

WARDS  
*of*  
LIBERTY  
By  
Myra Kelly



PS  
3521  
E473  
W9

CORNELL  
UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY



Cornell University Library  
**PS 3521.E473W9**

**Wards of liberty.**



**3 1924 022 496 941**



## Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in  
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in  
the United States on the use of the text.

# WARDS OF LIBERTY







*“What is it, sweetheart? Didn't the stylish little cousin  
come out of Russia?”*

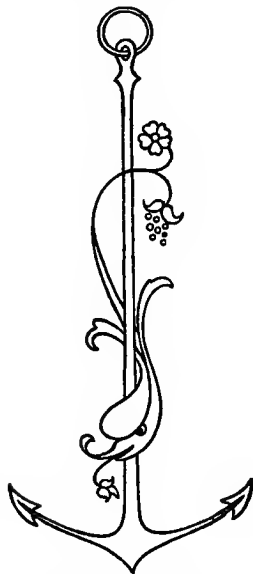


# WARDS OF LIBERTY

BY

MYRA KELLY

Author of *Little Citizens*



ILLUSTRATIONS BY FREDERIC DORR STEELE

NEW YORK  
THE McCLURE COMPANY

MCMVII

EL

UNIVERSITY  
LIBRARY

*Copyright, 1907, by The McClure Company*

Published, October, 1907

125

3521

473W9

A 488135

Copyright, 1906. 1907. by The S. S. McClure Company

TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
A LITTLE CHILD



## FOREWORD

I HAVE often been asked how, now that I have left the East Side, I find my material for stories of life in that quarter. In publishing this second collection of tales about "Little Citizens," I welcome the opportunity to answer this question, since it enables me to speak directly to all my readers, whose interest in my work, so often and so generously expressed, has meant much to me. Of course, although I am no longer a teacher, I have by no means severed all connection with the East Side. I frequently go back to visit my friends of the Ghetto, who have not, I am grateful to say, altogether

## FOREWORD

forgotten me if I may judge by the letters I occasionally receive from Morris Mogilewsky, Sadie Gonorowsky, and their associates. Other friends, in the schools or not, write me incidents and keep me posted concerning events which they know will be of interest to me. And I still have a store of note-books and of memories.

I think no one can come in contact with these people—really try to know them; to understand their difficulties and their struggles; their sufferings and their patience—without remembering all their lives long. These impressions do not fade. Rather, they grow clearer and deeper as one learns more about other lives. But the deepest can never be written out by one of an alien race. The lives being lived in those crowded streets are so diverse, so different in end and

## FOREWORD

in aim that no mere observer can hope to see more than an insignificant vista of the whole seething, swarming mass of hope, disillusion, growth, and decay.

The opening through which I saw my vista was the school-room. I taught these babies and I loved them. The larger problems of maturity passed far from Room 8, but their shadow crossed its sunshine. This was inevitable in a community where all the life of a family, eating, sleeping, cooking, working, illness, death, birth, and prayer is often crowded into one small room.

I am frequently asked whether I was not myself the model from which Constance Bailey was drawn. I admit regretfully that I was not. "What I aspired to be and was not" Constance Bailey was. Only her mistakes are mine and her very earnest effort to

## FOREWORD

set the feet of the First Reader Class firmly in the path which leads "through the years, maybe," as Mrs. Mogilewsky used to say, to American Citizenship.

The other characters in these pages are as real and unadorned as words of mine could leave them. If I have even to a degree succeeded in making others see what I have seen I shall have contributed something to the quickening of intelligent interest in the poor and unfortunate of an alien race which is crowding into our great cities until whole districts turn foreign, squalid and overcrowded with a rapidity beyond all belief. For the newly arrived Jew must go to the Ghetto. Only there shall he find his language understood, only there shall he find his orthodox synagogue and the food prescribed by his religion, only there shall he



## FOREWORD

find work for his unskilled, untrained hands.

I find great pleasure and reward in the testimony, which those most qualified by intimate knowledge and wide experience to pass judgment upon them, have borne to the essential truth of these stories. In this connection I am happy to be able to present, with the writer's permission, the following letter from one whose position as the head of this nation does not prevent him from taking the same interest in the problems of his own municipality as when he was locally concerned in the regulation of its affairs. No one knows better than the President how deeply the problems of a city are those of the nation itself and how tremendous a trust has been committed to it in making it the "Mother of the Wards of Liberty."

## FOREWORD

OYSTER BAY, N. Y.

July 26, 1905.

MY DEAR MISS KELLY:

Mrs. Roosevelt and I and most of the children know your very amusing and very pathetic accounts of East Side school-children almost by heart, and I really think you must let me write and thank you for them. While I was Police Commissioner I quite often went to the Houston Street public school and was immensely interested and impressed by what I saw there. I thought there were a good many Miss Bailies there, and the work they were doing among their scholars (who were so largely of Russian-Jewish parentage, like the children you write of) was very much like what your Miss Bailey has done.

Now, a word of preaching, not to Miss Kelly but to Miss Bailey. The scrape into which Miss Bailey got by following too closely Messrs. Froebel and Pestalozzi (and

## FOREWORD

these eminent men, like most other human beings, diluted their good work with bad work) was because of not seeing, and therefore not telling, the plain, wholesome truth. To try to teach her pupils that there should never be any appeal to force, when they lived under conditions which meant reversion to the primitive cave man if it were not for the continually exercised ability of the father of Patrick Brennan to cope with the Uncle Abys, amounted merely to the effort to give them ideals which would not work for one moment when they got outside of the school-room, and I think it is an abomination to teach people ideals that will not work, because, instead of understanding as they ought to that it is only false ideals which do not work, they in such cases generally jump to the conclusion that no ideals at all will work. Teach them that the wrong is not in fighting, but in fighting for a wrong

## FOREWORD

cause or without full and adequate cause, and you teach them what is true and right and what they can act up to. But teach them that all fighting is wrong, that the wars of Washington and Napoleon are of the same stamp; that Lincoln and Attila are on the same ethical level, and the result is either vicious or nil. If Miss Bailey's "steady," the Doctor, would not knock down a man who had insulted her, I would have a mighty poor opinion of him; but if he were brutal to the weak, or a bully, or a tyrant, I would have an even worse opinion of him.

There! I suppose I have been preaching again, when I only meant to write a word of thanks and appreciation.

Sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

This letter refers to the story entitled "In Loco Parentis," which I have placed

## FOREWORD

first in this collection. Pedagogically considered that story is atheism. So, I fear, is "A Soul Above Buttons," and "The Gifts of the Philosophers," is entirely without the pale. But Emile is educated—and dead. "The Child" has passed away or has lost its "tabula rasa," while Yetta Aaronsohn comes to school to learn "the style," and the Boss has no time "to fool with his arms and legs."

MYRA KELLY.

OLDCHESTER, NEW JERSEY,  
October, 1907.



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD . . . . .	vii
IN LOCO PARENTIS . . . . .	3
A SOUL ABOVE BUTTONS . . . . .	49
THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS	91
A PERJURED SANTA CLAUS . . . . .	137
LITTLE BO-PEEP . . . . .	177
THE WILES OF THE WOOER . . . . .	213
THE GIFTS OF THE PHILOSOPHERS .	255
STAR OF BETHLEHEM . . . . .	285





# IN LOCO PARENTIS



IN LOCO PARENTIS

Cinderella had a Fairy-Godmother; Aladdin had a Wonderful Lamp; Isidore Belchatosky had an Uncle Abraham. Uncle Abraham combined the power of the genii with the complaisance of the godmother, and was further distinguished by a settled place of residence and a distracting generosity of cast-off clothes. The more purely mythical personages, with accounts of whose beneficence Miss Bailey was wont to entertain her charges, were not entirely convincing. Giants, genii, fairies, conversational animals might or might not be; but who could question the existence of Isidore's Uncle Abraham? Excerpts of



his views upon men and events adorned Isidore Belchatosky's conversation and examples of his taste in "gents' furnishings" adorned Isidore Belchatosky's person.

The speckled vest which shrouded Isidore's form had once belonged to Uncle Abey. It was crossed by a steel watch chain, the gift of Uncle Abey. Its pocket waited — open-mouthed — for a fat and noisy watch, promised by Uncle Abey. The bold plaid trousers which reached from Isidore's ankles to his armpits, and showed so pleasingly through the opening of the speckled vest, had but lately graced the limbs of Uncle Abey.

"These is nicer nor that velvet suit you

IN LOCO PARENTIS

used to wear," said Patrick Brennan judiciously. "Them was sissy clothes."

"These is fer mans suits," Isidore proudly informed him. "I gets 'em from off of mine Uncle Abey. The lady by our floor she makes pants fer her little boy mit the legs, und I puts me on mit the rest."

"Your uncle could to be awful big," commented Morris Mogilewsky.

"Sure is he big."

"Is he high?"

"Sure is he high. Like a house is he high."

"Und fat?"

"He is fat like blocks from houses."

"Did you ever,"



asked Patrick, "see Father Burke over to St. Mary's? Is your uncle as fat as him?"

"Fatter," Isidore maintained. "Say, you open me the back of this waist und I shows you how is mine uncle fat."

Morris undid the buckle; Isidore removed safety-pins and shook out reefs until the vest hung, in voluminous folds, to its extinguished wearer's knees.

"Fill it up from coats," he commanded, "und you could to see how is mine Uncle Abey fat."

It was recess time. The yard was swarming with little boys, and the discrepancy in girth between Isidore and his uncle was soon overcome. Coats, caps, mufflers, even lunch-eons, were pressed into service, until Isidore, looking like the most backward tilted of pouter pigeons, turned to Patrick.



“ Mine uncle is fat like that ”

WARDS OF LIBERTY

“Mine uncle is fat like that,” said he. “I guess nobody in that world could to be fat how mine Uncle Abey is.”

“You lie,” cried Patrick Brennan. “No sheeny could be as fat as a priest.”

“*You* lie,” retorted Isidore; “mine Uncle Abey is.”

Whereupon they fought. It was a little unfortunate that the bell should have rung just then and that the owners of Isidore’s *embonpoint* should have forcibly and hurriedly reclaimed it. For Patrick’s science was upset by the alarming shrinkage of his opponent while Isidore’s aim and nerve were disturbed by frequent, even by simultaneous, tugs at his person. The relative *avoirdu pois* of priest and Levite was still undetermined when a large monitor dragged the kicking combatants to Room 18 and delivered



them to Miss Bailey, their long-suffering teacher.

“Mine uncle is fatter,” Isidore persisted, even when Miss Bailey had consigned him to the corner near the book-case. “He’s fatter’n blocks from houses und bunches from priests.”

“Then why don’t he come round?” taunted Patrick from durance vile under the desk. “Why don’t he never come round?”

“He’s comin’,” said Isidore, who knew that he was lying.

“You lie,” said Patrick, who guessed it.

“Say, Teacher,” cried Eva Gonorowsky, in whose care — for their greater debasement — these two rivals for her favor had been placed. “Teacher, Missis Bailey, Patrick und Izzie begins mit themselves some more. They says they lies.”

“He *is* comin’,” Isidore maintained.

And, strangely enough, he did emerge from the invisibility which had held him. Isidore’s youth was leaving him. His seventh birthday was even then approaching, and Uncle Abraham craved — by formal note — Miss Bailey’s permission to mark the flight of time by giving a party to the First Reader Class. The Principal was consulted; stipulated only that the celebration should take place after school hours; and Uncle Abraham was informed — by formal note — that Room 18 would be at his hospitable service at a quarter after three upon the anniversary of Isidore’s nativity.

There never had been a more successful party. The guests all knew one another; there was neither embarrassment nor constraint; and the host, who arrived at the ap-

## IN LOCO PARENTIS

pointed hour in gleaming raiment and great heat, was observed by all observers to be a man of wealth and of importance. Also the refreshment promised well. It was contained



*“ ‘It’s hoky poky,’ pronounced Sarah Schodsky, whose word upon all social matters was law and final ”*

in three dirty, moist, and enticing pails and several cardboard boxes. There was much pink string and a suggestion of festivity

about them, and the First Reader Class was properly impressed.

“It’s hoky poky,” pronounced Sarah Schodsky, whose word upon all social matters was law and final. “It’s hoky poky. A man by our block he sells it. You gets a awful little bit fer a penny. I seen how Ikey Bor-rachsohn buys some once.”

“Cake costs money, too, und candy,” said Isidore. “On’y mine uncle he don’t care. He’s got lots. He’s got kind feelin’s over me, too, und so he makes a party over mine birth-day. Say, he’s awful rich.”

“He’s stylish, too,” said Eva. “Ain’t you seen how he makes all things what is polite mit Teacher? I never in my world seen how he is polite.”

Neither had Miss Bailey. She was rather at a loss as to the means of entertaining so

very impressive a guest and the easy formality of his manner took her entirely by surprise. When, however, they had discussed Isidore's virtues and had together ministered to the fifty-six assembled and clamoring appetites she found herself beginning to understand the admiration in which Isidore held this precious relative. There was a dexterity in the turn of his wrist, a finish and precision about all he did, that seemed to promise great capacity, and the tender pride which shone in his eyes when he looked at or spoke of his small nephew showed that Isidore's love was not lavished in vain.

When the more carnal wants of the First Reader Class had been satisfied Uncle Abey turned his attention to the spirit.

"Will you let them sing?" he asked, and they sang selections from the class repertoire.

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

Gradually the control of events passed from Miss Bailey's hands into Uncle Abey's, until Teacher sat at her own desk, the guest of Uncle Abraham, while he marshaled her own charges for her entertainment.

Under the spell of his persuasiveness the dazed Miss Bailey, who had delved in memory and music books for songs sufficiently simple to be learned and understood by her small people, listened to Sadie Gonorowsky's polished rendering of "Hello, Central, Give me Heaven," to Patrick Brennan's recitation of "Kelly at the Bat," to Morris Mogilewsky's interpretation of the classic, "She May Have Seen Better Days." At one stage of the symposium Uncle Abraham made a speech which, though it began with Isidore, soon wandered over to Miss Bailey and stayed there. Other songs and recitations

IN LOCO PARENTIS

followed, all well received, but perhaps the most popular number of the program was



*“Morris Mogilewsky’s interpretation of the classic: ‘She May Have Seen Better Days’ ”*

Eva Gonorowsky’s singing, with appropriate gestures, of “The Hotel Windsor Fire.” The

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

audience was hanging spellbound upon the voice of Yetta Aaronsohn when Teacher rose suddenly and announced that it was time to say good-bye. One verse of Yetta's selection, whose refrain was "She's More to be Pitied than Censured," had been quite enough for Miss Bailey.

As Isidore, still miles from the ground of common things, was being led home by a proud uncle, that relative turned to him and demanded:

"Who is that teacher what you've got?"

"That's Missis Bailey. Ain't she a nice teacher?"

"Nice!" repeated Uncle Abey. "She's fine. All silk and a yard wide."

"Missis Blake is wider," Isidore was forced to admit, "but Missis Bailey is nicer. Ain't I tell you from long how she says all

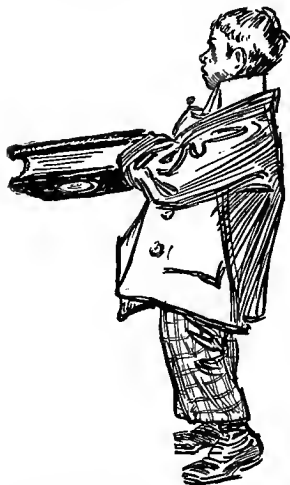




“‘Nice!’ repeated Uncle Abey. ‘She’s fine,  
All silk and a yard wide’”

things what is nice over them clothes what you gives me."

"I've got some more for you," announced the uncle. "You wear 'em to-morrow and tell her where you got 'em."



*"A large magenta photograph album and Uncle Abraham's regards"*

On the next morning Isidore, in incredible grandeur, presented Miss Bailey with a large magenta photograph album and Uncle Abraham's regards. And in the first unwreathed aperture for pictures there

was a polished and edited version of Uncle Abraham's most bland expression. Decorously but sadly Miss Bailey returned the gift.

In the afternoon Isidore, with his morning's glory still upon him and a large and inflexible four-in-hand necktie added thereto, presented Miss Bailey with a pair of impressive earrings dangling on a card. Decorously also, and sadly too, Miss Bailey returned them.

