

❁ ❁ The Story Page. ❁ ❁

Not Ashamed.

(SALLY CAMPBELL, IN OUR YOUNG FOLKS.)

Charley Peters was going to college. With his hat and his grip in his hand, he ran upstairs to say good-by to his grandmother.

"I am about to start," he said, gayly. "If you have any last words, now is the time for them."

The old lady looked lovingly at her big, broad-shouldered grandson and reached out a gentle hand to lay on his arm.

"Try to do your duty, my boy," she said, "and try not to make a secret of it. It will help the other young fellows to do theirs."

"Dear grandmother!" was all that Charley said, as he stooped for his good-bye kiss.

One night, a group of freshmen were collected in Dan George's room. They were sitting on the bed, the table, the floor—everywhere but on the chairs. Three weeks before, they had been strangers; now, they were chatting and chaffing together like lifelong friends. As the hands of Dan's clock drew near to half-past seven, Charley rose to go.

"What's the matter?" said Dan. "You are not going to leave us?"

"Yes, I must. I have an engagement."

"Forget it," said Billy Archer. "Break it. We can't let you go; your company is so delightful."

"That's true," said Charley modestly; "but you must try to comfort one another, and hope to meet again."

He was half-way down the narrow corridor of the dormitory when he hesitated. A moment later, he opened Dan's door again, and put his head in.

"Look here," he said, "you fellows need not suffer the pangs of curiosity. I am going to Professor Dean's Bible class, and I don't care about going on the sly." He slammed the door and departed, this time to stay. There was a moment's silence in the room after he had disappeared.

"What was that for?" asked Dan.

"Advertisement," said Billy.

"But he didn't wait for any of us to go with him."

"There are several ways of advertising," remarked Billy, "and beware of imitations."

"If Peters is a Sunday-school boy," said Mat Hewlitt, "I am afraid he has dropped into the wrong pond. He will be a queer fish among us all, for I guess we are none of us saints, exactly."

"Don't be cast down," said Billy, consolingly; "he may be worse than you fear. Going to Bible class once in a while doesn't altogether make a saint."

"What do you know about it, old man?" asked Dan.

To this question Billy made no answer, and the talk went on to something else.

A few days later, Mat said to the others, "What do you suppose Peters was upholding at the club to-night?"

"Morning chapel," asked Dan.

"We were all talking," Mat went on, "about what an abominable screw-out of the fellows that missionary fund is, and he must needs put in and sermonize about missions being nearly as deserving an object as athletics, and what a pity that the 'college spirit' couldn't include our dues to the heathen as well as the football championship."

"Wasn't it scandalous?" said Billy. "What could he have meant by it?"

"Something serious," said Dan. "I really think that Peters must be a genuine case, for when a man wishes to put his hand in his pocket for that sort of thing it goes a good way to prove his sanity."

Up in his room, Charley was struggling with the unpleasant sense of having felt obliged to say something not relished by his hearers.

"It is so much easier," he thought, ruefully, "to do what you consider right than to own up to it publicly. Why did grandmother put in that clause? I'd like to keep my principles to myself, and then the fellows think I'm a prig, which does not matter, I suppose. But what good does it do?"

It was not long before Mat Hewlitt began to "work" one of his many schemes, for which he had been famous in his preparatory days. He and Dan and Billy and some others were talking it over, one afternoon.

"Charley Peters would be just the one to help," said Mat, "if he will."

"He won't," said Dan.

"Why not?"

"Well, because everything has to hang so awfully plumb for him, and this—Dan hesitated over the end of his sentence.

"Isn't in the Bible," suggested Billy, dryly.

"Pshaw!" said Mat. "We must have a little fun. We will ask him."

He went to the window and shouted up to the next story, "Charley Peters!"

Charley came down.

The plan was expounded to him, and he was urged to join in.

"You are the only man in the class who can help us out," said Mat, "and we rely on you."

"I can't do it," said Charley.

"Yes, you can. It is the very thing you can do. You must."

Charley shook his head.

"Why not?" said Dan.

Before there was time for an answer, Mat said, sneeringly, "Because he is afraid of getting his hands dirty, dear little boy."

Charley squared his shoulders, and by an unconscious gesture, stretched his strong, young fingers out before him.

"I am, indeed!" he said, energetically. "When I came here to college, I came with the intention of keeping my hands clean, and, please God, I mean to do it.—That night, Billy Archer came to Charley's room."

"Peters," he said, "I wish with all my soul that I were you!"

Charley was too much surprised to speak.

"When I first went off to school," Billy went on, "I meant to be good; I honestly did. But, like a fool, I was ashamed of it, and, little by little, I gave in to what my conscience told me was wrong, until now nobody supposes that I have any conscience. I dare say, you thought me the most hardened of the crowd."

Charley could not deny it.

There was a moment's silence. Then Billy said, hesitatingly, "I wonder whether I could—"

"Yes," interrupted Charley, eagerly, "you can; you will. You will begin over, and do right."

"Will you stand by me?"

"Yes, I will—and one better than I, Billy."

It was months after this that Charley wrote to his grandmother: "I have tried to do my duty, and I have tried to be open about it; and it has helped somebody else, just as you said it would."—Sel.

A Home Heathen.

"Oh, mamma! I am so disappointed," cried Emma Estlin, coming dejectedly into her mother's pretty sitting-room, her usually bright face woefully clouded over.

Mrs. Estlin looked up sympathizingly from her sewing.

"What is the matter, darling?"

"Why, you know the entertainment that our mission band is getting up? Well, we meant to have it such a good one in every way. Bessie Allen was to read—and you know she reads just lovely. Elsie Sharpe was to recite, May Stevens to sing, and Elsie Haines was to play an instrumental solo, while Dollie Watson and Willie were to have a piano duet, and I was to sing, too, you know; but now it's all spoiled, and I'm not going to sing."

