

Roe's "Nature's Serial Story" is full of interest and wholesome. There are a number of other stories, serial and complete. The description of the Upper Thames is beautifully illustrated. "A winter in Canada" possesses special attractions for us. There is a beautiful frontispiece entitled "The Bible Reading."

St. Nicholas is as full of instruction and of fun as ever, and the two are most delightfully combined. The various departments are admirably conducted. The monthly reports of the Agassiz Association are doing a good work in fostering a love of nature and of the study of nature. This is the Queen of all children's magazines, pure, but not prudish, funny, but not frivolous, instructive, but not prosaic. It ought to be in every household in the land.

We have great pleasure in recommending to our readers two new Sunday School periodicals, entitled, "THE LABOUR OF LOVE" and "FOOD FOR THE LAMBS." They are beautifully illustrated, the typography is remarkably clear and elegant, and the contents are of excellent character. Moreover, they are published at a very low price. The first is a monthly, and is published at 15 cents per year per copy when not less than 10 copies are taken; the latter is a weekly, and is supplied at 20c. a year per copy when not less than ten are taken. Published by S. R. Briggs, Yonge Street, Toronto.

Children's Corner.

HOW TOM TOMKINS MADE HIS FOR TUNE.

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD GENTLEMAN'S VIEW OF THE SUBJECT.

The short winter's day was closing in when Tom returned to his post, and the snow fell fast again. The bitter cold made the bull's-eyes more acceptable, and when it grew too dark to distinguish the passers by, Tom, who had lingered beyond his usual hour, in the hope of seeing his old friend again, walked gently away to the miserable shed, which he called *home*. It was simply an old out-house, belonging to a good-tempered carpenter, who had known Tom ever since he began his career as sweeper, and who had promised him never to deprive him of the shelter of the shed in question. So, night after night, the lad crept to his humble lodging, sometimes cheered by a kind word from the carpenter, and now and then, with a crust of bread from the good man's wife; but she had little to spare, for there were many mouths to feed, and little food to satisfy them. Morning after morning he washed his dirty face and hands at the pump, and returned to his business. Such a life had few charms to recommend it, but Tom was used to it, and for him it had excitements, and even pleasures. He knew most of the passers-by by sight: from some of them he sometimes got a smile or a kind nod, and even once a little girl gave him a bun, but that was a solitary instance. He rather enjoyed seeing the people slide and slip about this frosty weather, and, indeed, he had a private slide of his own, which he watched with intense interest. He had made friends, too, with some of the other sweepers in the same road; but although he had now followed his profession for nearly six months, he had not got accustomed to the bad words and oaths which fell from them. As I said, his mother had taught him carefully, and she never had thought that her boy would become a common street-sweeper; but when God took her away there was no one to provide for him, so he followed his friend the carpenter's advice, and accepted the broom as a start in life. Many people had observed Tom's steady application to business, and had observed with approval that he was never idle; but the neighborhood was a poor one, and Tom seldom earned sufficient to satisfy the wants of a growing boy, and he grew daily more wretched-looking and ragged.

His mother had taught him to read and write

before she died, but the little he had learned was fast fading from his recollection.

Amongst others who had watched our little friend's career with interest, was Mr. Miller, the elderly gentleman who had astonished him with his loan of a shilling. He was considered rather an odd man, and, although he was rich, he never gave away money, although he sometimes made most useful and acceptable presents to the poor around him. Passing Tom day after day, he was attracted by the lad's good-humored face, and grew more interested in him as he watched his perseverance and industry. After mature deliberation he determined to help the boy, but in his own way. "First," he thought, "I'll try if he's honest; it will be time enough afterwards to give him a helping hand;" so he fixed upon the method described. The day after he put his plan into execution, he walked leisurely down to the turning where our little friend had his station, somewhat curious to see whether the lad would show any sign of gratitude. As he turned the corner, he caught sight of Tom, brushing away the snow in a most energetic manner, with a broom nearly as large as himself. A smile passed over Mr. Miller's face as he noticed the boy's frantic efforts to master the broom, which, stiff from nature, and stiffer in contrast to his old worn one, was almost more than a match for the slight-made boy. In a moment Tom caught sight of him, and, catching hold of his jacket, almost breathless in his eagerness,

"Sir," he said, "it was only sixpence: here's the change."

"Oh!" muttered the old gentleman, gruffly, "then you *are* honest?" and, somewhat to Tom's disappointment, he pocketed the sixpence, and made no further remark, only, as he reached the other side of the road, he turned round and called out, "It will be only twelve halfpence now, my boy."

