

myself. But help them to get work—and oh! if you have any influence here in Ladbury, close those saloons which have been my ruin before my two boys get old enough to go the evil way I have gone!"

"I and certain others whose hearts the Lord hath touched," replied Amos, "do daily fight this traffic. Whether or not we can drive out these saloons I cannot tell, but by God's help we will keep thy boys out of them. Poverty and the necessity of hard labour keep, by God's blessing, many a boy from mischief. When man became a sinner, the good Lord gave him a blessing in labour. If Deacon Stanhope had left thee his good name and example and not a dime, he might have had a more worthy successor. Thomas, I have brought thy son to bid thee farewell."

He stepped aside, and Thomas stared blankly at Achilles as at a stranger. It was not that the boy, thus put face to face with him, looked suspicious, defiant, beligerent; for years Thomas Stanhope's actions had been of such a nature that Achilles could show to him no more pleasing expression. The lad's nature was sturdy and war-like; there was more iron than clay in his make-up. What was curious to Stanhope was that for the first time for years he saw his son in new shoes and new cap, a tidy suit, a necktie, a percale shirt, and scoured to the unblemished cleanliness of his Quaker protector.

It came to Stanhope that this eminent respectability might have been the moral condition of Achilles but for him. He suddenly remembered a day when he had come with his own father, the good deacon, to this station, to start on a pleasure trip to Philadelphia. He had then been about the age that Achilles had now reached. Good fare, good clothes, had been his birthright. What a happy, innocent, frank-faced boy he had been, holding by his father's hand, so trustful and fond of such a good father! And here—here was his son, clothed by a stranger's care, defiant, wrath brooding in his soul, come to see his father carried off to serve a ten-years' sentence! His lips trembled, there was a sob in his voice, as he held out his hand to his deeply injured son and said, "Achilles! my boy!"

Achilles was not one to be placated by a tear, or to forget ten cruel years in five minutes. He took his father's hand, but without cordiality.

"How are they?" asked the prisoner. "Better off than they've been this good while," said Achilles. Stanhope winced.

"You'll be good to the mother and the children, my boy."

"I'll be better than you have, by a long shot," said the son.

Stanhope turned paler at this home-thrust.

"I've been very bad. You're better without me. I'm going for a long time, Achilles."

"None too long," retorted Achilles. "When you come back I will be a man, as big as you are, and the rest of 'em will be grown up. You'll find you can't carry on up at our house any more the way you have. I'll have a good place for mother by that time, and she is going to have some peace and quiet in it."

"I hope so, she needs it," said the humbled father. "I have thrown away my chance in life and ruined you all. I shall never come back to trouble you. Build up the home I destroyed, Achilles, and be all I have not been and nothing that I have. I suppose your mother and Letitia are glad to be rid of me too?"

"Oh, they cried like everything; women are so dreadful soft-hearted and don't know what's good for 'em; but of course they'd be scared enough to see you back."

The train whistled. The sheriff touched the prisoner's arm.

"Good-bye, Achilles, my boy," said Thomas. "Forgive me if you can and ask them to; don't think harder of me than you can help. I'd have been a good father if it hadn't been for drink."

"What did you drink for when you knew how it made you act?" said the obdurate Achilles.

The second whistle blew. "All aboard!" cried the conductor. Thomas suddenly clasped his son in his arms and kissed him. Then leaving the astounded lad on the platform, he entered the car before the sheriff. Achilles stood dazed for a moment,

then ran along by the car window, where he could see his father, and shouted: "Good-bye, father! I'll give 'em your love! Don't fret. I'll take care of 'em. We'll be all right now!" To the sound of which assurance, which might have a double meaning, the train rolled out of the station. Achilles looked after it.

"There," he said to Friend Amos, "you wanted me to come say good-bye, and I did it."

"Thee has not a very soft heart," said the Quaker quietly, "and I conclude thee has a hard head. I could bid the prisoner good-bye more kindly."

"Good reason why. He never treated you to brickbats and kicks, nor scared your little sister, nor chased your mother out in the rain, nor sold your steer."

"Thee will come to breakfast with me, Achilles," said Friend Amos, trusting rather to time than to argument to soften the rancour of the injured lad.

At the Quaker's door was Friend Sara Lowell, with little Patty in her arms. Patty, washed and curled, clad in a new pink dress and white apron from the ample supplies in Friend Lowell's big country-town store, roused up to give a smile to her brother. Both Achilles and Patty ate heartily of the ample breakfast set forth by Friend Amos, one of the most notable housewives of the village.

