

The Broken Window.

(Elizabeth Olmis in New York 'Ledger.')

One bright afternoon, a few days before Christmas, Max Brown hurried home from school. His clear, gray eyes were sparkling and the big dimple in his rosy cheek kept coming and going as he smiled at some pleasant thought. It was nearly a quarter of a mile from the brick school-house to his mother's cottage on the edge of the town, but the snow was packed hard, and his sturdy legs were used to running the whole distance. So it was but a few minutes before he burst into the cozy sitting-room, pulling off cap, mittens and comforter at the same time.

'Gently, Max, gently,' said Mrs. Brown, looking up from her sewing with a smile of welcome.

'Oh, mother! I'm too happy to think of manners this time,' he cried, laughing as he stepped back to shut the door. 'I met Mr. Harris on my way to school this noon, and he paid me the milk money he has owed

now. Wasn't it fine of Mr. Harris to remember to pay us just before Christmas?'

Mrs. Brown thought of a boy who had been obliged to go several weeks without warm stockings because of Mr. Harris's careless delay in settling his small account. But she did not cloud the boy's joy by alluding to it then.

'Yes, Max, I am truly glad that the money came in at this time.'

'Can't we go downtown now and get the things, mother?' was his next question. 'The children are coasting down East Hill, and won't be home till dark.'

His mother glanced at the sun wading through the snow, far down the western sky and then at the work on her lap.

'I must send this dress home to-night, Max. I have promised it.' To-morrow I shall be busy every minute, but Saturday morning, the first thing after breakfast, we will go.'

Max could not help feeling and looking disappointed, but he said, quite cheerfully:

'Well, I can't help it; it's true, mother. I've never told you half the mean things he's done, and he's sharp enough to get somebody else blamed. He bullies the little boys and he cheats in lessons, and—'

'That will do, my son,' said Mrs. Brown, gravely. 'I'd rather hear what Maxwell Brown does to help this poor boy overcome his faults.'

Max flushed up.

'It's easy enough for you to sit here at home and think of making Phil Carter a good boy, but if you were at school with him every day you'd soon find out, just as I have, that it isn't any use. I—I—don't believe even you could be patient with him if you were a boy. I don't, truly, mother.'

Mrs. Brown could not help smiling at this opinion, given with so much decision, and Max ran off, glad to be rid of the hateful subject of Phil Carter.

The next afternoon the sitting-room door was again burst open and Max rushed in. This time there was no radiance in the clear, gray eyes, no smile on his lips. He threw himself on the lounge, hiding his face in its cushions and shaking it with heavy sobs.

'Why, Max, my dear boy, what is it?' cried his mother, alarmed. 'What has happened?'

She kneeled beside him with her hand on his thick, curly hair.

'I've got—to—take all the—the—m—money to pay for a broken w—win—win—dow,' he burst out, and then he sobbed harder than ever.

Mrs. Brown put both arms around him and drew his head close to her breast for a moment.

'Now, tell mother all about it,' she said.

In a short time he quieted down enough to do so as follows:

'After school all of us boys went over to Pond Common to have a snowball match with the boys of No. 8 school. We beat them, and on the way home we were throwing some balls at each other just for fun. All of a sudden there was a great crash of broken glass, and the first thing I knew the boys had run away and a man had hold of my arm.

"Here, you young rascal," he said, "my master wants you," and he began to pull me along.

I held back as hard as I could.

"I didn't do it!" I cried, getting angrier every minute. "Let me go!"

'But he was as strong as an ox, and I couldn't get away. We went up the steps of one of those fine houses in Totten Street, those old houses, you know, with big yards, where rich people live, and into a beautiful room. There were lots of pictures and books and a bright fire on the hearth. I noticed all this before I saw an old gentleman standing by the window.

"Here he is," said the man, who still had me by the arm.

"You may go, James."

The old gentleman stood with his arms folded like the pictures of Napoleon Bonaparte. His eyes were very blue, and as keen as swords. He was tall and straight and splendid-looking. At last he said:

"Did you break my window?"

"No sir. I am sure I did not. I wasn't throwing this way," I replied.

"What is your name?" he asked me.

'When I answered "Maxwell Hugo Brown," such a strange thing happened. He got as white as anything, and his eyes were all watery. He put his hand under my chin and looked at me ever so long. Then he drew a great, deep breath and stood up very straight and asked me where I lived and all about you and everything. And then he wanted to know about the snow ball, and I



HE OPENED THE ENVELOPE AND TOOK OUT THE NOTE IT CONTAINED.

us so long, and which we never expected to get. Four dollars and twenty-five cents. See! Isn't it good to look at? And now, mother, we can buy the sled for Jamie and the doll for Helen, can't we? And they won't have to go without some candy in their stockings Christmas morning. I tell you it was hard work to stay in school all the afternoon and work out fractions when I just ached to come home and let you know, but I managed to stick it out by keeping my hand in my pocket, feeling of the money. Aren't you glad, mother? Why don't you say something?'

'A dimple to match his own came into his mother's cheek. She smiled in such a significant way that Max laughed merrily.

'Oh, I see! Well, you shall have a chance

'All right, mother. I'll put the money in your trunk.'

As he came out of the bedroom and started to attend to his nightly chores, Mrs. Brown said:

'How was it with you and Phil to-day, my son?'

'Oh, he was just as mean as ever,' replied Max, in a tone of disgust.

'And you?'

There was a moment's silence.

'I—I—mother! There's no use trying to be nice to him. Some people are so horrid and sneaky that they ought not to be treated decently, and Phil Carter is one of them.'

The boy spoke with an angry vehemence that shocked his mother.

'Max!'