Tom felt rather hurt in his own mind, that what was so important a matter to him should be taken as a thing of course by his patron, but there was nothing for it; so he gave all his attention to his crossing, and it seemed as if the new broom brought him success, for he received more coppers than he ever had before; indeed he was so elated, that he stopped a man who was passing with hot potatoes, and bought two pennyworth. He had formed a plan in his own mind for getting free of his debt to the kind gentleman in less than the time specified. "If he gave a penny every Monday it would take less time." Accordingly, he saved a halfpenny on this fortunate day of large receipts, and put it where the sixpence had been. Monday came, and Tom looked anxiously for the old gentleman, and, as he saw him coming, he stood in his path, and began—

"Please, Sir—"

"Well, what's now? Oh, the halfpenny! All right: you need not stop me in the middle of the street for that: here, hand it out."

"Please, Sir," repeated Tom, nervously, "please, Sir, here's two halfpennies, and then it will be quicker."

The old man stopped, pushed his hat on to the back of head, and looked at the boy with a smile.

"Ho," he said, at last, "so, he's a man of business, is he?" and then added, more gently, "And pray, who taught you to reckon that?"

"Mother, Sir," said Tom, not quite understanding, but sure that he knew *nothing* except what she had taught him.

"What's your name?" pursued his questioner.

"Tom, Sir; mother's name was Tomkins, Sir."

"Oh, Tom Tomkins. Very good. Now, Tom, as you are so anxious to be out of debt, I'll put you in the way to earn two-pence towards it,"

"Thank you, Sir," said Tom.

"Can you read?"

"A little, Sir."

"Well, then, take your broom and walk up that street till you come to a house with a large iron gate, and written beside the gate, 'The Lodge,' and then ring the bell, and say Mr. Miller sent you to sweep the snow away, and, if it is properly done, when I come home I will pay you;" and before the boy had time to say Thank you, he was out of hearing.

Tom lost no time in following his directions. Dragging his broom after him, he made his way through the town, until he came to the house described, and, standing on tip-toe, he managed to reach the bell, and pull it, which act was followed by such a loud peal, that he was ready to run away with fright. After a minute or two, which seemed very long to the trembling sweeper, a man-servant came to the gate, and asked him sharply enough what was his business there.

"Please, Sir," said Tom, "Mr. Miller sent me to sweep away the snow."

"Oh, you're the boy, are you?" asked the footman. "Well, come on. Master's always picking up some stray vagabond or other," he continued, as Tom followed him up a gravel path to the front entrance of a very large house.

"There's your work; just clear them steps, and sweep it all clear down to the gate." And with this injunction he turned into the house.

Tom didn't find his work very hard; he had soon cleared the steps, and had nearly reached the end of the path, too much occupied to hear footsteps, when a hand was laid on his shoulder, and a voice he knew said,

"Well done, boy, here's the twopenny;" and Tom found himself addressed by Mr. Miller.

"Thank you, Sir," said he; "but is it not to go for this?" holding out the broom.

"Well, you are in a hurry," said the gentleman, laughing; "all the better; yes, it shall go with the other penny towards your payment. Now, finish that, and come with me."

So Tom followed him as he was bid.

This strange friend led the way round the house, to what he afterwards found was the kitchen entrance, and there he saw his former acquaintance, the footman, beating a mat.

"Here James," said his master, "take this boy to the back kitchen and give him some victuals, and then see him out of the grounds;" and Tom found himself alone with James.

"This way," said the latter, leading the way into the kitchen, where he proceeded to fill a plate with scraps which, despised by him, made Tom feel as hungry as a half-starved lad well could.

"Will you eat them here or at home?" asked James.

"Home, please," said Tom.

When James found that Tom had nothing to carry the broken bits away in, he pulled out a clean cotton handkerchief and put everything in that, and, bidding Tom take care of it against he ever saw him again, he led him out the same way he had come, and shut the gate upon him.

Tom did indeed feel rich as he sat down on the kerb-stone, and opened the handkerchief on his knees. There was a meal indeed; and, as he set to work upon it, he thought of poor Charlie Weeks, who had to begin life with his old broom, and he carefully set aside a portion for him, and, as soon as it grew dark, he deserted his post, and ran as fast as his tired, stiff legs could carry him, until he reached Charlie's home, when he felt amply repaid by his friend's grateful delight and enjoyment.

Indeed it almost seemed to Tom that he enjoyed seeing Charlie eat as much as he had enjoyed his own meal; but then, perhaps, that may have been because he had so very much