Uncle Abraham, surprised but not discouraged, made other attempts to guess Miss Bailey's taste in jewelry and love tokens, until Isidore would have been, at almost any time, worthy of the attention of the Clinton Street gang. For always on his way to school he bore gifts proffered by Uncle Abraham, and always on his way from school he bore gifts rejected by Miss Bailey. And then Teacher wrote a short, polite, but clear statement of her wishes. She would allow Uncle Abraham to do as many kind and

gracious things as he might choose for the First Reader Class, but his generosity could not extend to its teacher. His nephew's classmates were quite ready to serve as objects of his beneficence. His nephew's teacher was not.

Uncle Abraham pondered heavily over this extraordinary sentiment, and Isidore watched his cogitations and repented that he had been the bearer of a letter which seemed to be distressing to the kindest of uncles and of men.

"Teacher ain't mad?" Uncle Abey asked.

"No. She has kind feelin's," Isidore assured him. "All times she says what is polite over that party."

"Then why don't she take the things I send her? Why don't she want diamonds and books and perfumery?"

The question was large, but Isidore grap-

pled with it. After prayerful and long consideration he delivered himself of the opinion:

“I guess, maybe, she’s hungry. She don’t needs she should wear somethings; she don’t needs she should look on somethings; she don’t needs even she should smell somethings. She needs she should eat.”

“Gott!” said Uncle Abraham. “That’s fierce. We’ll have to have another party right away. An’ I’ll have ice-cream and cake for you kids, but for her I’ll have something filling. Don’t you suppose she gets enough to eat at home?”

“Well,” said Isidore, “she ain’t so awful big und she ain’t so awful fat. She’s skinny. She says all times how you is nice und fat. She says she ain’t never seen no clothes what is big like yours is.”

“Then we’ll have that party right away,” said Uncle Abraham.

“But I ain’t got no more birthdays,” Isidore objected. “You can’t have a party ’out no birthday.”

“She’s *got* to have something to eat. She’s *got* to have a party. You ask her when her birthday is.”

Isidore asked and crestfallenly reported that Teacher would remain at her present years until July. “Und in July there ain’t no school und in the school there ain’t no birthdays.”

“Gott!” said Uncle Abraham again. “We can’t wait till July. She don’t look healthy enough to last that long. We’ll have a party without a birthday.”

But a party for no reason at all was, Miss Bailey informed her would-be provider, too

grave an infringement of class routine to be permitted. The letter went on to say that Room 18 was very grateful, that Miss Bailey was very grateful, and that she deeply regretted being obliged to interfere with Mr. Abrahamowsky's kind intentions.

Again Uncle Abraham fell to pondering upon the eternally incomprehensible feminine, but his reflections served only to increase his bewilderment. Nor were Isidore's reports cheering. Whether the thought were father to the observation or whether the long confinement and insufficient ventilation were having their natural effect upon Constance Bailey's not too hardy frame, is uncertain. But certain it is that Isidore met his uncle's constant queries with:

"She don't looks healthy. She is awful white on the face."

WARDS OF LIBERTY

There were days during January when Miss Bailey deserted Room 18 and a substitute reigned in her stead. But not peacefully and never — willingly — twice. Then would Isidore report to his anxious uncle:

“We didn’t have no teacher to-day. We had a substiteacher, und Patrick Brennan says cheek on her. So-o-oh, she sends him on the Principal’s office. Patrick had a awful mad.”

“Where is Miss Bailey?”

“She’s sick. Comes a from-doctor’s letter on the Principal. He comes und tells us how she is sick und Eva Gonorowsky she cries over it.”

“Too bad, too bad,” muttered Uncle Abraham. “A roast goose would fix her right up, and she won’t have it.”

“Not ’out birthdays,” Isidore acquiesced. “Und I had mine und hers don’t never come.”



But Isidore had reckoned without George Washington. His birthday was neither past nor distant, and American public spirit gave Uncle Abraham the opportunity which he had sought and even attempted to manufacture. Once more there was an interchange of letters and Mr. Abrahamowsky set to work to design and order a repast worthy of the occasion — festive yet nourishing. Miss Bailey meanwhile devoted much energy to that “Training in Citizenship” to which February with its Washington and Lincoln celebrations is so eminently suited. She found rather surprising historical conceptions abroad in the land and did battle with them to the best of her ability, but with less success than had rewarded her efforts in other directions. A large picture of “The Father of his Country” was conspicuously hung; American

flags were draped on window and wall and the American spirit was fostered in the hearts of these newest American citizens.

Stories of George Washington in all stages of virtue took the place of the fairy tales with which Miss Bailey had been wont to diversify the afternoons. The First Reader Class listened — open-mouthed — to accounts of his love of truth, his affection for his mother, his exploits with the hatchet. But of his middle years, of the wars he fought, the homes he made forever desolate, she said nothing. There is nothing which can explain this part of a man's work to a child's mind; no way of correlating the war of the Revolution with the Golden Rule. Of his later days, when peace had been bought so dearly, of the good he did, the laws he made, the country he assembled out of chaos, she tried to give these

future Americans some idea. But the work was hard and the results discouraging.

Even as George Washington transcended Isidore Belchatosky in fame and in glory, so did Uncle Abraham's second celebration transcend his first. The ice-cream was red and white and blue. So were the cakes. So were the ribbons, presented by the host, which adorned the First Reader breast and rose and fell over excited First Reader hearts. Red, white and blue was Uncle Abraham's necktie, his vest, his handkerchief, his socks, and the solid bouquet which he presented, with great *empressement* and many speeches, to Miss Bailey. Patriotism shone through him and was reflected in Isidore's vest — lent for the occasion and to be returned pure and unspotted on pain of instant disinheritance — of blue and white plaid with red buttons.

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

Even the roast goose was embedded in parti-colored paper napkins, and when Mr. Abrahamowsky had forced it upon Miss Bailey's puzzled acceptance he felt only chagrin that his country boasted and toasted but one relative. He would have gladly made festivals for a national family tree.

Upon this occasion everything was arranged, orderly, glaringly American. Even the songs and recitations were selected, rehearsed, and patriotic. There were solos; there was a grand chorus of an utterly unintelligible version of "My Country 'tis of Thee." Patrick Brennan had learned from his father and now informed the First Reader Class — and Eva Gonorowsky, who was wonderfully edified — that "a government by the people, of the people, and for the people" would do the people a lot of good. Nathan

Spiderwitz loudly, but somewhat indistinctly, "swore allegiance to his flag and to the Republic for which it stands," etc.

And then Uncle Abraham took the floor. This speech began with a laudation of Miss Bailey, and it was not until he had effectually banished the "white looks" whose persistence had so troubled him that he devoted his eloquence to "the day we celebrate." Teacher had forgotten this possibility, else would she have imparted to Mr. Abrahamowsky the warning against presenting "the war thought" to the mind of the Child, which Messrs. Froebel and Pestalozzi and assorted professors had impressed upon her. But Uncle Abraham waited for no advice. After a few introductory remarks he asked with oratorical eloquence:

"Who was George Washington?" and

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

every hand in Room 18, except only Miss Bailey's, sprang into the air. He had not expected or desired an answer, but it was thrust upon him.

"A God from off of Krishts," answered Ignatius Aloysius Diamantstein. "He's got gold buttons und a horse."

"I seen him on a p'rade," cried Morris Mogilewsky. "Him und Cap. Dreyfus rides by side themselves. George Wash'ton has awful stylish looks."

"He is the papa off of the country where flowers und Fresh Air Funds stands," submitted Eva Gonorowsky.

"He has two birthdays," said Isidore Belchatosky enviously. "To-morrow is one und Christmas is one. It could to be awful nice."

"He never tells no lies," was Sadie Gonorowsky's contribution to the fund of his-

toric data. "He hooks a great big all of cherries from off of his papa's push-cart. Und sooner his papa hollers on him he tells it right out how he takes 'em und he gives 'em back."

"His papa gives him hacks," said Isidore Belchatosky.

"A axe," corrected Patrick Brennan. "Me pop wouldn't give me no axe. I asked him."

Miss Bailey listened in dismay, and, while Mr. Abrahamowsky went placidly on to answer his own question, she determined upon frequent reviews and much explanation. Uncle Abey began with the secure ground of Washington's virtuous youth and drew ennobling morals therefrom. But before Teacher could stem his eloquence he was launched upon the war thought, and the eliminating and expurgating of weeks was undone. He swam

through seas of blood. He cracked his hearer's ears with cannon. He undermined their nerves with cries of agony and death. Miss Bailey stopped him when she could and trusted that the First Reader Class would understand as little of his eloquence as they had of hers. They looked absorbedly interested, but that they always did. They were eagerly ready to answer questions, but that, too, they always were. And their answers were, as always, startling.

This habit stood Miss Bailey in good stead when she had made up her mind to interrupt Mr. Abrahamowsky at the first pause in his address. He was describing the devotion of the soldiers, their suffering and their bravery. "We must always remember what George Washington, the Father of our Country, did for our country," he charged his



hearers, "but we must remember too that he was not alone. The army was back of him. He had colonels and majors and captains and generals and soldiers to help him. Always remember the soldiers. There were thousands and thousands of soldiers. And when any one asks you who made your country a free country, you must say 'George Washington and —'" Here Uncle Abraham paused to give due effect to the next word, and the First Reader Class, feeling itself challenged, answered as one man:

"Cap. Dreyfus."

And Uncle Abraham's astounded silence was Teacher's opportunity.

When it was over and Room 18 was emptied of all save Teacher, the corps of monitors, the roast goose, and Isidore Belchatosky, the latter began to carry out his uncle's instructions:

WARDS OF LIBERTY

“Parties like that costs whole bunches of money,” he remarked.

“Indeed they do,” Miss Bailey agreed. “It was a beautiful party, a beautiful, beautiful party.”

“Whole bunches of money they costs,” continued Isidore. “But mine uncle he don’t care, he likes you should have parties. He is got kind feelings over me, und you, and George Wash’ton. He’s *got* whole bunches of money, too.”

“Surely he must have. Does he keep a store all of his own?”

“No ma’an.”

“Does he work in one?”

“Mine uncle? No ma’an. Mine uncle don’t work. He plays.”

“The piano? How nice! And does he get all his money for that?”

“No ma’an, he don’t plays pianos.”

“At the theater, then ? Is he an actor ?”

“No ma’an.”

“Well, then, what *does* he play ?”

“He don’t plays nothings. He just plays.”

“Did you ever see him doing it ?” asked the puzzled Miss Bailey.

“No ma’an. I ain’t seen. He plays by night und I lays then on mine bed. Comes mans und comes ladies und plays mit mine Uncle Abey. They gives him whole bunches of money the while he plays mit ’em so nice.”

Miss Bailey and Doctor Ingraham were discussing things and events some evenings later when it occurred to her to inquire:

“Among the powers with which you come in contact at Gouverneur Hospital did you ever meet a Mr. Abraham Abrahamowsky ?”

WARDS OF LIBERTY

“No,” said the doctor. “But ’tis a sweet name. What is he?”

“A rival of yours,” she laughed. “He lavishes gifts of price — jewelry and roast geese — upon me, and ice-cream upon the class.”

“Rich?”

“Apparently. He supports his small orphaned nephew who, by the way, adores him.”

“Rather decent of the chap to work for other people’s children.”

“But according to the nephew, he toils not, neither does he spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory never equaled Abraham in his. You never saw such clothes.”

“Perhaps he makes them.”

“No. He never works. ‘Just plays,’ Isidore tells me.”

“Acts?”

“No. I suggested that. He is neither an

actor nor a musician. The nephew reports: 'Mans und ladies they comes by our house by nights und mine uncle he plays mit them.' Now what do you suppose that means? I can't imagine."

"I can," said the doctor grimly. "Tell me that name again."

"Abraham Abrahamowsky."

"And the address? I might get a few fellows together some night and go to play with him."

"I don't remember. I shall send it to you."

It was some days later yet that Room 18 was deserted by its Leader of the Line. At about ten o'clock he arrived, attended by his mother in evident haste and dishabille.

"Patrick wouldn't come late, without me," Mrs. Brennan explained. "And I couldn't

get him ready in time. We're *that* upset. His father was brought home to me last night, miss, shot in the leg."

"Mr. Brennan? I'm ever so sorry. He's not badly hurt, I hope."

"No, miss. They say he'll be well in a couple of weeks."

"But how did it happen? Let me give the children something to do while we are talking. I want to hear all about it."

"Well," Mrs. Brennan began, when the First Reader Class had been supplied with the means of keeping Satan at bay, "it was in a little raid. You know, miss, that there is gambling and all sorts going on round about. Sometimes the officers can do something — shut the house up or arrest the people in 'em. Sometimes they can't; friends higher up, you know. But yesterday one of

the young doctors in Gouverneur handed in a report of a place. Nobody seemed to know the man, so they raided his joint last night. Me husband got shot when the man got ugly and pulled his gun on the officers. But they locked him up an he'll get a nice long rest on the Island. They'll learn him not to shoot an officer."

When Miss Bailey and her corps of monitors were leaving the school that afternoon they found Isidore Belchatosky, who had not graced Room 18 during the day, in copious tears upon the big steps. He was wonderfully unkempt and bedraggled, and Teacher paused an appreciable moment before she sat close beside him and gathered his dejected little body to her.

"What is it, honey?" she crooned.  
"What's the matter with the poor old boy?"

“Oh, mine uncle,” wailed Isidore, “mine poor uncle.”

“Your Uncle Abraham?”

“Yiss ma’an. I ain’t got no more uncle, on’y him. I ain’t got no mama nor no papa nor nothin’ on’y mine uncle, und now they takes him away. I ain’t got nobody. The lady by our floor is nice on’y I ain’t lovin’ so awful much mit her. I needs mine Uncle Abey.”

“Poor Izzie,” cried Eva Gonorowsky, and stooped to take the sufferer’s hand. By so doing she disclosed the sturdy figure of her satellite, Patrick Brennan, and Isidore’s grief was quickly changed to wrath.

“Think shame how your papa makes mit mine uncle,” he raged. “Mine uncle he don’t makes nothing mit him und extra he commences. Anyway mine uncle he shoots him mit pistols in the leg.”





“ Yiss ma'am. I ain't got no more uncle, on'y him ' ”

“Not your uncle,” Miss Bailey corrected him. “Patrick’s mother came to see me this morning and told me about poor Mr. Brennan. But it was not your uncle who shot him. It was a man who kept — well, I can’t explain the kind of a man it was. But not your uncle.”

“It was mine uncle,” Isidore maintained. “I lays on mine bed in sleep when comes a great big all of mans — your fellow was mit —”

“No,” cried Teacher; “not Doctor Ingraham!”

“Teacher, yiss ma’an, your fellow.”

“Oh, Isidore, Isidore!” wailed Teacher, and fell to crying as bitterly as the boy. “It is all my fault and he was so good to us.”

“Yiss ma’an, he had feelings. He makes

on me und you und George Wash'ton, parties. He is kind mans."

"Huh!" snorted Patrick, "he shot me pop."

"'Cause your papa was rubberin' round. Your papa is awful nosy. He comes mit that all of mans und they takes mine uncle's chips und his cards und a table what he had mit turning wheels. Mine poor uncle he feels awful bad, und your papa und Teacher's fellow they says cheek on him on'y he don't says nothings. On'y by a while they makes they shall take where mine uncle's money is und he hits a man — a little bit of man — a hack. Sooner the all of mans they hits mine uncle und they takes his money und they chases him around und they holds the mans und the ladies what was playin' mit mine uncle — the ladies they hollers

somethin' fierce. So-o-oh mine uncle he takes his shootin' pistol und he shoots Patrick Brennan's nosy papa in the leg."

"That was very wrong of him," said Teacher.

"Ain't George Wash'ton made shoots mit pistols?" demanded Isidore.

"Yes, he did," admitted Miss Bailey.

"Ain't he hit a great big all of mans? Und ain't they made him presidents over it unds papas off of countries where flowers stands und birds sings?"

"Und where the Fresh Air Fund is," supplemented Eva.

"Well, not exactly because he hit so many men. And besides it all happened long and long ago. They don't make presidents that way any more."

"Ain't Teddy Rosenfelt hit mans? Und

ain't they made him presidents over it? On'y that ain't how they makes mit mine uncle. They don't makes him presidents nor papas neither. They takes und puts some-things from iron on his hands so he couldn't to talk even. They puts him in a wagon und they says they sends him over the water."

"Where?" asked Teacher.

"Over the water where Islands is und prisons stands. That's how they makes mit him the while he hits somebody mit pistols. I guess they don't know 'bout George und Teddy. They makes them — mine uncle tells you how they makes George und Teddy — presidents und papas over it."

