

WHAT SAVED A MAN.

A STORY FOR BOYS.

DOLLY, Jack Alcott's going to the bad. Little Mrs. Haywood, lying on the couch in front of the blazing wood fire, studying her husband's handsome profile, had just arrived at the highly satisfactory conclusion that her Will was the finest looking man she had ever seen. At these words, however, the happy smile on her face died quickly away as she answered "I'm afraid you are right, Will." And then the silence fell again.

Jack Alcott, the subject of that brief conversation, was a handsome, thoughtless, happy-go-lucky scapegrace, endowed with a deeply affectionate nature with nothing whereon to expend itself. Had his mother lived it might have been different, for the sight of her distress and suffering, over his reckless life would have proved a restraint. Poverty also would have been a blessing; but deprived of these two safeguards, the young fellow seemed bent on going blithely, and with no uncertain steps, on towards that goal designated in popular parlance as "the bad."

"Can't we do something, Dolly?" Jack's much too fine a fellow to go waste like that!" "I wish we could; but he comes so seldom now. Can't you speak to him, dear?"

"I know Jack better than you do, Dolly, and speaking would not be of the slightest use. He would lend me an ear, so to speak, might even pull up for a while just to please me, but that's all it would amount to. Things have to go deeper than that with Jack to make an impression."

"Well, I think he's a hard-hearted, ungrateful fellow!" exclaimed Mrs. Haywood wrathfully, at the sight of her husband's anxious face, "when he knows how much you care for him, and how his conduct must grieve you. It's a disgrace for such a man as he might be to be what he is!"

"Of course it is," answered her husband; "and I am going to trust you to think of some of plan, Dolly, by which he may become what God intended he should be. If he only had some sweet, good woman like you to love him there would be some hope. But what right has any good woman to venture on the experiment of trusting herself to such a man as he is now, for all he is so lovable? But I must go, dear. I'm sorry to leave you feeling so miserably, but I will be back in two hours."

Then he stooped and kissed her and went away, and Dorothea lay looking at the dancing flames, with a happy flush on her sweet face, thinking of "poor Jack Alcott."

Not five minutes had passed when a tap on the library door was followed by the subject of her meditations, who entered smiling and

handsome. She did not reproach him with his long absence, but simply looked glad to see him, and held out her hand with a word of warm welcome.

"Will was obliged to go out, so you are doubly welcome," she said, "for I have such such a wretched cold that I need company."

But she was not to have it after all, for at that moment, a maid entered with a note, at which on opening Dorothea first laughed, and then looked as though she wanted to cry.

"What is it?" asked Jack; then she handed it to him. It read as follows:—

"Bobs teecher,"

"Bobs awful fond uv you an' no mistake an' ef yer ever wants ter see him agin yerd beter com rite off. Bobs askin' fur yer an' askin' fur yer hes that terrible sick."

"Im his brothur Sam."

"O Jack, what shall I do?" and there was no doubt about the crying now.

"What does it mean?" he asked full of sympathy at her evident distress.

"Bob is in my class at the mission, and though I have only had him for a few Sundays, I have grown really fond of him. I think I never saw quite such a little heathen as he was, but he is very lovable. He was not out last Sunday, and I intended to go and see him, but this cold has kept me in. Oh, I wonder if I might not go to-night?"

"Certainly not. It would be you: death in such air."

"But fancy the poor little fellow wanting me! It breaks my heart to think he will be wondering why I do not come. If Will would only come home!"

"Why, I will go and explain it gladly, if you will tell me where the little scamp is to be found."

"He and his brother have a tiny room at the top of a tenement house. Oh, how good you are!" and she seized a bit of paper and wrote off the address.

"First time I have ever been accused of that," he said dryly, as he took the paper and went off, promising to come back and report.

Jack Alcott experienced a rather peculiar sensation as he climbed the fourth flight of stairs in a tumble-down tenement, knocked at a certain door, and in response to a rough boyish voice entered. Directly before him, on a miserable apology for a bed, lay an evidently dying child, who, with eyes bright with fever, was looking beyond him as he crossed the room to the still open door.

"Didn't she come?" he asked pitifully, when he found that Jack was unaccompanied.

"She couldn't, Bob, she was sick herself," and Jack Alcott felt a strange lump rising in his throat as he saw the big tears rush into the blue eyes.

The other boy, presumably Sam, turned