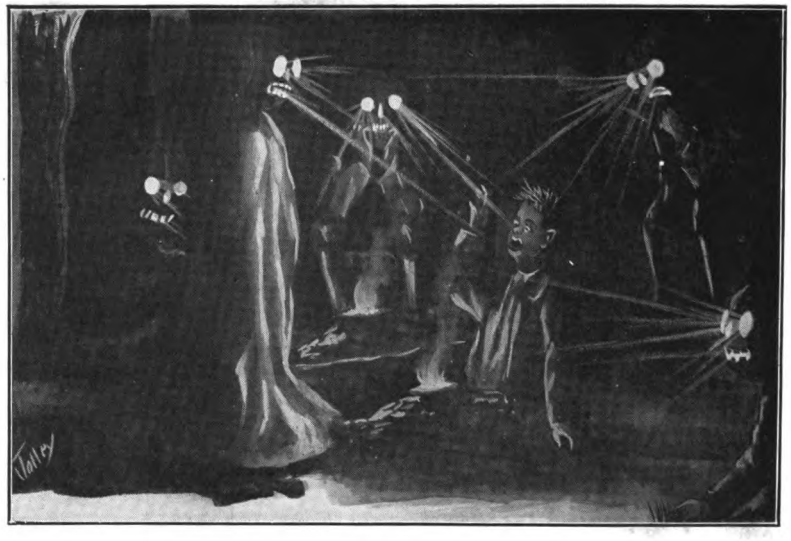
SINFUL SADDAY

Son of a Cotton Mill

THORNWELL JACOBS



"Help! O Lawd, they've got me—the devils have got me!"

Sinful Sadday

SON OF A COTTON MILL

A STORY OF A LITTLE ORPHAN BOY WHO LIVED TO TRIUMPH

By Thornwell Jacobs

MCMVII
SMITH & LAMAR
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

PREFACE.

THE olden times and the little faces that come and go in one's dreams, how dear they are now! So many years have passed that it has been forgotten how they were once real boys and girls who loved little wet violets and purpled muscadines and dreamed of shadowed brooklets as they pored over their geography lesson. To live among these little folks once more would be a thing which strong men would consider a prize to be grasped after as was once the oft-knurled top and the rough-handled baseball bat. And if to it could be added the tale of a comrade who loved the daisy and the dewberry the more because of a past which was darkened almost before it had time to be —perhaps an hour whiled away among such memories may have its value to child and parent, and the author may be forgiven for making another book.

Nashville, Tennessee, 1907.

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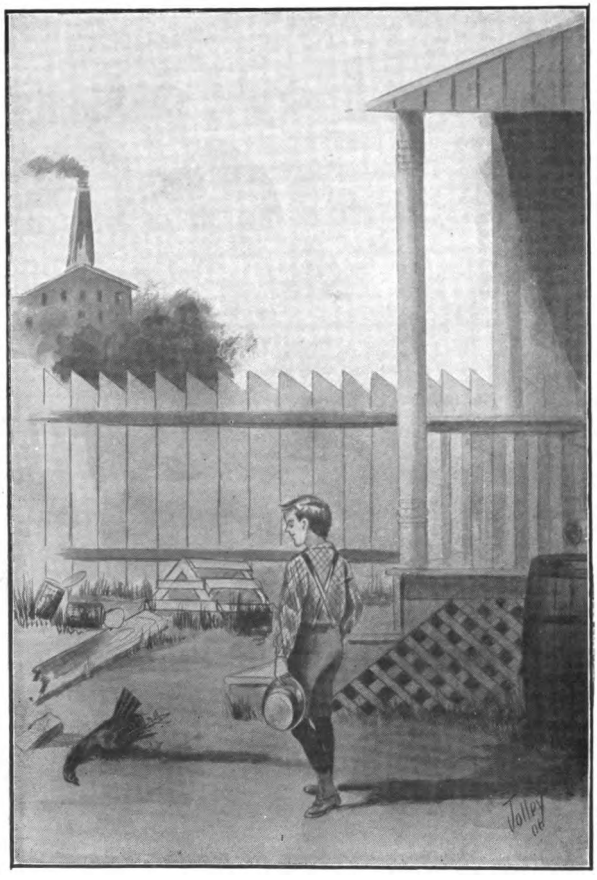


JIM TOMPKINS'S RED PYLE GAME COCK LAY DEAD IN SAMUEL'S BACK YARD.

SINFUL SADDAY

CHAPTER I.

SON OF A COTTON MILL.

THE gigantic smokestack of the Congaree Cotton Mills was tipped with the first faint light of the coming dawn. Dense volumes of black, soft-coal smoke rose boastingly forth from its soot-ringed mouth. The hoarse whistle of the mill sounded like the battle yell of some mighty army, and in a half-thousand clapboard cottages the noises of early morning began. The mill village awoke. It was already past four of the morning, and the backs of many millions of men must be clothed. Congaree textiles were selling at ten cents per yard. By day and night the spindles ceased not their song and the shuttles failed not of flying.

In a cottage of five rooms midway in a long row of many similar to it, even to the "t" at the top of the chimneys, a little spinner awoke as the whistle sounded. He seemed only a scrap of a boy as he pressed the night's dreams out of his coal-black eyes. There was something infinitely pathetic in the countenance that showed under his half-brushed hair. Sad little eyes with all the witchery of deep deviltry in them, and yet with a curious look of sadness there too! Many generations of sorrows were in those eyes. From mothers of a long race of sufferers they had come and from

fathers whose backs had broken beneath the burden of accumulating toils. Years of "line-breeding" had given them their gentle, long-suffering sadness in which there was something akin to the uncomplaining endurance of the lambs of the Unaka hills which his forefathers for generations before had led to the slaughter.

There was something pathetic in the countenance which showed under his half-brushed hair.

Only of late days had his people moved from the Tennessee Mountains, but to Samuel Wimball it seemed that the uprooting had taken place in prehistoric times. He remembered only the sandhills around the mill village and the black-mouthed smokestack of the Congaree Milling Company. It seemed to him that there had always been electric lights in his cottage and artesian water flowing from the hydrant at his front gate, so that the stories his mother told of dingy, smoky lamps and of carrying water on her head a half mile uphill from the spring seemed to him days of barbarism indeed. How glad he was that his lines had not fallen unto him in the unneighbored wastes of the Unakas!

He was disposed to be grateful for the comforts of the mill village as he stood at the front door of his cottage, and the frying ham and eggs his mother was preparing added to the gratitude effectively; but neither the one nor the other had brought the smile of satisfaction to his face which Little Pardner noticed at once. It was an open secret that the best wages in

the State were earned by the factory operatives, and that meant that their table was comparatively lavish and their Sunday clothes expensive. Talbot, who kept the shoe store on Main Street, said often that he sold more seven-dollar shoes to the factory boys than to all the rest of the city combined. These things were pleasant enough, as it was also to remember that some of the weave girls were said to be the most beautiful in the city; but none of them, as Little Pardner knew, could have brought that ironical smile to Samuel's face.

Jim Tompkins' Red Pyle game cock lay dead in Samuel's back yard, or better, in the mutual back yard of the long row of mill houses, and there was the queerest little twitch of his hands and the most curious dilation of his nostrils each time he thought of Jim's boast about his pet. For Samuel had saved his pennies three times now to buy game cocks. First, one of Chappell's blood, but Jim's Red Pyle had demolished him in five minutes; then a promising spangle of Aus McClintock's stock that had stood up only a few seconds longer; and now at last for a full round dollar he had gotten his Georgia war horse, and Jim's pride and joy was dead! It was really better than stealing old man Green's apples.

"I dremp I got him at last, I did," the little spinner chuckled in little gritty chuckles to himself; "an' I dremp mine spurred his'n right in the eye like he did, too. I'll be jiggered if it don't look like I gits all I dreams an' all I prays for."

A little stream flows into the story here, for probably even the young theologue who came over from

the seminary to preach at the factory chapel every Sunday was no firmer believer in prayer than Mr. Samuel Wimball. Mosaic of sinfulness that he was, he had yet grown lonely because other boys had brothers and sisters to spare and he had none. So after his new "dad" had coaxed him into attending Miss Willie's Sunday school and she had told him to try prayer for anything, he had done so with as marvelous results as those attending his "war horse" purchase. There was a strange admixture of piety and deviltry in this runted, swarthy, keen-eyed child that made the only woman in the world who knew why it was so remember often the tenderest, dearest prodigal son that ever died on his way back to his father.

Samuel was six years old when it happened—when he said the thing that every child who is brotherless and sisterless, as he was, had thought many times. It was near Christmas.

"What do you want most, Samuel, for Christmas? What shall I give you, my boy?" his father had asked.

The father received no answer for a moment; but he knew one would soon come, for Samuel's nostrils were dilating thoughtfully.

"What shall it be, Samuel? What do you want most?"

"Father" (Samuel always called him so, though most of the youthful spinners of the Congaree habitually addressed their fathers as "Dad").

"Yes, my boy."

"Father, *I want a little pardner!*"

Samuel had never known what a Christmas present was like before, and so had not thought much of

Christmas up to that time. A woman who spent half the days at the loom and the other half in bed could barely do more than find clothes and bread for her boy; and since he had become nine years of age he had spent all his spinner's earnings, as many factory children do, within an hour after they were received. But long afterwards there was no boy of all his little company of orphans who loved Christmas more than he.

"Father, I want a little pardner!"

Christmas eve, while the father was down town and the mother was in bed, the little lad had gone to his bedside in all the same simple faith of childhood that had made him sure there was a rooster in the world that could whip Jim's, and said: "And, O God, Miss Willie told us at the chapel that you could hear us plum' through the ceiling, and I'm afraid to holler, for mother'd hear me sure. Please make him bring me a pardner. All the other boys has got 'em. O God, I'd be so mighty happy. Please, God, please make him bring me a pardner."

He did not hear his father come back that night nor Dr. Leonard enter, though his little bed was only a few feet away from his mother's; but he heard his mother's voice in the morning and saw a little white bundle by her side.

"What's the matter, mother?" Samuel was standing by the bedside now. He always did when his mother was ill.

"Mother—m—mother, what is—is that?"

It was her husband who answered: "It's yours, Samuel; your very own; something you have a long time wanted."

"Sir?" replied Samuel, not even faintly perceiving the meaning of the words addressed to him.

"It's yours. It's your Christmas present, Samuel; your little pardner!" returned the father.

So he was called "Little Pardner" from the beginning. No one believed that he ever received any other name.

CHAPTER II.

THE FATHER DEPARTS.

THERE is a little village in Piedmont South Carolina named Clinton, which visitors remember for two things: the enthusiasm of the inhabitants as they tell that it is the highest point on the Seaboard Air Line Railway between Monroe and Atlanta and the Thornwell School for the Fatherless.

A man who came to see the Orphanage stood still once when a troop of the boys and girls passed by him on the campus from the academy class rooms.

"A penny for your thoughts, sir?" Doctor asked.

The stranger did not answer for a moment. "There were a great many of them," he then said slowly, as though to himself.

"Yes, indeed, a great many of them; and they are very live, are they not?"

"O, no, no; I was not thinking of the children! It is the fathers, the fathers"—

And now stand we quietly while a few years pass us by.

He who reads the story of orphan children always comes to the sentence where the father dies, and there are a great many of them. Dying at a cotton mill used to be the simplest thing in the world. Day after day one rose, as Samuel's father did, at half-past four and worked till twelve, and at half-past twelve began again and worked till six. Little by little his lungs

would fill with lint; and as he watched the flying shuttle, standing eleven hours and thirty minutes on his feet each day, the luster in his eye would slowly die out. Far away from the peace and quiet and the sunlight of nature, listening to the incessant roar of the looms and the eager whirring of the spindle, little by little he died, and the children—the blood was sucked out of their fingers or ever it bloomed in their cheeks. Those days of manufacturers' murders have, for the most part, departed.

Little by little he died.

So, after a few years, Samuel's father lay dying, and the women who gathered to gossip garrulously each evening around the hydrant near the pigpen would look curiously toward the door and shake their heads: "Another one gone." When one day the sick man coughed up a lump of lint that had gathered in his chest, some of them swore that they would take their old men and go back to the farms. The doctor, who was paid ten cents per week by his clients, sick or well, gave up hope; and finally one morning at half past four, while the hour whistle was blowing, the patient died. On his deathbed the dying father asked to be taken back to the country home which he had left and be buried beneath the elm in the old graveyard. The sloppy-looking women at the hydrant by the pigpen talked about this too, and some of them went behind the

"Another one gone."

wagon to the railroad to see him off. Samuel only half understood what it was all about, and his little baby brother understood none of it.

"Where are they taking him?" he had asked Miss Willie; "and won't he smover in that box?" and the kind-hearted Sunday school teacher had told him that his father was going to heaven, where Jesus was.

"Is he goin' on the Seaboard?" the little boy asked. He had heard one of the women at the pigpen mention the name of the railroad.

Little Pardner and mother must not starve.

The mother did not go that day with the boy; but as Miss Willie looked at her thin, emaciated face on the dirty pillow and the ill-fed infant at her breast, she thought that the wife must soon follow. Since Little Pardner's birth she was an invalid, and now it came Samuel's time to die. He began by becoming a spinner. First nothing, then ten cents per day, and then they gave him a little more for his lifeblood. He exchanged his color for a cough; but Little Pardner and mother must not starve, nor the newly come babe. For three years he went on selling his little body and brain for ten cents a day. The babe died.

And then came the night of the fire. The mill was running night and day now, and Samuel was on the night shift. A snowstorm was upon them, and Samuel could hardly distinguish his little home by the hydrant and the pigpen as he went from time to time

to look out of the window. But once as he looked he saw a little light, and his heart sank, for that meant that a little brother four years old was tossing at midnight by a sick mother all alone; for Little Pardner had been in bed for a week. And then he went back to his work, and hadn't the heart to come again to the window for a long while; and when he did—

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" Even above the whirring of the spindles the shrill voice of the tiny boy could be heard as he sped along toward the stairs. With the agility of love, he flew over the snow and rushed into the home. A score of men had already battered down the door. In the strength of despair he grasped his baby brother and bore him out of the burning building.

The mother's room was back under the shed, and her boy slept nightly by her side. She had not heard the cries until the stroke of the ax sent the glass flying about her.

And this was the scene that followed, the scene that drove her to the madhouse: A mother, weak, emaciated, wakened at midnight with the hideously confusing cries of "Fire! Fire! Fire!" ringing in her ears from all sides; a sick baby boy at her side; a wild, frantic clutching for it; a horror of great darkness as she feels the place empty; the stifling smoke; the great, greedy flames; the noise of the falling timbers and shouting men; the shattering glass and wailing of women; the bewilderment, the anguish—above all, the baby boy!

Do you wonder, then, at her piteous cry as she fled

from the flames out into the darkness and then back into the burning building, crying wildly: "O, Little Pardner! Where is Little Pardner? O, where is Little Pardner?"

The men who keep the "great institution" where she was carried said that they heard that cry too; that sometimes as they passed along the corridors with nurses and attendants it rang through the passageway; that sometimes at night when all was still there came a shriek from the worst cell in the wildest ward: "Fire! Fire! Fire!" Then for a moment all was still till a low wail rose weirdly until it became a frantic cry: "O Little Pardner! Where is Little Pardner? O, where is Little Pardner?"

. . . . . .

It was two years after the fire, and Mr. Samuel Wimball was still the darkest, sharpest, meanest, and most tender-hearted runt that the mill could afford.

"Say, Little Pardner, just guess what's happened?" he cried gleefully one Sunday after returning from Miss Willie's Sunday school.

Little Pardner thought only one thing could make his brother so happy. "You're goin' to mamma!" he exclaimed.

"N—n—n—n—o—o"— That was a very long no.

"O, Samuel, I bet you are. Lemme go too. O yes, of course I'm going too. O, I know—to the great insti—instichu— O, you Gret Physician!"

Another stream runs into the story: Mr. Samuel Wimball was a doctor as well as a sport. He could cut a game rooster's comb and rub soot on it in a way that would make him almost ready for a fight

the next minute—rosin for fresh cuts, milkweed juice for old sores. He had known all that long ago, and in due recognition of his medical prominence Little Pardner had dubbed him the "Gret Physician" and prophesied that some day he would even cure mamma at the "Great Institution."

"O, Samuel, why don't you holler? Why don't you say 'whoopee,' boy, 'whoopee?' "

Ready for a fight the next minute.

Happy, blue-eyed little cotton mill cadaver!

"Little Pardner, I spect you may be right. No, I don't, neither."

"Tell me all about it, Samuel. I bet I am right. It's to a gret instiți—what-you-may-call it, ain't it?"

"Yes, to a orphnidge"—

"That's what it is; a orp—a orphnidge—an' she's there, an' "—

"No, Little Pardner; there ain't nobody there but little children, boys and girls, 'at are orphans, 'at ain't got no father nor"—

"That's it; that's exactly it. An' their mothers is there! Who'd take care of them if their mothers wasn't there?" Blue eyes are the ones to enforce unanswerable questions.

"But Miss Willie said 'at all you could see was chilluns; wasn't no grown folks at all." And black ones are the ones to watch chicken fights and raise objections.

"I know, but the mothers is there all the same. Folks can't see 'em; but they're there just the same, right by 'em all the time. Don't you remember, Sam-

uel, how Miss Willie told us about folks 'at could fly around and guard little chillun an' nobody could see 'em? That's the place and them's the mothers. An' I bet mamma's there—an'—then besides, Samuel, it's a in—instichu—instichushun!"

"I don't know—I don't know nobody over there, an' Miss Willie don't, neither."

"Don't you know nobody, Samuel? Don't you know nobody?"

"I ain't ever seen nobody, but I seen the pictur' of the man 'at runs it"—

"O, O"—

"Miss Willie showed it to me. I axed her if she knew who run it, an' she said the Son of God run it, an' then she showed me that picture on the wall with all those people around him an' him a-settin' on the throne. He's the only man I know."

"Don't you know nobody, Samuel?"

"O, Samuel, he must be kin to Jesus!"

"That's a fact. That pictur' looked jus' like Jesus too. Anyhow, I looked at the pictur' a long time, so that when I see him I'll know him."

"An', Samuel, jus' think of it! If it's where Jesus is, then father's there too, for Miss Willie said he went to Jesus on the Seaboard—and that's heaven. Why, Samuel, you're goin' to heaven, an' I guessed it and you said no!"

"But I kinder thought heaven was up in the sky; but then I dunno, for I know we have to go up to'ds

the mountains, an' mebbe that's it. I dunno, Little Pardner; I dunno 'tall."

"But, Samuel, if mamma's there, how can I know her? What does she look like?"

"She looks—she looks like all the weaver women of the night shift look a-comin' from the looms in the mornin' early."

"If she was to speak to me, would I know her voice?"

"Yes, Little Pardner; you'd know her voice. It's like—jus' like your mother's ud be."

"And the Son of God, Miss Willie said, runs it. He ain't the same one as the men always is talkin' 'bout when they swears, is he, Samuel?"

Samuel could make no answer.

CHAPTER III.

LITTLE PARDNER STARTS FOR HEAVEN.

AND so the great day came when Little Pardner sat with his arm over Samuel's shoulder in the big, red-cushioned seat of the railroad car, and his simple little heart poured itself out to all the passengers.

"Samuel, what's the matter with all the land up here? It's all bumpy."

"It always gets mountaineous round heaven."

Mr. Wimball was something of a cosmogonist.

"We're gittin' up in the sky now, ain't we, Samuel? We ain't far from heaven now, are we?"

