

PRESERVING PRAYER.

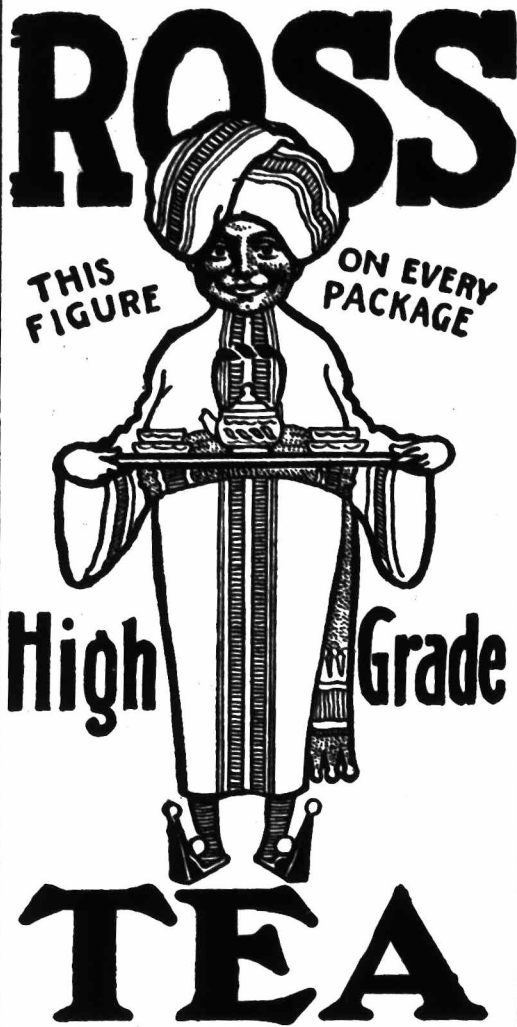
What a sublime and striking picture is presented to us of the Incarnate Son; withdrawn from the noise and tumult of the cities and the haunts of men, amid the silence of the night, and the desolation of that mountain scene, holding converse with the ineffable Jehovah, all nature hushed in still repose, as if being unwilling to interrupt the wonderful communion; while hour after hour passed away, and still the unwearied prayer winged upwards its happy flight, from the perfect purity of God the Son below to the not more perfect purity of God the Father upon His throne. What a mighty, what an almighty prayer must have then gone up before the Eternal One, embracing not merely the chosen few, who, on to-morrow's dawn, were to become the near companions of their Lord, but their successors and followers throughout all time! "All night" did our Lord continue in that mysterious intercourse with the Eternal Father; an example of preserving prayer which, although as regards the peculiar nature of the communication, it must ever remain far above the attainments of the Christian, still furnishes, in its perseverance, a high and holy lesson for the imitation of the Church, as long as she continues militant here below. It is not by the short and transient application to a throne of grace, which we are too apt to dignify with the name of prayer, that we can hope to be qualified for seasons of peculiar trial, temptation, or labour. This can alone be done by dwelling near the mercy-seat; by sitting, as it were, upon the footstool of the throne; by daily, hourly, constantly, sending forth those winged messengers of the heart—the secret, silent, swiftly-flying thoughts, which, while they form, like the patriarch's ladder, an uninterrupted line of ascending entreaties to the Most High, form also a channel for His descending mercies to our souls.—Rev. Henry Blunt.

WHICH WAS BOSS?

Alec was handsome and haughty, Evan stout and freckled. Alec should have been a young lord of the story-book kind, for if there was one thing that he loved to do it was to command, or, as Alec and the boys said, "to boss." They were eating blackberries in about, but he had a large stock of patience, and for a while he obeyed pretty well. But one day he nearly lost his temper. Alec and Evan Evan were eating blackberries in front of Lelia Jones' house. Lelia was a pretty girl whom both the boys liked very much.

"Lelia," called Alec, in his high clear voice—Lelia was standing in the doorway—"do you know that I am a conqueror? Watch me conquer Evan. "Down! Down!" he commanded, and Evan obeyed. Alec placed a foot upon his fallen foe, smiling to Lelia, who

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clapped her hands at the sight. Why didn't Evan resent such treatment? No one knows. Perhaps Evan was waiting. I am only telling the story.

The boys were still good friends, but Evan was growing tired, and more tired. He read his books more often than he used to do. He must have liked Alec very much still, for he did not leave him and take up with the Nicolls, who lived two doors away from Evan. The Nicolls owned a pony, and a goat, too.