"But that was from long, Izzie," Eva reminded him.

"And altogether different," added Miss Bailey.



“An’ me pop wasn’t there. He’d  
'a pinched 'em,” said Patrick.

“Und George had his gang  
along,” observed Nathan Spi-  
derwitz.

“Und Izzie,” said Morris Mogilewsky,  
summing the matter up, “George Wash'ton  
he ain't hit mans in legs mit shootin' pistols  
'out killin' 'em. You couldn't to be presi-  
dents und papas over that. George Wash'-  
ton he kills 'em all bloody und dead. He  
kills bunches of tousens of mans. Why ain't  
your uncle kill somebody ?”

“He hits him in the leg,” reiterated Isidore  
sadly.

“But he ain't killed 'em. Und, Izzie,  
sooner you ain't killed somebody bloody und  
dead, you *couldn't* to be presidents und  
papas off of countries.”

# A SOUL ABOVE BUTTONS





A SOUL ABOVE BUTTONS

**T**HE Boss staggered down the cellar steps and dropped the pile of coats from his small shoulder to the floor. The “boarders,” for a breath’s space, ceased from sewing



buttons upon other coats and turned expectant eyes toward their employer, their landlord, their gaoler, and their only source of news.

But he brought no tidings of the outer world on this particular afternoon. He had been through crowded blocks where the very air was full of war and murder and his only report was the banality:

“The day is upon me wherein I must go to school.”

No one was interested. Even the mother of the Boss, frying fish in one corner of the cellar, was busy with her own gloomy preoccupations and reached her son's communication only after a long delay. Then she asked dully:

“Why?”

“For learn the reading and the writing of the English. A man at the factory where I waited for my turn told me of how he had learned these things and he showed me the card he had won by his learning. ‘It is from the Union,’ he told me, and behold! when he stood before the manager he received gents' vests for the finishing. The pay is good for that work. So when my turn came I, too, asked for finishing to do. But the manager

laughed. 'Are you of the Union?' he demanded, 'show me then your card!' And I, having no card, received only buttons. For such a card I shall go to school."

On the next morning he waited upon the Principal of the nearest Public School and proved a grievous trial to that long-suffering official. The Boss's alert and well formulated knowledge of the world of the streets was only exceeded by his blandly abysmal ignorance of the world of books. And it was after careful deliberation and with grave misgiving that the Principal sent for the roll-book of the First Reader Class and consigned the newcomer to Miss Bailey's dominion.

Teacher welcomed him with careful patience but his advent created something akin to a riot in Room 18. There was hardly a child within its walls who was not familiar

with his history and awed by his proximity. They all knew how his father had finished gents' garments and his own tired life in a cellar under Henry Street, and how the son, having learned the details of the business by acting as his father's messenger, was now the successful manager of that dead father's business. They knew how he had induced his mother to work for him, though she had at first preferred — sensibly enough — to die. How he had then impressed a half-witted sister into service, had acquired an uncanny dexterity with his own needle, and had lately enlarged his establishment to include three broken-spirited exiles who paid for their board and lodging by their ceaseless labor.

And now ne had come to their school!  
Was in the First Reader Class! No wonder



*Eva Gonorowsky*

that Eva Gonorowsky tingled with excitement and preened the butterfly bow which threatened her right eye. No wonder that Sarah Schodsky, Monitor of Fashionable Intelligence, broke through all restrictions, and the belt of her apron, in her eagerness to impart these biographical details to Miss Bailey. No wonder that Patrick Brennan pondered how far a Leader of the Line might safely boss a professional Boss. No wonder that Morris Mogilewsky, Monitor of Goldfish and of Manners, was obliged to call Teacher's attention to the extent to which the "childrens longed out their necks und rubbered."

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

The Boss cared little for the commotion of which he was the cause. His red-lidded eyes were everywhere, saw everything, but found no trace of the "Cards off of Unions" of which he was in search. Nothing else interested him, and he grew uneasy as the class fell into its morning routine. An interval of Swedish Exercises prompted him to remonstrate.

"Say, missus, ain't you goin' to learn us to read? I ain't got no time to fool with me legs an' arms."

"We shall have reading in a few moments," Teacher assured him. "Are you so fond of it?"

"Don't know nothings about it," the Boss answered. "When are ye goin' to quit your foolin' an' learn us some?"

Teacher turned to survey her newest

A SOUL ABOVE BUTTONS

charge. Stripped of his authority and removed from his cellar, the Boss was only a little more stunted of stature and crafty of



*“I ain't got no time to fool with me legs an' arms”*

eye than his nine years of life on the lower East Side of New York entitled him to be.

And yet his criticism impressed itself through Constance Bailey's armor of pedagogic self-righteousness and left her rather at a loss.

"We shall have reading in a few moments," she repeated. "But first we must try a little arithmetic. Wouldn't you like that?" And out of an ignorance as great as his ambition he answered tentatively:

"I'll try it. But I *comes* for learn readin' an' writin'."

He didn't like arithmetic at all. It struck him as being a shade more inane than Swedish Exercises, and almost as bad as singing and praying. The Boss who could calculate, entirely without written figures, the number of boarders necessary to make his business a paying one and the number of hours and dollars he could allow his mother to devote to domesticity, the Boss who had already es-



timated the depressing sum which the vagaries of the official Course of Study had thus far cost him, listened in contemptuous amazement to the problems proposed to his consideration by this Teacher's words and the Boss's thoughts followed one another in some such sequence as:

"I had ten dollars and I spent six dollars for a dress — "

"Gee, ain't she easy!"

"Two dollars for a waist — "

"For her size! It was stealin'."

"Fifty cents for a belt and fifty cents for three handkerchiefs. Who can tell me how much I had left?"

"I kin," said the Boss, "but that's no way to do. You'd ought to count your change. An' I kin tell you, too, you was skinned when you paid six dollars fer that dress. I ain't

seen the coat but I kin tell by the skirt. An' that waist ain't worth no two dollars. I could show you a place where you'd get your money's worth. The man what owns half of it is a friend of mine."

But before he had arranged details he was swept into silence by the First Reader Class's divergent estimates of Teacher's present financial standing.

"You've got nineteen dollars left," cried the optimistic Eva Gonorowsky, while Ignatius Aloysius Diamantstein, with a pecuniary pessimism contracted from his Irish stepmother, shrieked the evil tidings:

"You're dead broke. You ain't got nothin' at all."

Finally the unashamed Miss Bailey set her extravagances in neat figures upon the blackboard and the Boss's spirits rose. This

was the sort of thing he had come for. This was like business. And he marveled much that so idiotic a shopper could be "smart" enough to write with so easy a grace.

After further waiting and other wilful waste of time the readers were at last distributed, and the mouse-colored head of the Boss, which might have been sleeker if the latest "boarder" had had greater skill or a sharper pair of scissors, was buried between the pages of a book. A half hour of the most desperate mental exertion left him spent, hot-eyed, gasping, but master of the fact that certain black marks upon a white surface proclaimed to those desiring tickets off of Unions that:

"Baby's eyes are blue. Baby's cheeks are pink. Baby has a ball. See the pretty ball."

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

Followed days of ceaseless effort and nights of sleepy toil. Followed headaches, hunger, weariness. But followed, too, a dim understanding of a relationship between letters and sounds. This Teacher called reading.

Writing he found even more difficult, but here Miss Bailey was able to manage some of that "correlation with the environment" which educators preach. While more frivolous First Readers wrote of flowers and birds and babies, the Boss stuck tongue in pallid cheek and traced: "Buttons are round," "Pants have pockets," and other legends calculated to make straight the way to Cards and Unions.

During his first week at school he managed to reimburse himself for some of his wasted hours. On the afternoon of his second day he spared time from his cellar to ask:

“Say, Mrs. Bailey, did you spend that other dollar yit?”

“What dollar?” asked that improvident young woman.

“The dollar you had left over when you bought that waist an’ suit.”

“No, I’m keeping that,” Miss Bailey informed him, “to buy a house on Fifth Avenue.”

“Where do you live now?” the Boss inquired, and Teacher told him a combination of numbers which conveyed nothing to his mind.

“Alone?”

“No, with my family.”

“An’ they let you fool round down here all the time? Don’t they need you home?”

“Not very much. They don’t mind.”

“I guess not,” the Boss acquiesced. “I

guess you don't help much. Your hands don't look like you did. Say, do you get pay fer teachin'?"

"Very good pay," she answered meekly, though she did not always think so.

"Then you'd better go right on livin' at home. You don't want to buy no real estate. You stay with the old folks an' buy a hat with that dollar. You'd ought to have a stylish hat to wear with that new suit."

"But a dollar seems so much for just one hat," Miss Bailey objected. "A whole dollar!"

"I might be able to fix you so you could git it fer less," the Boss encouraged her; "I know a lady what sells hats, an' she might let you have something cheap if I saw her about it."

"Oh, would you really!" cried the



*"An old crouny of his mother's who kept a millinery establishment neatly combined with a candy counter and a barrel of sauerkraut"*

guileless young person, "that is very good of you," and thereupon fell into consideration of a suitable color scheme.

"You leave me 'tend to it," the Boss advised. "I'll fix you up all right, all right."

On his way to the cellar he stopped to visit an old crony of his mother's who kept a millinery establishment neatly combined with a candy counter and a barrel of sauerkraut. With tales of the approaching birthday of the weak-minded sister he induced this lady to part — at the reduced rate of thirty-four cents — with a combination of purple and parrot-green velveteen and diamond sunbursts. Departing with this grandeur he made the provident stipulation that unless the mind of the weak-minded sister were reached and pleased the whole transaction might be rescinded.





*“ Miss Bailey cheerfully paid ninety cents for the head-gear ”*

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

And before school had formally opened on the next morning, Miss Bailey cheerfully paid ninety cents for the head-gear and for a lesson in the sharpest bargaining of which she had ever dreamed.

Teacher was as new and puzzling a type to the Boss as he was to her. He had seen ladies like her in fashion-plates, but he had never imagined that the road to Cards and Unions was adorned by such sentinels. He had not expected that a very soft hand would guide his own work-roughened one in the formation of strange letters: that a very gentle accent would guide his own street-toughened one in the pronunciation of strange words. But least of all had he expected to enjoy these things and to work as much for the lady's commendation as for Cards and Unions, to be interested in her impossible

## A SOUL ABOVE BUTTONS

stories, to admire her clothes, to entrap her into ill-advised purchases, and to be heavy of heart when his early doubts grew into sad cer-



*"He had not expected that a very soft hand would guide his own work-roughened one"*

tainties and he knew that Constance Bailey, so gay, so gullible, so friendly, so good to look upon, was woefully weak in mentality.

And yet what other explanation could

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

there be of her wastefulness of time and effort and matériel. Why spend hours in the painting of a flower or the learning of a string of words which — when they meant anything at all — meant lies. Why close her ears to truth? Why reject his answer, founded upon fact and observation, to her question: “Where did you come from, Baby dear?” in favor of Isidore Belchatosky’s inane doggerel: “Out of the everywhere into the here.”

Then there was her Board of Monitors. The sons and daughters of great men were entrusted to her care and she allowed them to languish in officeless obscurity while Morris Mogilewsky, Yetta Aaronsohn, Eva Gonrowsky, Nathan Spiderwitz and Patrick Brennan basked in favor and high places. Was not Isaac Borrachsohn, the son of an

A SOUL ABOVE BUTTONS

Assemblyman and the grandson of a Rabbi, better fitted to "make good" than the daughter of a man who peddled notions "on the country," or a boy whose father even then was looking for a job?



*Yetta*

But the saddest proof of her mental condition was her passion for washing. She was always at it. She had established a basin and a heap of towels in one corner of Room 18 and there she would wash a First Reader for no reason at all, or because of a mere obscurity of feature which might have been easily cleared away by the application of a slightly moistened coat cuff or the dampened hem of an apron. In a paroxysm of cleanliness she washed the Boss, though his

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

morning canvass of his person had shown him to be, with careful usage, good for at least a week. She washed paint brushes, desk covers, glasses, even pencils. All was fish that came to her net and she put it all in water.

There was one phase of her conversation which refused to classify itself either as fact or fiction. In the Course of Study it was described as "Moral Training," and Constance Bailey devoted a daily half hour to this part of her duty. She combined ethics with biography, and showed that virtue not only was its own cold reward but that the virtuous always held preferred stock in the business of life, and might realize at a moment's notice. There was Jack the Giant Killer and Abey Lincoln; King Alfred the Great and the Light Brigade; King Arthur

and the David who slew Goliath; and — but this was the Boss's contribution to the galaxy of heroism — there was his own countryman Schonsky who had licked Paddy, The Terrible and many others. All these bright stars of history, all these examples of the good and true, had reaped great renown and profit from their purity and prowess; had triumphed over wrong; had demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that "honesty is the best policy" and that "fortune favors the brave."

So things progressed in Room 18 until the Friday afternoon of the Boss's second week in the high halls of learning. On the preceding Friday he had been detained in the cellar by the sudden collapse of a boarder. But during the second week he had been constant in his attendance and Teacher handed him a

blue ticket which announced to whom it might concern — and who could read it — that the punctuality, the application, and the deportment of the Boss had been all that could have been desired. She smiled approvingly when she gave it to him; she even laid an appreciative hand for an appreciable moment on the mouse-colored head and added a word of encouragement.

“You have done beautifully this week,” she vouchsafed him, “I am very proud of my new little boy.”

The new little boy retreated silently to his place and watched. He noted the joy and eagerness of such children as received tickets, the dejection of those who got none. He did not quite understand the details of the system but its general principles were familiar to him, so he waited until he and Miss Bailey



were alone and she had given him such private instruction as their scanty leisure allowed. Then he drew out his certificate of merit and asked:

“Where do I git it cashed?”

“You don’t get it cashed,” said Teacher. “You take it home to show that you were a good little boy.”

“Then where do I git me pay?”

“Your pay for being good!” Miss Bailey reproved him.

“Naw,” said the Boss, “me pay fer sew-in’. Didn’t I make ye a book-mark an’ mat, an’ a horse reins fer a kid?”

“But not for pay,” Teacher remonstrated. “You did it for ——”

“Fer me health?” queried the Boss. “Well I guess nit. I done the work an’ I done it good, an’ I want me pay. If you don’t fix

me up I'll report you and have your whole — shop raided.”

In view of this awful threat and of the bursting indignation of the Boss, Teacher temporized with the hopeful-sounding but most doubting suggestion:

“Wouldn't you like to take the things home with you now? You will get all your sewing at promotion time, but if you would like to have those three pieces to-day I might let you take them.

“No you don't,” said the good little boy grimly. “You don't work me with none of your con games. I done the work an' I want me pay.”

Gently, but firmly, Miss Bailey explained the by-laws of the Board of Education to him. Stubbornly he refused to accept the explanation.

“You git *your* pay all right, all right,” he unchivalrously reminded her. “You git your pay an’ now you’re tryin’ to welsh on them poor little kids. Why, I wouldn’t treat the greenest Greenie in my cellar like you treat them kids what you’re paid to treat right.”

Miss Bailey appealed to his common sense, to his thirst for learning, to the integrity of all her former dealings with her good little boy. In vain, again in vain. The commercialism of the Boss was rampant and vigilant. At the first pause in her justification he broke in with:

“An’ I folded papers fer you, too. Don’t I git no pay fer that ? I don’t know the rates on that kind of a job but a young lady friend of mine works to a paper-boxes factory an’ she gets good money. What are you goin’ to do

about the house I folded for you? A house an' a barn, an' a darn fool bird. (I won't charge you nothin' on that bird 'cause it didn't look like nothin'.) But I want me pay on them other things, an' you'll be sorry if you don't fix me up now. I'll queer yer good and plenty if you don't. I — ” and here the contempt and the maturity of the Boss were wonderful to see — “I don't want the crazy truck. I don't want no book-mark — I ain't got no book. Nor I don't want no paper house an' barn. An' do I look like I wanted a horse reins with bells on it? Bells on *me!*” cried the Boss who had his own reasons for going softly all his days. “Well I guess nit!”

Of course compromise, after attempted intimidation, was impossible, and Miss Bailey went home that afternoon in a most uncomfortable frame of mind. For the Boss

had interested her. She had enjoyed working for and gaining his slow regard, was attracted by his independence. And she was sorry for the little chap with his tiny body and his great responsibilities. While he was pitying her for the omission of mind from her constitution she was grieving over him as a child defrauded of his childhood. But in this matter of paying children for the work they did at school, there was nothing she could say to make him understand her position.