After breakfast, Friend Amos took them into his adjoining store and gave Patty a little red cart, a doll, a woolly dog, and a stick of candy. Upon Achilles he bestowed a rake and a hoe.

"This is as much as thee can carry three miles up the hill," he said. "Friend Jacob Lyman is not far from thee. He will give thee seed potatoes, and cabbage and tomato plants, and lend thee a spade. Get the garden made betimes, and let me see at the end of two or three weeks what thee has done to better affairs. Thee is not slow to promise what thee will do; let us see if thee will be equally good at performing."

It was six o'clock and the sun was well up, drinking the dews of the April morning. The grass was green on the road-side; the chickweed and shepherd's purse were in blossom. As Achilles, full of hope, sped along, his rake over one shoulder, the hoe over the other, he counted every moment lost until he could begin to work in his long neglected garden and tell his mother of the happy fortunes of his golden Seeing a dandelion spreading its golden disc by the clear purling water in the roadside rannel, he broke into a joyous whistle. A black-bird and a blue-jay chased each other over and under the rails on the fence, and watching the flash of green neck and vivid blue wings, Achilles felt as if scales had fallen from his eyes, and for the first time in his life he saw that he was living in a beautiful world. How had he been robbed of his childhood's heritage of joy!

When he reached the little home, his mother, Letitia, and Samuel were busy with a vigorous house-cleaning. Mercy at first had felt too out of heart, too wearied and broken down to undertake anything, but Letitia had seen a good possibility of decency and home-life for the first time, and had entreated her: "Don't give up, and had entreated her: 'Don't give up, mother. You will feel better if you get your mind on something new. Don't discourage us, now we've got a chance for the first time in our lives. If you don't help us on, I'm afraid Achilles will run away in despair. He was talking of it yesterday.'"

"Achilles run away! Achilles leave me!" cried Mercy.

"He won't if you'll give him anything to live for," said Letitia.

"But where is he now?" cried the poor mother.

"Looking for work, maybe," said her daughter. "He'll come back; let us show him we are trying to make something of this place."

Mercy, spurred by thoughts of her children, stung by fears for Achilles, began to gather together the wreck of her household goods, to see what could be done with it; casting anxious glances towards the road, her heart heavy for her son. At this moment the husband was forgotten. She was a glad woman when Achilles, with his implements, came in.

"I've been to the train to see father start," he said. "Mr. Lowell made me. He gave me this hoe and rake for doing it and breakfast. I saw Patty. She looked

so pretty in a pink frock and white apron, just like other folks; and Mr. Lowell gave her a doll, a cart, a woolly dog, and some candy. You ought to see her!" The little sister was of much more importance than the father.

"O Achilles, you saw your father! How did he look? What did he say?" cried Mercy.

"He looked a heap better than I ever saw him look before. Being a prisoner does him good, seems to me. He said he was sorry, and he was never coming back to trouble us, and for me to take care of you, and he cried and kissed me."

Mercy sat down and burst into violent weeping.

"Wish't I hadn't told you," said Achilles, "making you cry so. Don't, mother. I thought you'd not be crying any more."

Mercy tried to control herself. Evidently her son was not fond of crying people. He had had overmuch of crying and sighing in his short existence. Letitia whispered to her: "Don't discourage Achilles so, mother. I think it was a good sign if father felt bad." Achilles caught the words.

"Tain't no use. Mother's bound to cry; she's got 'customed to it. I did think maybe we'd have good times now, but we won't. I think father ought to feel bad. I told him so. I told him I'd see myself further if I couldn't be better to all of you than ever he was. But there! 'tain't no use to try."

And again in Mercy's heart the wife gave way before the claims of the mother. She wiped her eyes. "There, Achilles, you will not see me cry any more. I'm going to keep up heart for you children, and you'll all help me. We'll try to do all those things we planned yesterday, Achilles. You shall lay out the work and we'll help you. You are the man of the house now."

"There!" cried Achilles, who liked to be at the head of affairs, "that's something like. Whatever you want, mother, you just sing out, and it's going to be done. It's a little after seven now by the sun. Some day we'll own a clock. As soon as I get off these nice clothes I'm going to work. I say, Tish, I've been to town and back. Won't you go over to Lyman's and get a spade for me to dig with, and ask for some seeds, and plants, and seed potatoes? Things had ought to be in right off. You tell 'em I'll help 'em haying or harvesting, to pay for what I get. We ain't going to beg—we're folks now."

Letitia at once set off across the pasture lot for Mr. Lyman's. Samuel pulled his mother's arm.

"Say, mother, can't I put on the new clothes and go to school now? I had to stop 'cause of my trousers and no shoes. Can't I go?"