One August morning, the boys were exploring the lower part of the bathing pavilion on the beach. They did not notice that the sea was heavier and the tide higher than when they had scampered out of the sunlight among the slime-covered posts. As Evan stopped to pick up a mussel shell, he heard the roar of a huge breaker. He was in his bathing-suit, but Alec was not even barefooted. The stout boy picked up the slender one and held him high and dry, while the foam swirled about his own waist. He would have been swept off his feet if his back had not been against a post.

"Promise," shouted Evan, above the sound of the water, with a set expression about his mouth, "to stop bossing me, or I'll plump you in!"

Alec promised quickly enough, for his new sailor suit, with long, middy trousers, was dear to his heart. Yes, Evan had the upper hand this time. He knew that Alec would not break his word.

Alec, however, was soon to be conqueror once more, in a new way.

Evan, strong hearty Evan, was ill—very ill, indeed. When he lay on the sofa trying to get well it was Alec who came to him, day after day, rain or shine, to read out loud, and to tell what was going on at the beach. Evan's heart grew warmer with love for his little friend, with the big black eyes, and he said, one afternoon, when Alec had read the last word of a long story:

"Alec, take back your promise. You haven't meant to be, but you are—my boss! I would do anything for you, dear Alec."

Alec threw his arms about Evan's neck, sobbing: "No, no; neither of us is boss; we're partners."

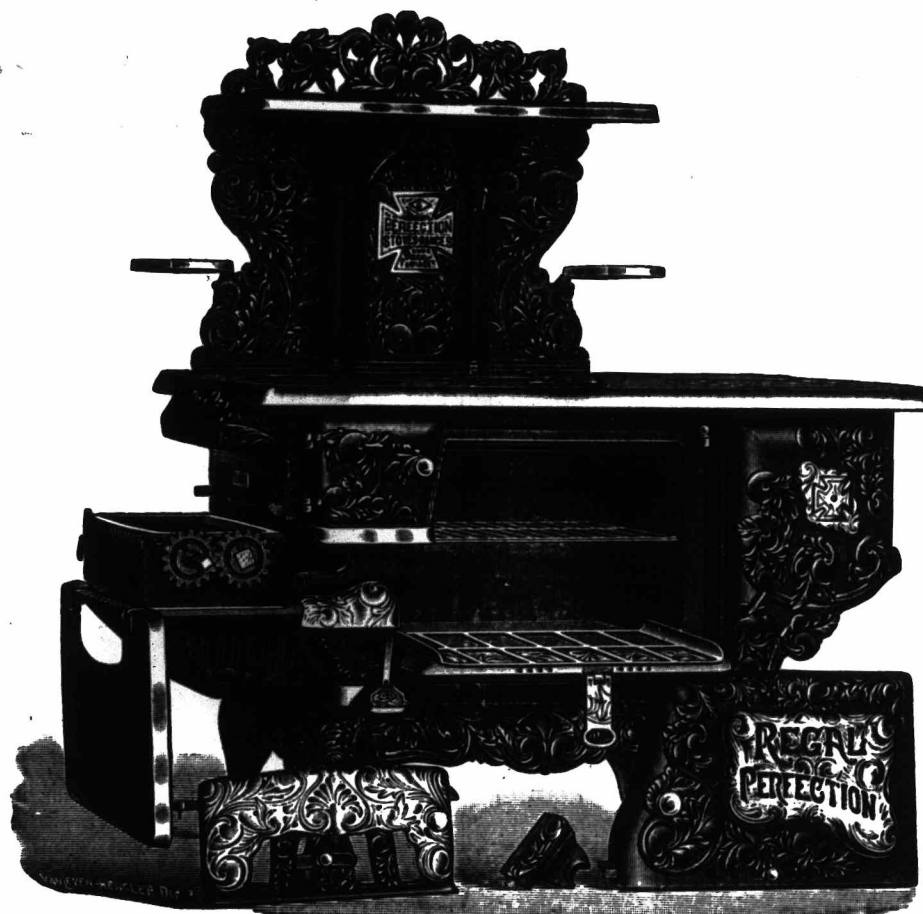
They became partners in play and in business. They shared stamps, curios, pet animals, and books, but the money did not roll into their pockets until the first of Sept. They were looking at a five-masted schooner, when Evan exclaimed:

"See the shining things in the surf!"

"Yes!" answered Alec, "and we must catch them!"

The boys were in their bathing-suits, and it did not take them long to race up to the house, catch up big baskets, and plunge into the water. The chums had stumbled upon a large slice of fisherman's luck, for the fish were American sardines, bound on a journey northward. Venturing too near shore, they had been pulled

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