On Monday morning the lowering expression of the Boss's visage and the truculent carriage of the corduroy head had become epidemic in Room 18. All the dark eyes, which for nearly a whole term had regarded Miss Bailey as a judicious combination of angel, Fairy-tale, and Benevolent Society, were now darker still with disillusionment

and suspicion. Sulkily, the First Reader Class obeyed the voice of authority. Slowly, the First Reader Class cast off the spell which had held them. Stealthily, the First Reader Class watched the mouse-colored crest of its new commander and waited for his signal to revolt. It came with the sewing hour in the late morning. Fat needles and gay worsted were distributed and the working-drawing of a most artistic iron-holder was traced upon the blackboard. The work was ready, but the workers were militantly not so. Teacher turned to Morris Mogilewsky:

“Is this a Jewish holiday?” she asked him, out of her disheartening experience of the enforced idleness of those frequent festivals.

“No, ma’am, this ain’t no holiday,” Morris answered. “On’y we dassent to sew fer

you fer nothings, the while we likes we shall make mit you a hit."

"That is slang, dear," Teacher warned him. "But you could make much more of a hit with me by doing your sewing like good children."

"We dassent. The new boy he makes we shall make a swear over it. It's a fierce swear."

"Come here," Teacher commanded, and the Boss, abandoning a lurking desire to use his desk as a barricade and to entrench himself behind it, rose upon unsteady legs and obeyed. Teacher looked less harmless than he had expected as she demanded:

"What kind of a hit is this supposed to be?"

"It ain't no hit. It's a strike. I told the kids what their work is worth an' they feel

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

like I do about doin' it fer nothin'. I guess you'll be sorry you turned me down, Friday," and for a baffled moment Teacher wished that the turning might be across her knee and accompanied with vigorous infringement of the by-laws. Here was a model class of the school, her pride, her enthusiasm, almost her creation, given over to mutiny and sedition. For a moment she thought of using coercion and then determined upon a *coup d'état*. Very gravely she stood beside her desk and made an address of farewell.

She touched upon the little joys and sorrows which had visited Room 18. She made artful allusions to flowers, canaries, goldfish, and rabbits. She cast one regretful eye back to the Christmas tree and she cast the other forwards to the proposed 'scursion to Central Park. She concluded, as well as she



could through the satisfactory veil of tears which had enveloped the Class:

“But since you feel that I have treated you badly, since you feel that you should have been paid for learning those things which will help to make you useful when you are big and to keep you happy while you are little, I must ask you to take your hats and coats and everything which belongs to you and to leave your desks for the little boys and girls — there are plenty of them — who will be glad to come to school in Room 18 and who won’t have to be paid for coming.”

A long and wavering wail from the monitor of pencil points ended Miss Bailey’s valedictory and was echoed by the monitors of goldfish and of buttons.

“I don’t want I shall be promoted,” snuffled Ignatius Aloysius Diamantstein with

a damp cuff against a damper nose. "I have a fraid over Miss Blake und I likes it here all right."

"You won't be promoted," Miss Bailey comforted him. "You will stay at home or play on the street. You won't have to go to school at all."

"I don't likes it, I don't likes it!" wailed Morris Mogilewsky. "I don't need I shall be no rowdy what plays by blocks. I likes I shall stay by your side und make what is healthy mit them from-gold fishes."

"Very well, you may stay if you care to," Miss Bailey remarked with a coldness hitherto unknown in her dealings with this, the most devoted of her charges. "But the others must take their things and go at once."

But no one wanted to go. Teacher was buried under a landslide of moistly com-

punctious First Readers which launched itself upon her defenseless person with tearful pledges of fealty. When it was at last differentiated and driven back to the desks Miss Bailey delivered her ultimatum:

“The children who will stay at school only if they are paid for their work here may — Stand!”

Only the Boss arose. Fear, or love, or gratitude, or public opinion held the others in their seats and the Boss surveyed them with hot scorn. He had not reached that stage of Moral Training which would have taught him that the way of the reformer is as hard as that of the transgressor, and that the wages of the man who tries to awaken his fellow is generally derision and often death.

So he shared the lot of many leaders and



“You’re a bunch of scabs”

stood without followers when the time for action had come.

“You’re a bunch of sissies,” he informed the neat and serried ranks of the First Readers. “You’re a bunch of softies. You’re a bunch of scabs.”

“You really mustn’t say such words,” Teacher reproved him. “You just wait in the hall for a moment while I give the children something to do; I want to talk to you.”

Some compromise between the Boss, Miss Bailey, and the By-laws might have been effected, but when Teacher had supplied her reclaimed and repentant charges with occupation, when she had placed Patrick Brennan in command and had uncoiled sundry penitent embraces which had again fastened upon her, she followed the Boss and found the hall empty.

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

Scouts were despatched and returned baffled. The truant officer was no more successful. Miss Bailey visited the cellar and retired discomfited, for she could neither breathe the air, believe the disclaimers, nor speak the speech which she encountered there. Other First Readers from time to time reported fleeting glimpses of the always fleeing Boss. But what could the inexperienced eyes of Constance Bailey, the hurried inspection of the truant officer, the innocent regard of the First Readers avail against his trained and constant watchfulness. More than ever now did he go softly all his days and many of his nights.

For he had presented himself before his friend, the manager of the shop, as one desiring examination in the elements of English Literature and Composition and had dis-

covered that his two weeks had furthered him not at all upon the way to Cards off of Unions and that buttons were still to be his portion.

“Ain’t this writin’?” he demanded and offered for his friend’s inspection some mystic marks of whose meaning — in the absence of a copy — he was a little unsure.

“No, it ain’t. It’s foolin’,” said the candid friend.

“She learned me that,” the Boss maintained. “An’ she learned me too, ‘Honesty is the best Policy.’ What’s that?”

“That’s a lie,” the candid one informed him.

“An’ she learned us about Jack the Giant Killer an’ King Arthur. Who was they?”

“Fakes,” was the verdict of candor. “She worked you for all you was worth.”

WARDS OF LIBERTY

“She fooled me all right, all right,” the rueful Boss admitted. “But say, you’d ought to see her. She sure looks like the real thing.”

“Sure she does,” acquiesced the friend, who combined worldly wisdom with his frankness. “The slickest always does.”

And so the Boss avoided the high halls of learning and all associated therewith. For had he not bent thirstily over the Pierian Spring expecting to quaff inspiration to Cards and to Unions, and had he not found



that it flowed forth misinformation, Swedish Exercises, unpaid labor, and that it bubbled disgustingly with soap and water?



**THE SLAUGHTER  
OF THE INNOCENTS**



THE SLAUGHTER OF THE  
INNOCENTS

“No, Yetta, I think not,” answered Teacher.  
“You have a very nice place of your own.  
Why should you want to sit near me?”

“I could to hold your pencil,” the Monitor of Buttons suggested with a pale hopefulness.

“Thank you, dear, but it stays very safely on my desk,” replied Teacher. “We will go on with our reading. You were doing very nicely, Morris. See the waves break on the — what do waves break on, Morris?” But the Monitor of the Goldfish Bowl could not remember having been on intimate terms with a body of water larger than that in which

his charges were even then lazily sinking and floating with mouths agape and fins trailing. His lip began to tremble.

“Look carefully at the word,” Teacher encouraged him. “Try to remember the sounds of the letters.”

Morris hissed and sputtered in obedient effort and finally delivered himself of the statement: “The waves break on the store.”

Hands sprang up in all directions: some were almost shaken free from connecting wrists in the eagerness of superior knowledge.

“You’ve been to Coney Island, Isaac,” said Teacher. “You may help Morris. ‘The waves break on the ——’ ”

“Swimming ladies,” cried Iky Borrachsohn promptly. “I seen ’em last Sunday. Mine uncle takes me for see them. They hollers somethin’ fierce.”



*Yetta*

“No, no, no, dear, Morris was more nearly right than you are. I’ll write the word on the board. Now; who knows it? Everybody! Good babies! Well, you read it, Yetta Aarensohn.”

“I holds up mine hand,” explained the unabashed Yetta, “the while I likes I shall set by your side.”

“Don’t be silly, Yetta,” answered Teacher; for she was very tired; the day was very hot and interruptions very unwelcome. “This is a reading lesson. Eva, you read the word.”

“Shore,” announced that most reliable of

small persons. And so the lesson progressed. At every appeal to the opinion of the populace Yetta's hand clawed the atmosphere of Room 18, but always her information consisted of the rumor that she fain would sit at Teacher's knee upon the Kindergarten chair sacred to those undergoing a cotton and camphor treatment for toothache or awaiting beneficent action of dilute Jamaica Ginger.

"But you have no toothache," remonstrated Miss Bailey, upon the sixth of such interruptions. "Why can't you be happy at your own desk?"

"Don't you likes you shall set by my side?" questioned Eva Gonorowsky.

"I likes," suggested Yetta, "I likes I shall hold Teacher's handcher."

"Thank you so much, but I prefer to keep it in my pocket," said Miss Bailey, restoring

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
it to that receptacle of her trim white linen  
costume.



*“Don't you likes you shall set by my side?”*

And thereupon the Monitor of Buttons  
laid her head upon her own disprized desk  
and wept quietly.

“You won’t lets me I shall hold your pencil,” she whimpered when Miss Bailey bent over her and essayed comfort. “You won’t lets me I shall hold your handcher, you won’t lets me I shall hold your hand. You won’t lets me I shall just set.”

“Well, of course,” Teacher relented, “if you think it would do you good to simply sit in the little chair ——”

“Yiss, ma’an, that’s healthy for me.”

“Then, of course, you may,” said Teacher. “Just try to let it make you a little fat and a little pink. You are a very white little Yetta.”

“Yiss, ma’an,” Yetta acquiesced. “I ain’t so awful healthy.”

At recess time Teacher detained the small sufferer and made a superficial examination. A shade of fever, a general sense of *malaise*, a great weariness without much



## SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

desire to sleep, a persistent headache, a little difficulty in hearing, almost bloodless gums and inner eyelids, were the symptoms at which she arrived. And when the First Readers filed back, after fifteen minutes of decorous relaxation and refreshment in the dim but stuffy coolness of the school-yard, they found Yetta in the enjoyment of the Kindergarten chair and the large doll reserved for acute or surgical cases. A patch of absorbent cotton soaked in alcohol was bound to her brow with a gauze bandage and held in place by a safety-pin chosen by the patient from Teacher's store, and announcing by its size and authority that the suffering to which it was applied was of the most severe and serious nature.

At intervals of the school routine, Miss Bailey would make polite inquiries: "How

is it now, Yetta ? Shall I put more alcohol on the bandage ?” And Yetta’s invariable reply was : “ It’s worster,” in the most pathetic of suffering inflections. She enjoyed her indisposition and regarded herself as entitled to all first-aids to the injured which the desk afforded. She was, therefore, very indignant when she detected Jacob Spitsky in a bloody attempt upon her position.

“Teacher,” she interrupted a bout of mental arithmetic to warn Miss Bailey, “Teacher, Jacob Spitsky pulls his tooth extra loose the while he wants he shall set here. Und my head ain’t healthy yet.”

“It’s a lie,” yelled the outraged Jacob. “Mine tooth was over yesterday in the morning loose. It bleeds all over mine jumper und it spoils mine necktie. My papa says I don’t needs it no more.”

“Don’t take it out here,” Miss Bailey charged him, with a memory of several such hari-kari performances and a prevision of the probable result to her spotless linen. “If you do, I shall certainly send you home. I’m taking care of Yetta now. It is not your turn to be sick. You had an earache last week.” And fortified by this successful encounter Yetta’s watchful eyes, under the gauze bandage, roamed the serried ranks of the First Readers and warned Teacher of impending danger.

Thus the long hot afternoon passed and brought three o’clock and leisure. Jacob Spitsky and the rank and file of First Readers retired with undiminished teeth. Room 18 was left to its Teacher and its monitors who straightway busied themselves with unsubstantial tea-cups and an alcohol kettle. The

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

children loved the vicarious hospitality of these afternoons when ladies and gentlemen visited Teacher, wore interesting clothes, made unintelligible comments, and shed an air of “stylishness” upon the class-room. Generally Yetta shared in this enthusiasm, but to-day she sat upon her Kindergarten chair — moved now into a patch of sunshine — and shivered. Nothing roused her to more than a languid interest. The Monitor of Pencil Points tendered her an outworn pencil. Morris Mogilewsky, Guardian of the Goldfish Bowl, prescribed a small quantity of fish food from his official store. Nathan Spiderwitz, who held the Portfolio of Window-Boxes, offered her a withered blossom and a crinkled leaf. She accepted these ameliorations with gentle, silent gratitude, but she was still huddled close to the heat

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

when steps sounded in the hall. Teacher flushed quickly, the door opened, and Dr. Ingraham came in. The Principal was with him and they were evidently in search of tea. At least such seemed to be the quest of the Principal. The Board of Monitors had long ago decided that other interests prompted Dr. Ingraham to so frequently desert the sufferers in the neighboring Gouverneur Hospital for the calm groves of Nathan's tending. But they had, also, as time passed and Teacher remained with them, voted him harmless and accepted his friendship, his visits, and his *largesse*. In his survey of Room 18 and its occupants he, of course, discovered Yetta.

"Another?" he asked.

"I fear so," answered Teacher. "The tenth this week in this class, and the other teachers tell me ——"

The Principal groaned audibly and consumed hot tea to an extent which paralyzed the eyes and the manners of Morris Mogilewsky.

“The other classes in the Primary Department,” said he, “are just as bad. Such reports of average attendance! And such slow stupidity when they *do* come! The teachers discouraged, the District Superintendent puzzled, the Board watchful. And here am I trying to keep up the standard of the school against such odds and in such weather.”

“Really, do you know,” Miss Bailey commented, “I think there is some subtle connection between their noses and their brains. I’ve noticed a decided improvement in the youngsters who have received treatment.”

“Of course,” replied the Doctor. “Noth-

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
ing is more clearly or more easily proved. How can you expect the kidlets to think properly unless they can breathe properly. Try it yourselves and see. Health comes first, I tell you. And then," with a laughing bow to Miss Bailey and the Principal, "then knowledge."

"I'm not so sure," the Principal insisted; "a little knowledge might lead them to health. An inkling of physiology, a few laws of hygiene ——"

"And the means of carrying out the laws," suggested Miss Bailey. "You men always grow theoretical. Please stick to practicalities and tell me what to do for this baby"; and she called to her patient patient: "Yetta, honey, come here."

The Monitor of Buttons tore herself away from the sunshine and obeyed. Leaning

against Teacher's knee she shivered forlornly and waited.

"I want you to tell me, dear," Miss Bailey began, "what you generally have for breakfast."

Yetta regarded the kind eyes above hers for a puzzled second before she answered gently:

"Coffee."

"Nothing else?"

"No, ma'am."

"And for dinner?"

"Coffee."

"And for supper."

"Coffee."

The Principal groaned again and turned to the doctor, who had eyes for nothing but the white clad girl and the bedraggled child before them. "And there are thousands of





*“When I couldn't to sew no more I lays in sleep”*

such cases," he marveled, for he never grew reconciled, "thousands of such little lives — and deaths." But Miss Bailey had not finished.

"And when do you go to bed?"

"Teacher, I don't goes to bed. I helps my mama. When I couldn't to sew no more I lays in sleep. Sooner I wakes and helps some more. Und by times I goes on the yard fer water fer make coffee. I ain't got time I shall put me the clothes off and lay by the bed. I ain't no baby."

"No, indeed, dear, you are — How old are you, Yetta?"

"I'm seven. I will become eight."

"Of course you're not a baby. I want you to show how big and brave a girl you are by going over to the window with Dr. Ingraham, and letting him look at your throat."



*“I goes on the yard fer water”*

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

“It ain’t healthy,” Yetta warned this tall young man with the kind eyes and the strong hands. “I guess maybe I’m got a sickness. Mine head aches. Und mine neck aches, und I likes I shall make nothings on’y just set mit cold feelings in mine heart und tears in mine eyes.”

The Doctor’s examination, though more thorough and professional than Teacher’s, led to the same diagnosis.

“Adenoids, of course, and a rather aggravated case,” was his decision; “but one which good food, fresh air and sunshine would cure. But failing these, an operation is the only thing.”

“Just as I say,” maintained the Principal. “If we could only reach the parents and *educate* them ——”

“Or as *I* say,” Dr. Ingraham countered;



*“Eva guided the buttons to their respective holes”*

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

“if we could force them to observe a few of the laws of *health*.”