The train was running rapidly, and Little Pardner was all excitement. He understood why the trees danced so gleefully; and when the train began passing box cars on the side track, he exclaimed in wonder: "Ohy, there goes a train! My, Samuel, I saw that train over there, an' I sho' thought we had run off the track." A moment later: "Are we goin', Samuel? Look at the cotton bales goin' by and them houses! Why don't we go?"

"Shucks, put up your window. Now you're travelin'," the little runt replied.

Then the train slowed up for a station.

"What's the name of this town, Samuel? I can't zackly read it!"

Samuel leaned out of the window. Miss Willie had taught him that much at Sunday school, and the big

letters weren't so hard to spell out after all. "It's C-a-s-t-o-r-i-a, Castoria. Why, it's jus' as plain as anything."

"There are lots of 'm named that, ain't they, Samuel?"

A passenger got on at Castoria and the conductor said "Clinton" to him. Little Pardner lost some color.

"O, Samuel, he's goin' to Clinton!" And then the little boy was silent with a great wonder before he said in a whisper: "Samuel, Samuel, do you reckon it's Jesus?"

But it could not have been Clinton, for he soon left the car.

As they glided on, the red hills of the up country grew steeper.

"Ohy, Samuel, ain't this sho' a mountaineous country? There's a hill as big as a house!"

They were crossing a river, when Little Pardner said: "Goodness, Samuel, we're goin' into the ocean!"

The little lad's eyes were opened as they passed along.

"Mr. 'Bull Durham,' Samuel, do you reckon he's got anything to do with the instichushun? Ain't he got a big cow?"

Then Samuel, out of his superior wisdom, explained who Mr. "Bull Durham" was, but noticeably without the slightest change of his impassive features.

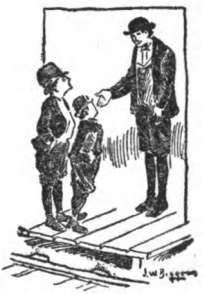
Then an old and ugly woman boarded the train. Little Pardner, who saw everything, soon spotted her as unusual along her line. "Look a-yonder, Samuel!"

"But ain't she ugly?" Mr. Wimball remarked.

"Ain't she, though? and don't her face look like it

had been folded up wrong and creased all over? But we must love her, Samuel; she may have given something to the Orphnidge."

Lep Carter, one of the boys, met them at the station. One of the older boys often did this service. It was Saturday afternoon. Samuel was trying to look very brave and confident, and Little Pardner was doing so without trying.



Lep met them at the train.

"Are you the two boys from C—— who are going to the Orphanage?" Lep asked.

"Yes, sir; we"—

"Give me your hands and come this way."

Then Little Pardner whispered to Samuel: "I bet he ain't the man that runs it, is he?" And then he whispered again, "Lemme ask him if he knows mamma?" whereat Samuel shook his head very vigorously.

The two boys were now keeping well to the rear of the larger boy.

"How was it, Samuel, Jesus had the lamb in his arms an' the Son of God had all the people before him?"

"Yes, that was it."

"And the Lord, who was he?"

"Him and the Son of God was the same one."

"They was the one sittin' on the throne, was they?"

"Yes, an' they're the one that runs the instichushun," said Samuel with a limitless faith.

"Well, what does Jesus do? He's here, don't you reckon? 'Spec he helps to run it, don't you reckon?"

"Mister, does Jesus help run the Orphnidge?"

Little Pardner's question startled Lep, it was so sudden and so earnest.

"Why, yes, my little man; of course he does!"

"That's what I guessed! But the Lord is the one that runs it, ain't he?"

"Why, er—er, why—er, yes, of course he is!"

"And, mister [Little Pardner in his eagerness didn't think to ask Samuel's permission now], there's a mother for every boy here, ain't they?"

"He means the matrons," thought Lep, and then answered: "Yes, indeed, a good, kind mother for every boy."

"Ohy! Ohy! Ohy! Whoopee! That's what I told Samuel! An' she takes care of you, don't she? an' she goes with you, don't she? an' she fixes your clothes an' she kisses you at night, that she does, don't she? an' she's always smilin' for you, ain't she? Sometimes you see her an' sometimes you don't, don't you? An' she loves you better'n everybody else does, don't she?"

"Better than everybody but the President."

"Who is the President?"

"The President? Why, the President is the man that runs the institution!"

Lep did not notice the look of undisguised amazement on the faces of the boys, nor did he notice the deathly silence that followed, broken at last by the queerest of half-doubting, half-wondering tones.

"Does the Lord love you, Mister?"

What a queer lot! thought the older boy. Why don't he stick to one subject? "Why, yes, my boy, the Lord loves you."

"Better'n your mother?"

"Yes, better than your mother."

"Better even than your mother?"

"Yes, indeed. Why not?"

"O Samuel." And then the two fell behind again, and Lep did not hear the half-surprised, half-inquiring tones of Little Pardner: "My, Samuel, he does make me wonder! I thought it was just Jesus that loved you!"

"So did I, Little Pardner. I reckon they must all love you here!"

Samuel was right. They all love you at Thornwell.

They were at the gate now.

"Mister"—

"Call me Lep, boys. Lep Carter is my name."

"Well, Mister Lep, where is my mother?" asked Little Pardner, reserving nothing.

"I don't know exactly. I expect she's at the Augustine Home. And I guess they'll put your brother Samuel at the McCormick."

"Augustine Home? Is she there now?"

"Yes; she stays there all day."

"Do—you—know her?"

"Why, yes, of course I know her. The Orphanage isn't that big!"

"When did she come here?" Little Pardner wanted to be very sure.

"She's been here about two years."

"That's right! And what does she look like! Does she look tired like the weaver women on the night shift early in the mornin'?"

Lep could not conceal a smile. "No, no; she's well and strong. But sometimes she's pretty tired."

"O, Samuel, they've cured her!"

"Why, did you know her?" It was Lep's time to be surprised.

"N—n—o, I guess—I've seen her, though. Can't we go an' see her now?"

"No, we must go to Doctor's office now."

"Doctor?"

"Yes, he's the President."

"That's the Lord, Little Pardner," in a whisper from Samuel.

"Will all the people be around him, do you reckon?"

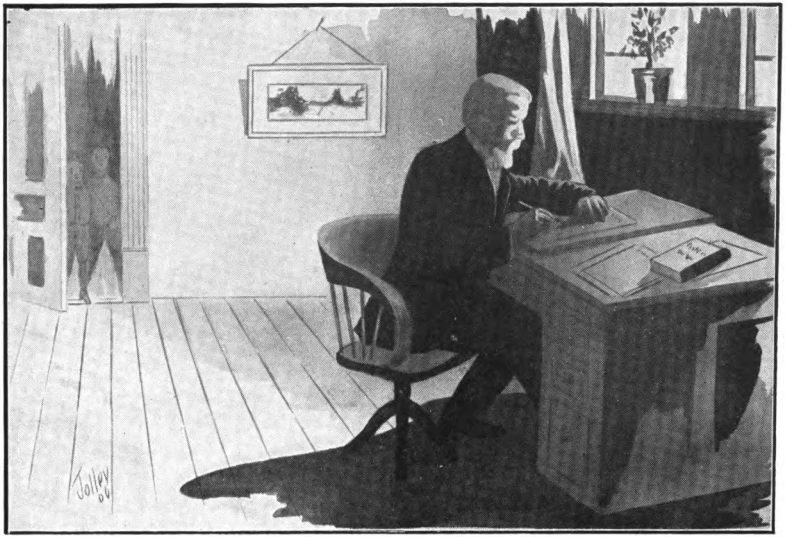
This was intended for Samuel, but Lep thought it was his question. "No, I reckon not; they're off rambling mostly or playing ball. To-day's Saturday," he answered unsuspectingly.

When they reached the office, Lep opened the door and peeped in.

"Doctor is busy, boys," he said; "wait here a minute. I want to go into the press room and speak to Jim. Stand right where you are. I'll be back in a minute."

But before he had gone ten feet Little Pardner was peeping through the crack. A moment later amazement was written on his face. "Gee-ee-ee-ee, Samuel! This does make me wonder! It ain't the Lord 'tall."

"Can you see him, Little Pardner?"



"Gee-ee-ee-ee, Samuel! It ain't the Lord 'tall."

"Yes, easy, and he ain't got a single person before him, an' he ain't got no crown."

"Maybe you don't see the crown."

Ah, Samuel, you were always saying wise things. For years they used to watch Doctor at his desk giving his lifeblood for them, and they never once saw the crown. He did, though he never told them of it. And God did, for it was there; yes, it is there still.

"Well, anyhow, he don't look like the Lord. His eyes ain't flashing, an' there ain't no stick in his hand. He—O, Samuel, I know who he looks like: he looks like Jesus!"

To this day the boys, in looking over the traditional pictures of our blessed Saviour, stop for a moment when they come to one that is well known among them and say: "That one looks just like Doctor, don't he?" Little Pardner was not far from a very great truth, which may be stated about any man who has spent fifty years in being conformed to the image of the Son.

. . . . . .

"Samuel, these will be your playmates," said Lep a little later, introducing the boys around. "This is Tommy Squigley and Goat and Jamie. Tommy, carry them over to Miss Mary at the Augustine Home, leave the little one there, and carry Samuel on over to the McCormick. Doctor said to."

So the boys started off together, and something must needs be said.

"I got mo' warts'n you got," Sadday began.

Truly even an orphan is never so poor but that he has something he can be a braggart over.

"Got any marbles?" Squigley could knock a middler from the taw line every other time.

"No," replied Samuel Wimball, not yet deigning a smile to these friendly advances. "We didn't play marbles much."

"What's the matter? Didn't have none?"

"Didn't have time much. It was too dark when the whistle blowed, an' you was too tired when you knocked off."

"Can't you play nothin'?"

Lo, the ice was broken!

"Of course I can. I can play baseball. I can play marbles. I can"—

"When did you play? By moonlight?"

"O no, dummy, of course not; we played on Sunday."

"Hevilty, devilty, spooks!"

That was a new phrase for Mr. Wimball, and he made mental note thereof.

"Played baseball and marbles on Sunday?" Tommy spoke as though he would rub it in.

"Why, don't you believe me? When else could I 'a' learned?"

"Well, you won't do it here!"

"They don't work on Sunday here?" For Miss Willie had promised less work, not more.

"Work? Why, what'd we do?"

"Haven't you got no mill?"

"No mill?"

"No engines, nor spinnin' frames nor looms nor carders, nor nothin'?"

"Law! I don't know what them are!"

"Ain't you got no pickers nor dynamos nor— What have you got?"

"We've got lots more than you!" Tommy had been at Thornwell eight days.

Samuel's civic pride was now aroused. His little cotton mill, cadaverous face was all aglow.

"Dare you to prove it!"

"Look a yonder!"

"What?"

"The seminary!"

"Shuh! You could put it in the lobby of the capitol!"

"Huh, you ought to see the Congaree."

"Huh! Look at the Tech!"

"What is the Tech?"

"Don't you know all about our Tech? Where was you raised? It's the place where we print the *Monthly* an' make the furniture an' where Doctor has his office an' where we take the pictures an' all that."

Samuel paled a little, and was about to weaken when Doctor's office was mentioned, but he collected himself.

"Huh, you ought to see the Congaree! She's got a million spindles in her!"

"I don't care if she's got a billion spindles in her, she ain't worth as much as the Tech. Besides, you ain't got no infirmary. Look at ours!"

"Infirmary? What's that?"

"Granny! Don't you know what a infirmary is? A infirmary is where they take us when we get sick an' where Dr. Landrum comes an' cures you."

"O, but you've got nerve; that's a hospital. How many can she 'commodate?"

"Lots of 'em; more'n twenty."

"Huh! we can put a thousand in our city hospital."

"You ain't got no Dr. Landrum!"

"We got Dr. Leonard an' 'bout a million mo'!"

"An' the Gret Physician can beat Dr. Landrum," Little Pardner put in. That was a stunner, but only for a moment.

"Course He can, but he ain't a man. [Little Pardner could not deny that.] You ain't got no anniversary!"

"Who is Anna Vussry?"

"Who is Anniversary? Man, the anniversary is the Sunday school picnic day, an' more'n a thousand people come to see it."

"Cheeky Nit, ain't you? We got the Fourth o' July, an' the whole city turns out!"

"Sakes! we got that too. That ain't no day! An' you ain't got no college!" triumphantly.

"Where is the univussity an' the seminary an' two gal colleges?" Samuel was away up in the air!

"You ain't got Doctor!"

First dismay, then mortification, then pride struggling for a way out, then a quick process of reasoning, and then: "Yes, we have too!"

"You—you haven't!"

"Well, who is the Doctor? Ain't he the man who runs the Orphnidge?"

"Yes, I know he is; but"—

"Well, don't the Lord run the Orphnidge?"

"Y—y—yes."

"Well, how'd Miss Willie git to know him if he ain't down there? How'd he git his picture if he ain't down there?" triumphantly.

CHAPTER IV.

LITTLE PARDNER FINDS HIS MOTHER.

ALONE in the darkness! Many a child's heart has sunk before Little Pardner's in that awful moment just preceding sleep, when the light films of the eyes become the ghosts and the goblins that dance upon the walls. Many a man's, too; only, unlike a child, he is going into the darkness and the shadows are creeping onward with the added years and the child is coming out into the light. Yet who can say whose world is darker —the child, alone in a great, big room afraid to pray for sleep to come, or the man, alone in a great, big universe, whose sleep is coming all too soon?

The ghost that danced upon the walls.

They had taken little Pardner to the Augustine Home for the first night in Clinton, and, the matron being at the infirmary, he had been put to bed in the company room.

"Now, my boy, you are to sleep in this room tonight. Put your clothes over on that chair," Lep said gently to Little Pardner, realizing how tired the tiny traveler must be.

"Do you undress to go to bed?" the little fellow had asked the older boy.

It was not only the darkness that had made Little Pardner's heart beat so tumultuously nor his being separated from Samuel, who had gone to the big boys' cottage, but the joy of knowing that his mother was near. Lep had said that she was here in the Augustine Home, and he had asked where she was when he entered and had been told that she had gone to the infirmary a moment and that he was to sleep in the company room just opposite hers to-night, and to-morrow she would give him a bed and bedfellow. So here he was in bed wondering why he had not seen her. "But Samuel said you could not see the mothers! Anyway, I'm glad she's here." And so he thought on for a long while.

Then it was that he remembered how Miss Willie had said once that Jesus could hear you even when you couldn't see him. "Ohy, whoopee! I know what!"

A moment later a tremulous little voice called: "Mamma!"

All was silence.

"Mamma, I'm Little Pardner."

A door creaked on its hinges, a door just opposite. Miss Mary had caught the name.

"Maybe I didn't use to call her mamma," thought Little Pardner.

"Mother!"

"What is it, my boy?"

"Ohy, I must call you mother, mustn't I?"

"Yes, my boy; you must always call me mother."

"Ohy, whoopee, mother! hurrah, mother! You live here all the time now, don't you?"

ALONE IN DREAMS.

"Yes, Little Pardner."

"An' you've been here two years, haven't you?"

"Yes, two years."

"O, mother, I've growed a lot in two years, haven't I?"

"Just lots."

"I knew you was here when I seen Jesus. Miss Willie told me he took you off; but I knew he didn't live nowhere but in heaven, an' I didn't know we was so near to heaven. It ain't no piece down to C——, is it, mother? He loves you, don't he, mother?" The child faith could have moved mountains.

"Yes, my boy, and the Lord loves you too."

"Me?"

"Yes." From the very beginning the matrons at Thornwell turn the eyes of their children heavenward.

"Did you say that the Lord *loves* me, mother?"

"Yes. He loved you so much that he died for you."

"Ohy, mother, an' he run the instichushun, didn't he, mother? an' now Jesus has to run it by himself. Ohy, mother, what did he do it for? Ohy, I'm not fit to die for! Ohy, I'm so sorry!"

"None of us are, my boy."

"O, mother, did he die for you too?"

"Yes, for us all. He had to die."

"What made him have to die?"

"So that we could get to heaven, Little Pardner."

"Why, mother, Miss Willie said that Dr. Leonard got us here!"

There was a long silence.

"Are you there yet, mother?"

"Yes, my boy."

"Are you going to stay there, mother?"

"Yes, my boy."

"For good?" asked the child in tones of pleading.

"Yes, for good."

"An' may I talk to you every night just this way?"

"Yes, every night."

"Mother, do you know? I didn't use to want to come to heaven when Miss Willie would tell me about it. It was all too fine an' cold an' rich, an' I didn't care a cent for the golden streets or the glass sea or them funny trees along the river. I believe she was jus' foolin' me, for I didn't see none of 'em. Nor I don't think I'd like the angels like I like Squigley an' Lep. I haven't seen a one of 'em, mother. I guess Miss Willie was mistaken about 'em, too, an' I didn't see no wall nor we didn't come through the kind of gate she thought we would. I like the boys lots better'n I'd like the angels, but I didn't want to come a bit. But if she'd a jus 'told me you was here!"

. . . . . .

"How do you like your new boy, Miss Mary?" Doctor asked of the Augustine Home matron the next morning at prayers.

"He thinks he has come to heaven."

"I just love him," she answered. He's the cutest little fellow, and he calls me mother all the time. And do you know? he has the queerest notion. He thinks he has come to heaven!"

Thus it was that Samuel Wimball and his brother, Little Pardner, came to Thornwell. To them it was indeed heaven. Five hundred acres of wood and field

and meadow—all theirs, with Bush River flowing through it wherein were great whales of perch and sunfish and suckers. There was a "wash hole" too, four feet or more deep, tawny as the Tiber, from one to twenty feet wide, and as long as the sluggish stream of which it was a lagoon. They could "muddy" the wash hole, though they reserved that for the smaller lagoons, making the water so muddy yellow that even the catfish would come to the surface to breathe, and be caught thereat in the wool hats of the boys. Berries and muscadines filled the fields and woods, and once a boy had found a partridge nest within a stone's throw of the McCormick. The homes, too, in which they lived were all of stone, and each boy with a partner or two had a room to himself, so that tops could be kept separate and kites stored away safe from marauders.

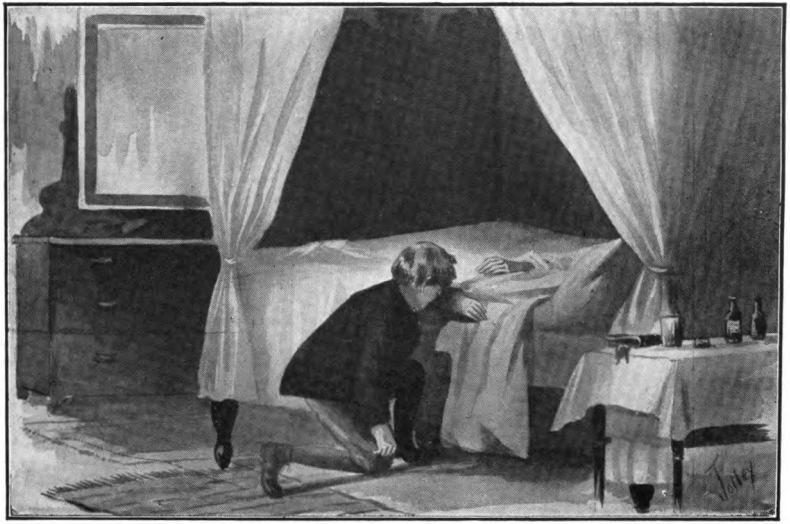
In each stone cottage a company of a dozen or two boys lived with their mother, and it took only a day for Samuel to learn that he had found twenty-four little brothers. Homes for the girls covered one-half of the campus and homes for the boys the other, each having comrades of a size. Thus Little Pardner could not live with Samuel—it was his one grief.