"Maybe Achilles wants you to help him in the garden."

"O Kill!" pleaded Samuel, "You let me go. I'm forgetting all I learned about reading, and I want to read, and if I can read I can have that beautiful story-book mother got down last night. And I like the teacher, Kill, she's so nice to me. I will work like sack, Kill, 'fore an' after school, an' Sat'days, if you'll let me go to school, Kill."

Highly flattered at being thus created into the family autocrat, Achilles paused with his foot on the attic stair and contemplated his little brother.

"I say, mother, he ain't much size for his age, and ain't much good to work—s'pose we send him to school, and make a scholar of him, like some of the big-bugs down in the town?"

"Well, Achilles, just as you say; he has always had to be kept home on account of his clothes. But since Mr. Lowell brought him some—you must help brother out of school though, Samuel. Brother can't do all the work."

"I'll work just as tight as I can lick," responded Samuel.

"Well, then," said Achilles, "it will be an hour before you need get ready. You begin gathering all the rubbish up from the yard. You put all that will burn in the stove, in a nice pile close to the house for mother, and make a heap of the rest. Don't leave any old tin, or rags, or shoes around."

Samuel darted out to obey.

"Achilles," said Mercy entreatingly,

"if you only could forgive your father—now he's gone—"

"I forgave him—a little, down at the depot," said the boy. "I said good-bye, and we'd be all right now. I can't forgive him the hull of it till I can forget, and I don't know how good I am at forgetting. Maybe when I see you all right, and things looking pretty nice, I may forgive him some more."

With what pride and security did Achilles now look about his poor home, feeling himself free to work for its effectual restoration. In the new manliness aroused by his independent position, he suddenly began to wonder why the house and its twenty surrounding acres had not been sacrificed in the devastations wrought by his father. He asked his mother, after he had returned to old clothes and bare feet, and had taken time to reprove Samuel for not working thoroughly.

"Your grandfather left it to you children," said the mother, "so your father could neither sell it nor mortgage it."

"But he wrecked it all he could," said the boy. "Ours, is it? Well, I'll make it worth having, and if ever he does try to come back he just won't get in. I'll be a man then. Samuel! don't run about so here and there. Begin at a corner of the house, and work clean as you go."

Here came Letitia flushed and breathless with running.

"Kill! Mr. Lyman's ever so kind. He says he'll come right over now, and plough the garden, cause you can't work it up right with a spade. And he'll bring seed potatoes, and plants and seeds, and he says he believes there's good stuff in you, and you'll make a man if you have half a chance. And, mother, Mrs. Lyman's baby is sick, and Mrs. Lyman says if I can come over and work for her for a month, she'll give me a hen and chicks, and a little pig, and a new calf. Can't I go? Can't you finish up here and get me a dress and some aprons made, so I can be decent while I go and work? Mrs. Lyman said she'd lend me an apron and a sack till you fixed some."

"A pig!" shouted Achilles, "a calf! a hen and chicks? What are you stopping for, Tish? Why don't you go back as fast as ever you can? I'll take hold and help mother till Mr. Lyman gets here. I guess now we can have things that won't be carried off for whiskey. I'll make coops and I'll build a little pig-pen, and mend the barn-yard fence, for our pig and calf and chickens, Tish!"

Letitia was soon speeding back across the pasture, and Achilles put his brawny strength at his mother's service. He swept down the walls, straightened the stove-pipe and fastened it up, and rubbed it clean with some paper.

"He didn't leave us much, only what things were to strong to break, and too heavy to take to town," he said, as looked at the stove, table, bed, two or three chairs, a tub, pail, and washing bench, which formed the major part of their household gear. "I'll mend some of those things, mother. I will make you a stool or so, if I can get hammer or nails. Couldn't you cover them the way Mrs. Lyman does? And can't you take the old clothes and rags, and braid us some mats the way she does?"

"Put all the rags you find here in this tub, Samuel," said Mercy, stepping to the door. "I did use to make mats, but your poor father sold them and I gave it up."

"Poor father!" said Achilles, between his teeth, going out to help Mr. Lyman unload the plough from the waggon and begin work on the garden. "I'll show poor father a thing or two, if he ever sets foot in this house again."

(To be continued.)

SELF-DENIAL.

A LITTLE box came into a missionary collection inscribed with the singular words, "Tis But." It was from a lady who had never felt that she could do much for missions. But she had been accustomed to buy a good many things for herself which she did not absolutely need, saying, "Tis but a dollar," or "Tis but a trifle." This year she determined, when so tempted, to put her "tis buts" into the missionary box; and it surprised her to find that they amounted to \$150.