“But neither knowledge nor health alone will solve the problem,” amended Teacher. “You must have both and something else besides.”

“What else?” demanded the Doctor, but Miss Bailey laughed and looked at the Principal. “I’ll tell you when I’m sure I’m right,” she promised, and the conversation veered to other things.

Since this blight had been discovered in the school Miss Bailey had spent the majority of her afternoons in calling upon the parents of afflicted children and urging them to action or even to interest. The task had been a trying one. East Side mothers are too busy and too resigned to demand a high standard of ruggedness or ruddiness in

## SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

their offspring, and a child who can stand, walk, climb stairs and get into its clothes without help is a well and buxom child. An utter lack of appetite makes rather for economy than for uneasiness, and a lack of interest is no disadvantage when the days, from their dawning to their dark, hold no event of pleasure and but few of variety. The mothers were generally courteously apathetic and blandly surprised that young women—for all the teachers were involved in the campaign—of educational and social advantages had no better sense nor occupation than to busy themselves with obscure anatomical observations and to expect others to share their folly.

Some mothers of course there were whose means and information prompted them to instant action. A local doctor was consulted;

fifty cents changed hands; a scholar was absent for a few days; returned with reports of bloody details; was a hero for a brief space, and then gave place to a later victim. The vast majority, however, paid very little attention to this latest manifestation of pedagogic hysteria. They classed it with the mothers' meetings fad, the clean hand crusade, the kindness to animals agitation, all of which had to be endured as the price of an education nominally free.

Miss Bailey accompanied Yetta to her abode and, through the interpretation of that small sufferer, delivered an address on the nature, growth and danger of the affliction with which the preceding weeks had made her drearily familiar. Mrs. Aaronsohn was carefully attentive to Yetta's translation of her symptoms, but her attention was due



SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
to a very real and grateful regard for Miss Bailey rather than to alarm. When the case had been fully stated she pondered for some space, but she still made buttonholes with a horrible dexterity. In all her numerous visits Miss Bailey had never seen Mrs. Aaronsohn empty-handed, resting, holding a child, or even standing free from the mound of unfinished garments which encompassed her nether limbs. Still sewing, she now asked Teacher, via Yetta:

“How much costs that ’peration?”

“Fifty cents to have it done by the doctor down-stairs. Nothing at the hospital.”

These health quotations were imparted and Mrs. Aaronsohn made regretful and lengthy answer.

“She says that’s five hundred buttonholes,” Yetta translated to Teacher, “and

she says she ain't got time for take me on the hospital, und she says, anyway, I ain't never a fleshy child, und mine face is all times white. Und she likes she shall look on them things what you says is growin' in me."

So Yetta climbed upon the barricade of "knee pants," and submitted herself to another inspection, while Constance Bailey labored with the choking atmosphere and wished alternately for millions to spend in combat with such conditions as these and for her old-time happy ignorance that these conditions could exist. For here was a child languishing for want of sunlight and God's fresh air. A charming child, gentle-eyed, soft-voiced, brave-hearted and devoted. And patient beyond all imagining.

Mrs. Aaronsohn meanwhile ceased from

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
sewing for a moment's space. She investigated Yetta's throat as far down as unaided vision would allow: investigated Yetta's nose up to the same satisfactory limit, and declared the prospect to differ in no material detail from other anatomies.

"She says she don't see no biles," the patient reported, when she had climbed to the floor, and when Mrs. Aaronsohn had resumed her sewing. "She says it's healthy for me I shall be cold in mine hands und white on mine face. Sooner I gets hot and red she could to have a fraid. That's how our other baby dies. We got two left." And in her pride of exhibiting the remaining babies and pointing out the reassuring pallor of their faces and clamminess of their hands, she allowed her rôle of invalid to fall from her.

So many of the teaching staff reported a

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

like lethargy in the homes of their charges, that the Principal appealed to headquarters. The Board of Education applied to the management of a large Jewish hospital and the Principal was informed that upon a certain day a staff of doctors and of nurses would attend to and operate, free of all charge or officialdom, upon such cases of adenoid growth as should present themselves — with certificates signed by parents or guardians — for treatment.

Other interviews between parents and teachers ensued and, since they made no demands for time or money, were crowned with success. For the East Side parent has learned to trust the Board of Education as it trusts no other of the powers concerned in its care and guidance. If such a proposition had been made by the Gerry Society or the Board

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
of Health it would have been received with contumely and rejected with scorn. For was it not well and generally understood that these forces are in the employ and command of the long-armed Czar of Russia and that they go secretly — sometimes even openly — up and down the world seeking to reek his vengeance upon the people he was bent upon exterminating. And is it not further clearly known and easily demonstrated that the Fire Department, the Police Force, and the Commissioners of Street Cleaning are further manifestations of the same dread power?

But the Board of Education was a different thing. Respected, trusted and omnipresent, it took such mild and beneficent forms as gentle lady teachers, free lunches, night-schools, roof-gardens, recreation piers and

lectures in the vernacular. Its occasional unreasonableness and "foolishnesses" made it only the more human and lovable. The teachers carried on their campaigns, an extraordinary collection of autographs accumulated upon the Principal's desk, the day was set, patients warned and cheered, and all things were put in readiness.

This new and unpronounceable disorder, its detection, danger and cure, formed the topic of conversation on corners, on crowded crossings, on stairs, in the class-rooms and at teachers' meetings. Even the local papers found space for its mention between reports of fresh massacres and new treacheries in Russia, the increased price of food, and the report of the weather bureau, giving no hope of coolness or of rain.

Mesdames Spiderwitz and Mogilewsky

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

discussed the question in all its bearings upon the sylvan spot where East Broadway and Grand Street intersect, and were forcibly removed — still discussing it — by the crews of several stalled cable cars and an irate truckman. The recently united houses of Gonorowsky were almost shaken into discord when Sadie was turned away as free from nasal obstruction, while Eva was granted a card which declared her to be in the enjoyment of a perfect obstacle race-course between her lungs and the circumambient air. Mrs. Brennan called upon Miss Bailey to explain that, while her Patrick — thank God! — was free from any respiratory disease more serious than that childish disorder commonly called the snuffles, she and Mr. Brennan considered the present opportunity an excellent one to have three

large warts removed from their son's right hand and to ask the doctors if they couldn't anyways at all bleach out the mole on his cheek and straighten the finger what was crooked ever since his grandfather — "the saints be his bed — let have at him with the poker an' him no bigger than no size at all at the time."

But it is an exceedingly good wind which blows nobody ill. The feud between the Board of Health and the small East Side practitioner is old and bitter, and much of the alien's sullen distrust of official relief is due to the efforts of the man to whom every case of illness treated gratis by the Board's representatives means a potential patient deflected and a problematical fee turned aside. Such accustomed interference had been hard enough, but if up-town hospitals were to



SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
enter the arena, armed with internes and  
nurses, what would be left to local talent ?

Appointment after appointment was cancelled as the teachers continued their crusade, and parent after parent explained that Jacob, or Rachel, or Isidore would be made healthy, free of fifty cent charges, at school; until at last one worm turned. He was young and ambitious and very poor, and the temptation to make a last effort to turn his vanishing half dollars back in his direction was stronger than his conscience or his powers of prophecy. And he addressed the poor, ignorant drudge, who was the third in one morning to rescind earlier arrangements for his attendance upon her offspring:

“So you choose that the Christians shall cut the throat of your son. So be it. He is not my child.”

Instantly the mind of the mother leaped to credit this worst of horrors. Had not the papers been full of such stories? Was not her brother even then crouched in wordless misery behind the stove in her half-roomed home because his wife and their three children had been tortured to death in Russia not six weeks ago? Was not anything possible except happiness? Everything to be expected except good? In the quiet of the house and in the presence of the angry man she bore the news in silence, but once in the glare and clamor of the streets, she broke into distracted wailing. Tearing her hair, beating her breast or shaking clenched hands at the strip of relentless sky far above her, she shrieked:

“They are murdering our babies, they are slaughtering our young, they are cutting

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
the throats of our children.” Instantly she  
was joined by other mothers as ignorant and  
as fearful as she, and a groundless rumor,  
arising from one man’s cupidity, became the  
bitter cry of distracted thousands.

“They are murdering our babies, they are  
slaughtering our young, they are cutting  
the throats of our children.”

The few mothers whose children attended  
the school in which the health crusade was  
in progress, credited the report as eagerly as  
did the thousands and thousands of mothers  
whose children attended other schools where  
the affliction was unknown or disregarded,  
and momentarily the crowd increased in  
fierceness and in numbers. All through the  
steaming streets, the sweltering tenements,  
the rumor spread and, spreading, grew.  
The cries as they grew louder, grew wilder,

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

too. "They are working for the Czar! Remember Kishinef! They are burying our children, with foul rites, in their cellars. To the schools! To the schools!"

The crowd, unkempt, half-clothed, wild with panic and tortured by fear, poured out into the narrow streets and surged and yelled and foamed at its thousand mouths. The local police force, taken unawares, was paralysed and perplexed, for the cries, when they were articulate, were in Yiddish and gave no hint of cause or chance of answer. And presently the schools were surrounded.

"Our children, our children," yelled the mothers; and threw stones, bricks, vegetables — anything they could pick up or tear up — at the grated windows and the heavy doors.

In Room 18 a singing lesson was progressing with as much spirit as could be expected

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
under the lamentable breathing equipment  
of many of the class. The First Readers were  
demanding shrilly and quite uncomprehend-  
ingly: "Oh, say can you see by the dawn's  
early light?" when the storm broke against  
the school walls with a hoarse reverberation.  
A stone crashed through the window, laid  
Morris Mogilewsky's "fish theayter" waste,  
and rolled across the empty space toward  
Teacher's desk. It promptly stopped the  
singing.

"I don't know what kind from noise is  
that," whimpered Yetta Aaronsohn. "I  
never in my world heard nothings like it."

"I did," cried that Ulysses, Isaac Barrach-  
sohn. "In Coney Island the waves is like  
it." But Teacher knew that this was no  
moment for conversation. Rather it was the  
time for discipline, swift and sharp. The

howling in the crowded streets outside was beginning to find echo in the crowded rooms within and hurrying feet clattered through the halls.

“Stand,” she commanded. “Mark time!  
 . . . One, two, three, four . . . Sing  
 . . . Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean.”

Waveringly at first, but with growing confidence as the song drowned the tumult, the First Reader Class obeyed. Constance Bailey wondered what she would be called upon to face in the next few moments. Something, she knew. The heavy air was full of threatening, and the wailing rage of thousands of women is not often heard. But, once heard, it is unlikely to be forgotten. She knew that her duty was to keep the children calm and ready to obey orders when they should come. And as she watched the

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

timorous faces and startled fawn-like eyes before her, she found herself wishing, with surprising fervency, for the brave and blue regard of Patrick Brennan. But the Leader of the Line had heard of his parents' preparations for his Renaissance, and Room 18 should know him no more until doctors should have come and gone. His understudy Abey Ashnewsky was a poor and tame substitute.

The telephone in the Principal's office added its shrill note to all the other clamor as that over-burdened official communicated with police headquarters and with other principals similarly besieged. One of his staff, a Jewess, stood just within the grated window and translated what she could understand of the crowd's hoarse demands:

“They want their children.”

“Well, I’m sure I don’t,” snapped the harassed man. “Are they giving any reasons?”

“None clear at all. There is something about the Czar and murdering babies. I don’t quite understand. They seem determined to get their children.”

And reports from other schools corroborating this, a rapid dismissal was decided upon.

Miss Bailey’s charges were of the smallest and her class, according to the regulations, was the first to leave the building. She had expected some such action and the First Readers were still marking time with feet and hands, and still chanting patriotism, when the summons came.

Out into the hall she led them, and other children, hearing the singing, joined in the



SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
refrain which spread from room to room,  
through hall and stairs, until the whole build-  
ing rocked to it.

*Three cheers for the red, white and blue,  
Three cheers for the red, white and blue,  
The army and navy forever,  
Three cheers for the red, white and blue.*

When the First Readers reached the wide main entrance the janitor opened the doors and a roar of mingled rage, relief and longing struck Teacher like a blow. Abey recoiled before it, the columns faltered, turned to Teacher and she, sunny-haired, slim and white-robed, stepped out into the sunlight and faced the mob, leading Abey by the hand. There on the highest step she stood, still marking time and still exhorting by voice and gesture the long lines of children who followed her, clapping their hands, and all

WARDS OF LIBERTY

singing in tune or out of tune, as the case might be:

*Three cheers for the red, white and blue,  
Three cheers for the red, white and blue,  
The army and navy forever,  
Three cheers for the red, white and blue.*

The uproar increased rather than diminished as the parents most remote from the building clamored for some particular child or made frantic efforts to reach the scene of action. Several hand to hand encounters occurred, several women fell and were trampled upon, more missiles were thrown, and Mr. Brennan, Senior, who was on duty, reduced himself to the very confines of apoplexy by exhorting:

“Bulge out there, bulge out I tell you, and lave the kids run through yez and then bulge back to where yez were agin.” But the horde

SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS  
declined to bulge and a woman near him  
threw a jagged brick at the slim, white  
figure on the steps. Mr. Brennan saw its  
direction and bellowed a warning to the  
janitor:

“Take her in out of that,” he roared. The  
janitor was quick to obey; but not quite  
quick enough.

“They h'ave struck her,” cried Mr. Bren-  
nan. “By the Holy Saint Dennis and Father  
McGauley they've struck the little lady.”

The school being empty now of children,  
the doors were quickly shut and the rioters  
were left to some very unreserved treatment  
at the hands of the police reserves.

Upon the next afternoon the Principal,  
Dr. Ingraham, and Miss Bailey were again  
having tea in Room 18. Everything was  
as it had been upon the last occasion of

such entertaining, except that the hostess' right arm was in a sling. The Principal's optimism was in what appeared to be permanent eclipse and Dr. Ingraham was in a smoldering rage.

"But it was only temporary," Miss Bailey assured her hearers. "A little madness made by the heat. And truly it is enough to cause anything, and there was nothing personal about that brick. I wager the woman who threw it was ever so sorry afterwards."

"She ought to be hanged," growled the Doctor, "the lawless, ungrateful brute."

"How changeable you are," commented Teacher. "Is hanging the way to health? And isn't health your panacea for all these evils? Health, according to you — and knowledge" — she added, turning to the Principal. But he repudiated the theory.

## SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS

“How are we going to give them knowledge,” he questioned. “You saw them yesterday. Did they strike you as being teachable?”

“They certainly struck me,” said Miss Bailey, as the Monitor of Buttons, in the agony of solicitude, adjusted Teacher’s sling for the thousandth time that day; while the Monitor of Window-Boxes held her cup and saucer, and the Monitor of the Goldfish Bowl hung solicitously in the background.

“Knowledge and health,” the Doctor repeated. “Are you ready yet to tell us the remedy you had in mind?”

“Every member of the class was here this morning,” said Teacher. “The sick children underwent the treatment with the quietness of the stoic and the patience of the lamb. A procession of parents has filed through

the room to explain and disclaim the events of yesterday."

"And yet," said the Doctor. "I don't quite see ——"

"Oh, Teacher, Teacher," whimpered Eva Gonorowsky, deserting her pencils to bestow smudgey embraces upon Miss Bailey's uninjured side. "Teacher, mine heart it breaks the while your arm ain't healthy. I am loving so much with you."

"There you have it," said Miss Bailey to her visitors. "The third thing I hinted at was love."

"But I thought you didn't believe in that," marveled the Doctor, while the Principal tactfully withdrew.

# A PERJURED SANTA CLAUS





A PERJURED SANTA CLAUS

“You’re crazy,” said Mike Dwyer, out of the deep experience of his eight and a half years. “You’re crazy, I tell you. Nobody gives you nothing for nothing.”

“But ain’t I told you that *he* does,” his friend Patrick Brennan assured him. “Ain’t I telling you what he give me last year?

A fire-engine, a prayer-book, and a bag of candy.”

“An’ you ain’t pay’d *nothin’* for ’em?” marveled Mike.



Mike

“Not a cent.”

“Ain’t nobody never came ’round to collect on ’em?”

“Not a one.”

Mike pondered a moment and then demanded:

“Have you got em now?”

“Well,” Pat admitted, “I ain’t got all of ’em, but I’ve got three wheels and one of the horses. The rest busted when it fell off the fire-escape. An’ me mother has the prayer-book.”

“There wasn’t any sense to them things anyway,” said Mike. “Crazy truck, fire-engines, prayer-books, and candy. Gee, if he was going to give youse somethin’ why couldn’ he give you somethin’ youse could use?”

