

August 21, 1913.

THE CANADIAN CHURCHMAN

551

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the heaps of mortar, sand, and builders' material they came—helter-skelter—beating old tin pans, whacking sticks upon the ground, shouting and yelling at the top of their lungs. They were chasing something—a little gray and white furry something, with wild eyes and a stiff, erect tail.

"Why—it's Mrs. Baker's Tabby—from next door!" shouted Teddy, in astonishment.

He was in pussy's direct path. And with a fierce "Ps-s-st!"—unable to stop herself in her wild flight—Tabby landed on Teddy's chest, almost knocking him over. Instantly his arms closed round her, and he dashed away with her toward his home.

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"So, Tabby, old girl! So—so!" he soothed her as he raced along. And though, in her fright, poor pussy did not recognize a friend's voice, she was so utterly exhausted that Teddy managed to keep his hold of her.

The way his small heels flew along that avenue and through the side street that led to his home! And the way those other boys tore after him—yelling, hooting, throwing rotten vegetables and sticks at the little figure ahead! And they were gaining on him.

"They're those rude boys Sukie talks about. 'Hoodlums,' she called them. She says—they come—round this avenue," thought Teddy, scudding along—with poor Tabby's claws sticking into his chest and arms, right through his blouse. And, I can tell you, they hurt. "But they shan't get this cat!" he declared. And on he raced.

Tabby belong to an old lady who lived in Teddy's apartment house. She was very old and delicate; and Tabby was her pet.

"They'll hurt Tabby, if they catch her!" thought Teddy; and urged on his little tired feet. A half block more, and he and the cat would be safe, for Mike, the elevator boy of his house, was almost always on the steps or in the hall. He would send those boys flying!

But, oh, how long that half block was! Teddy's feet seemed to stick to the sidewalk. And, once or twice, Tabby, frightened by the shrieks and yells behind her, almost leaped out of his arms. 'Twas all he could do to hold her and run.

A hand caught at his arm—but Teddy dodged. A bound forward—and he was on the steps of his own house.

Alas, there was no sign of Mike! "Upstairs!" shouted Teddy, and flung Tabby as far as he could through the open front door into the vestibule. And, like a flash, she was gone. But not so fortunate was Teddy.

An angry hand gripped his collar and swung him round, and slapped his face.

"Who're you, to be interferin' with our sport?" cried the big boy who had done it. And the other boys crowded around—yelling, calling names, brandishing their sticks. Everything swam before Teddy's eyes.

But our boy came of "fighting stock." Many times had grandpa shown Teddy the old sword and musket of Revolutionary days that hung in the living room at the farm.

"Don't go looking for quarrels," grandpa always said. "But if you've got to fight—fight like a man! as did those who carried those weapons long ago."

And Teddy's blood was up this afternoon—he knew he had done right in helping poor Tabby.

With all his strength—the hand on his collar was choking him, he tried to wrench himself free. His cap was gone, his blouse was torn, his face marked by the stinging blow, but—his blue eyes blazing—he looked fearlessly into the threatening faces around him.

"You're all a set of bullies—just bullies—or you'd never torment that

cat! And all pounce upon one boy!" he cried out, scornfully. And valiantly he dashed his small fists against the big boy—that held him. But what use? They only crowded the closer round him.

"Here—ye hoodlums—what mischief are ye up to?" shouted a voice, and there came Mike running out of the hall, and behind him Tommy Burton, another friend of Teddy's. "Now you've got yourselves in trouble! This boy lives in this here house, an' I know, for sure, he ain't done you anything. Won't his father make you all sorry for this, though!"

While Mike was saying this he snatched Teddy away from the big boy, and quickly he stood in front of him—though Teddy would rush out. And Tommy Burton began making fists at the crowd, which, at sight of Mike, had drawn off.

"Now, just keep easy," Mike advised Teddy and Tommy in a loud whisper. "I've rung up a p'leeceman. He'll be here in a jiffy—"

Well, if you had seen how quickly that crowd of boys took to their heels and disappeared when they heard a policeman was coming!

Teddy's mamma felt dreadfully when she saw her boy with his clothes torn, a big bump on his forehead, and an ugly red mark on his cheek. She wanted him to go to bed; and she would send for the doctor.

But Teddy begged so hard to stay up and be at the dinner; and his daddy, when he heard the whole story, said let him do it. So mother put another clean white suit on him and brushed his hair. And old Mrs. Baker sent in a message to thank Teddy for saving her cat—for Mike had told everybody about it. And she sent, also, a dish of the most delicious candied fruit you ever ate!

Now, perhaps, you think this is the end of the story. Well, it isn't. For just as they had all got to the dessert part of the dinner—which, of course, everybody likes—in came Sukie with another message.

"A boy in the hall, ma'am, wants to see Teddy," she said.

And mother said Teddy might go and see him. And when Sukie whispered something more to daddy, he, also, begged to be excused from table, and went and stood by the door, close to Teddy, though Teddy did not know he was there. Mike, too, had his elevator at that floor.

Now, who do you suppose it was that wanted to see Teddy?

Why, the very boy that had led the band of hoodlums, and struck Teddy!

He stood there, twisting his old cap in his fingers and looking so ashamed of himself that Teddy did not know what to make of it, until he spoke.

"I never knew 'twas you—till I went home. And minute Johnnie heard—'bout the cat—he says—'Tim!—'"

"You're Tim? Johnnie's brother Tim—that's so kind?" broke in Teddy, incredulously.

"Ay—I'm Tim—a hoodlum you'll never be forgivin'," cried out Tim, with a choke in his voice. "An', after all you've been an' done fer our Johnnie—I wouldn' 'a' laid a finger on you—ef ye'd taken 'for-ty cats. The poor, sick b'y jus' loves you! He's like a different child sense you come to see 'im—an' wid the 'code

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an' the c'nary! I'm sorry—I'm awful sorry I hurt you! Johnnie's cryin' fit to break 'is heart—"

Tim's voice failed. He brushed his cheek roughly with his coat sleeve.

Teddy was so perfectly astonished that he couldn't say one word. Johnnie's brother! But Tim thought he was still angry.

"See here"—he said, imploringly. "Ef 'twould do any good I'd beg yer pardon on my knees. But—I'll tell you what I will do—even fer Johnnie I ain't done that—I'll never tease no more cats—an'-an'-I'll keep away—from them hoodlums—" Again his voice broke.

Teddy sprang forward and caught Tim's hand.

"Why, Tim—that's all right!" he declared, warmly. "I couldn't keep mad with Johnnie's brother! Why—he thinks you're the nicest boy in the whole world! Of course, you and I are friends. Wait—"

He dashed into the dining-room, caught up his plate of sugar plums, and the big orange mother had given him, and, in a minute, was out in the hall again.

"Here, Tim—these are for you and Johnnie," he said, putting candy and fruit into the big boy's hands. Then he pulled Tim down and kissed him.

"Now we're friends—eh?" he asked. And Tim eagerly agreed.—From New York Churchman.

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