Fourteen great stone buildings—no wonder Squigley had bragged extravagantly. And more than two hundred little boys and girls! A campus of fifty acres and woods and fields and farm of a hundred! Rabbit gums instead of spinning frames, multicolored bird eggs instead of broken yarns, the thrush and mocking bird and bobolink instead of the monotonous clanging of the looms! It was as if all things had been given

back to them, from the strawberries in the garden to the mother in the home. How good and kind he must have been who devised it all for little children! Thus before they learned who Jesus was they loved him.

He did not wonder now that Miss Willie had been unable to describe Thornwell to him, though she herself had seen it. It was not fair to call it an orphanage of the old type, for there was nothing in common between them. They consisted of one large barracks building; Thornwell, of many houses in the woods. They contained pale, cadaverous-looking, emaciated children; Thornwell had fat, healthy, rollicking boys and girls, who may have lost father and mother, but who had gained a couple of hundred brothers and sisters instead.

It was as if a man had once passed by a great and beautiful wood, a man who had lived in the smoke and heat of a large city, a man whose mother had died when he was still a little boy. He watched the sparkle of the running water and laughed at the mirth-making squirrels. He remembered how when a lad he had longed for the companionship of the flying squirrel and the humming bird, how to find a bed of white lilies was surpassed only by the discovery of a partridge nest. So he bought the wood and built houses here and there in it—none nearer to the other than they should be—and he found a mother for each home and brought little orphaned lads and lassies and put them in the homes and cared for them. Then he had built schools for them and a church and a library, and gave them Saturday afternoon to hunt the flying squirrels in or play baseball, as they chose, or bathe in the



A MAN WHOSE MOTHER HAD DIED WHEN HE WAS A LITTLE BOY.

"wash hole" in the summer time. He made them work four hours each day, and he let them play four. They learned to love their home and one another and the man, but not so much as they loved another man who had prompted the former to do it all—a Man who lived many years ago, and who used to call the little children to Him and put his hands upon their heads and bless them.

This was Thornwell. The witchery of it all soon shadowed Sinful Sadday.

Only one thing of the many that might have happened came to mar the happiness of the newly come Samuel Wimball. There was a bully among the three score boys of Thornwell whose work of supererogation it had ever been to haze all new arrivals by a spanking and to add a thrashing to any who resisted. Struck by the look of deep deviltry in Samuel's eyes, he had nicknamed him "Sinful," to which he had added "Sadday" somewhat later to commemorate the day of his arrival at Thornwell.

A little brute named Plug Ugly.

He was a pugnacious little brute named Marbut, and Little Pardner was just the size for a fat little spanking. He had caught the tiny lad, who was laughing with glee at the joke of it. As his blows descended they began to pain the victim, and Little Pardner started to cry. Then it happened.

If Marbut had known Samuel Wimball, he might have been prepared. As it was, he only felt the sharp

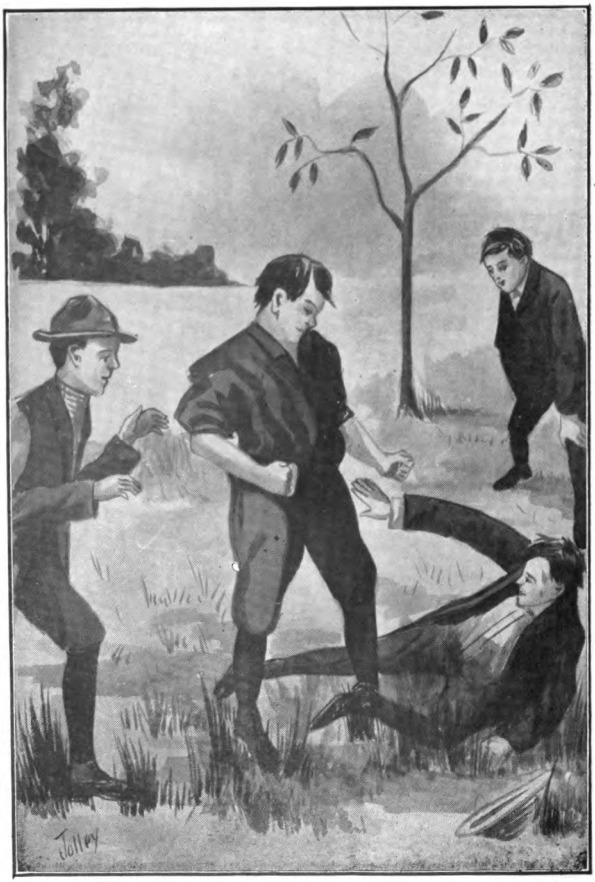
pinging of a tiny fist on his face; and dazed as he was for the moment by the lick, he could yet see his assailant, an infuriated bundle of nerves, as he lay furiously on with his bony fists.

"You puggy, old Plug Ugly, let Little Pardner alone! There! there!" as his fists landed successfully on the big, beefy face. "There, you bully, you shitepoke, you"—

Marbut (he may as well be called Plug Ugly from now on with every one else) dropped the little boy he had been spanking and prepared to demolish his new anatgonist. As he straightened his heavy body, he seemed to the boys who watched to tower a full two feet above Sinful Sadday. He doubled up his heavy fist, ready with one blow to drive his enemy to the wall. It fell on Samuel's neck as he bent over to see if Little Pardner had been hurt, and felled him to the ground. In a moment the bully was at him, pounding heavily his tiny body, kicking his sides with tough brogans, and beating mercilessly his face.

While Samuel had accomplished the thing whereunto he had been sent, he was not of the material to stand a cuff even from an elephant. With the agility of the spinner, he caught Plug Ugly's feet and buried his teeth in his ankle. The bully howled with pain. A score of boys were looking on. Goat had started to intervene, but things were evidently more evenly matched than he had supposed.

But by every right of weight and strength and position Plug Ugly had the fighter's advantage. Brutally he drew up his disengaged foot and drove the heel into Samuel's face. It was heartlessly done; and



AND THE BOYS PULLED PLUG UGLY OFF.

when the blood had been wiped away, the little boy could scarcely see which way to turn. After all, how could a tiny form weighing fifty pounds hope for victory against a brute of a hundred? But he made for the bully, the little fifty-pounder that he was, with head down, teeth gritted, and fists clinched. His eyes were too full of sand and blood for him to tell just where Plug Ugly stood, but he was of the stuff out of which the Tennessee mountaineer had been carved.

Sadday stood the blows as long as he could, for they descended heavy and hard. In return he could not even touch his antagonist's throat nor catch his huge fists. At last he fell exhausted, and the boys pulled Plug Ugly off.

The pathetic moment of Samuel's life was when he arose weakly and looked about him. One boy held his hand, which was clinching its fill of grit and dirt, and one wiped the blood from his face; but most of the lads looked at his eyes. The pupil had dilated until it was indistinguishable from the iris, and from its inky blackness infinite sadness seemed to look forth. Many generations of sorrowed mothers and burdened fathers were concentrated there. It was a sort of line-bred sadness, ineffable but full of meaning. Not glaringly, not wickedly, not furiously, but with an animal hate his pathetic eyes looked upon his conqueror as he said: "Plug Ugly—I'll—have—to—wait!"

He buried his teeth in his ankle.

CHAPTER V.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

THE bright summer days came soon at Thornwell, the days when the children reveled in the prospects of holiday and its attendant fun, and scarce an hour passed that Sinful Sadday's fingers were not twitching with excitement. Simple, indeed, and yet to him how rich were those pleasures! There were the long wood rambles, jolly watermelon-cuttings, and merry games which were suspended only when the young players could bear it no longer. Then, too, in the evenings the loll under the dark shades of the trees on the campus and the rehearsing of the day's adventures and the morrow's prospects. Sometimes, too, when the children had been epecially good the boys were allowed to leave the confines of the dear old McCormick and visit their fair young sisters of the Home of Peace and frolic in gladness around the evergreens of the front yard. Many merry moments were spent in "Base" and "Goosey Goosey Gander." There were no such days as those, no, nor ever shall be unless—well, yes, unless it was when they all met in the house for an old-fashioned orphanage sociable. Then "Base" became "Steal Partners," "Fox and Gander," was "Cross Questions," and "Old Hundred" became "Jack Grinned at Me."

Then the old rooms did ring with laughter so lusty and bounding that the solid granite walls seemed about to yield to the irrepressible joy till the faint prophecy of a smile could be seen about Sadday's mouth, the mouth of the tiny cotton mill cadaver whom much spinning had made so sad.

It was on such a night that Mr. Wimball fell. It was a long struggle and a hard one, but at last he gave out and fell—in love. It was not Sadday's fault; ordinarily he was a sober and level-headed boy, and had very seldom lost his head or his heart. Perhaps it was the balmy air of the vacation idleness or, more likely, the coyness of the maiden that again intoxicated him so that a new color began to appear in his horizon. The humdrum of the summer days became enlivened with interest, and all things became new. It was at the old game of "Steal Partners" that it happened, and it was then that the love-liquor he had been drinking for quite a while first began seriously to affect his mind. Eva was in the ring, and many a boy was watching with averted eyes, knowing which one she would choose when they all sang:

Mr. Wimball was in love

"Fly to the east,
Fly to the west,
Fly to the very one
That you love best."

And it happened just as they expected: Eva chose Mack. She might as well do it anyhow, for if she hadn't they would all have said she was ashamed.

Since the day of Sadday's fight with Plug Ugly no girl had dared to come near him. Mack's heart swelled with pride as the little hand that he prized more than his own rougher palm was stretched out to him, and they both blushed as the circle continued:

"Now you're married you must obey,
Now you're married you must obey;
You must be true, you must be kind,
You must do all that she bids you."

The young lad may live long and grow much. A physician, he may stand by the bedside of death and, bidding defiance to that monster's claims, drive him back to his own dark dominions and reclaim the sufferer from his terrors; a lawyer, his eyes may fill as after a long and trying case he has saved an innocent man's life; a Governor or President, he may receive the adulation of many multitudes—but none of these nor all of them could equal the unalloyed bliss of that moment.

But it was well for the young master of hearts that he did not look behind him, for the jealous eyes and determined features of Mr. Wimball would have set him to wondering if his Eva could be held against all odds. Sadday watched the performance eagerly. To be sure, he expected nothing else, and yet it was with a little feeling of dismay that he saw it turn out as he knew it would. He had lost his chance that day of the fight, and was afraid he never could reinstate himself. But then and there he resolved that there was to be a battle for the maiden, and that in at least one case none but the brave should deserve or hold the fair. Two young hearts had entered the

lists. It was but a transcript of life's long struggle they were beginning. True and brave and courageous, fighting honorably and hard, of such are the princes of earth.

But there was a difference in the world between Sadday's resolve and its execution. To the latter he immediately devoted himself. The boys and girls all wondered why he sat so quietly in his corner during the games that evening, seemingly caring nothing for the fun in which he had been accustomed impassively to revel, disregarding every attempt to pull him out into the gay circle. But while the others were merry he was planning; and when the ten-o'clock bell rang for the dispersing of the party, he rose as one who knew and was confident that he would shortly be master, and master of something that was worth being master of. That night as Goat and Tommy were going home Sadday joined them and told them to come to his room immediately. A few moments later found the trio in close consultation. Sadday's eyes had the unconquerable gleam in them. Tommy seemed interested, but Goat was a little indifferent to the scheme Samuel was proposing.

"I tell you, fellows," he said, "there ain't no use in wastin' this summer huntin' blackberries an' goin' washin'. Let's have some fun, some shore-enough fun. We three fellows can work things a lot better than just one, and there ain't three finer girls in the country than them three."

"But, Sadday, don't you know Fannie don't care anything for me? I don't like her, nohow; her nose is too long and she looks too much like a sheeny."

"Aw, Tommy, you're a loon; that's the fun in the thing. You want to make her fall in love with you, and so'll Goat have to make Bertie; but I'm in a lot's worse fix than you fellows, for Eva is dead in love with Mack, and everybody knows it."

"There's this much about it, Goat," said Tommy, remembering last summer's sores: "I ain't never had no use for Mack since he told where our plum thicket was, and I would just like to help Sadday cut him out. He's been sporting Eva mighty heavy too long, anyhow."

"Well, then, fellows, I'll tell you what we'll do: Goat, you take Bertie for your sweetheart, and Tommy, you take Fannie, and I'll try Eva. We three boys will run together and set rabbit gums together and go muscadine-huntin' together, an' we'll get the girls to goin' together; an' if we do that, I believe in a week or two Mack's jig will be up."

Eva.

And so they talked and planned. Sadday had some difficulty in getting his two friends to join the triumvirate; but once in they went at it in earnest. He had to persuade Tommy a little, too, to reconcile him to Fannie, whom he had selected for him because of her influence on Eva. And Goat would have liked to have Sadday's girl; but consented at last to take the one allotted him, chosen also with an eye to her possible usefulness in love lawyering. As the night wore on they became more and more interested in the scheme, and the early rising bell found them putting the finishing touches on it.

"Did you know that you had caught a beau?"

"All right, fellows. Now don't say a thing to a soul about it, and we'll start the ball rolling to-day." And Sadday, a little red-eyed but unboundedly happy, meant every word he said.

That very morning he had his opportunity. Fannie was sitting in the swing, and he leisurely sauntered up to her. They had always been good friends. She began: "Say, Sadday, what was the matter with you last night? Did Mack get ahead of you?"

"Well, Fan, he's been ahead so long that it don't seem unnatural to let him stay, does it? But say yourself. Did you know that you had caught a new beau?"

"No. Who is it?"

"Now don't try to fool me that way. You know who it is."

"I declare I don't. Who on earth can you mean?"

"Do you mean to say, Fan, that you can't tell when a boy like Tommy falls in love with you?"

Not a muscle of that inscrutable face moved, nothing but the customary dilation of those nostrils.

"Tommy? O, tadpoles and little fishes! Are you dreaming, Sadday, or are you just a bit out of your senses?" But her eyes brightened.

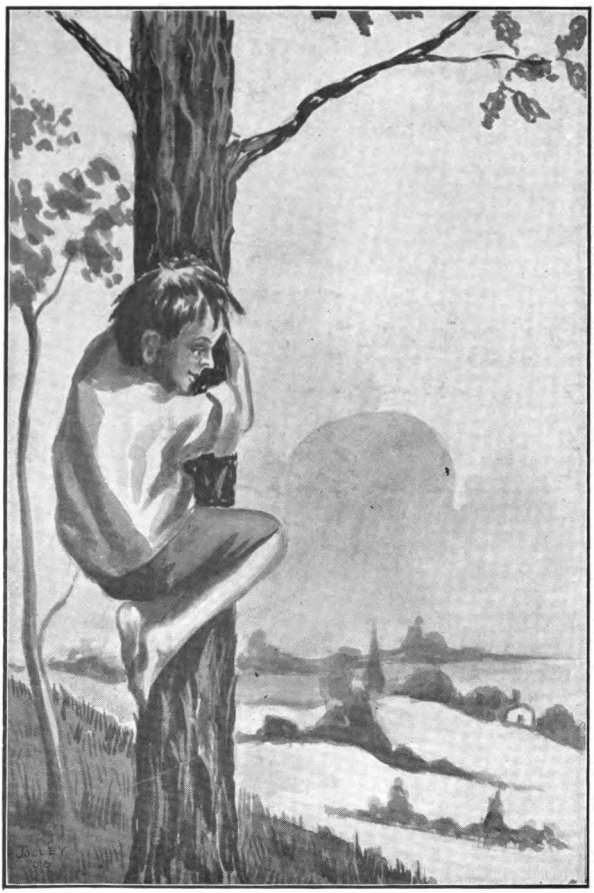
"O, pshaw! Now don't try to put on like that. He owned up to me awhile ago; and Goat's gone on Bert too, an' there ain't two finer fellows in the Orphanage."

Just then some other girls came to the swing, and the conversation was interrupted. But Sadday had sown his first seed; he had "started the ball a-rolling." The next day Bertie's heart felt a new and strange sen-

sation; she had heard that Goat was struck, and was going to sport her.

And so the scheme began to work. Nothing noticeable at first, only Sadday and Goat and Tommy were always to be seen together. Then some one called attention to the fact that Fannie and Bertie and Eva were "pidners." Mack noticed the change immediately, and began to suspect something awful, but said nothing about it. Soon the two trios could be seen on all lawful and possible occasions to have something in common; and, though only giggles and grunts and blushes were seen or heard, such language was gloriously eloquent to those who understood. Gradually it came about as Sadday said it would. Tommy did fall in love with Fannie, and Goat with Bertie, and they with the boys. As for himself, he already knew his own heart, and each day seemed to be bringing him nearer to the end of his ambition.

The scheme which he had formed was a new one for the Orphanage, but wisely and philosophically laid. Hitherto the sole dependence of the young lovers, outside of their own stammering efforts, had been the daysman, the mediator who went between the two parties and talked up for both sides. This Fannie was still doing for Sadday, but the power of the plan was in the triumvirate. Sadday's philosophy was that it was easier to fall in love in company with some one else. He watched eagerly for the success of his plans. Every leaf on the tree, every star in heaven seemed to know about it, and his guilty conscience must show it. Sometimes it was a smile at the table, and then another smile, or better a third



THE IMAGE EVER PRESENT WITH HIM AS HE CLIMBED.

smile, and the fourth never passed without proving indisputably that the next bouquet of violets that came from the dell in the hands that belonged to those eyes would be found in hers as soon as his lawyer could hand them over. But the surest sign of them all was the muscadines that Sinful brought—the bullet grapes. Before his fall he had never brought home a single one of the many he so laboriously climbed and struggled for. Afterwards, however, he always carefully examined his pockets for his red handkerchief before he left for his Saturday afternoon excursion to see if it was there and large enough (it never mattered about the last time it had seen the washtub) to inclose the load of luscious fruit it would bear to the lassie at home. It was a beautiful picture, that of this young boy and a bright angel image ever floating before his eyes—an image of beauty and happiness to him. Ever present with him too, whether it was as he climbed the knotty oak or swung out on the rocking vine or braved the angry poison oak, there she was, and her face carried with it a benediction of peace and love.

A smile from her who sat in the opposite corner.

Not so beautiful, yet equally attractive, was Mr. Wimball when the solemn chimes of the church bells called the saints of God to worship. Before, his drowsy eyes had to be propped open with many a kindly pinch or twitch designed to save him from the punishment which would surely follow his being seen asleep by his matron. Now Doctor might preach as long as he pleased, and

the longer the better, for at least every minute he would win a smile from her who sat in the opposite corner and who moved in each short interval just far enough to see and be seen. One would not think that the angels of God consider that so impious as we, jealous for his honor, are accustomed to do.

But the chiefest of joys of those bright days were the jacks and mumblepeg. Never were the dual triumvirates happier than when, seated on the stone steps or under the shady oaks, they successively counted five, ten, fifteen, twenty, wound safely round the "snake," threw "ups and downs" the required number of times, and jumped the "elephant." Or if it was mumblepeg, Sadday claimed ever the privilege of being allowed to root the peg if bad luck threw it to her turn, and there was nothing but joy and promise in that laugh which under other circumstances would have been a bitter mockery. Doctor would smile, but not in derision, at such emotions as these, for such are they which develop the fire that carries the trembling soldier into the cannon's mouth and burns the midnight oil of the student's lamp.