“They wasn’t foolish, they was what I wanted,” Patrick maintained.

“How did the old guy know what you wanted?”

“Didn’t I write and tell him? I wrote it on a piece of paper, an’ I pinned it to the shelf over the stove, an’ he come down the chimney an’ got it.”

“Down the chimney!” exclaimed Mike incredulously, “that’s the craziest yet. If you don’t look out you’ll get put in the funny wagon. A lady in our block, she thought her man was Czar of Russia, and they put her in the funny wagon and they took her away and we ain’t never seen her again. You better shut up about your old man Sandy Claws, or somethin’ like that’ll happen to you.”

“Christmas is next week,” Pat announced in grim finality. “What do you bet, I don’t get an express-wagon and cap pistol? I

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

wrote Sandy Claws about 'em last night, an' put the letter on the mantelpiece, an' this morning it was gone; and I've got a picture of him in a book — I'll show it to you if you come round to our block — and Teacher tells us about him at school and we know songs about him, and po'try pieces. I tell you what: you come to school just one day, an' Teacher'll learn you about him."

"Aw, I ain't got no time to go to school," said Mike contemptuously. "I've got my business to tend to and I guess maybe I'd better tend to it now. But say, that's a good one about the old gent coming down the chimney. I was up and down them lots of times and it's hard enough for *me* to get through, and I ain't much for size."

"You come round to my house on Christmas Day," said the militant Patrick, "an'

I'll leave you look at my express-wagon and hold my pistol."

When Michael boasted an exhaustive acquaintance with the inside of chimneys, he did not speak lightly or without truth. It was some years since he had abandoned the scholarly career, which his pious mother had hoped would lead to his consecration to the priesthood, in favor of the more active life of "odd boy" in a local hardware store where he was "helper" in the stove department. That he would ever have made a priestly man was a moot point, but no one could conscientiously deny that he was an odd boy.

His hair, once red, was darkened by his avocations and his hygienic convictions to an indescribable sooty brown. His clothes matched his hair, and his skin struck no dis-

cordant note in the subdued color scheme. But there was nothing subdued about his spirit, nor his eyes, nor his startlingly brilliant smile. And there was nothing which could subdue his adoration for his mother.

He and she had suffered many sorrows in common, and almost in silence, though their pleasures they took more noisily. Sickness and babies had come, had been born and tended in patience, and had passed away leaving them chums and partners still. He and she had journeyed to Calvary or to Coney Island always together and always alone. For Mr. Dwyer had devoted his great energy and his scanty gleanings from the profession of "fence" — the go-between for small pickpocket and pawnbroker — to drinking himself from one fit of delirium tremens into another. He was

as familiar an inmate of Bellevue or the Island as he was of the home which he had laid desolate. As familiar and as welcome.

On the evening of his enlightening conversation with his staunch admirer, Patrick Brennan, Michael appealed to his mother for information.

“Say, maw, did youse ever hear of a gent what goes round in sort of fancy fixin’s an’ gives kids things for noth’ng?”

Mrs. Dwyer turned from the window, whence she had been watching for what she always dreaded, and answered quickly:

“Yes, dear. Santa Claus.”

“That’s the name Patsy Brennan called him. He showed me his picture on a book, but I thought he was guying me. I never heard of him. Don’t he never come round here?”

“Not lately, dear. But when you were quite little, he brought you a rocking-horse and a fire-engine.”

“That’s him!” her son exclaimed in high excitement. “I knew him by the fire-engine. That’s him. Say, maw, what ever happened to them things? Did I bust ’em?”

“No,” answered the woman, who, still watchful, had transferred her vigilance from eyes to ears, and now listened shrinkingly for an unsteady step upon the stairs: “No, Mike, you didn’t; they — went.”

It was a familiar explanation in that house, but the woman never made it easily. So many things — went. The few relics of her more prosperous youth, her street clothes, little refinements with which she tried to dignify or disguise her poverty, little comforts or necessities given by kind



neighbors in times of stress, her own meager earnings in an uptown laundry, or Mike's, still more meager in the hardware store. For Mr. Dwyer, though meeting in the course of his professional labors with many proofs that stealing could be successfully practised upon absolute strangers, still believed in the prior claim of family, and had so far confined his own active operations to the home circle. It was a safe practice ground and he could always flatter himself that he would one day broaden his field to include such gentlemen — if he could find them entirely unprotected and unobserved — who had reached that degree of intoxication which raised his envy and his courage almost to the point of action.

Nothing could accustom Mrs. Dwyer to this system of petty pilfering and the deceits

it forced upon her, for through all vicissitudes of neglect, ill-treatment, and abuse, she persevered in her fierce determination that the boy should never know, so long as she could keep the knowledge from him, his father.

And all the time the boy knew much more clearly than she, and was often forced to allow her panic-stricken vigilance to continue when he could have told her that the voice she dreaded was enlivening the alcoholic wards of Bellevue, or that the foot she feared was marching in decorous lock-step upon Blackwell's Island. But he was as fiercely resolved that his mother should never know, so long as he could keep the knowledge from her, her husband, and he was always careful to receive this explanation as satisfying and quite natural.

“Well, Patrick was talkin’ about it to-day. He got a fire-engine, candy, an’ a prayer-book, an’ he says he’s goin’ to have a express-wagon an’ a pistol this time. Do you think it’s on the level?”

“Of course it’s true. Why, when I was your age he used to bring me the loveliest things, and they always seemed to be exactly what I wanted ——”

“But Patsy writes an’ tells him what to bring. He gits what he wants every time. I wonder what I’d better write for?”

And then, wistfully, Mrs. Dwyer set to work to destroy the faith she had established. It was unlikely, she pointed out to her son, after a rapid survey of her own financial position, that the gentleman, having for so long neglected them, should remember them now. He was always, she delicately

hinted, a little snobbish in his tastes, and was more inclined to add to a store already amassed than to lay the cornerstone of a property. But these reflections affected her son not at all.

“He give you stuff when you was as big as me. He gives it to Patsy. He used to give it to me. I guess I kin git somethin’ off of him all right, all right.”

Then was Mrs. Dwyer forced to disclose the fact that there were some persons of upright lives and minds who utterly refused to credit even the existence of such a person, and to hint that doubts of such a nature had sometimes visited her gentle breast. But Mike’s faith, founded largely upon the coincidence of fire-engines, held firm against all attacks. And then he knew of a reason, happily hidden from his mother, that might

cause fastidious gentlemen to avoid Mr. Dwyer's abode.

On the next afternoon he came upon Santa Claus suffering quite humanly from cold, standing at the corner of Grand and Essex Streets, wearing his white beard and other "fancy fixin's." He was guarding a three-legged iron pot into which the prosperous cast pennies and the unprosperous — in overwhelming majority — longing looks. The pot hung upon a metal tripod bearing a printed appeal for contributions to aid the Salvation Army in supplying a Christmas dinner to all such as should approach the hospitable boards to be spread in Madison Square Garden on December 25th. The shower of coin was not very heavy and Mike seized his courage and a propitious moment to remark:



“You don't get round to all the houses every year, do you?”

“You don’t get round to *all* the houses *every* year, do you?”

“Well no,” answered the old gentleman in a surprisingly young voice, “not down here. There are quite a number of houses in this neighborhood and quite a number of children in every house.”

“Every other year, do you?”

“Just about.”

“Well, you’ve skipped me quite a while. I was wondering if you was plannin’ to take in our house this year.”

“Sure,” the old man answered, after he had acknowledged a contribution and breathed upon his freezing fingers, “where do you live?”

Mike told him. “On the top floor,” he amplified, “back. If you drop around to-night, I’ll have the list ready on the mantelpiece.”

WARDS OF LIBERTY

“Please don’t make your order too big. I’m a little strapped this year. You don’t want a house an’ lot, do you ?”

“No, but I’d like a lady’s hat,” the boy announced, “an I’d like some real, good tea, an’ I’d like a good, warm shawl. Can I have all that ?”

“Sure,” Santa Claus agreed, “anything you say, my boy. You’re the doctor.”

“Then I’d like enough dress-goods to make a dress for a lady — a small lady — I’d like it red with black spots on it. Can I have that ?”

“Oh, I guess so. I owe you something for back years, don’t I ?”

“I might let you have a little money on the goods. Not an awful lot, but if fifteen cents would help you any I could let you have it.”

“Fork it out, put it in the pot.”



“I can’t let you have it *now*. I ain’t got it in me clothes, but I’ll put it with the list on the mantelpiece to-night, and you come down an’ git ’em. Say, a kid told me you come down chimneys. Is that right?”

“That’s how I come when I come.”

“How do you git through the stove? That’s what I want to know,” said Mike, with professional interest.

“Well, I can’t tell you that. You don’t belong to the union. And don’t you wait up for me. I may be a little late, and if that fifteen cents is there in the morning you’ll know it’s because I can’t fill your order. I just have to look over my stock, you know, before I take a deposit on the goods.”

After one hour of intense exertion, mental and physical, Michael evolved the list; laid it upside down upon the mantelpiece;

weighted it with three five-cent pieces; cautioned his mother against disturbing it, and vanished into his sleeping-closet. Mrs. Dwyer bent over the pathetic little scrawl and scanned it tearfully. This tiny rift of fancy in her boy's prosaic life was doomed to such bitter disappointment, and she was so powerless to prevent it. And even as she read the list of feminine fancies, and knew them designed for her, the vigil of the last three peaceful weeks ended. The heavy step she dreaded sounded on the stairs. The heavy hand she dreaded turned the handle of the door, and Mr. Dwyer, in a state of intoxication very creditable to one without popularity and without steady source of income, lurched in. He ignored empty forms of greeting, and began at once upon the object of his visit.

“Where’s that boy of yours?” he demanded. “Where’s, where is he?” and then as she did not answer, he enforced his question with a curse which made her retreat behind the table. Her posture as she crouched there was more eloquent than any words.

“Never here when I want him”; Mr. Dwyer rambled on in one of the rapid emotional changes common to his state. “Never any good to me. Never stands a drink to hard-working father. Rotten with money, that kid, and never a nickel for suffering parent. Suffering, *incurable* parent. Where’s he now?” he repeated with a fresh oath which terrified the woman into the monosyllabic lie:

“Out.”

“Always out,” complained Mr. Dwyer,

aggrieved almost to tears. "Hard-working father come home, wants see ungrateful son; wants press his hand, wants give him father's blessing, dying father's, *dying* blessing, not here."

In keen appreciation of his own mournful eloquence, Mr. Dwyer made his shivering way to the stove, and maudlin in his grief, laid his head upon the mantelpiece and wept miserably. Now it chanced that his despondency led him to his desire, and that he had no sooner bowed his forehead in sorrow than he raised it in joy. There, under his eyes, lay three nickels on a dingy piece of paper. Three nickels meaning much stimulant and unlimited free lunch. Gloatingly he wrapped the coins in the paper, and pocketed them, and straightway he decamped, leaving his wife shaken with fear,

repugnance and wrath and tortured by that old, old question, What, *what*, could she tell the boy? What could she *ever* tell the boy? She fell asleep in her chair still wondering. And in the morning she told the boy — nothing.

The days that remained before Christmas were full of breathless excitement to Mike. He made all sorts of vague promises to his mother. He asked her again and again if, in the event of her having an entirely new gown, she shouldn't prefer one of a good, bright red with black spots. He planned excursions for her. Wouldn't she like to go to High Mass on Christmas Day? What were her views on a visit to the Eden Musee? Did any of the current theatrical attractions appeal to her? Wouldn't a red dress with black spots be the most suitable thing to

wear when they should go to see that classic drama, "The Withered Wedding Wreath" ?

He even condescended to discuss Heavenly visitants with Patrick Brennan, and to hint at the nature of his demands. The idea of vicarious generosity was new to Patrick, but he adopted it with energy and pinned a new list to the mantelpiece. It puzzled his always puzzled parents, for it commanded a set of doll's dishes and a silver thimble, extra small size.

In the grey dawn of Christmas morning, Mike was astir, and there upon the mantelpiece he found, not the red and black-spotted gown, not the shawl, not the hat, but a very shield and buckler of an Ascot tie, impervious to pin or tenpenny nail, and of a most becoming yellow. For some space he was dumfounded, absolutely speechless with

disappointment. "He played me for a sucker and he won out," was his vengeful thought. "He's got me good money, an' I've got his dirty truck. I ain't goin' to stand for no such deal." His abhorrence of the yellow Ascot distressed his gentle mother, for the satin atrocity represented to her many an act of self-denial, many an hour of work or even of hunger. He refused to touch it; to allow it to touch him; to see any beauty in its shiny impassiveness or to agree that it was, after all, a satisfactory proof of the existence of the old gentleman. Upon the whole that Christmas morning could not be said to have brought peace and good-will to the modest home of the Dwyers.

Late in the afternoon, Michael came upon Patrick Brennan seated in his express-wagon, flourishing his cap pistol and being

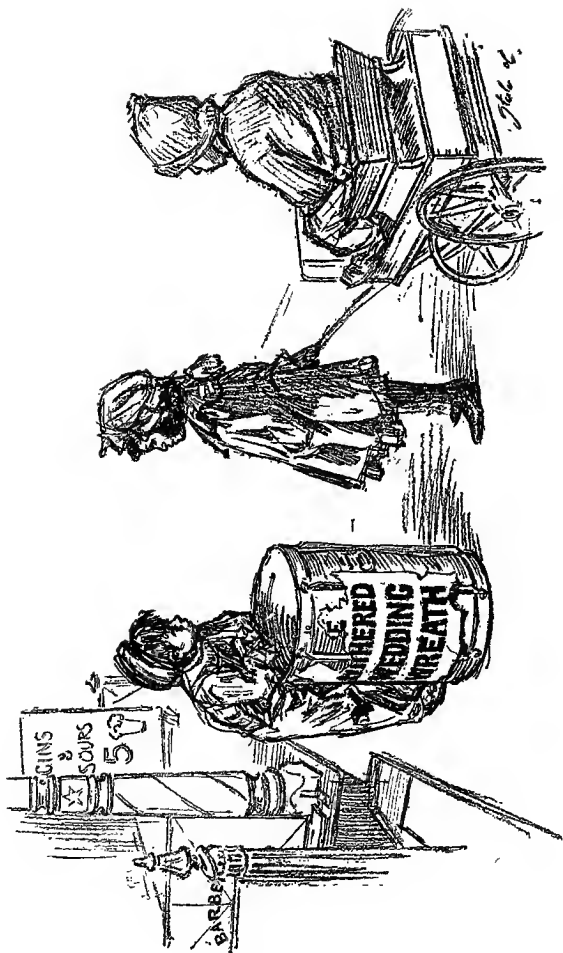
drawn through the crowds of Henry Street by a young lady who wore on the thumb of her uncovered right hand, a silver thimble — extra small size. Almost instantly the two Hibernian gentlemen appeared to be at sword's points. And Miss Gonorowsky, waiving the ceremony of a formal introduction, was all voluble concern.

“It's something fierce,” Eva sympathized. “In all my world I ain't heard how it is fierce. He takes bunches of money from off of you and don't gives you nothings only neckties that you don't needs.”

“That's what he done,” said Mike grimly. “He played me for a sucker.”

“Und mit Patrick,” Eva continued, “he makes all things what is polite. He gives him cap pistols, und wagons, und doll's dishes, und thimbles — Patrick gives me





*"It's something fierce," Eva sympathized"*

the dishes und thimbles. From long, a man makes like that with my papa. He takes money und he don't send goods, and my papa he goes where judges and lawyers sets and they arrests the man and they makes him he shall give back the money on my papa. Do you know where them judges und lawyers sets?"

