

bery. It was surrounded with an ornamental fence of iron, and the boys stood just beside the wide gateway.

Three of them were richly clad, but the fourth boy was poorly dressed, and stood apart from the others, his face flushed, his hands thrust into his pockets.

He was a sturdy, close-knit fellow, with mild blue eyes and a resolute mouth. There had been a quarrel, and the three boys had taken sides against him.

"Ben Greenleaf, you are a coward," one of them said.

"Well, now—maybe not," he replied, his blue eyes sparkling.

"Why don't you prove that you are not?" was the retort. "Dick called you by some ugly names."

"He will be sorry for it sometime," replied Ben.

"Is that a threat?" asked Dick Carson, loftily.

He was a tall, slightly built boy, with a bright red scarf around his neck. He wasn't a match for Ben, either in muscle or endurance, though his conceit led him to believe that he was.

"Knock his hat off," suggested one of Dick's companions. "See if he'll stand it."

"Why don't you fight?" asked the third boy, glaring at Ben. "You shall have fair play. We are Dick's friends, but we'll not interfere."

"Oh! I wouldn't want you to," replied Dick Carson. "I'm quite able to handle him. Will you fight?"

A faint palor came to the sturdy boy's face. He compressed his lips, then said:

"No."

"You are afraid."

"You would get the worst of it, Dick."

"Oh my!" exclaimed Dick. "You don't want to hurt me,—eh? Well, now, that's considerate in you! I'll see what sort of stuff you're made of."

As he spoke he stepped forward and struck Ben a blow on the cheek with his open hand. It was not a stinging blow, but it was a very tantalizing one.

Ben Greenleaf's blood surged into his face and his eyes snapped. He had a fierce struggle with himself, but it was of short duration. He was a little Christian, and knew where to look for strength.

"You have concluded to pocket the insult,—eh?" Dick asked, with a sneer.

"You're made of putty," said the second boy.

"You're a coward," declared the third.

"I am brave enough to walk away," Ben said, in a slow, hurt tone.

"The Bible says that he who ruleth his spirit is greater than he who taketh a city."

"Just listen!" cried Dick Carson.

"Let's call him the little parson," suggested one of the boys, at which the others laughed.

A young lady came from behind some lilac-bushes, and walked close to the iron fence. She had overheard and witnessed all.

When Dick Carson saw her, the blood rushed to his face. She was his Sunday school teacher, and he knew how meanly he had acted.

"Greenleaf, come here," she said. "Wait, boys."

She spoke quietly, but there was something very positive in her manner. The poorly clad boy walked nearer, with an humble embarrassed air.

"Dick," Miss Webb asked, "your little sister Nelly was nearly drowned at Atlantic City, last summer?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"She was in bathing?"

"With mamma. The under-tow carried her off."

"Who saved her?"

"Some boy, Miss Webb."

"You never learned his name?"

"No, ma'am."

"Was he a coward?"

"A coward! I should think not, Miss Webb! It nearly cost him his life."

"Strong men looked helplessly on?"

"They were too much frightened to stir, Miss Webb."

"It was a heroic act, Dick. The guests at the hotel made him up a sum of money, and presented him with a medal. He was errand boy about the boat-houses at the time. Master Greenleaf, have you that medal with you?"

"Yes, ma'am," stammered Ben.

"Show it."

"Oh! never mind it, ma'am," he said, his face reddening.

"Show it," insisted she.

He produced the medal, his embarrassment increasing.

Miss Webb took the medal.

"Presented to Master Benjamin Greenleaf, for his heroic conduct in saving," etc. She went on reading.

"Miss Webb," asked Dick Carson, with wide open eyes and flushing cheek, "is this the—boy who saved our little Nelly from drowning?"

"Yes, Dick. Is he a coward?"

"No!" cried Dick, explosively.

"You said he was."

"I am the coward and am heartily ashamed of myself, besides. Ben

Greenleaf, I'm sorry I struck you and called you names, I take it all back, Will you not believe that I am in earnest?"