As the summer wore on the fruits of Sadday's scheme became more apparent. At last one day (it was late in August) the trio had a great plan to be executed, whereby both they could enjoy themselves and Sadday could test his case. It was nothing less than a candy pull. The boys furnished the molasses. For a whole long week they put in their spare time to earn its value; and when the expected Saturday came, it found the six ready. Mack had tried to join the crowd; but had failed, and then in spite, as Sad-

day knew he would, had gotten up his own pull and invited Eva to reign at it. This was the test, and Sadday conquered. Even when Mack, with his hands full of the gummy candy, paraded by the stand of the triumvirate and tried to entice Eva to his own kettle, she was not moved. Nay! she did not even look at him, and Sadday knew his plan had been successful; the prize was his. A few nights later in the merry-go-round ring, when the circle was chanting,

"Fly to the east,
Fly to the west,
Fly to the very one
That you love best,"

Sadday, and not Mack, was the one who was chosen to blush as they continued:

"Now you're married you must obey,
Now you're married you must obey;
You must be true, you must be kind,
You must do all that she bids you."

And as that swarthy, impassive, imperturbable runt took his place in the swinging circle again, a stranger who edited a country paper saw the gleam of triumph in his eyes and noted the nervous dilation of his nostrils. So, turning to Doctor, he said: "That boy will some day be at the top of the column, next to reading matter."

CHAPTER VI.

SADDAY'S REVENGE.

A CONQUEROR in love, it now only remained that Sinful Sadday should wait no longer, but should conquer likewise in war. Hitherto his little philosophy had defined the *summum bonum* to be "to whip." Even the gentle influences of Thornwell in the year they had opportunity to play upon him had not yet made him other than the impish-looking little runt that Plug Ugly had called him with the deep-set eyes of line-bred sorrow.

Regular work as effective as it was light had begun to round out his cadaverous body and steady his brilliant little intellect. The week after his arrival he found that the boys were divided into farmers, mechanics, gardeners, printers, and cobblers, and that he might choose the one to his own liking. He became the devil of the print shop.

He became the devil of the print shop.

It took the lad some time to get on to the purpose of his presence at Thornwell. It was so much like a long vacation that surely when the winter came it would end. Yet it kept steadily on. They gave him books to study. It was more fun than baseball. They told him to set type. That alone was a complete game. When at last he

was advanced to assistant pressman, they had to coax him to go fishing, so great was the fascination with which his task held him.

Sadday found himself straightening out as he worked. It helped him to tell the truth when he worked honestly, and it always did seem to him to be very much like prayer. Little by little he made a friend of labor, but one enemy remained — "Plug Ugly," Sinful had called him; and, laugh as deridingly as he might, Marbut could not laugh it down, for the nickname stuck. Somehow it suited his bristly hair and red, blotchy face and big, fat hulk; but he never forgot the black-eyed lad who had made him ridiculous. So he hated Sadday, but was afraid to dare him for a fair fight, though he weighed twice as much as the printer lad. Joe Harris had done that lately, and had gotten such a walloping that he apostrophized Sadday as "the vigrousest scrapper, that Sinful! Bejiggered if he can't whip 'is weight in waspses!" Joe's eye had never looked right since. Some of the boys urged Plug to tackle Sadday, to catch him sometime when he was by himself; but that seemed exactly the time Plug didn't want him. But there were other boys smaller and weaker than Mr. Wimball, and upon them the boy bully loved to work his will.

"Here, Squigley," he would call out; "you bow-legged, box-ankled, pigeon-toed, slab-sided, bandy-shanked, rib-nosed, so'-eyed, pusillanimous, invigious, nonconsequential, insignificant little tail-'tween-you'-legs houn' pup, come here and bring the brats!" and Squigley and his half-dozen little comrades dared not

disobey. They hitched themselves up in the harness Plug had made for them, and pulled their lord hither and yon over the campus in the cart he had devised. Between work hours each day and after school was out at five o'clock and all Saturday afternoon he kept them in turns between the shafts, and gave the little fellows no pay but a kick.

At last it became unbearable, and Squigley appealed to Sadday. Then Mr. Wimball organized the Anti-Plug Combine, whose only terms of admission were to obey Plug implicitly until next Saturday afternoon; then to assemble before Memorial Hall and wait till he brought out his cart, and then to refuse to pull him another foot.

"But he'll nearly kill us, Sadday. He's as savigerous as a brute! What'll we do?"

"Leave that to me," replied the imperturbable little runt.

All week long they hauled him whither he ordered, while Sinful looked on and waited, and Saturday afternoon came promptly after dinner.

Plug Ugly sauntered out.

Plug Ugly, with some molasses bread still in the corners of his mouth, sauntered out of the boys' door. A bevy of girls was just coming out of the other. "Come here, Squigley, you putty-faced bumblebee; go get my cart!"

But Squigley did not move except a little nearer to Sinful, whose keen eyes watched the bully's every movement. "He doesn't seem surprised enough," Sadday noted to himself, for

his quick judgment discerned insincerity in Plug's tones. "I wonder if some one has told him?"

"You won't do it, eh?"

Then Sadday saw Joe Harris following Plug as he came for Squigley. "Stand behind me, Squigley; I'll have to fight 'em both," said Sadday. His eyes fairly blazed, and his little fists clinched until there was no blood in them. And he had seen Eva looking at him from the well.

Plug came on, Joe following. In a moment he was opposite Sadday, behind whom Squigley hid all a-tremble. He looked and walked as though he had something up his sleeve still. Singularly enough his right hand was in his pocket.

"Git out of the way, you vigrous little devil," Joe Harris called, "and let Plug git to him!"

"You give your game away, Joe," Sinful replied; "but come on, and see I'm good for you both."

"All right; look out," and Joe grabbed a big rock from his pocket and hurled it at the lad. As a swallow would do, he dodged it and opposed only his little fists.

"You impudent poodle, what business have you got mixing up in my private affairs?" Plug hissed, and his right hand came from his pocket, and the boys saw that his knucks were enveloped in steel. Joe had made a lunge for Sadday's side, and Plug's steel-clad fist struck Sinful full in the face. Like a lump of lead, the Great Physician fell to the ground.

"Coward! Shame on you, Plug, to use brass knucks on Sadday! Shame on you, Joe!" and the

boys, who were willing enough to see a fair fight, rushed upon the combatants and pushed the enemies away from the prostrate body.

Plug Ugly struck Sinful in the face.

Eva saw it all, and went up to her room and cried. Then came Sadday's revenge. With infinite patience he bided his time.

"Let's all get a rock," said Squigley one day when the Anti-Plug Combiners were all together, "and steal up to him and pound him to a mud heap!" and he turned to Sadday for approval.

But Sadday shook his head.

"Let's get some rotten eggs," Jamie suggested. "I know where some are, and Mr. Watts won't mind, and let's everlastingly paste him with 'em."

But Sadday didn't even look pleased.

"I wish Jesus would set the devil on him," said Little Pardner with all the earnestness of a prayer.

Whereat Sadday looked thoughtful and said: "Leave it to me; I'll fix him."

A whole week passed while Sadday bided his time and thought it out. He told his plans to none, not even to the Anti-Pluggers; but he used them.

The next week came.

The matron noticed that when Squigley and Jamie asked after dark to be allowed to go to the pump they stayed an insufferably long time. The boys noted that when they came back their hands were dirty and once muddy and their faces showed every sign of excitement.

During the time they were gone Sadday's door on

the third floor was locked tight; at least, no one but his bedfellow was allowed to enter it.

On the third night Goat happened to look out of his window and saw a sheet hang for a few minutes from Sadday's window, a boy clamber down it and hurry off to the woods, and the sheet hurriedly drawn back again. But he kept it to himself and tried to think it out and added a petition to his prayer for the under dog.

Meanwhile a feeling got out among the boys that something awful was about to happen to Plug.

"Little Pardner is prayin' for the devils to git you, Plug Ugly," Goat said one day, and was surprised to see the bully's face blanch and his legs fairly tremble. He had only the night before had a dream in which a dead man's skull had grinned luridly at him.

"He's as superstitious as an old nigger woman," Goat said to Sadday a little later.

And it seemed to please Sadday very much. For, the night before, the grave which the Anti-Pluggers had been digging was completed, a generous deep one in the heart of the blackest part of the second woods, and Sadday even then had a little powder in his pocket.

"Give me a powder you can't taste and that will put you so sound to sleep you can't wake up, even if somebody picked you up," he had said to the local druggist.

The young doctor of pharmacy, convinced by his smile, had given him a sleeping potion.

"Is it harmless?" Sadday asked.

"Yes, perfectly."

"But it'll work?"

"You won't be troubled with insomnia long after you take it."

It was put in Plug's water.

They were playing Old Hundred that evening in front of the seminary when Plug hid behind the big pignut tree, and grew sleepy while the catcher was droning out the numbers, and so no one missed him after the game was over.

But six little Anti-Pluggers slid out of Sadday's window down a white sheet a half hour later. And they gathered like happy pallbearers around the sleeping bully, and rolled him into a quilt and started for the second woods. Through a lonely path they bore him, sometimes groping for the way in the darkness, past the swamp where Little Pardner was afraid the frogs would wake him, through the pasture fence where the bars were already down, skirting the woods for a little way, and then plunging boldly into the dense blackness of the second woods.

Sadday leading, at last they brushed aside the briers and laid him down beside the black hollow of the big poplar, where every Orphanage boy believed the ghosts stayed at night. The Anti-Pluggers stared at it ruefully, but Sadday was busy with his revenge. "Are the saucers ready?" he asked. "Give me the alcohol; I want to pour it on the salt." Then he drew out a human skull he had borrowed from Dr. Landrum, who believed him interested in physiology, and set a lighted candle in it.

At this each little Anti-Plugger drew a mask from about his person somewhere and put it on, no two alike except in hideousness.

Alarmed by these strange deeds, a hooting owl called: "Who? Who?"

"Hurry up, Samuel, let's"—whispered Little Pardner. But where Samuel had been was only a grinning skull now, and the little mummer fairly shivered with fright.

At the given signal they lowered their enemy into the grave.

"Now!" their leader called.

With one voice the night hawks gave voice to an unutterable groan, horror-laden, sepulchral. Plug Ugly moved uneasily, as though a bad dream had come.

"Again!"

Like the dying anguish of a hundred ghosts their weird voices thrilled with terror.

Plug shivered, gasped a moment, and then woke up. At first drowsily as if loath to leave some pleasant land, and then— He was wide awake! Unutterable terror drew every line of his countenance. His eyes bulged with fear, his limbs were cold and rigid, and his hair bristled with unspeakable dismay. And the weird, unearthly noises as though from the anguished throats of the lost! And the odor of fresh dirt and the clammy feeling of the clay as his hand touched the side of the grave! The devils were burying him!

Then Sadday looked over the brink of the pit at him as he lay at the bottom, and Plug saw the skull of the dead man with the infernal lights glowing from eyes and mouth, and watched the jaw open and shut fiendishly.

With a cry of indescribable terror he struggled to his feet; and as he did so, six masked faces of as horrible demons as his wildest fancy could draw stared at him from the brink. With a deft movement the head devil touched the alcohol and salt, and lurid flames lit up the blackness of the forest. And, worst of all, there directly in front of him was the big poplar—home of fiends and ghosts. And the groans of the devils redoubled as they saw their victim terrified into spasms.

"Help! O Lawd!" he cried. "Help! they've got me; they've got me! O, Lawd, the devils have got me!"

Cold beads of sweat stood on his brow; he shook like a man with the palsy.

And the frightened owl called weirdly: "Who? Who?"

At the sound of a thing so human Plug Ugly with supernatural strength sprang to the brink of the grave and, wild with fear, rushed madly through briers and underbrush. And the devils followed mocking. Strengthened with terror, he struggled on, his hands lacerated, his feet, from which his shoes had been removed, torn and bleeding, shouting at every step: "O, good Lawd, they've got me; they've got me! The devils have got me!"

Rushed madly through briers and underbrush.

And the head devil was close upon him when he crashed headlong through the underbrush into a creek and fell upon his face. The lurid lights still showed

in the skull, and the fiend mocked in ringing laughter that slowly died out to a moan.

"O, Plug Ugly," it said in low, sepulchral tones, "I am the devil of Sinful Sadday. He owns me and controls me. He told me to kill you."

"O, Lawd!"

"This very night."

"O, Lawd!"

"And Little Pardner prayed for me to get you too!"

A quiver of unutterable fear, and then a low moan: "O, Mister Devil! O, Mister Devil!"

"But O, Plug Ugly," the devil continued, "you are such a low-lived coward and scoundrel that I've a good mind to let you off."

"O, good Mr. Devil! O"—

"And if you'll run before some of my other devils get here, you may go."

Hope ever outrunneth fear, and like the wings of morning Plug sped away. And Sinful stood by the side of the brook with a little smile on his face. "I wouldn't have ended it so soon," he said softly, listening to the crunching of the underbrush in the distance, "but my candle was about to go out."

CHAPTER VII.

SEEING SANTA.

To be a little boy—a runted, wicked, pauper boy—even this Sinful Sadday had once thought a prize to be grasped for. Life, even wicked life, was a joy, a good heritage. Curse words were better than dumbness and noisy looms than the silence of the grave. This was Sadday's philosophy. In its way it was a great philosophy. It was the ideal of the poor man's child. There were millionaires who would have given many thousands if their children could possess it. Whatever came was good. A nickel could give him as much joy as a hundred dollars would have done had he been born on a bedspread of gold.

A top and a broken window cord—a month's fun was in them. A jackknife and a scaly bark limb—the simple whistle he made of the two gave him fully as much pleasure as the Gabriel horn of the autoist's child. To be barefooted, to know how to swim, to love all things that tasted well, never to have cried since he was three years old, never to have waked at night since he put on pants, never to have tattled in his life—these things were his jewels. And the petted, pampered, spoiled child of a luxurious idleness, with white hands and tender feet, ever complaining, whining, crying—from all such he daily gave thanks that he had been delivered.

He had heard of rich men and had seen their hot-house brood, and he was glad that by the grace of a cotton mill he was what he was, rough and ready, a son of common folk, who shivered in winter and sweated in summer and built their own fires with kindling they themselves had split. He had many things to look forward to. If any of them happened, it would satisfy his soul. Thus in his own little way he vindicated the judgment of Him who looked on what he had made and called it good.

He had never imagined that anything could be quite so nice as Thornwell, where there were boys and boys and boys, not to speak of woods and squirrels and bird eggs, where you could lose yourself in search of violets or gather blackberries by the pailful, where the persimmon tree flourished and the land flowed with things that made milk and honey remind him of the cotton mill, and where—they left you alone. It was a place where he knew what he ought to do without having to be told, where it seemed a pity for a fellow to be bad.

After Thanksgiving day, all eyes turned toward Christmas. Sadday took out three hundred scaly barks from his hoard and ranged them on his bureau. He ate ten each day. It was a pleasant way to enliven the weary plodding of the coming holidays.

About three days before the eventful one Sadday saw Little Pardner flying across the campus with hat off and hair disheveled. He met the little boy by the corner of Faith College.

"O Sadday, Christmas is sho' comin'!" cried Little Pardner excitedly.

"How do you know that?" the oracle asked.

"Because I saw Kit and Bally hitched up to the two-horse wagon coming from the depot, and the wagon was just loaded with apple barrels and orange boxes, and—and—I saw one big box of firecrackers"—

"Sure enough?" Sadday asked it encouragingly, although he had known a week before of the big pile in the pantry that grew steadily from day to day.

"And, Sadday," the happy little boy continued, "they say Santa Claus is comin' to-morrow night, and I hope he'll bring what I asked him to bring"—

"He brought what I asked him once," said Sinful meditatively, "the Christmas you were born."

"O Samuel, if he'll only bring me too!" and the little lad, grown quite confidential, drew a letter from his pocket and showed it to his brother. "Dear Little Pardner," it read, "Mr. Santa Claus has received your letter, and says he will bring what you asked him to if you are a good little boy *and do not do as so many bad little boys do—try to see him when he comes.*"

Little Pardner could not be expected to know that it was in Sadday's handwriting, it was so disguised.

"You'll get 'em, I guess," Samuel said after reading the letter with much trouble. "What did you ask for?"

And Little Pardner told him, not knowing that his brother had already read it on his matron's table with tears in his eyes.

It was a real, genuine letter from a very little boy to Santa Claus. There was nothing deceptive about it at all, for the little lad wrote it in all the earnestness and eagerness of his heart to a supposedly real

and genuine Kris Kringle. It carried Sadday back to the days when he used to write letters to Santa and put them up the chimney, and then the following morning find that they were still there. It was addressed "Mister Santye Claws care of Doctor," and signed with the little lad's name in a characteristically childish handwriting. Just beneath it was a picture also drawn by Little Pardner. As well as Sadday was able to distinguish it, it was a picture of a fireplace and true to the nineteenth century custom. It was a grate and a coal of fire, and the flames were leaping upward in the chimney, only a little oddly, all inclined to the right. There were two rosettes, one in each corner of the grate. A shovel was on the right and very close to it a stocking, and a very long stocking. On the left were a poker and a pair of tongs, and a little to the left of these, but easily distinguishable, was another and longer stocking, and just above it was still another and still longer stocking. On the floor in front of the hearth was a rug, and there was a flower pot with a little tree drawn in it; though this little pot, instead of sitting as all honest flower pots do, seemed to be lying down on the rug. And just to the left of it was another which had the same recumbent position. Just above the grate was a picture of a calendar which had appeared to Sadday as the cutest part of the whole. What seemed a little boy throwing snowballs was on the lower part of the calendar, and up to the right was December, 18—. Below it and to the right the whole month was drawn out in long, lingering letters, December 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., just as in good old calendar style until it got down to the

21, when the Christmas holidays began and the rest was left to the imagination. The letter itself was on the other side of the sheet.

CLINTON, S. C., 18—.

Dear santy claws I want you to bring me a little Horse and a dog and how I should be pleased with them and I want you to bring me a Juping Jack and I want a little gun and a toy Pistol and a pair of Mittens and a little Pig like that you see in the Picture your little boy. Good-by.

LITTLE PARDNER.

P. S.—I want a squirt gun to shoot waspses with like Squigley.

Just below it was a picture of as interesting a pig as was ever drawn on paper. His mouth was a round circle with two big holes in it, his eyes looked longingly to heaven, his ears were just about such ears as an ordinary boy would draw a picture of, and his tail turned up in a curl, reminding one of a college diploma. As though not satisfied with this production, the lad had drawn another pig with a still bigger snout and still bigger ears and a sort of double tail just below the larger one.

"Did you ever see Santy, Samuel?" asked Little Pardner. "What does he look like?"

A vivid imagination dwelt beneath those black, dreamy eyes of line-bred sorrow. So Sadday answered: "Yes, I saw him once. O, he's great; he's fine-looking, big beard, and all that, perfectly stunnin'. You ought to see him; he doesn't mind it"—

And then and there Little Pardner made up his mind to see Santa Claus, whether or no.

So the big day came, and the boys got a box and put it by the pantry window, so that they could see

through and watch the pile of boxes, the Christmas boxes grow. Even the little fellows could tell an apple barrel from a flour barrel, and of course all knew a firecracker box without seeing it. And the pile kept growing until Christmas Eve, and after that there was to be no more pile. But Christmas Eve was to be the big time. The bonfire was ready, and everybody wanted to light it early Christmas morning; for the boy that did so, that waked up first and kindled her up, was the big boy and the King of Christmas. Then there was all to-morrow to look forward to, and Santa Claus always brought a whole lot of candy and apples and oranges and firecrackers, and they had a fine time eating them around the bonfire.

