmony with the kind of things pursued by my father and mother.

Just about eleven o'clock, when everything was going very gaily, my father appeared on the scene, greatly to my humiliation. The dear man had walked that three miles, after a hard day's work, because he feared his boy was in danger of harm. But that side did not appeal to me at the time. He called me out and took me home with him.

I felt greatly humiliated in the eyes of my companions, and was very indignant at first. As we walked home, my father gave me his view of the situation and his opinion of my conduct. His words stung me like hornets. But my father, who was one of the best men that ever lived, and who two years ago went home to heaven, never did a more angelic thing in his life.

He never was more perfectly the angel to me than that night when, at great cost to himself, he used the hornets of his control and rebuke to save me from the instinct of lawlessness and to sting me back to obedience and right living. I have loved him and crowned him in my heart for that deed for more than thirty years.