Michael pondered on the suggestion. He was familiar with the workings of the law, and had assisted at evictions, man hunts, raids and riots, and had often been present at the Essex Market Police Court when his own disreputable father stood before the magistrate. On the following morning, therefore, he approached the court-house and demanded audience with the judge, who had always taken a kindly interest in his small fortunes. And Mr. Dwyer, senior, never knew

that his commitments were somewhat longer than his offenses demanded, simply because the judge was interested in the struggle which a small, honest-eyed boy was making, and had endeavored to remove—as effectually as might be—the stumbling-blocks or the stumbling parent which stood in his way. Michael's charge was explicit:

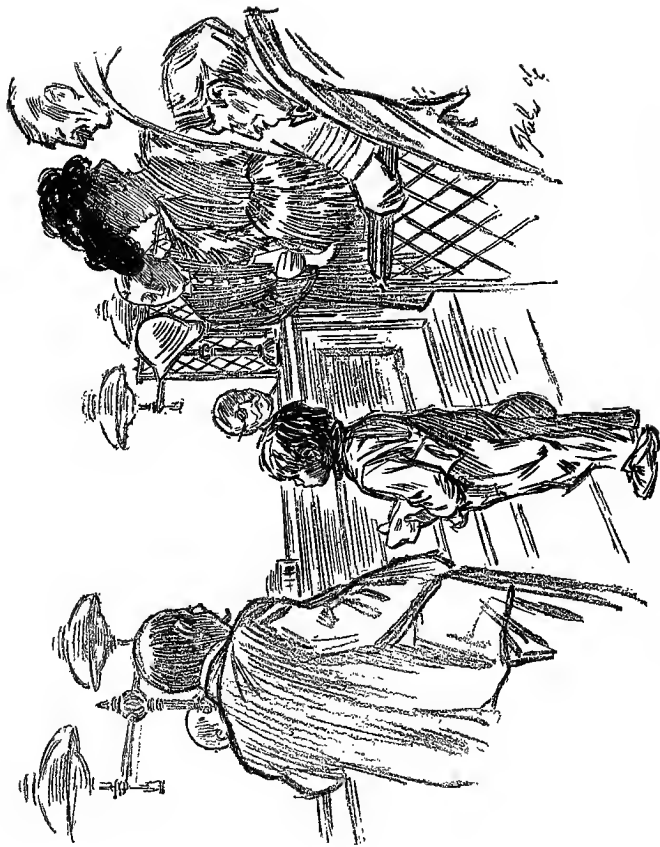
“A swell guy wid white whiskers done me dirt,” he announced.

“Go on,” said the judge, as the clerk of the court prepared to record the testimony, and some ladies in search of local color got out their note-books.

“Go on, what did he do to you?”

“He took an order for goods, he took me coin, and he delivered this here necktie.”

“A very fine necktie. It seems warm, and it ought to be becoming.”



“A swell guy wid white whiskers done me dirt,” he announced”

“It ain’t what I ordered,” said Mike,  
“and it ain’t what I wanted.”

“What was your order?” asked the  
majesty of law.

“A lady’s hat, some good tea, a lady’s  
shawl, and black and red dress-goods for  
a lady’s dress — a small lady.”

The clerk of the court made careful entry  
of this haberdashery, and the ladies in search  
of local color marveled audibly until the  
judge restrained them.

“A yellow satin necktie,” he solemnly  
agreed, “does not occur in this invoice, but  
I should think it might perhaps be a little  
more useful to you.”

“Me,” exclaimed the boy, in quick scorn.  
“Say, did youse think I wanted them fixin’s  
for *me*?”

“For some friend, perhaps?”

WARDS OF LIBERTY

“I wanted them things for me mudder,” Michael asserted belligerently. “She’s too much in the house, she is. I want to take her to the theayter, and round to see the sights, and show her a little life.”

“Bless his heart,” murmured an emotional tourist from the upper West Side. “Bless his little heart of gold.”

“Madam,” the judge sternly reminded her, “this is the court-room — not a church”; and then of the boy, he asked:

“How large a deposit did you send with this invoice?”

“I left fifteen cents for him with the order and he came and got it.”

“And you don’t regard the yellow satin necktie as covering that amount?”

“It ain’t worth nothin’ at all, ’cause I don’t want it. I want the things I ordered

or I want me money back, an' I want you to arrest that Foxy Gran'pa, an' make him act on the level."

"For whom shall I issue the warrant. What is the name of the accused?"

"Sandy Claws. That's his name. An' Mr. Sandy Claws is a crook for fair."

There was a fresh outbreak on the part of the fair pilgrims from the West Side, and the judge quelled them sternly:

"Mr. Crothers," he began, addressing one of the lawyers, who had been an interested spectator of the scene, "may I ask you to attend to this case? The clerk will hand you a copy of the original invoice and, until we locate the accused, the expenses will be defrayed by the court."

The harassed Mr. Crothers was ruefully examining the list when one of the tourists

stepped forward and asked permission to address the court. She had borne no part in the recent enthusiasm, she looked capable and calm. The judge folded his arms and nodded acquiescence and she laid a card before him. He waited with a new consideration until she began to speak, and the card's effect upon both Mr. Crothers and the clerk of the court was remarkable.

"I am, as you see," she began, "the representative of Mr. Santa Claus."

"I have often, Madam," said the judge, "heard of you in that connection, but your name occurs most frequently upon the records of the court much higher than this."

"And we were obliged to take on a number of new packers for the holiday rush season and regret that several mistakes of this



sort have occurred. The gentleman who ordered this necktie called at the warehouse early this morning and reported that some lady's furnishings had been left at his apartment. It is altogether regrettable, as the gentleman had planned to wear these goods at his wedding yesterday, and in consequence of their non-delivery was obliged to retain his overcoat throughout the ceremony. He was very indignant, and Mr. Santa Claus was greatly distressed. If this customer will withdraw his complaint and if the court will grant me the custody of the goods now in his possession, I shall see that the mistake is rectified."

The judge turned to Michael, whose naturally sharp expression had grown steadily sharper since the intervention of this alien female.

“Do you agree to this proposition?” he asked.

“Naw,” said Mike, “I don’t. An’, yer honor, don’t let her bunco you like the old gent done me. He fooled me out of me fifteen cents but the old lady don’t get nothing as long as she don’t give me nothin’. They’s all in the same gang, I tell you. If they think such a awful lot about the gent’s yellow tie, why don’t they bring me mudder’s hat, an’ tea, an’ shawl, an’ dress-goods? I’ll trade quick enough.”

“I should suggest,” was the urbane ruling of the bench, “that this plan be adopted. I will set over this hearing for two hours, and I direct that both the plaintiff and the representative of the defendant shall then appear before me. Next.”

Throughout the hearing of intervening

cases, Michael held the disprized necktie with watchful care. It shone like a slab of petrified butter through its tissue paper wrappings. The transaction was evidently puzzling him a little, and his eyes narrowed suddenly with new suspicion when the lady reappeared, still calm and still alert, followed by Mr. Crothers, still impressed, but now laden with bundles.

The judge reopened the case by ordering that the bundles should be opened and their contents compared with the list, and submitted to Mike. They were all perfectly satisfactory, and Mike, still puzzled, released the yellow necktie and gathered up his treasures. The lady was the first to leave the court-room, and Mike paused for a last word with his friend.

“Your honor,” said he, “do you think

the old gent tried to work a con game on me? It don't seem to me like all this song and dance about mistakes was on the level."

"Oh, I think so, Michael," the judge replied. "I have heard of Mr. Santa Claus for a number of years, and I never knew him to get into trouble before."

"Well, maybe you're right," agreed Mike, "but the thing looks funny to me. It seems to me like the lady was in the game with the old gent. Perhaps she's his wife; you can't tell, and she got scared that you and me would pinch their joint. It is good I came to see you. And say," he cried, "you seen me mudder once, didn't you?" And the judge's memory traveled back to his one ineffectual attempt to induce a panic-stricken little woman to testify against her useless husband. No array of brass buttons

or of officialdom could force her to admit discord in the music of their life. Terrified but loyal, she resisted all cross-examining and persisted in denying to all her world what all her world knew.

“Yes,” said the judge, “I remember.”

“Well,” Mike continued, “she wasn’t feeling just right that day. But just the first time I can get an hour off, I’ll get her to fix up in these here fixin’s and I’ll bring her round and let you see how she *can* look. She sure is a daisy.”

“Do,” said the judge, “I shall be honored. Next.”



# LITTLE BO-PEEP





LITTLE BO - PEEP

“Say, Teacher, what you think?” demanded Eva Gonorowsky, oblivious to everything save the marvelous news which had bubbled all day beneath her butterfly bow: “What you think? Little Bo-Peep is cousins mit me.”

“That must be very nice,” Miss Bailey responded. No geneological announcement could surprise her since Abraham Abrahamowsky had claimed kinship with Abraham Lincoln. “That must be very nice, dear.”

“It’s awful nice,” said Eva. “She lives now in Russia, only it ain’t healthy for her there no more, und so she comes soon on my house.”



*“Will she bring her sheeps mit?” inquired Morris”*

“Will she bring her sheeps mit?” inquired Morris Mogilewsky, whose passion for Nature Study persisted through all sorts of discouragements. “I likes I shall see a sheep, all in one, mit its hair on. I ain’t never seen that.”

“I guess she brings it all right, all right. She is lovin’ much mit amblins. In Russia her papa is got more’n fifty hundred und three lambs, und fifty million und six sheeps. Und mine little cousins she plays all times mit lambs. She is like me. She is all the childrens what her mama’s got. She brings her papa und her mama, too.”

“Is her papa got elflints?” asked Morris.

LITTLE BO-PEEP

“Is his name Barnum?” asked Patrick Brennan.

But Eva was conversing with Miss Bailey



“Little Bo-Peep ‘her picture what comes out of Russia’”

and refused to be distracted. “Mine uncle is awful rich, und mine cousin is awful stylish. You could to look on her picture what

WARDS OF LIBERTY

comes out of Russia. She is mine rich und stylish cousin."

Rich and stylish the youngster certainly looked. Hard ruffles of stiff lace encrusted all her velvet outlines; rings and bracelets adorned her pudgy hands; her coiffure was incredible, and her air was self-conscious. Two lambs were stiffly posed at her feet, and she held a beribboned shepherd's crook in her jeweled grasp.

"Bo-Peep indeed!" exclaimed Miss Bailey.

"Und she ain't lost them sheeps 't all. 'She let 'em alone und they comes by the house,' " quoted Morris, who loved facts above rhythm.

"Rich und stylish," repeated Eva unctuously. "Sheeps is all the style in Russia this year."

"I'm got a kitten," volunteered Saran

Schodsky. "They is stylish, too"; but no one seemed impressed.

The advent of that cousin affected all the relations of Eva's life. She was a possession to be lived up to, and Eva's spirit exalted itself daily to reach the standard fixed by the photograph. She carried it with her always, and in imagination she marched her friends and companions past the gaudy little figure and watched them shrivel into insignificance. Even her own Sabbath finery lost its power to uphold her through unadorned week-days, and the gleam of Patrick's official costume grew dim.

"I don't know," she pondered, as loyalty did battle with reason, "I don't know what is the style in Russia. Mine cousin could to think that Patrick is rowdy, und Yetta is poor, und mine best dress is old."

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

One of these fears was shared by Mrs. Gonorowsky, who straightway devoted some of her scanty funds and leisure to the construction of a toilet which should spare Eva the agony of "shamed feelings" when the stylish cousin should arrive. Teacher was, of course, informed; shown the sample of the much washed adult skirt which was to be the new costume's chief ingredient; was even allowed to contribute lace for its neck and sleeves, wide ribbon for its sash, and to be present at a dress rehearsal.

Week after week dragged itself across the calendar on Miss Bailey's desk, and brought no stylish cousin out of Russia to share the seat and the heart which Eva had emptied for her. She cast away all such treasures and friendships as were unsuited to one set apart to associate with rank and fashion.

## LITTLE BO-PEEP

The broken tin soldiers, the labyrinth of string, the fragmentary china doll, and its



*“Yetta, you could to take  
mine dolly . . . I ain’t  
got no more time no more I  
shall play mit nobody on’y  
mine little cousin mit lambs  
. . You ain’t got mads?”*”

cradle which had once been a baby’s shoe,  
she bestowed upon that element of her

acquaintance with which she felt constrained to part, with some such little speech as:

“Yetta, you could to take mine dolly, the while I ain’t got no more time for play mit her. I ain’t got no more time no more I shall play mit nobody on’y mine little cousin mit lambs what comes out of Russia. I am loving much mit you, Yetta, and I am loving much mit mine dolly, on’y I couldn’t to play no more mit nobody on’y mine cousin und lambs. You ain’t got mads?”

“Can I have the dolly’s bed, too?” Yetta demanded, before disclosing her emotional condition.

“Sure you can, und two pieces from pencils.”

“An’ a string for mine hair?” insisted the usurer.



“Two strings.”

“Then I ain’t got mads,” Yetta conceded.

“I have kind feelings.”

Only Patrick refused to let either threats or bribes affect him. He entirely misunderstood Eva’s anxiety and even increased it by his attitude of admiring protection.

“It don’t make no difference to me if you *have* got a greenhorn cousin,” he assured her. “It makes no difference at all. Why, I’d just as lieves treat the two of youse to hoky-poky — if I’d the penny — an’ I tell ye no one would dast to guyyer cousin if I was ’round.”

And Eva’s heart whispered: “He don’t puts him on so stylish as mine cousin, but anyways his papa is cops, and Patrick’s best suit is got from sure gold buttons.”

Every morning she appeared despairing

and in her ordinary attire; toward lunch-time her spirits and her expectations reached fever heights; at one o'clock she returned to Room 18 crestfallen; but at three o'clock she was all jubilant again and trotted off with the rank and file of the First Readers as though she were not a member of the cabinet.

And so no one was surprised when, one morning, she failed to answer to the roll-call. Miss Bailey rejoiced that her favorite's long vigil was over and the First Reader Class glued its eyes upon the door and prepared to have them dazzled. Yet the morning passed uneventfully away. One o'clock came; Eva did not, and, as the next day brought no sign of her, Miss Bailey went to investigate, remonstrate, and congratulate. Eva opened the door; but such a crushed,

tear-stained, white-faced Eva! Teacher promptly gathered her up and held her against the shoulder that had been her refuge in so many lesser griefs.

“What is it, sweetheart?” she questioned. “Didn’t the stylish little cousin come out of Russia?”

Eva clasped her frantically. “It ain’t cousins,” she wailed. “It ain’t stylish. It ain’t Bo-Peep. I ain’t never seen nothing like it. I don’t know what it is, on’y I have a fraid, I have a fraid, I have a fraid!”

“Is your mother in?” asked Teacher, when she found she could not bring Eva to anything like self-control. “Tell her, dear, that I want to speak with her,” and she set the child upon the floor and tried to reduce her to some semblance of the smart Monitor of Pencil Points. Eva crept to the door of



*“What is it, sweetheart? Didn't the stylish little cousin  
come out of Russia?”*

the dark closet which was bedroom, store-room, dressing-room — everything which the single outer room was not — and beat upon it.

“Mama! Mama!” she panted, and then cowered behind Teacher and hid her eyes in Teacher’s dress.

The door opened slowly, and Mrs. Gonorowsky came quietly out. Constance Bailey had heard of anguish and despair, but she had never seen them until she met Mrs. Gonorowsky’s eyes.

“What is it?” was all she could say. “Oh, Mrs. Gonorowsky, what is it? Didn’t your people come?”

“The little girl comes” — Mrs. Gonorowsky was beginning, when Eva, her hands still before her eyes, broke out —

“It ain’t little girls. It ain’t cousins. It

ain't got no lambs. I don't know what it is, but I have a fraid over it."

"But your sister and her husband?" asked Miss Bailey.

"They don't comes," said Mrs. Gonorowsky. She was quite passive, and yet Constance had often seen her in hysterics of neighborly vituperation. "They don't never comes," she repeated dully.

"And the child came all alone?"

"A friend from mine sister und from me, he brings her on the house. You like you shall see her, maybe. You don't needs you shall ask over mine sister sooner you looks on that child."

"It ain't no child," wailed Eva. "It ain't! It ain't! It ain't! I wants mine stylish little cousin what I had pictures off of."

Teacher followed Mrs. Gonorowsky into

the tiny inner room, lighted only by a candle and not aired at all, and there on a heap of clothing lay a creature — Eva was right: it was not a child — who gazed blankly at them. Its head had been shaved, perhaps on the steamer, perhaps to escape identification, and its lips never stopped moaning, panting, whispering one sentence.

“That is the child,” said Mrs. Gonorowsky simply.

“But what is she saying?” queried Constance. “Is she asking for any one?”

“She says,” Mrs. Gonorowsky interpreted, “‘I am Christian! I kiss the Cross!’ They learn her to say that. I show you how they learn her,” and she took the little body on her lap and began to unswathe the bandages in which it was wrapped. The back was uncovered first.

“I kiss the Cross!” shrieked the baby as the last dressing was removed. “I kiss the Cross!”

“The knout,” said Mrs. Gonorowsky, very quietly. “We learn to know its mark, we women of the Jews. Now see another way they learn her,” and she deftly turned the child upon its back.