Little Pardner's plan was ready, and Jamie was to help him execute it. They planned it all while the big boys were gathering canes for the bonfire. The main point was where to look for him. The time every one knew. Now both of them had discovered where Santa Claus kept his apples and all his stuff, for they had seen them in the pantry, and he would have to go there to get them. Surely they could see through the window, and he would be too busy to see them, and they could watch him at his work!

They planned it all out.

O, think of it! A look at Santa—really, jolly, good old Santa! So one night Christmas Eve came!

The retiring bell rang. The lights were all blown out. The matron, anxious for the secrecy of Santa's footsteps, had looked cautiously through the cracks

and keyholes of every door, and then closed each one that stood ajar. One by one the tired little sleepers forgot even the bonfire and the Christmas tree—and—

A little mouse scurried back to its hole, hearing a light footfall behind it. The tiniest possible creak came from Jamie's bed. As gently as any burglar could do it the window by the shed was raised, and two little trembling forms scooted down the pillars and slipped around to the pantry. It was a fearful thing to do—this secret spying out of Santa Claus. What an awful punishment they would receive if Santa Claus should see them! They stood for a moment in the dense shadow of the oaks that had retained their leaves in true Southern spirit until Christmastide.

"Shall we do it?" queried Jamie, ready to turn back.

"Think of the glory of it!" Little Pardner replied, as if he were already telling it to the boys.

So, keeping the shadows around them, they crept stealthily on, and at last reached the side window of the pantry. Like two little burglars they clambered up on the wall and looked in. All was quiet and spooky.

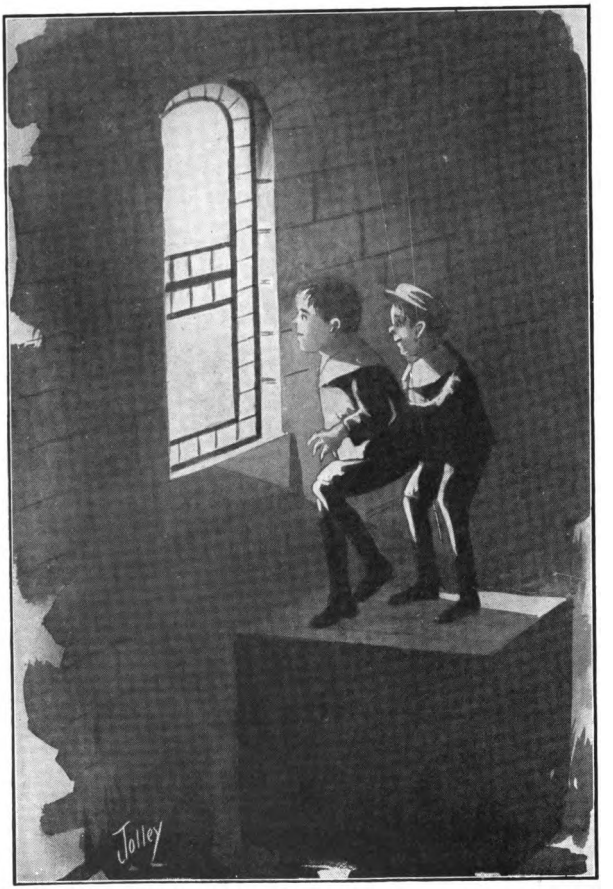
"He's seen us and gone home," whispered Little Pardner in dismay. That was what the matron had said he would do if he saw them, and so they started back for the McCormick with heavy hearts. O, the shame of it!

Just as they turned they saw a bright light in the kitchen.

"What's that, Jamie?"

"It's him, Little Pardner; he's coming!"

They crouched low in the dry grass and waited, but



"My law!"

the light moved not. They grew tired, and then slowly edged their way toward the kitchen window.

"Let's look at him and run," Little Pardner had said. With the studied stealth of the panther they climbed up on the window and looked in, and my! what they did see! It beat anything that ever orphaned eyes had been laid upon. There was a long table, and around on one side was a big row of Santa Clauses and Mrs. Santa Clauses. And all along on the table were oranges and fruits and candies and a thousand heavenly things, and one Mrs. Santa Claus had her hand in the candy bucket; and when another Mrs. Santa Claus would pass by on the opposite side of the table, she would douse it down in the bag she was carrying (Santa used bags instead of stockings). And another Mrs. Santa would put in a banana and another Mrs. Santa would put in the firecrackers.

"My law!" Little Pardner did wish he was that Mrs. Santa and had big pockets like he had in his everyday suit.

So the little eavesdroppers just stood there and watched them.

"My, Jamie, don't this beat all? Why, I didn't know there were so many Santies."

"And yonder is one of the girls, Little Pardner. See her with the bags?"

"Where's old Santy gone? I haven't seen him since we first got up."

"Yonder he is. Well, sir, if there ain't another one of them. Reckon he's his brother?"

"Jamie!" Was it a tone of surprise or mortification?

"What?"

"Jamie, old man! Jamie!"

"What in the"— Jamie turned around to look at the boy, and his face was the strangest sight that comrade ever saw. Disappointment, surprise, and consternation struggled to control his features.

"Jamie, if I ain't mightily mistaken, one of them Santies is Doctor and the other one's Mr. Scott!"

If he had slapped Jamie in the face or if a thunderbolt had struck him, he would not have been more surprised. You could have knocked him down with a feather, with a pinfeather! He looked. They were moving this way; for the spies were at one end of the long room and they at the other. Little Pardner was right: there was Mr. Scott and there was Doctor.

"Little Pardner, let's go. I guess the Mizzes Santa Clauses are the matrons." It was said much in the same tone as that in which a man would speak who was being turned away into the outer darkness.

"Do you reckon he was sick?" Little Pardner questioned after they had gotten out of earshot of the pantry.

But Jamie was too broken-hearted to reply.

"Anyhow, there's the bonfire to-morrow morning," said Little Pardner, feeling that some word of consolation must be said.

But Little Pardner was not destined to light the bonfire, to which he had looked forward with so much joy, nor to see the Christmas tree that he loved. In the one case his older brother forestalled him; in the other, the perverse fate of good little boys. Sadday and Squigley had planned it all out. To light the bonfire was to be King of Christmas, and Sadday had

confidence enough in his wits to make a try at it. He determined to be the first, and the only way to do it was to stay awake. Many of the boys had tried it, but it was harder than they had thought.

As Little Pardner said: "It isn't like settin' up, for you are lying down. The matron makes you do that, and you have to lie down four or five hours, and you're tired anyhow and you're sure to go to sleep."

But Sadday and Squigley fixed up a trick that worked. When the "sacks of Christmas" were brought over to the rooms, Santa always came in one of the front doors. So Sadday and Squigley got a couple of strings and fixed them to the door knobs, and then Sadday took one of the strings and ran it up outside the house to his window and his comrade took the other; and then, when the doors had been shut and everybody was in bed, they drew them in tight and tied them each to his big toe, and then went to sleep the sleep of the just.

About midnight Sadday dreamed that he was cutting wood, and that Plug Ugly had the ax that he wanted and that Plug wanted too. Then Plug got mad, and before Sadday knew what he was up to he had come down on his toe like an earthquake shock—kerblaum —and the toe was mashed as flat as a pancake. Squigley said he dreamed something of the same sort. Then they both woke up and stayed awake. They heard Santa bring up the sacks and then go down again. Then they got up and went downstairs. Two minutes later Little Pardner and Jamie followed, trembling with hope.

"Got a match, Jamie?" Little Pardner asked.

Of course he had. "Come around this side, and let's get her started and then yell," Jamie whispered.

He took the match and rock, and was just bending over to start her up when he heard a match scratch on the other side of the pile. A moment later the flames rose, and the bonfire was lit.

"You beat us," Little Pardner cried, ready always to render honor to whom honor was due.

"You ought to have had more sense than to try to beat me, Little Pardner," Sadday replied; but added softly to himself, "If I had known who he was, my match would certainly have gone out."

But ere the bonfire that sent its shafts of light far into the midnight blackness had well died down and the canes had ceased their cannonading, before the oranges had been exhausted and the firecrackers and nuts and jokes all cracked, just as Sadday said, "Come on, boys, let's go and look at the rabbit gums," Little Pardner was stricken down. Too much candy. Jamie helped him back home, and Dr. Landrum said he might be in bed a week. Certain it was he could not see the Christmas tree. And when he had gone, Little Pardner wrote a note and stuck it up the chimney. It read:

Jamie helped Little Pardner to bed.

Dear Mr. Santy Claus: Please forgive your little boy for trying to see you. I deserved not to light the bonfire, but please let me see the tree.

Then he called Jamie to his bed and whispered softly: "I am going to ask Jesus too, for Doctor says Santy always does what Jesus says."

AROUND THE BONFIRE.

When Sinful came back from looking at the gums, it was near daybreak, and Jamie told him about it.

"He'll see the tree," the runt said, as if they all must come to him about such things. So he took the note out of the chimney when none saw, and soon Jamie whispered excitedly that Santa Claus had gotten it, for it was gone already.

But as the hours went by Little Pardner got worse, and Jamie was surprised. During the whole long day while firecrackers popped Little Pardner consoled himself by saying: "Never mind, Santa got my note."

The never-ending afternoon dragged by and the time for the Christmas tree came, but still Santy had not made his little boy well. Then Squigley came in and told about how the candles and gifts and gold and silver beauties would look until Little Pardner asked him to pray for him to see it. Then Squigley said, "In a minute," and went and laughed at it to Sadday; and Sadday said, "He'll see it." For Sinful had arranged it all with Doctor.

But somehow when Little Pardner heard the bell ring and knew that they were all going in to see the tree he could not keep down the lump in his throat. "O, Jamie," he said remorsefully, "why did we try to see him?"

And Jamie sat and wondered what he had done it for and why Santa hadn't put him in bed too.

"I planned it, Jamie; that's why," Little Pardner explained.

Just then they heard a knock on the door, and then the door opened, and O the sight! Little Pardner saw it first, and Jamie heard him say, "There she is, Jamie;

I knowed I'd see it," and then Jamie saw it too. Just the finest tree! Just like the big one and lots prettier —the candles and all the presents, the nicest presents one ever saw. And there were old Doctor and Mr. Scott looking as kind and as happy as they had the night they had been taken for Santies. Jamie looked around at Little Pardner, and he was crying like—like —like Jamie was.

Back of Mr. Scott and Doctor and the tree was a little, swarthy runt; and when it was all over and Doctor had kissed his little boy good-by and Mr. Scott had left a great big bundle of goodies, Sinful Sadday walked as carelessly up to Little Pardner's bedside as if he had only just happened in and remarked casually: "Somehow or other, boys, I believe that the only safe way to get Santa Claus to do anything for you is to get Jesus to make him."

And then Little Pardner drew him over to his pillow and told him the whole story, and Sinful Sadday could hardly believe it for surprise.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ANGELS' VISIT.

WHEN the next February came, the rain and sleet were falling fast outside and the trees were moaning under their loads of ice. The boys were gathered around the big, open fireplace in the sitting room. They had been talking over old times. It was just such a night as would make the cheery blaze within most sharply contrast with the coldness and gloom without—a night when they used to love to gather round the glowing coals and "talk good talk." This is what they had been doing; and as it was almost time for retiring, some one blew out the lamp that was sitting on the table. This only added to the attractiveness of the scene in the eyes of the lads. The fitful glare of the fire, the long, shooting shadows dancing over floor and wall, the glimmer of the light against the ice as the sleet rang its tattoo against the window pane, all conspired to suggest thoughts and stories and the weirdness of the scene to impress them the more deeply.

"Do you see that coal down there," said Lep Carter dreamily, "right between those two big ones? See its wings and body and head? I declare it looks just like an angel!"

"Did you ever see an angel, Lep?"

"No, 'n' I guess there ain't anybody else around here

that has seen any; but that ain't no sign, for a man can't no more see an angel 'n a steam engine can draw a conclusion. Angels are spirits and we ain't." Lep was always a sort of philosopher.

"Did you ever see anybody that had seen one, Lep?"

Lep Carter was a good boy—not a "goody-goody," but plain, simple good. He was not afraid of a fight, but he would never fight about a thing not worth fighting about. Perhaps, too, he possessed above the usual amount of thoughtfulness and strict honesty, and such traits could not exist among the boys and not result in the higher ideals of life. Perhaps one of the reasons of his greater thoughtfulness could be found in his weaker constitution. Father and mother had both died of consumption, and Lep had begun lately to show signs of a similar tendency.

Signs of a similar tendency.

For five weeks the weather had been cold and rainy, alternately freezing and thawing. After a while it had begun to tell on the health of the children; and finally, after a record-breaking freeze, Doctor's prayer contained a clause for our little sisters and brothers who were so near death's door, and from that on the clouds hung lower over the homes. The next morning after the boys' conversation his voice stuck in the midst of the petition, and one of the little girls began to cry softly—a little sister of a sick one—and the lips of a good many of the boys were seen to be moving during the prayer. All during the day quiet reigned on the farm, carpentry shop, and printing office, and

about ten o'clock a little messenger boy sent into Doctor's office found him leaning with his elbows on his knees and his face buried in his hands. While he was waiting, afraid to interrupt the prayer, a little girl from the Harriet Home entered, her hair disheveled, her face cold and pale. "O, Doctor! Doctor!" she almost cried, "please come over to the Harriet Home; the doctor says Eva is dying!"

"Doctor says little Eva is dying."

And the little lad stole back to his foreman and said: "I never did see anybody look just like him when she said that; he looked just like somebody had slapped him in the face. But he didn't say a word; he didn't even put on his overcoat nor take his umbrella; he didn't even put on his overshoes; an' I don't believe he'd 'a' took his hat if I hadn't reached out an' handed it to him. He went out like a man in a dream—like a man dreamin' he was goin' to a hangin'."

When he reached the Harriet Home, everything was quiet. The matron was there and showed him the way to the room. It was as cozy a room as the extreme plainness would allow—two windows, a table with a little white cover and the mat Eva had made for the lamp, the bureau with an oilcloth covering, the bare floor, and a few simple chairs. He was about to pass into the door the matron had opened, when an ashen-colored hand tugged at his sleeve. He turned. Sinful Sadday was at his side. "Doctor!" The face was as utterly imperturbable as ever, but the black eyes pleaded infinitely: "Doctor, may I come in too?"

"No, my boy, you had better not come."

He entered; Sinful Sadday followed.

The little face on the pillow was very white and the tiny throat was well-nigh choked with gasping. The luster had left the eyes, and their brownness was dead. Doctor's heart sank at the sight. She had gone! But the old familiar step roused the child.

"Father!" It was so that he was often called by the children. "Father!"

"My child!"

The physician had left the room; a little girl, a playmate, was crying softly by the bureau. The matron with a great gulp turned away. Doctor's eyes were filling. Sinful Sadday, like a diminutive statue, stood motionless and apparently immobile; only his fingers twitched and the little nostrils dilated and contracted rapidly.

"O, Father, look!" A tiny hand and trembling pointed up toward the ceiling. Doctor looked up.

"Look, O look! Aren't they beautiful?"

It is the last sign of life, the first of approaching death; her mind is wandering. Perhaps it is the wild flowers she used to hunt that have come back to her disordered fancy.

"My child, my poor child," was all he could say. But Sinful Sadday was watching the luster come back to her eyes. Slowly and softly it came until they were O so beautiful! And Sinful Sadday knew she was dying; but the only sign he gave was his ashen color, and his hands twitched.

"See, Father, see! O, don't you see them?"

"My child, there is nothing there."

"O, Father, yes there is—they've come, and O they're so beautiful, and they've come—and they've come for me. Father, tell"—and there was the faintest blush on her little cheek—"tell Sadday to come—to be sure to come." And then her little arms were outstretched for their embrace; slowly they fell again.

The luster died out—the great rest had come. The little playmate was crying aloud now, the matron sobbing deeply, Doctor's eyes were full, and Sadday's hand twitched.

"She is gone!" Doctor with bowed head went out into the hall.

They had all left the room a moment later, all except Sadday. With only the motion of his eyes he turned and saw it, and then he approached the bed and upon the purple lips he printed his first kiss. Then his ashen hand went up toward heaven. "Sinful Sadday will come, so help him, great, gentle Jesus! He'll be sure and come!"

The next morning the Doctor told the children what he saw there and what he had heard. He said: "Little Eva was thoroughly conscious and wide awake. There was no appearance of the least wandering of mind. She knew she was dying. As I stooped over her, sitting by her side, while death was nearing, she whispered, 'Father, look, aren't they beautiful?' and when she said it, her thin, pale face lit up with an extraordinary intelligence. She spoke as one communicating extraordinary tidings. Looking up into my face, she caught there the thought of doubt and surprise that filled me. 'Do you not see them?' she said. 'They've come, and O, they're so beautiful!' I could not take

my eyes from the child's face. It was enraptured and full of glory. 'They are beautiful—so beautiful—O, so beautiful!' she murmured; and then with the same sweet smile with which she would tell of a great joy that had come to her she whispered in my ear, 'They've come for me.' She never spoke again, nor did she while she breathed lose that sweet smile which made her even in death seem lovely. Yes, my children, the angels have passed this way. Our dim eyes saw them not; but she, who sank gently to rest yesterday, had a vision that we might well envy. I rose from the side of our little sister feeling that if one might die as she did there would be nothing terrible about it. Her physician testifies that she was entirely conscious to the last. There was much more in this deathbed than can be interpreted by science. Our little girl was just a plain little girl, with no vivid imagination and only a child's mind. She saw what she said she saw."

That was all he said, except when he finished he looked down on the children with the strangest look and said: "Children, I wonder when the angels will come back again?" And when he finished, there wasn't a boy prepared to look him straight in the eye. Even Crawf was looking away and moving so that no one could see his eyes. Only Lep Carter spoke softly to himself. "I would like to see the angels," he said, "and hear them talk of heaven, and they could tell me about"—but Lep too had to stop.

Ever after that day Lep seemed even more thoughtful and earnest. He had been the best student in his class; now he became better than the best. His foreman had never known him to shirk a lick of work,

and he now could be seen working after the hour when he thought he might be needed. But he seemed more melancholy, too, and often after school he could be seen wandering in the woods, seemingly in deep thought and sometimes talking almost inaudibly to himself. One evening in the spring while some of the boys were sitting at the root of an old oak tree they saw Lep approaching. He did not see them and came slowly on. He was murmuring softly to himself, and his face, which had grown unnaturally pale during the last few weeks, was turned upward, as though he were watching the tops of the trees. One of the boys, more to attract his attention than anything else, said: "Hello, Lep!"

He stood a little surprised for a moment, and then the boys said that he looked at them with a strange light in his eyes and replied, "Fellows, I was thinkin' about Him and wantin' to talk to Him," and with a trembling hand he pointed to where his eyes had been. "Do you believe it, fellows? Do you believe it all, all that Doctor told us that mornin' in the chapel? O, if I jus' knew it, knew that Jesus loved me and died for me and that I was to see him in heaven some day! In heaven, too, our fathers are there. I believe it, fellows; but if I just knew it!"

The boys let him pass on. "Lep's lookin' bad," said one of them.

"Yes; and if I hadn't known him all the time, I'd say that lookin' bad and gettin' good go together."

The boys were right: Lep's health was failing. It took him some time longer than the others to see it; but during the damp days of the early spring he learned

his true condition, and his body wore away with the summer months. At last one morning the boys missed him in his accustomed place, and had no reason for asking what was the trouble.

During the following weeks the news was all the same, and at last the day came—the day when one of the lads asked the doctor how he was, and the answer came back: "Leopold is very sick; he won't be with us very long." The lad went inside and looked at Lep, and then looked through the mist in the fire.

Mrs. Fuller was reading: " 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; . . . to comfort all that mourn; . . . to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' "

She had to stop there. Lep was coughing; he was very weak; his suffering was almost over.