"Yes," replied Ben.

"If you know how meanly I feel about it you'd forgive me right heartily. I want to be a friend to a boy who has such pluck as you have, and who can well control his temper under gross insult."

"I am just as sorry," the second boy said.

"So am I for everything I said," declared the third.

"Miss Webb, I have been taught a lesson," Dick Carson said humbly. "I have a better idea of what real bravery is."

"It seems we don't always know," remarked Miss Webb, with a quiet but very significant smile.—*S. S. Times.*

THAT LITTLE TOAD.

A TRUE STORY.

BY MRS. LUCY E. SANFORD.

Mr. Brooks is a stalwart farmer with broad acres, rich and clean, a kind, frugal wife, a pleasant home, and two bright, happy, industrious children.

With a dear little friend of mine, some seven years old, I went out to "the farm" and passed a week.

"One evening Mr. Brooks took Georgie on his knee and said:

"I hope you are a temperance boy. Are you?"

"I am a Band of Hope boy, sir."

"I am very glad. If they had had Bands of Hope when I was a shaver it would have saved me the last fifty years of more or less trouble with that foot."

And he pointed to his right foot, on which was an embroidered slipper.

"That handsome slipper does not look as if it covers a boy's sin and shame, does it?"

Georgie's eyes grew very large and questioning as they looked first at the foot and then in the face of the good man.

"No-o, sir! Please tell me all about it."

"Yes, my little fellow, I will. When I was about your age—let me see—you are—how old?"

"Seven years old, sir."

"Well, I wasn't but six years old. My father was a farmer and made a great deal of cider, and when it was new and sweet he let me drink as much as I wanted to. But after it began to work I wasn't allowed to drink any. But every fall he bottled up a supply for summer. One sunny autumn day I thought I would make some mud pies, and went in the kitchen for a big iron spoon. They were putting some raisins in bottles in which cider was to be put and corked tight, so that when they were ready to drink the cider it would sparkle like champagne."

"My papa had champagne-cider, and one day some popped right into my face and made me jump."

"I hope none will ever pop into you mouth. Well, my mamma filled my little hand with raisins and let me take a swallow of the cider, and it tasted so good I begged for more, and mamma said I might have one more swallow. And I took a big swallow and then ran out to play. But though the sun was shining bright, and the mud was soft and warm, just right for pies, those raisins and that delicious cider kept tempting me back to the kitchen to ask for just a very few little raisins and just one more sip before it should be all bottled up. But no one was in the kitchen at the moment, and I knew my kind mamma wouldn't refuse me, so I took just *one* raisin and *one* little sip, and then I took just one more raisin and just one more little sip, and how many *ones* I took I don't know. But mother came in and told me 'to go out to play.' I ran back to my pies, and in a minute I saw a toad stick up its black head right where I was playing. I tried to scare it off, but it would come right back and keep squirming. I could not stand that intrusion in my bakery, and I caught up my hatchet and brought it down with a vim, and then I screamed!"

"Did the toad jump right up and bite your foot?"

"No, my boy, worse than that. It was no harmless little toad, but the serpent in the cider that bit my foot. I had drunk so much that I did not know my own muddy toe from a toad, and it was not a toad's head but my own foot that took the blow. And when the doctor came my great toe had to be cut entirely off."

"Oh! didn't it hurt awfully?"

"Yes, and it hurts me yet whenever I am tired. But that lost toe has been a life lesson, perhaps a life blessing to me. I might have kept on, sip by sip, and drunk up my character, my farm, my home, my happiness, the happiness of all who loved me, my own life, and more than all these, *heaven itself.*"

Georgie's intent face looked very solemn a moment, then broke into the brightest of smiles, and he exclaimed:

"Pretty high price to pay for cider."

"Yes, yes!" said Mr. Brooks; *but many a man has paid it. It is the first step.—Youth's Temperance Banner.*