"Why not, dear? What has spoiled it all?"

"Why, some one said that we ought not to slight Anna Lewis, and so she has been asked to read—and she reads horribly. She'll just spoil the whole thing! I won't sing, if she takes part, and I just told her Stanley so; and if I'm not in it, some of the other girls—they won't be either, I think it's a shame that she had to be asked!" And Emma looked ready to cry.

Mrs. Estlin felt sad. This was not right to look down on some one less favored in wealth and talents than herself; that she would so worry a kind teacher in trying to break up an entertainment; and that she should be the means of leading her young companions to do these same things! This is the Master's work, too!

"Oh, mamma, don't!" in a smothered tone. "I care more for what you think of me than any one else, except God," she added, not wanting to put God in the background the second time.

Then, as she lifted her tearful face from its refuge, she said:

"I didn't know there were so many wicked thoughts in my heart. What shall I do?"

"Go, set it right with Miss Stanley and the girls—after you have set it right with God," and Mrs. Estlin left her daughter with a loving kiss—left her alone with One that never refuses to forgive—and the mother's heart rejoiced knowing that works worthy of repentance would follow.—Children's Missionary Friend.

How Flies Brush Their Coats.

Willie flushed and happy, had just come in from the barn, where he had been playing hide-and-seek, an exchange relates.

"I guess my little boy needs to find a brush," said mother, looking up from her work. For there were clinging to his pretty sailor suit bits of dry grass and seeds from the mows and some were playing peek-a-boo in the little fellow's hair.

"O mother, can't I wait? I'm just too tired now."

"If flies had been playing hide-and-seek, they wouldn't allow a speck of dust to stay on their heads; they'd brush it off," casually remarked Aunt Nan.

"Flies!" exclaimed Willie, incredulously. "Where'd they get their brushes, I'd like to know?"

"Oh, they have them, and use them," laughed Aunt Nan. "Hair brushes?" questioned Willie; and his face took on a perplexed look.

"Yes; and with them they always keep themselves very clean. Have you never seen a fly rub his delicate front legs over his head?"

"Lots and lots of times," replied Willie quickly.

"Well," resumed Aunt Nan, "there are a great many hairs on the underside of a fly's feet and legs, and these form tiny hair-brushes. When any dust gets on a fly's head, he brushes it off at once; and then he rubs his legs together, as you have probably noticed. This is so that no dust may cling to the little brushes."

"Hurrah, Mr. Fly!" exclaimed Willie. "I guess you needn't think you're the only one who can use a brush, even if the other fellow doesn't carry his brushes round on his feet."

Away he ran; and, when he came back, mother said her little boy looked neat enough to be kissed.—Sunday School Visitor.

A Cat Story.

A very beautiful cat, carried in infancy from some remote village in the Apennines, was given as a mascot to the Italian captain of an oil-tank steamer which ran between Savona and Point Breeze, Philadelphia. In the course of time she presented the ship with a family of kittens, who were less than a month old when the Philadelphia docks were reached. Like the other sailors, pussy went ashore, and, when the "Bayonne" was loaded and ready to depart, could not be found. Search was made in vain about the wharves; and Capt. Hugo was compelled not only to sail without her, but to assume responsibility for her abandoned infants.

Two days after the prodigal came back. Another and a larger boat filled the "Bayonne's" place. Repentant and dismayed, she visited every steamer in the docks. Then, convinced that her indiscretions had made her both homeless and kittenless, she took up her quarters in a watch-box, and patiently awaited Capt. Hugo's return. Week followed week, scores of barques arrived, and were each in turn anxiously inspected; and, still discouraged by repeated disappointment, she bravely kept her post. At last the "Bayonne" was sighted, and there was no need this time to hunt for the cat. There she stood, quivering with agitation, on the extreme edge of the wharf, as the malodorous little craft plied its way along the river. The captain's big black dog, Pussy's friend and companion, barked his furious welcome from the deck. The sound increased her excitement; and, when the steamer was still twelve feet from the docks, she cleared with flying leap the intervening space, and amid the cheers of the crew, ran straight to the captain's cabin, where she had left her kittens two months before.—Agnes Repplier.

A Riddle That Solved Itself.

After a hard day's work the boys' raft was at last finished. Of course, grandfather must see it launched, and they rushed pell-mell to the house to bring him down to the creek. Grandfather admired the new raft, even as much as the boys thought it deserved, and that was a very great deal.

"But this isn't the first raft I've seen on the creek this summer," he said. The boys looked at him in astonishment.

"Why, how can that be, grandfather?" Ted ventured. "We're the only fellows that play here, you know, and we never built a raft before."

"The other raft was made of leaves," grandfather began with a twinkle in his eye.

"Of leaves! What good would that be?" Hal interjected.

"But it really was made of leaves," grandfather insisted, "of dried leaves and twigs, all nicely sewed together with silk. It doesn't sound exactly agreeable, I know; but it carried its owner very comfortably. He sat on his raft—"

"Sat on it, grandfather!" Ted's eyes were growing wider and wider. "Why, we have to stand on ours. If we sit down, over it goes, in a minute!"

"His doesn't, though," laughed grandfather. "He sits and floats all day long, wherever the wind and water may choose to carry him. His meals are brought to him, too—all he can eat. He's a ravenous fellow, a regular wolf for hunting and devouring."

"Is it a riddle, grandfather?" Hal asked suspiciously.

"Well, perhaps; see if you can guess it! The raft builder is very beautifully marked, and has exceedingly strong jaws; and whenever a water insect floats too near the raft, he is quickly seized in these strong jaws, and swallowed before he can even try to get away."

"Is it a frog, grandfather?"