" 'In all their affliction he was afflicted,' " she continued, " 'and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.' "

"Mrs. Fuller," his voice was weak, "I've always believed that; but it's mighty hard to die. I wanted to be a man, a real man so bad, 'n' it's awful—lonesome—to die."

She made no answer; her eye had caught the next line: " 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea,

I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.' "

"Is that there—in the book?"

"Yes, my boy, and listen: 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.' "

"O, Mrs. Fuller, I'm so glad that's there; and he'll have to come in a minute, for I'm nearin' them now."

She had closed the book, and, looking up into his face, she saw that he was right. His feet were already in the waters, and He had come too. The little group around the bed were silent; only the whistling of the wind outside and the crackling of the fire within broke the stillness, the stillness of death.

Then Leopold's lips began to move and the voice became stronger, and the last words were words of prayer: "O Lord, give me strength to make this prayer. Help me to trust myself to Christ, forgive all my sins, give me grace to trust in thee. If it had been thy will, I hoped to live a little longer. Bless my matron; she is the best woman in the world. Bless Miss Lizzie; she is so good to me. Bless all the boys and Doctor; he's the best man round here. God bless my little sisters, thy little girls, and my brothers, and these folks that have been so good to me. Give me strength to pray longer—for the missionaries, all those in foreign lands. This I—Jesus's sake."

His words and his life ended together. And as the last little gasp died away the boy who was leaning on the mantel and whose face was as impassive as the black andirons, but whose little nostrils were dilating slowly, looked down at the soft, velvety coals, and there

was one, a little one, just between two big ones, that seemed to have two little wings quivering as the fire glowed and the blast of heat passed over it.

"The angels have come back again," murmured the lad; "God's angels. I wonder if Eva was with them?"

CHAPTER IX.

THE BALL GAME.

SUITABLY enough the baseball season always rolled around. It was a time of joy for the boys. There was no fun like that of the game, and ordinarily it would have taken no seer to read the intense satisfaction on their faces. But somehow the boys did not seem to be so now. Doctor had heard of the last game and the nearness of a clash and the hard feeling still remaining in the breasts of many of the boys, and had forbidden them to play any more match games. They might pitch and catch among themselves as much as they pleased, but there was to be no more occasion for free fights among them. The boys believed and yet hated to believe that he was right. No more ball! Why, what was the use of living any more? No more hard-fought struggles upon the field with friends yelling and girls waving handkerchiefs and everlasting glory just ready to light upon him who knocked a home run or caught the last fly. "But you can still play among yourselves." "Pshaw! man, don't you know it ain't no fun to learn how to play unless you are going to get to play? What's the use or fun, either, in breaking your finger unless some big crowd is there to sympathize with you and some girl sends her handkerchief to tie it up?" O, no, nobody wanted

to play a little measly game by themselves with not boys enough to have a fielder for both sides.

At first it seemed as if the fellows were going to grin and bear it; but as the weather became warmer and they saw the town boys practicing, they could stand it no longer.

"Say, fellows, I'll tell you what let's do; let's ask Doctor if we can't try it again and promise never to ever get mad, don't care how much they cheat."

"But, Sadday, there ain't no use; he wouldn't think of doing it. You know how he looked in chapel when he talked about it, and he'd believe we were foolin'."

"Well, I don't care, and I believe if we were to ask him right he'd let us, and I don't see no use in not tryin'. Will, does he ever say anything about it around you?"

Will was Doctor's pet, the boys said, and constituted a sort of prognosticating barometer as to the storminess or calm of the weather ahead, getting his information from chance rumors of Doctor's sentiments while he was building the office fire or bringing the mail.

"I haven't heard him say a word, except yestiddy he asked me why the boys were not playin' ball like they used to."

"You see, fellows, he's thinkin' about it. Let's get Will to ask him, and I bet he'll let us."

"No, siree, Sadday, I'm not the man to do the askin'; he'd smell a rat sure. One of you fellows'll have to do that."

"Well, I can't do that, for I'm the man nearly got in the fight."

"Goat's the man to do it," said Twig (so called as a

diminutive of Branch). "Doctor sorter likes Goat because he's quiet up in the printin' office."

"Say, Goat, do it, old fellow, and we'll give you the first pick on taters for a month."

But Goat needed no urging; he was as anxious as any. So the following morning he found his way a little hesitatingly indeed but bravely to the office, and after a little rap was invited in. He had to wait for a moment, as a stranger was talking to the President.

"Well, he must be a wonderful fellow," the man was saying. "I wish we had one up our way."

"Yes, indeed, he is, sir. Just to give you an example, last year his total salary was two hundred and twenty-eight dollars, and he gave the Orphanage two hundred and spent twenty-eight on himself."

"Well I declare!"

"Yes, sir; and more than that, there does not a month pass that he doesn't bring in something and give it for the children's use. You saw the girls around a bicycle yonder. Well, he bought it and gave it to them. About three months ago we needed a new roof for our dining hall and couldn't get the money to put it on, and one day he brought it in and laid it down here on my desk. He had just gotten it through buying a farm out on Enoree River for us, and last year he brought in a paid-up policy of life insurance, and said it was to make the orphans glad when he was dead."

"Why, where in the world does he get in all from?"

"He gets it just as nobly as he gives it. Some is made by selling lime, some in trading paints, and in all conceivable ways. He doesn't know when nor how

he will get it; but when it comes, he knows he won't keep it."

"A wonderful fellow, sure. What did you say his name was?"

"Scott, Tom Scott. He was a wild Irishman during the war, and"—

"I'm glad you told me about this; I'll carry it with me. I've heard of a good many men who gave the tithe and kept the rest, but of a very few who kept the tithe and gave the rest. Good-by."

Goat had about stopped trembling by the time the conversation ended; and when Doctor turned kindly to ask him what his errand was, his tongue had limbered up.

"The boys said for me to come and ask a favor."

"Doctor, the boys said for me to come and ask a favor of you," he began.

"Well, my son, what is it?"

"They say that they are sorry that they nearly had a fight that time, and they promise that they ain't goin' to get mad no more."

"That's good, my boy, and what else?"

"And they said wouldn't you let them play ball some more?"

"Why, certainly. Don't you remember that I told you that you could play as much as you pleased among yourselves?"

"Yes, sir; but that ain't no fun."

"Ain't no fun, eh? Well, what would you call fun, my boy?"

"Well, sir, if you'd just let us try one more game with the town boys, we'd be mighty glad."

"And what else would you be?"

"We'd be mighty good."

"And what else?"

"We wouldn't yell much."

"And anything else?"

"We'd study lots harder in school."

"Good! and would you be anything more?"

"Yes, sir, we'd be—we'd be sure to lick 'em."

There was silence for a full minute, and Goat saw that the Doctor was thinking, but his heart sank as he noticed the amused smile upon his face.

"Now, Billy [Doctor did not know the nicknames of the boys very well, but had heard them call Goat by that name], I am going to say yes." Billy's eyes popped out. "But on two conditions: first, that there shall be no bad or boisterous behavior on the ball ground; and, secondly, that you do as you promised and lick 'em."

Goat didn't stop to say "thank you." As he went out the door he didn't stop to shut it. As he went down the steps he did not stop to pay his respects to more than one out of six. Susie, his sister, who was coming in at the door, got a box that made her face tingle for a week, and made her so mad that she declared all day that he was crazy.

Doctor, however, received his thanks a few moments later, when a great shout went up from the ball ground, and every boy's face at the dinner table was as bright as the midday sun!

It was not long afterwards that the secretary of the

town team received a note, much fingered and dirty, which read somewhat as follows:

MR. WILL BUZZARD, *Secretary of Clinton Town Baseball Team.*

Sir: We, the undersigned, respectfully challenge you and your team to cross bats with us on the Orphanage baseball diamond field on next Sadday evenin' at 3 P.M.

Respectfully, SAMUEL WIMBALL, *Captain;*
PLUG UGLY MURPHY, *Secretary.*

P. S.—Bring your own bats and git a mask if you can; we ain't got none.

And every boy in the Orphanage read the reply:

MISTERS SINFUL SADDAY WIMBALL AND P. U. MURPHY.

Gentlemen: We most respectfully except your challenge to beat you next Sadday evenin' at 3 P.M. We broke our mask, but we're goin' to git it fixed, and we'll bring our bats.

Most respectfully, WILL BUZZARD, *Captain;*
JIM JONES, *Secretary.*

And so the great day came. All during that Saturday morning nothing else was talked about. The fears of all that the day might prove a rainy one had been dissipated, for the sun never shone brighter. In the shop, on the farm, in the printing office, and even in the cook room and laundry mysterious stories were going the rounds about how Crawf had made a new bat and no one else was to be allowed to use it except the Orphanage team, how he had worked on it for weeks, telling nobody about it; but Tommy Quigley had seen him when he carried it up to the McCormick last night. The girls in the laundry nearly wept when some one told them mischievously that Sinful Sadday had broken his finger and could not catch, and the report had been circulated that Goat's arm was too

sore to pitch. A whisper had gone the rounds about a trick Goat was going to play. Tommy said it was "something about a fly and not getting in the box; he did not zackly understand it; but he bound Goat would work it all right." Mysterious sighs and expressions and motions were common during the whole morning. A hog being driven to the pen was misunderstood by some of them to be a ball, and was batted accordingly. On the farm a boy would be hoeing properly enough, when suddenly an idea would seem to strike him. Down goes the hoe, up goes the head; he jumps forward, leaning over, grabs a rock, and sends it with a whiz across the field, shouting, "Second base lively," "Judgment, Mr. Umpire." Upon which the farm manager promptly rendered the decision of an extra session in the cornfield upon another demonstration. In the shop all kinds of tools would find themselves used as bats, and several girls could not understand what the sight could mean when they entered the printing office door and every hand went up as if to catch a fly.

"Now, boys," said Little Pardner to a little company of lads his size the afternoon before the game, "be sure and meet me there by the pines, and while they're playin' we'll be askin' Him, and I bet we'll beat 'em."

"Reckon He cares anything about baseball, Little Pardner?" asked one of his friends.

"Course He does; He's too fine not to."

"But reckon He'll see us? Won't He be watchin' the game?" asked little David.

"Course He'll see us. Don't you remember Doctor

said if two or three of us got together and asked Him he'd be right in the middle of us?"

Perhaps one of the most enjoyable features of it all was that the girls of the town and the Orphanage were both to be allowed to witness the game. In fact, a number of the wiseacres among the old boys said they would not have let Plug Ugly play if Gertrude had not promised to come.

Long before the hour (the game was to be played about three) the field was covered with the excited boys. "Pitch her here, Sinful," "Gimme a grounder," "Watch him muff it" could be heard on every side. The town team had just come, followed by a crowd of rooters and friends. All the Orphanage boys and girls were there. The time had come to begin.

"Play ball!" shouted the umpire.

All was silent. The Orphanage nine had the field, and the town boys were at the bat.

"Play ball."

"All right," called Tommy, "Buzzard to the bat, Jimmie Jones on deck, Bub Cope to follow, and Jacks crawlin' out o' the water."

"An' who's in the mud, Mr. Tallyboarder?"

"O, I guess we ain't goin' to have anybody in the mud this time. Lemme run this cat, won't you?"

What intense interest hung around the first throw of the pitcher in the match game! The crowd stood in breathless expectancy. The ball itself was tossed lightly by the umpire, who tried to call as nonchalantly as he could, "Play ball," as though he were so used to such little incidents that he was getting tired of them, when in reality his breast was swelling with pride at

the thought of his importance. The ball rolling lightly toward the pitcher's box was carelessly picked up and twirled in his hand. Then came the long-expected moment. Hearts scarcely dared to beat. The catcher leaned forward with a hand on each knee and face toward the box, conscious that many eyes were upon him. The first baseman stood some fifteen feet from his castle like a mouse which seems to hear some hostile sound and is on the point of making a dash for his hole. He was also conscious of the crowd of witnesses, most of whom were looking at him. The second baseman stood motionless, his nostrils distended and clapping his hands together, as though every time he were catching the highest fly that was ever knocked and three on bases and two out. Even the right fielder watched the ball, absolutely oblivious of all else, yet betraying an evident consciousness of the fact that nobody else was doing so, but all eyes were centered on him, and boys and girls were remarking how determined he looked and saying, "I bet he won't miss any," and of course commenting on his cap and red garter around his sleeve that had been rolled up to exhibit his muscles. As a matter of fact, however, most people were watching the pitcher, who stood with left foot forward and left hand holding the ball in the air, while the right was to be found alternately in his mouth and on the seat of his pants. He stood motionless now, passed the ball to his right hand, drew back, contracted every muscle in his body, and with a great grunt, such as he had learned from the darky wood cutters, indicating power, hurled the ball toward the batter, who with an eagle eye had been watching, con-

scious, too, that nobody was watching anybody else except him. And then what glory to the pitcher if the umpire should call "Strike," and his friends among the spectators call, "He'll fan!" and what determination would immediately be seen on his face if it is "Ball," and what a disheartening yell arise from the other side if the batter knocked a fair hit! Surely these were important moments of a boy's life.

Visitors used to come and moralize on the game like this: "The battles of the baseball field are the battles of life. He who would best learn the soul of a boy and later understand the actions of his son let him go to the field and watch. Perhaps, too, he had best remember the days when he was a boy, when he gave those yells which now are so hideous and those cat calls which he now condemns as ungentlemanly. They did not seem such to him then. Let him remember, too, how his heart throbbed at the whiz of the ball or sank as his bat fanned the air. Or let him think how the lad who bandages most gently his comrade's bruised finger may be the famous doctor or surgeon. The pitcher who throws the ball strongest and best may be the general who endures the hardest campaign, and thus the leader of lads become the master of men. Watch the expressions on the lads' faces, just the one in miniature of the soldier and surgeon and preacher. Watch Sinful Sadday at the bat. Did you see him hit at that ball? All his soul was in the lick, the same soul that will be in the big hit he will some day try to make at the oratorical contest or the bar of justice. He missed, and his little heart sank. In just the same way it will sink when he makes a

poor speech or a poor crop. Laugh not at the boys and their fanciful world battles; learn of them rather how to fire each effort with the whole soul. He's given it a lick, and now he's running for the first base! Would God we each considered the race we are running of as much importance as the flying lad! Would that we moved as quickly toward our goal as his flying feet! See, he's making a dive for the base as the ball speeds quickly to the baseman. Alas, too late! He has failed. But never mind, he will try again. No, no, indeed, the umpire has called him safe, and how gladly he turns now toward the next goal and eyes and calculates and rushes for it! No pausing and loafing and napping on the first. No reclining on the laurels of his first success; but he knows what many men have not yet learned: that nothing of all his work is of any value to himself or his comrades unless he wins the home at last. And so past second and third he presses, and to his little heart the home plate is literally the heaven plate."

It was toward the middle of the game. The tally-boarder had just finished declaring, to the satisfaction of himself and enjoyment of all, who was "to the bat," "on deck," and "crawlin' out of the water," when, looking up, he saw a sight that made his blood boil.

"Say, Simp, who's that red-headed, ball-headed, bullet-headed, slinky-headed thing yonder beatin' that little kid?"

"Where?"

"Over yonder by the fence, and I saw all of it. The little one didn't do nothing but kick his box out from under him."

"Aw, that's Buzzard, our ketch out."

"Well, he ought to catch worse'n out. If I was his mammy, I would call him to his roost."

The game went on smoothly. At the end of the seventh inning the score stood twenty-five to twenty-five, but that was barely an indication of how it might stand at the end of the ninth. Time seemed ripe, for the town nine was at the bat, with three men on bases. A fly had just been knocked and caught, and its batter was the only man out. Tommy had been wondering why Goat had not tried the trick of which he had heard very much, and was now watching for it to come. He had not long to wait. Goat was acting a little strangely, standing on the edge of the box and throwing the ball. No; as Tommy looked more closely he was not in the box at all, and there was something wrong. A satisfied smile was seen on the catcher's face, but very few seemed to have noticed anything amiss. Goat threw the ball much slower, too, so slow that the batter sent it flying over the left fielder's head, and a grand chorus of yells went up from the town side. Each one of the three men on bases went a base farther.

Neither Goat nor Sadday seemed disturbed, only a little excited; but Tommy had forgotten to call his roll.

"Hello there, tallyboarder, what's the matter? Let 'em come."

"All right. Walt Price to the bat, Simp Harris on deck, and Buzzard crawlin' outer the water." But Tommy did not, as usual, stop to admire the amused smiles of the auditors; he was too busy watching Goat.

The ball had been fielded to the pitcher, and he now stood squarely in the box; but instead of sending it over the home plate he threw it to the third baseman, and he seemed to understand and passed it to the second and he to the first, who returned it to the pitcher.

"Side out!" cried basemen and battery together.

"Huh, what's that?" It was Buzzard speaking.

"Side out!" cried Sadday. "Judgment, Mr. Umpire."

But before the umpire could understand (umpires didn't generally know all the rules in the new books) Buzzard had gone a step farther. "I guess not! you can't cheat us that way. You ain't playin' a set of fools, I guess."

"Nor a set of gentlemens neither, it looks like," the tallyboarder now remarked.

"No, sir; he was fairly out. Will caught the fly and Goat didn't go into his box, and then you all batted another ball on"—

"Aw, shet up yer lyin'. If you don't, I'll shet you up with"—

"I'm a-lyin', eh?" Sadday had found a bat, his eyes were flashing fire, every nerve tense, and, what was the best evidence of his passion, his teeth were biting blood from his lips.

"Tetch me if you dare," said Buzzard, slapping him on the cheek, which was the same thing as shaking his fist in a rattlesnake's face.

"Hit 'im," "Separate 'em," "Bust 'im open," "Let 'em lone," "Let 'em have it out" came from all sides.

"Remember, Sadday."

It was his best friend in the world that spoke. The

uplifted bat was lowered, the muscles relaxed, Sadday remembered. "Tell her Sinful Sadday will come. He'll be sure an' come." Tears of penitence mingled in his eyes with those of anger as the vision of a little pallid face rose before him.

"Buzzard, I ain't a-goin' to hit you, but I dare you for a wrastle."

"Hurray for Sadday!" the boys shouted. "Good!" "Throw him down, Sadday," "Wrastle with him, Buzzard," "I ain't skeered." They locked arms. Buzzard characteristically took the underhold. Being larger and older and heavier, he had much the advantage.

"That ain't fair; give Sadday the underholt," one called. But before much could be said Sadday jumped in the air and attempted in his boyish way to bend his opponent's back. Failing in this, as soon as he touched the ground, he adroitly placed his right foot behind his adversary's right, and by throwing his weight upon Buzzard's neck and shoulder twisted him sideways, and in a moment they were on the ground and Sadday was on top.

"Fair fall," both sides yelled. "Try it again, Buz," "Sadday got 'im," "Buz ain't as sho' on his feet as he is in the air." By this time the whole crowd was in a good humor, all except the defeated wrestler.

The game progressed, and the last inning came. The town team was in the "holes." So far the tally stood thirty-eight to thirty-nine in favor of the town. The Orphanage had the last inning. Then successively the town boys had fanned out. Goat was pitching, and the curves he had just learned to throw came in most handy. The Orphanage team now came to

the bat. Upon the next few moments depended the reputation of their prowess and the redemption of Goat's pledge to "lick."

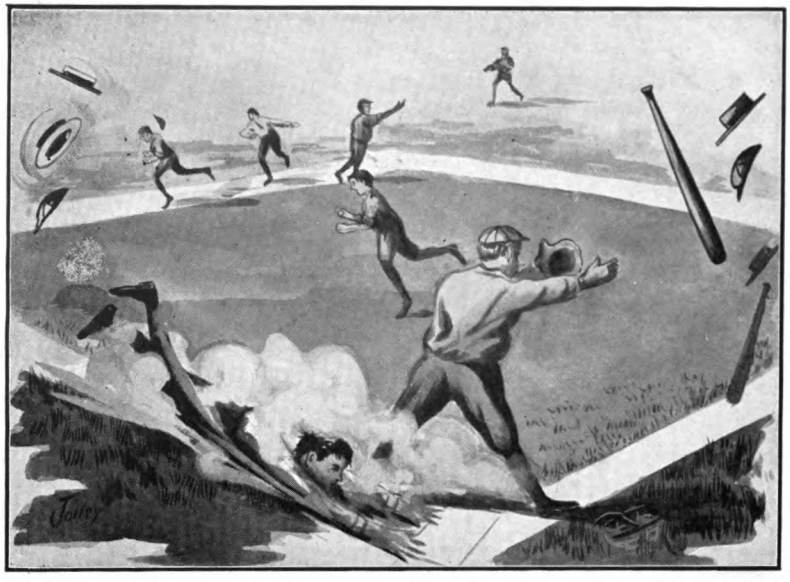
"Plug Ugly to the bat, John Giz on deck, and Nat Harris crawlin' out of the water," Squigley called. Plug went, but was too fat and fanned. John Giz was on deck again; but John couldn't control himself well enough to do more than knock a foul and be caught. Giz had gotten his name from the fouls he had knocked and his fondness for their gizzards. Nat had crawled out of the water, as many of his kind before him had done. He was a handsome, blue-eyed little fellow. Being the youngest and weakest on the team, the boys groaned as they saw him go to the bat. Nat had not hit a ball that afternoon, and he did not hit one this time. But his very littleness saved him; for the pitcher, failing time and time again to throw anything high enough or low enough for him, gave him his base. And now hope came back to the lads, for Sadday came to the bat; but what was their dismay when at the very first strike he knocked a little fly right toward the pitcher. Everybody thought he was gone; but just as the pitcher put up his hands to catch it the sun, which had been behind the clouds for a few minutes, suddenly shone out and right into his eyes, and the ball fell with a thud to the ground.

Very few of the spectators, if any, noticed an eager little face some distance off from the other spectators grow intensely white nor heard him say in a voice throbbing with feeling: "Jesus done it!" But Little Pardner and his little companions under the pines

were very sure of who had drawn the clouds away from the sun just at the right moment, and even little David echoed his words: "Jesus done it!"

The game was getting interesting now. If the boys could only get Nat and Sadday in! And now Will came. Will was a tolerably good batter, and there was some chance of victory. He took the bat, smeared his hands with dust and saliva as he had seen the big boys do and as they learned from the darkies, and, poising the bat in midair, awaited the ball. But poor Will! as the ball whizzed past him and his bat missed it a foot, a cry of derision arose from the town side sympathizers. Another ball, another foul, a ball, another foul. Nat was on the third and Sadday ready to run to the second. Then came the lick, the lick that the boys never forgot. Will could not hit a high ball, and the pitcher knew it. As a consequence he had given him the only sort he could not hit. Now in a moment of inadvertence he had lowered his aim, and a second later the ball was flying into the right field, while a mighty huzza went up from the Orphanage boys. Nat was in, Sadday was enveloped in a cloud of dust at third, and Will was making for second. Now Sadday had leaped upon and was hugging the home plate, which, after all, was only an old sawdust bag, and with a glorying shout had called: "Score Sinful." There was not a hat on a single boy's head from the Orphanage, and the lads were slapping and kicking and hugging Sadday till he was beginning to get a faint color in

Enveloped in a cloud of dust at third.



THE GAME WAS WON. DUST, SHOUTS, HATS, LEAPING LADS, BATS, BALLS—EVERYTHING WAS IN THE AIR.

his cheek. Will had gotten to the third before the ball, and then with a mighty slide which skinned his arm from wrist to elbow reached the home base. The game was won! Dust, shouts, hats, leaping lads, bats, balls—everything was in the air!

Then a very wonderful thing happened. Sadday had been dancing around in infinite glee, his hair flying wildly and his eyes flashing fire. Plug Ugly, his sworn enemy, on the other part of the field, was the center of the circle of glorying victors. Since their last fight, Plug and Sinful had not spoken, and each was waiting an opportunity to humiliate the other. Gradually, singing and yelling, they drew nearer together, each approaching the home base.

"Watch out, boys, don't let Sadday and Plug Ugly come together!" "Goat, stop 'em quick!" "Look out, boys, there is goin' to be a fight!"

They were in three feet of each other now, but neither knew it—when Sinful's eyes met the other's fairly. Suddenly the joy died away from each face. Sadday's muscles contracted and his sinewy frame grew tense. Then his hand shot out—but it was open, and a generous smile was on his face.

"Come on, Plug, I don't remember nothin' mean since that home run," he cried.

"We'll just wipe them old scores off the tally board, Sadday," Plug responded, and they clasped hands. The joy of a great victory had made them friends.

And the air was ringing with their shouts. "Hurrah for Will!" How the echoes rang through the woods! "Hurrah for Sadday!"

But off a little to themselves were Little Pardner

and his coterie, and he was saying to them: "Listen what they're shoutin', boys. They don't know what we do, do they?"

"Hurrah for Sadday!" and a hundred hats were in the air.

"It was Jesus that done it, I say," Little Pardner called softly in response.

"Ain't he fine, though?" his little comrades answered.

CHAPTER X.

FATHER DAY.

AFTER the summer ball games came the winter work; and to Samuel Wimball, who looked not for it, there came a day of fate. The autumn had already arrived.

Bending over the big Universal press in the printing office, with one hand on the impression and one grasping a circular he was printing, was Sinful Sadday, and the old familiar gleam of wickedness was in his eye. The ink was cold and sticky; and the inkoleum bottle being empty, he had just smashed it to shivers against the andirons in the fireplace back of him. Furthermore, the impression was bad, as was plain from the uneven imprint on the paper, and all the letters seemed to print on one side only. His practiced eye at once diagnosed the case.

"The things are off their legs."

"The d—— things are off their legs!" he muttered. So he took the circular up to see if he could read it.

Times had been hard at the Orphanage, and even the collards had gone. The circular, which Doctor had written, was to go out and ask God's people for bread and molasses and sugar and clothes. Badly printed as it was, Sadday followed the words:

To the Friends of God and the Fatherless: Our larder is empty, and we have only your love left. The flour is gone, but our confidence in the Lord and his people remains. Can

you send us a sack of meal, a barrel of flour, a side of bacon, a suit of clothes? You will send it to one of God's children of whom he said: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me!" Our distress—

With a little impatient gesture Sadday turned the paper around so that he could not read any more, and, considering what he had read, modified his sentiment accordingly.

"The dinged things are off their legs!" he exclaimed.

Now, only that morning at prayers Doctor had said something that Sadday remembered as he spoke his evil words and that made him handle the chase a little more carefully as he prepared to take it out. Sunday next was to be Father Day, and it happened to be his own birthday as well. Father Day is the day of heritage when the orphan comes into his own, when, following the advice and leadings of teachers and matrons, he claims the Father of the fatherless as his. Holy and sacred it is to the orphan, this hour of his coming to himself and God, this moment of finding fortune and family and Father. Once each year the day of decision came, and the children were asked whether they would have a Father who, since their earthly parent must needs forsake them, was willing to take them up. As gently and as naturally as the little newborn leaves open to the sun in the springtime, their orphaned hearts opened to the lighting smile of God.

All this Mr. Wimball knew, and of it he was thinking as he still further amended his exclamation to:

"The dirty things are off their legs!"

And then because he was a boy of vivid imagina-

tion the thoughts closed his eyes for a moment to the well-worn type and the sturdy press, and the rain was falling heavily while an old and loved man with bowed head walked unnoting toward the Harriet Home. A room was there with two windows and a table with a mat Eva had made for the lamp. The oilcloth covering was over the bureau, and the girl—and—the—angels—and—kiss—

"The type is off its legs, and I must fix it," he said, waking and carrying the chase to the slab.

When the foreman came in that morning to inspect the printing of the circulars, he noted with evident satisfaction the perfect print and with interested wonder the signs of a sweet smile around Sadday's lips.

"Samuel, next Sabbath is Father Day," he said, moved by a subtle intuition.

"Yes, sir," the lad replied.

"Have you claimed him yet, Samuel?"

Not a quiver on that imperturbable face. "No, sir."

"Samuel, I have never spoken to you before about it, for I have felt that you did not care for it; but it would give us all joy if—if you claimed him."

"Thank you, sir."

Not the faintest sign of expression on those features; only a little light in his eyes and a little excited dilation of the nostrils as the foreman moved on.

But when he had closed the doors behind him, Sadday stopped the press for a moment and listened for approaching footsteps, and, hearing none, knelt by the side of the old Universal press with his brown forehead against the impression handle and prayed: "Dear God, I don't know what you want with me; but if

you'll take me, I'll be your boy." Then he arose and put aside the completed job and washed the form and set the rollers.

And when the week was done and the fishhooks had all been put aside and the last look given to the bird eggs, Father Day came. That morning in the chapel the children sat so still—as the little newborn leaves are still when the wind that bloweth where it listeth whispers its secrets to them—and Doctor was reaching out for their hearts with a story.

"My children," he said, and the many sweet faces upturned to him made one dream that the throne was really there and the great multitude and the books that were to be opened. "My children, there was once a little boy, a little black-eyed boy [Sadday did not wince a hair space], who came in rags by chance to the door of one of God's homes. God loved the boy, as he loves all of us. In time others came to love him too, and one who believed in him well made application for his entry here. He was a bootblack in his native city and a newsboy by turns, and life was cold and dark and dreary for him. Of all our boys, he had the hottest temper and the brightest mind, and carried the longest and deepest scars from many little battles. One Father Day he became God's boy. His work became better, his temper milder, and his life deeper and more earnest. He graduated with honors from the college, and entered the holy ministry that, being God's boy, he might serve his Father. And the Father has owned and honored him. My children," and Doctor paused that the words might sink the deeper in their memories, "our boy, God's boy, is now pastor

of the biggest congregation in his native city, and the elders and deacons in his Church are men whose shoes he used to black and to whom he used to sell the morning paper. But better than that, his Father lives with him and loves him."

And then, as though he would make more sure of their hearts, he added yet to the keen interest of the children by telling another story of another Thornwell boy.

"Some four or five years ago," he continued, "a young Japanese student might have been seen slowly traveling along the highways of South Carolina, wending his way toward Clinton. Quick, alert, with all the energy and enthusiasm of his race, his dark eyes penetrating each soul to whom he spoke, he won his way forward. Housekeepers along the road were often surprised on answering the call of their door-bells to see this young foreigner, almost immaculately clean in spite of his dusty travels, with a book under his arm, and to hear him ask in his broken English for its examination. Many were curious to know the object of his quest, and to one and all his reply was: 'I go on a peelgrimage. I go to veesit where my Father in Christ was educated.' And then the story would all come of how, when a student in his native country, he had heard of a wonderful American teacher who had come to the village, who spoke Japanese as well as the natives, and who was loved passing well by his disciples, and how the young Japanese had asked his father to be allowed to learn of him. 'Yes, you may go to him and learn, my boy; only be careful lest he bewitch you too into his atheistic religion.'

And the young Japanese of noble lineage had drawn himself up to the full height of his proud little body and replied: 'I am a Japanese!' But in spite of his convictions of Buddhism and his loyalty to the Mikado, he had fallen within the pale of the fascination of the Christ life. Little by little he had become aware of a difference between his life and that of his teacher, between his companions' lives and that of his teacher. At last he found its cause. 'It is Jesus, the Christ, that makes the difference.' So he had become a Christian, his father had driven him from the ancestral home, the people had ostracized him, and he had come to America to finish his education, winning his way by his labor. At last he reached Clinton, and inquired for a spot to see which he had traveled so long and far. 'Ees it here, ees it really here, the Thornwell Orphanage?' As he entered the front gate the hat was lifted from his head as though it were holy ground and God were in the bushes about. 'And thees ees it! Thees is where my teacher lived?' 'Yes, sir, this is his old home; but won't you put your hat on, Mr. Kato? it is quite chilly to-day,' his guide asked. 'No, no, not here, not now. It ees too holy, too holy!' he answered reverently. 'Here lived my teacher, my father in Christ! Thees ees where he saw God. Thees ees where he became God's own son.' "

That the children were touched by the simple stories one could see, and Doctor knew that the time had come for the little paper to be handed around. "Each child," said he, "who will take Him as his or her Father will write a little promise on the slip of paper in your hand to be a good son or daughter,

and our two little ushers will collect the promises. When you write your name, remember that forever afterwards you are God's child!"

His face ashen with emotion, Sadday took his slip and bit his lips till the blood came. Then he made the great choice and wrote his letter to God:

Dear God: I'm getting ready to come to you and Eva. I'm going to sign this paper, and I'll never take it back! You will have lots of children when we all get up there, won't you? I must close; Doctor's calling for the letters.

Respectfully your son,

SAMUEL WIMBALL (SINFUL SADDAY).

P. S.—Tell Eva Sadday is comin'.

"Dear God: I'm getting ready to come."

"Look, Doctor!" the foreman of the printing office whispered as the promises were being collected. "Look! Sinful Sadday is smiling."

Doctor turned and saw. How love had witched the printer's face! The matron saw it, and fell to laughing for joy. A girl who had seen it caught it up in a glad response of happiness, and, glancing as the golden beam over the waters, it came to the choir, and lo! Doctor was smiling too.

"You would not know him!" he whispered to himself. "He must have signed. Yes, he must have. It is the smile of God's own boy."

CHAPTER XI.

THE MEDAL.

THE years that came afterwards dealt kindly with Sadday as the spirit within him took note of the world. Many months of regular hours for work and play and study cajoled him into both physical and intellectual expansion. As the golden spots appear one by one on the green cheeks of the orange, so came the hopes of youth into his soul. And one morning as Sadday turned over dreamily at the rising bell, he knew he was a young man.

And yet at biggest he was but a little young man. Only his moments were large. The bronze of the face had lightened, but the eyes were jet-black still, and his hands would twitch even in his dreams. The morning when he found himself his nostrils dilated understandingly, as though they sniffed the air of coming battle.

For Mr. Wimball was determined that it should be a battle. Just across the way from the McCormick was a Presbyterian college, which they who were brightest of the orphans might attend when they had finished their own school. The college was the arena and he a freshman. He would meet the world that day—young men from the best families of South Carolina. They would be in his class and, little boyish man that he was, he would chip knives with them. So he entered the battle with a song.

And that morning when the students met in the Assembly Hall, while others were laughing at pranks and jokes, he was studying the faces of his classmates to see how high he would let his hopes come in his heart. When he was done, he rested his eyes gently on the faculty, for each of them must be met on his own plane; and when prayers began and others looked curiously around, his eyes were closed and his thin lips kissed each petition.

For a full week of class work none of the professors called on Sadday for a recitation. All the others' abilities had been gauged. Then one day when Charles P. Janeway missed his question it was passed: "Mr. Wimball, where was Andrew Jackson born?"

Now it was the first time in all his life that Sadday had been called Mr. Wimball, and for a moment he could not open his lips for joy and vaulting ambition. At last, the pause seemingly indicating ignorance, the question was passing on to the next, when he said:

"Wait, please, Professor; I think I can answer it in—a minute."

Then as clear as a bell his thoughts rang out in mellow tenor words, and he returned the answer in the history that the professor held in his hand, and when he had finished he added quaintly: "But, Professor, that ain't so! Andrew Jackson was born in South Carolina unless both he and I are mistaken."

That was how Mr. Wimball won his reputation as a historian, for with a few trenchant sentences he showed that more than one volume dealing with the subject was on his table at home. With marvelous exactness he discussed the controversy, and the pro-

fessor put down his text-book on the desk and looked at him.

He was a hard man, this professor, and only once had he ever marked a man 99 on a recitation. The best made 80 and 90 under him. When he put the mark into his class book, he always raised it on his right knee, and the boys quickly grew adept at guessing his figures. When Sadday had done with his reasons, the Professor took up his record from the table and bit his mustache a little, and then the boys saw him do something that broke all his class room traditions and set Sadday's lips to quivering.

He was a hard man, this professor.

Slowly he wrote—100.

Ah, orphan lad, thy Father had taken thee up!

Thus the years sang merrily by, and each brought him power and each left him honor; till the day of the great debate came. Above all else Sadday coveted the debater's medal; and when, after much balloting, he and Janeway were chosen to represent the Eukosmian Society on the negative side of the question, the light never once faded from his eyes in the weeks that followed. "Resolved," read the query which they had clipped from some Northern paper, "That the Southern States were morally culpable in waging the late war of the rebellion."

The night for the great debate came, and Sadday was the last speaker. The children in the Orphanage prayed nightly that their brother might win, and gathered the violets and saved the magnolias as though

there was no doubt but that God heard. He was theirs, and it was the first time an orphan lad was matched against the bluest blood of the State.

During the weeks preceding, he had written out three separate and different speeches. Eight introductions lay in the left drawer of his desk. But when the hour came, he used none. The spirit of the orator stirred him, and the power of mastery beat with each throb against his bosom for utterance. Alonzo Devery had just spoken—Alonzo, who was said by all to be the winner, who had won the declaimer's medal two years ago, and who had been trained by Professor Harris. The applause his eloquence had won died out in little ripples from the galleries, and the silence came. In delighted whispers the audience said:

"He has won it!"

He then introduced Samuel Wimball.

Then the Orphan in Sadday spoke, and he wanted his Father to take him up. He, a little boyish runt—and this great audience in which each of the debaters had friends and admirers but him, and—

But the Chairman was speaking:

"I take pleasure in introducing to the audience the last speaker on the negative, Mr. Samuel Wimball, of the Thornwell Orphanage."

"Look, Jamie," whispered Little Pardner; "his eyes are on fire!"

For what seemed a full minute Sadday stood motionless—only his eyes went here and there in the audience—till every one of the vast assembly saw him—till the men standing up on the benches behind the

pretty girls in the gallery looked over their heads and caught the gleam in the eye—saw the twitching of his fingers—read passion in the dilation of his nostrils—and wondered at the impassivity of his features. Then he spoke—in tenor words that went far up into the galleries and searched for men's emotions and rang in the ears of their reason. In the tumult of his heart the polished introduction was forgotten: "Cursed," said he, as though he were speaking to the deaf man in the far right-hand corner, whose blue eyes had faded in following Robert E. Lee and whose beard had grown gray at Appomattox—"cursed, thrice cursed be any man who fought in any war of rebellion" —the pause while the men waited for the words of their master—"but blessed, thrice blessed be those sons of God who lived and died for Southern independence!"

The indescribable thrill that comes when he speaks who has a right to be heard.

"He is the living image of Dr. Thornwell," said a minister who had sat at the feet of that great rabbi, "even to the fire and the power."

"Egad, he talks like he fit under Marse Robert!" muttered the deaf man in the far right-hand corner.

For twenty minutes he held them there, swayed them by their memories, their honor, their hopes, told them of the men who died for them of whom the world was not worthy. And then—

The girls are leaning far over the railing of the galleries and a bunch of roses had just fallen unnoticed to the floor.

The judges have forgotten to mark the speaker on composition, enunciation, and argument.

The old veteran in the right-hand corner is rising from his seat unconsciously, his eyes blue again, his right hand gripping the musket. Sadday is describing Appomattox. The shadowy forms of gray-clad men are moving behind him on the stage and a woman is wiping away the tears because she cannot look longer upon their faded cheeks nor their ragged attire.

"And there stands one before the general to whom he is surrendering," says the speaker, "the latchet of whose shoes who is worthy to loose? His hair is whitened with the snow that filled the trenches around Richmond and his features drawn with agonized prayers for his cause of right. Exquisite pain has run its plows over the forehead, and disease and death have combined in vain to draw his devoted followers from him. I am describing a man," Sadday cried, "a man whom you know. Who is he? A traitor or"—

The old man in the far right-hand corner has risen to his feet, his pale eyes afire, his hand still gripping the musket. "It's Marse Robert!" he cried, as he used to do when Traveler came in sight down the battle line. "It's Marse Robert—my general!" And then the charm broke and he sank back surprised at what he had done and looked furtively around lest some one should have heard him; but not an eye turned in his direction.

"Aye!" replied the speaker, "our general, our patriot, our father."

"Father!" the echo called—"father!" then he continued: "Yes, my father—I claim him as I claim God."

When the audience really came to itself, it found that the three judges had not left their seats, but had merely written down "Mr. Samuel Wimball—winner" on a slip of paper and handed it to the chairman. The announcement was made, and in the great burst of applause that came from aisle and gallery the boys of the McCormick could be heard: "Sadday—Sadday —Sadday! Hurrah for Sinful Sadday!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE "GRET" PHYSICIAN.

So stand we by again in silence that the years may pass till one comes when Sadday is no longer at the Orphanage, but is a "Gret" Physician in a distant city, and Little Pardner is a "big boy" at Thornwell. Will, too, was there—Will, who knocked the great home run—only now he is sweeping all honors before him at Clinton College. Little David is a freshman and Jamie his companion.

And there came a day in the spring when diphtheria that smothers laid hold on Will, the scholar, Thornwell's pride, and Dr. Landrum shuddered when he thought of the inadequate facilities for fighting the remorseless enemy. So at last he had to tell the truth and say that Will would die.

There was not a dry eye that night among all the boys. Around the great big fireplace in the McCormick sitting room they were gathered in silence.

"Is he dying, Jamie?"

Jamie leaned over and buried his face in his hands for an answer, and the boy who had asked him the question slowly lifted his chair, placed it noiselessly against the wall, and stole out of the room. As he opened the door a great sob broke from his breast.

"They've telegraphed for Dr. Wimball," Jamie said

to those remaining, "and Little Pardner thinks"—the sentence died like the mountain streams that slowly evaporate as they flow down through the hot desert plains and die in the sands, never reaching the ocean. Even the speaker did not trust the hope they might suggest.

Then came the rap on the door. Professor Lang entered. "Well, boys, I've got some good news for you! The contest is over, the papers and essays have all been examined, and your jolly old comrade is the hero of the college. The faculty have awarded Will both medals and valedictory. It is unparalleled! Where is he now? I would like to see him."

The boys took handkerchiefs from their pockets, two turned toward the window, Jamie sobbed aloud.

"Why, my boys, Jamie, David, what can be the matter?"

"He's dying, Professor."

Jamie left the room quickly. "He must know it before he dies," thought the lad as he walked rapidly toward the infirmary.

Little Pardner himself met him at the door. He had grown to be a handsome lad as he followed Opportunity, and the years had only strengthened his sweetness. No question was asked, but Little Pardner said: "I don't know, the doctor has given him up. They say he'll die by morning, but the 'Gret' Physician is coming to-night."

"Have you heard from him?"

"No, he wouldn't wait for that, he'll come to-night."

"What hour?"

"Eleven."

"Is it too late to tell good news?"

"He's delirious, Jamie, and he's beginning to choke. He's gone back to his old pardner, Lep Carter. You know Lep was his best boy friend and Samuel was his pardner. Samuel is only a few years older."

Silently they stood by the dying lad.

Silently they passed on up to the ward and now stood by the dying lad.

Miss Genie, the matron, hovered over him. Doctor was by his side. Dr. Landrum was preparing a swab. Jamie came to her—she had been at the foot of the bed for hours.

"Dying," she said. He had asked no question. But she added:

"Dr. Wimball comes to-night. He may live till morning. Little Pardner sent for him."

Then a telegram came, and they handed it to Little Pardner and said: "Wire him not to come, Little Pardner."

He read it: "What disease? Diphtheria? Wire immediately. Samuel Wimball."

"Wire him not to come, Little Pardner; it's too late," Miss Genie said between sobs.

Aunt Liza, the negro mammy, heard the contents. A look of amazement came upon her features. "Chang' his name, now," she cried; "chang' his name. He ain't no 'Gret' Physician no longer, a-lettin' his pardner die—chang' his name!"

"He had a reason for it, Aunt Liza," was all Little Pardner could reply, and a moment afterwards he

handed the messenger boy a reply. "Yes, diphtheria. He is dying."

A half hour was then spent by the "Gret" Physician at the Johns Hopkins laboratory, where a new and wonderful life-giver could be made, and thirty minutes later he was coming home. "If I can only reach him before he dies," he murmured, and then the "Gret" Physician patted a little package and put it in his breast pocket over his heart.

Far south at Thornwell Jamie was leaning over the dying boy trying to tell him something:

"Will," he whispered.

Unconscious, he was silent.

"O Will, this is Jamie. I've got some good news."

But the unconscious lad had better news of his own.

"Will, Will, old man, you've won both medals and the valedictory. Professor Lang says it is unparalleled. You're the man of the hour!"

But Will, who was near being the man of eternity, was not wanting to be a man at all; he was a boy again, and his feeble mutterings were becoming more distinct.

"Now, boys, ain't it fine?" he was saying.

"Do you hear me? do you see me, Will?"

"I'm comin' up, Lep," Will kept saying; and his outstretched hands, groping for the limb of the tree, took hold of Jamie's arm. "Yes, I'm comin' on up, Lep."

O Pathos, thou art a youth who dies at play.

"He's going to fly. Little Pardner, watch out." And scarcely had Will uttered the words before they knew where he was and what visions were passing before his

eyes. How often had they heard him, as he stood hatless and breathless with expectancy beneath a hollow tree, which another had climbed, watching the flying squirrel, dearly beloved of boys. How often had they heard him call to one or the other of them who guarded the trees: "Watch out, boys, he's going to fly!" In those days Little Pardner was the youngest of the "flying squirrel" fellows, and must be watched and taught the mysteries of the Thornwell woodcraft, and it was Little Pardner who was always warned. Ah, Will, God gave you the dream of boyhood days far better than the gold and jewels of the heavenly city. He carried you back once more and let you see your comrades among boys and birds and beasts. He knew how you will long to leave the gilded streets of the crowded Jerusalem and gather again with the "flying squirrel" fellows and "look the hollows in the second woods."

"Climb on up, Lep, he'll fly in a minute," Will continued deliriously. His eyes seemed to be watching the boys one under each of the largest surrounding trees, with their little coats in their hands, waiting for the coming prey. Now they are turned upward to watch the climbers. And there is a hand waving to him and a comrade's voice calling and white lips saying: "Must I come up too, Lep? Ain't one enough?" No, old comrade, no, no, no, God never has enough of boys like you. He is going to fill all the woods of heaven with flying squirrels like those in the lily valley and with boys like they have at Thornwell, and he is going to let them hunt every "Sadday" after work hour and after school every day. It will help them to learn their lessons bet-

ter. Go on up, Will, it is God, not Lep, who is calling you—you must go up too—one isn't enough.

"Fellows, ain't it gettin' dark?" he murmured.

Little Pardner leaned over him then.

"The sun must 'a' set, boys; you never can see the sun set when you're after a squirrel. It's mighty dark, boys, ain't it? Can you see, Lep? Are you there yet, Lep? Come ahead and go home with me." He paused a moment and then continued, "It's got dark too quick for us to hunt lilies and violets, boys," and then a little smile of joy came over his face and he whispered to Lep, "I wanted to carry some violets to Gertrude, Lep, but she'll know, won't she, how it got dark too quick?"

Ah, dear, dear old comrade, some of those who loved you were gathering flowers too for their loved ones. God granted them time to pick one by one the lilies of life and carry them home in love and joy to pin them upon their bosoms. Stay thou the Sun of our lives, Lord God, in the valley of Ajalon, that it may not get dark too quick!

"It ain't so dark now, is it, or are we coming to a light place in the woods?" he murmured. "I can see the lilies and the daisies. O Lep, I didn't know there were so many flowers in these woods, and you can see them in the dark. Lep, did you know there were so many lilies on the way home?"

Those were the sweetest words ever spoken at Thornwell about the pathway to heaven.

"I'm going to pick some for Gertrude, Lep. They won't wither, and I can give them to her in the morning."

It was exactly one o'clock the next afternoon when the south-bound Seaboard Express blew its signal for Clinton. Little Pardner had been walking the platform impatiently for a half hour. Before the train had stopped, Dr. Wimball was off.

Between the last word of the above sentence and the first of this there have been many hours of thought and striving on the part of the author, striving to find words that would describe the scene when Sinful Sadday and Little Pardner met that day. He has failed. There were many thoughts and words that came to him. He was going to start by reminding the reader how the two used to stand each night in the grove back of the McCormick and tell each other good-night and wonder over which lad the mother would watch, the little one at the Augustine Home or the big one at the McCormick—and how Sinful would kiss Little Pardner and then Little Pardner would kiss Sinful, and then Sinful and Little Pardner would kiss each other. Then he was going to say that this meeting at the Seaboard depot was the first in four years. He would recall a moment in the reader's life once when a very dear one lay dying and a brother had come, a brother who was always called the "Gret" Physician, had come many miles to save a life, and he was going to say that the tears in Little Pardner's eyes were those of joy that a brother had come, and of hope that the "Gret" Physician had come. No—but of despair because Death had almost come, of exultant confidence that life would come too. These were the reasons why Little Pardner's heart quivered little less than the great steel bosom of the engine.

And then he was going to say that Little Pardner grasped Sadday's hand satchel silently and led the way to the infirmary.

"Is he alive, Little Pardner?" Samuel asked.

"Yes, yes, he was—just barely alive when I left."

It usually takes fifteen minutes to walk from the depot to the infirmary. It took them seven.

A little band was at the bedside when Sadday came. This is what they saw: A gasping boy in constant danger of choking; a matron in tears with averted face; two comrades near—Jamie and David—feeling that Death and God both wanted Will, and they had been powerless to keep him, but wondering whether Dr. Wimball could bring him back—and Doctor. No one in the Orphanage can get sick in a bed that Doctor does not sit beside—Doctor talking to somebody—somebody who could hear a little, tiny heart whisper.

He leaned over his old-time comrade.

Then the door opened and Little Pardner came in with his brother eagerly—swiftly. It took only a second for the young physician to reach the bedside and lean over his comrade. And Little Pardner was standing near Sinful almost laughing, he was so happy.

Then Samuel spoke:

"Miss Genie, please have some water boiled immediately—immediately, please, or—I see you have some. Bring it here quickly. Now where is Dr. Landrum? Gone downstairs? Well, you can tell me all right. Has he been given any strychnine? No? Nitroglyc-

erin? Digitalis? No? Whisky? No? Been trying to beat down fever by antipyretics? Coal tar derivatives? I see. No, you had better not give any more, his heart is very weak. Chlorate of potash internally? I see—to destroy poison of disease by giving up its oxygen. No, we won't give him any more of that. Swabs? Good—iron and glycerine—they won't hurt. O yes, the water."

Then they saw him draw the package from his pocket—a long needle, a long-necked vial full of a straw-colored liquid. For a moment the liquid was held in the boiling water and then the little neck of the vial was loosened, then the needle sucked up some of the liquid.

"Please bare his shoulder."

With a quick, deft touch the little point was passed beneath his skin and the liquid flowed into his body.

"There, that will do—have you some nitroglycerin or strychnine? Yes, we'll give him some."

"How long can he live, doctor?" a comrade asked.

"An hour—forty years—I don't know which."

"His symptoms"—

"It all now depends on his heart. The nitroglycerin—yes, we'll use that."

. . . . . .

"But why didn't you come at first, Samuel?" Little Pardner was asking the next morning as the sun was rising in the east and they stood around the bed.

"I could only have watched him die if I had."

"Why?"

"Because I could not have brought the antitoxin with me then, and that is the thing that is saving him."

"I knew it!" Little Pardner exclaimed, as one would say it of his God.

. . . . . .

"He is much better now, isn't he, Dr. Wimball?" Doctor asked.

"Yes, sir, very much better. His heart is stronger and respiration easier. I gave him another injection of the antitoxin last night. He will get well."

The first beam of the rising sun struck the face of the half-conscious boy. The curtain was quickly drawn, but the beam had done its work, and he waked saying:

"It's light again, Lep. Let's go back. Won't you go? Well, wait for me at home, then. Hol' on, boys; I'm comin' back."

CHAPTER XIII.

LITTLE PARDNER IS FOUND.

In the valley of the Eseeolas, where peace is a fellow at every fireside, was the "Great Institution." Thither they had taken Mrs. Wimball after the fateful fire that burned away the reason from her soul. During the many years of her children's training, she had fretted there, for even the winds of the Wa-haws cannot bring rest to a patient in the wildest ward, and night after night had refused to answer her weird cry: "Little Pardner! O where is Little Pardner?"

The keepers and the nurses had learned to know that cry, but none had ever failed to shiver at its madness.

While the sun shone the stricken woman would sit quietly in her corner, her hands hanging listlessly and the vacant stare of the maniac in her eyes. But ere the shadows had fallen, she would arouse her every energy, creep stealthily about till some one made a light, when her scream suddenly rang through the halls:

"Fire! Fire! Fire!"

The patients too knew her piercing voice, and even their lightless eyes looked pity upon her, and the nurses could not find heart to laugh.

And when the years had passed so that they had

time to be men, Samuel and Little Pardner came regularly to see their mother.

"Do you remember how I used to call you the Great Physician?" Little Pardner asked of his older brother on one of these visits, "and I remember thinking once of how when you were grown you would go to the "Great Institution" where she was taken and would cure our poor mother; and do you know, Samuel, I thought of that to-day when you entered her ward and for a moment she seemed to know you."

"There is nothing that can cure her," replied Dr. Wimball; "we can only supply her with care and protection."

They were to return the next morning, and after leaving their mother's side walked forward to the office where Dr. Merton was, to thank him for his kindess. For a while they sat together.

"Your mother's is a very remarkable case," said the doctor, who for many years had been in charge of the "Great Institution." "I think I have never seen one so intimately connected with the occasion of its inception; a light, a fire arouses her, and at such times she is uncontrollable. I used to think," he continued, "that if we could restore her nervous system to its normal condition and build up her physique sufficiently we might be able to restore to her some part of her reason; but we have failed, and for many years it has been"—

As if to emphasize and complete his sentence, a faint cry could be heard far away: "Fire! Fire! Fire!"

"Listen, quick! where is Little Pardner?"

"And I think, Dr. Wimball," Dr. Merton said regretfully, "that the most pathetic part of it all is to see her hunt for your younger brother. When darkness comes, she creeps stealthily from corner to corner, opening closet doors, and peering into every nook, murmuring softly: "Little Pardner! O where is Little Pardner?"

"Fire! Fire! Fire!" the words rang in the hall near by, and in a moment an attendant rushed terrified into the office, crying: "O doctor, the hospital is on fire!"

They were stupefied by the news for an instant, then the doctor hurriedly gave the alarm, and Samuel and Little Pardner rushed back toward their mother's apartment.

With the swiftness of fate the flames were devouring their way, and already dense volumes of smoke filled the passageways. From the chambers on every side could be heard the wild cries of fright as the eight hundred patients, each in his own disordered way, took cognizance of the fire.

Hoarse voices of command could be heard as the nurses and attendants tried to control the hundreds of insane men and women who rushed through the opened doors, or sulked in the corners, or moved doggedly on to the flames. More than one maniac with less wisdom than a brute rushed toward the light and perished in the flames. And over it all the ever-increasing pall of stifling smoke and the fierce heat that drove the poor benighted people from their only home.

Sadday stood for a moment stifled by the fumes at a corner of the long passage, leading toward the wild-

est ward. Little gleams of light showed through the smoke that poured from that direction, and told the tale of destruction. Shrill screams of horror and dismay could be heard and a nurse struggling to control his wards.

Suddenly with a crash the whole side of the adjacent wing fell in, and the flames leaped upward before his eyes. Hundreds of maniacs with indescribable shrieks now began to pour through the corridors urged on by the attendants, and the full voice of Dr. Merton could be heard calling to the nurses to come out. The dense heat and smoke forced Sadday backward.

Then above the noise and confusion he heard a wild, maniacal scream: "Fire! Fire! Fire!" In it there was a strange note of exultation like the cry of the petrel that loves the storm. He looked through the smoke in the direction of the voice, and saw the thin, white-robed figure of his mother bending low, her weird eyes alight with an inhuman fire. Onward she came to him as a bird driven before the clouds.

"O where is Little Pardner?"

"O mother, come"—

"Listen," she said—"quick"—in tense, hysterical tones—"where is Little Pardner? for God's sake, where"—

He laid his hands upon her person, but at his touch superhuman strength came upon her, and she cast him off, and ran on crying with fright and anguish:

"Little Pardner! O where is Little Pardner?"

The building was well-nigh falling now, and the crowds gathered from the little village of Dunvegan could not restrain themselves from rushing into the doomed structure to rescue those from certain death who dared remain another moment in it.

Sadday followed his mother through the hall until the smoke caught her from view as she sped with excited strength through the corridors. Then confused and smothered with smoke, he came to the gallery and looked downward upon the gathered crowd. He was upon the second floor and fire escapes were near; many others were coming down similar ones along the walls. Shouts from the onlookers warned him of his danger.

To the left a pale, slight form.

Below, the maniacs, as though for a moment subdued by the fire, huddled together in packs, while within he could see the nurses and attendants rushing through the halls struggling with those who were still in danger of death.

Then on the balcony above and to the left of him a pale, slight form appeared. Back of her the flames, before her the precipice. For a moment she seemed to be shielding her eyes from the light, and peering back into the hall through which she had come, turning to the watchers, then in agonized tones she called:

"Little Pardner! O, where is Little Pardner?"

An instant later a lithe young form leaped into the fire, struggled through the smoke, beat his way on and upward. Through the long aisles he ran his race with

death. As he reached the floor on which his mother was, another joined him, and almost hand in hand they came to her at last.

"O, mother," he cried, "do you not know me? This is Little Pardner."

Then a wonderful thing happened. Slowly, as if a strong, undeniable hand had been laid upon her, the tense muscles relaxed, as if a voice that could not be refused had spoken—the wild gleam died from her eyes and for a moment she stood as one would stand who was waking from a hideous nightmare. Gently and with infinite pathos she laid her hand upon the younger man's head and in a tone of wonder and surprise asked: "You—you Little Pardner? This—this fire—surely I—I am mad."

"You—you Little Pardner?"

A half hundred strong arms had stretched the ladder now to her feet, and down it they bore her wondering.

"You—you Little Pardner?" she queried again; "and I want my Samuel."

"I am Samuel, mother," cried the delighted boy. "O, Dr. Merton, can it be? Can it be that she has regained her reason?" his voice trembled with excitement.

They gathered around the woman whose mind had suddenly returned to its throne.

"These are your boys, Mrs. Wimball. You have been ill, very ill a long time. The reconstruction of

the original scene which destroyed your reason has restored it again. Wonderful!"

"My—my boys?" she questioned, and they could see the new light in her eyes. "Yes, yes, my boys; I begin to see it now. How they have grown while I slept!"