“Oh, God in Heaven! Did men do that?” cried Constance Bailey.

“Christian!” moaned the baby. “I kiss the Cross!”

“Und you ask where is her mama?” commented Mrs. Gonorowsky.

A week passed before Eva came again to Room 18; but Miss Bailey had seen her frequently during the interval and had done what she could to pave the way for her return. Eva’s cousin, she explained to the





*Stal. 176*

*“‘The knout,’ said Mrs. Gonorowsky, very quietly”*

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

First Readers, had been ill and could not be expected to shine resplendent in foreign fashions for, perhaps, a month; and Eva, upon her return, was not to be questioned or bothered. Miss Bailey was very serious and very earnest in these commands, and the First Readers swore to do her bidding and almost did it when Eva slipped into her accustomed place in her accustomed clothes.

“It ain’t cousins,” she whispered to Miss Bailey. “It ain’t girls, und it ain’t got no lambs, but I finds a kitty on the street und I gives it to it, und I ain’t got no more a fraid over it. Last night I gives it a hair ribbon, und it smiled. It began to have a glad, so I ain’t got no more fraids.”

Gradually the reports grew more cheering; until one day the cousin came to school. Eva led her in in triumph, and Miss Bailey, who



*"One day the cousin came to school. Eva led  
her in in triumph"*

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

was accustomed to many pitiful appeals to her understanding of small hearts, now found herself quite speechless as she turned to greet this newest charge. The baby was still heartbreakingly thin; but her eyes were gentle and human; her shaven head was covered with a fluted, lace-trimmed baby's bonnet; a miserable kitten was clasped in her arms, and she wore, oh, miracle of loving kindness! Eva's reception gown. Of course, she spoke no word of English, but at Eva's whispered injunction she entrusted a little hand to Teacher's clasp and allowed herself to be established at Eva's side.

“Und any way,” said the Monitor of Pencil Points, as she surveyed her new relation, “und any way she don't look like nobody else und the childrens could to think, maybe, that caps from babies is the style in Russia.”

## LITTLE BO-PEEP

After that she came every day, and gradually the strained look left her little face, and once or twice, as Eva pointed out to Miss Bailey, she smiled. And all went well in Room 18; until the evil day set aside by the Board of Health for the vaccination of the scholars in that particular school.

Even then disaster might have been averted if Miss Bailey had not been obliged to stay in Room 18 with the majority, while little squads of five or six were taken to the Principal's Office to be examined and, if needs were, vaccinated, bandaged, and returned to their teachers in pride or in hysterics as their sex or nature prompted. It was nearly three o'clock when Eva, Patrick, the new cousin, the kitten, and two of the rank and file set out together, and they had not been

more than ten minutes absent when Patrick came dashing back.

“Gimme me hat,” he cried as he dived under his desk. “Gimme me hat! That fool Greeny run away.”

Miss Bailey wasted no time in setting out for the scene of excitement, and on the way encountered Eva Gonorowsky quite distracted.

“Oh, Teacher! Teacher!” she wailed. “Mine cousin she runs on the block, und she don’t know where she is, und she don’t know where she lives, und she don’t know nothings. She couldn’t to talk, even.”

“Oh, the poor child! Why should she run away?”

“I couldn’t to tell,” said Eva. “I holds her in mine hand. On’y sooner she seen how the doctor makes blood come out of Sarah

Schodsky, she yells something fierce over crosses und Christs, und she runs on the street.”

Down to the big door rushed Eva and Miss Bailey; but there was no sign of the white-bonneted stylish cousin in all the moving crowd. They were just in time to catch a glimpse of the vanishing Patrick Brennan; and surely no knight of old had ever, for a lady's sake, pricked his way on a more perilous adventure than this small knight of Ulster had embarked upon. Miss Bailey hurried back to her kingdom, dismissed her class, and followed Patrick's example. Mrs. Gonorowsky, Mr. Brennan, *père*, Morris Mogilewsky, Yetta Aaronsohn, in fact the whole executive of Room 18, joined in the quest; but far in advance of them all fared Patrick Brennan.

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

“I sure am up against it,” he communed.  
“What would de gang tink if dey seen me wastin’ me time chasin’ a darn fool Greeny?”

Meanwhile the greeny was adrift on a sea of troubles. The panic in which she left the school grew momentarily worse. Everything terrified her, but nothing stopped her; and her pursuers heard many disquieting rumors of her flight.

“A little girl in a cap?” said the policeman on the corner of Henry and Essex Streets, in answer to Miss Bailey’s inquiry: “Yes. I seen her runnin’ to beat the band towards the river. I stopped her long enough to ask her where she was going, and she tore out of me hands like an eel and told me something in Yiddish. ’Twas none of my business if she wanted to do steeplechases



LITTLE BO-PEEP

over and under the push-carts, and so I let her go. She had a kitten with her."



"*"A little girl in a cap?" said the policeman . . . "Yes. I seen her runnin' . . . towards the river."*

"Yes. She went by here," said the janitor of a neighboring school. "She looked

so little and so scared that I tried to stop her, but that seemed to scare her worse, and so I let her go. She was going towards the river." But no one could direct them to the darkness between an uptilted push-cart with one wheel and the wall against which it leaned, where little Bo-Peep crouched, one tiny incarnation of terror. She watched, through the crack where cart met sidewalk, the feet of her pursuers. Thousands of them passed, and yet others always followed. Some went briskly, as though they still had far to go. Some moved more slowly as guessing their quarry to be near. Some stood in sodden groups, as having discovered her hiding-place and knowing that they might seize her when they would. It was only by frantic repetitions of her exorcism that she averted a thousand deaths. "I am Chris-

tian," she whispered to the cold stones upon which she cowered. "I am Christian, I kiss the Cross." And the feet always passed.

Most terrifying of all were a pair of feet — enormous, heavy-shod, and turned up at the toes — which went deliberately and noisily across her field of vision time and time again. Above the ponderous feet a section of blue trousers showed, as Mr. Brennan, *père*, patrolled his beat and questioned every possible informant. Once a pair of small and shiny shoes held parley with these heavy ones just beside the push-cart.

"Still no news?" asked Constance Bailey.

"None at all, miss. The earth opened and swallowed her. A couple of women seen her running along here towards the river. A man on the corner seen her turn

down this block. But what became of her, I'm durned if I know. But don't you git worked up about it: them kids always turns up. 'Let them alone and they'll come home,' as the song says."

At the juncture of East Broadway and Clinton Street, Miss Bailey encountered Mrs. Gonorowsky.

"Mine Gott!" wailed that distracted matron. "Ain't you find her?"

"No," answered Constance, "but I saw a man who had seen her."

"Every one seen her," cried Mrs. Gonorowsky. "O'ny nobody wass smardt enough they shall stop her. Everybody says: 'Sure, I seen a girl mit kittens und baby's hats. She runs by the river.'"

Out of the crowd of Grand Street, Patrick bore down upon them.

“The whole gang is chasin’ her,” he panted. “One of the fellers seen her makin’ fer de river. Don’t youse fuss. We’ll git her.” Always that ominous phrase “towards the river.” Yet there was no trace of the fugitive along the dirty docks and warehouses of the river-front. Stevedores and loungers were accosted in vain. Neighboring police stations had heard nothing of her. Gouverneur Hospital had no news of her. And so the short afternoon faded into evening.

Meanwhile the baby, cold, hungry, torn by fear and sobbing, clung to her patch of darkness until all the world grew dark. The kitten had long ago escaped from her strangling embrace, and she was utterly desolate. And gradually a fear greater than all those which she had endured crept over her and benumbed all lesser fears into one

unreasoning panic. She was afraid of the dark. She was out in the dark. Alone.

So little Bo-Peep crept out of her hiding-place and lost herself in the dreaded crowd. Back and forth she strayed in search of light, but still in quaking terror of people. She was clinging to the bright window of a gloriously illuminated glass house on a corner when a woman stopped and accosted her in the old familiar language, but with an unfamiliar harshness.

“What are you doing here?” she demanded. “Don’t you know that you ought to be in bed? Go home to your mother, you bad little girl. She will be watching for you.”

Little Bo-Peep shrank into an empty hall, and the woman went upon her preoccupied way. But there was no rest for the small fugitive. Feet were still searching for her.

They began to come down the dirty stairs, and they drove her blindly on again, out into the night.

Light without people was now her prayer, and presently she found a narrow windowless lane at the further end of which a light burned dimly, over a door hung all askew. The lane was long, and it seemed easier to crawl than to fall so often, but at last she reached the step under the light, where there were no people and where the sound of the pursuing footsteps came very faintly.

When she awoke, she was in the dark again. "Mother, mother," she whimpered, as her baby habit was. But her head rested upon cold stone, and no reassuring arm enfolded her. Terror took her for its own again, and she was scrambling to her feet, when a familiar sound arrested her. Pressed close

to the door, she listened with her whole small body. Yes, she was right. It came again, a soft "crunch, crunch, crunch." Little Bo-Peep pressed her nose to a crack and sniffed cautiously. Again she was right. There were soft breathings in the dark enclosure; soft movings; and as she wondered, a wavering bleat changed quickly to a soft whinny of contentment.

The space between the gate and the threshold was cruelly narrow, and the baby, despite all Mrs. Gonorowsky's care, still bore the marks of her conversion red upon her. But outside the gate were fear and darkness, and inside there was Home.

And very early on the morning of the next day, the local Rabbi coming to make his inspection, as by Jewish law prescribed, found a limp little figure in the corner far-



## LITTLE BO-PEEP

thrust from the gate. The face in its border of limp muslin frills was white and still, and a deep stain was stiffening and darkening all Eva's reception gown — even the nearest fleece was red. But little Bo-Peep had found Home at last, and had lain down to sleep with her lambs.



# THE WILES OF THE WOOER



THE WILES OF THE WOOER

A store in Grand Street was the goal towards which Mr. Goldstone had been crawling through many dark and devious ways and years. What wife and children were to other men, his business was to him, and he dwelt happy and solitary in a neighboring garret conscious of no unfulfilled desire, for his name glittered in pleasing though unstable porcelain letters upon the window of his emporium and was repeated in gold and black above its door. "Samuel Goldstone," he knew the larger letters spelled, though he was quite unlearned in English print or script. "Samuel Goldstone"; and then, in smaller

type, the explanatory if ambiguous phrase, "Ladies, Gents, Houses and Children Furnished at Reduced Rates."

Within the store he had accumulated great treasure from the wrecks of neighboring and rival concerns, from fire sales, from sheriff's sales, from auctions, and even from enterprising burglars. To guard and distribute his hoard he had secured a cash-registering machine, a young lady and a young gentleman. The machine took care of the money, the young lady "furnished" the ladies and children, the young gentleman ministered to the gents and houses, while Mr. Goldstone stood proudly upon the sidewalk and chanted:

"Step right in, lady; step right in! This is our bargain day. Ladies furnished. All the latest styles. Babies and children at half.

Step right in! This is the place for big values!"

And the lady, weakly yielding to his persuasions, or to the detaining hand with which he reinforced them, would find herself simultaneously and suddenly in the shop and in the way. For the two assistants, young, lonely, and often idle, found time for many a confidential interview between onslaughts upon the customers delivered into their hands.

It was an afternoon in early October. The store was empty, a confidential interview was in progress; Esther Mogilewsky's golden head rested against a pile of "flannel opportunities," as she listened absorbed, entranced, while Isaac Blumberg, scholar and salesman, read aloud in the clear voice which had won him a medal at a recent night-school

oratory competition. He read of the fall sales of larger establishments as set forth in that morning's paper.

“And think of this, Miss Mogilewsky!” he cried. “Moleskin three quarter length coats at \$1,000! Think of it! And last week they were \$999. The Fur Trust, of course!”

Esther wrinkled her pretty forehead in obedient effort, but since she had been but a few years in America and had never heard of a mole, her reflections led her no further than that Mr. Blumberg was a learned youth and that Mr. Goldstone's store, with its counters along each side and its center tables piled high with bargains, was a pleasant place. But Mr. Goldstone's face, as he peered suddenly over the “Sacrificed All-from-Wool Underwear,” could hardly



be called pleasant, and during the next few minutes, in a mixture of English and Yiddish, with copious profanity in both, he favored his assistants with startling versions of their biographies for that they had, as they guiltily came to understand, allowed two potential shoppers to escape unshopped. In vain Esther wept. In vain Isaac explained and apologized. Mr. Goldstone set an extravagant value upon the possible outlay of the lost quarry and vowed to deduct it from the wages of his staff.

“A lady mit no hat und a vorn vaist! For the vaist, forty-seven und a half cents; for the hat, sixty-nine und three-fourths cents. That money you lose me. Und a little girl mit no shoes und stockings. For the shoes, thirty-five cents; for the stockings — ain’d you lucky we’re sellin’ off our stockings?”

— seven und a half cents. That you lose me, too. That is altogether one dollar fifty-nine und three-fourths cents. You pay me each half. That you pay for foolin’!”

“He wasn’t foolin’. He was readin’.”  
Esther interrupted, loyally.

“Und ain’d readin’ foolin’?” sneered the boss. “Readin’ is vorse than foolin’. I charge you extra, maybe, for readin’. Und what foolishness was you readin’?”

And so, to divert his attention and to stem his eloquence, they told him. Isaac read of liquidation sales, of clearances, of special importations, of glove sacrifices, of a lace week and of a hosiery event. The eyes of the listening Mr. Goldstone glittered with a new purpose.

“You read ’em good,” he commented.  
“Can you write ’em too?”

“Sure,” answered Isaac proudly.

Gradually the name of Samuel Goldstone spread throughout the East Side. It began to appear, heralding clearances, cut rates and other words of charm, in the polyglot papers — English, Russian, Polish and Jewish — most popular in the district. So eloquently did Isaac paint the advantages which ladies, gents, houses, and children must derive from being furnished by Samuel Goldstone, that the public, which had fought wildly against physical persuasion, yielded in weak hordes to the magic of the pen.

Then did mad self-reviling and vain regrets rend the bosom of Mr. Blumberg. He had destroyed his Eden, had made confidential interviews impossible, solitude unknown. The shop was never empty now. Esther never at leisure, himself rarely free

from women who wanted to see the "broken sets of china" or the "cuts in curtains"; from the men who wanted to buy either the groundwork or the accessories to their costumes. But he quickly found that there were trials more searching than attendance upon the men who demanded furnishing. The articles of strictly masculine nature were in what he proudly called his "providence," but over the co-sartorial ground of gloves Esther presided.

It was when he first saw her with a brew-ery-driver's huge hand between her two slender ones as she, greatly to her customer's delight, tried innumerable and inordinately large gloves upon it, that he realized how dear she was to him and how inimical to his desire the patronage of the sterner sex might prove. From that day the advertisements of

Samuel Goldstone's emporium threw heavy emphasis upon the ladies, the children and the houses, but slighted or ignored the gents. From that day, too, there was a new warmth in Isaac's few conversations with his colleague, and a new sting in his remorse as he noticed her growing weariness and pallor.

The boom increased. The expurgated advertisements continued. One morning Esther, coming early to the store, found a black-browed, black-haired, smiling and waxen lady hiding coyly behind the door and making an urgent though silent appeal for the services of a maid. Miss Mogilewsky had reduced her to the borders of conventionality before Mr. Blumberg arrived, and together they made place for her in the crowded window, hung a price upon every garment of her attire, and drove a stupendous

trade. She drew smiling attention to the "Sappho skirt with tailor tucked circular flounce effect," which Esther had dexterously fitted to the slender figure; to the "millinery opening," of which she wore a sample upon her dainty head; to the "Pride of the Avenue Bolero Eton Jacket," which afforded so alluring a vista of the "Reduced Ladies' Like-Linen Shirt-waist" beneath.

Mr. Goldstone was delighted with the new acquisition. She smiled at him gently through the window, and was profitable as well as ornamental. He lavished affection and bargains upon her, and it became Miss Mogilewsky's duty and pleasure to array her in varied but always gorgeous attire. When the weather allowed it was his custom to request the honor of the young person's society upon the sidewalk, and for these

occasions she had a purple street costume, gloves, veil and muff complete, and was most carefully watched over by her admirer's owner.

Esther had dressed her one morning in full bridal regalia — a sale of ladies' light weight dresses was in progress — and had then withdrawn the screen behind which these rites were performed and called Isaac to inspect and to set prices on the glowing vision. It was early and they were alone.

“Beautiful!” he cried. “Beautiful! But when I think of a bride she is not like this.”

“What is mit her? Ain'd she fine,” Esther urged. “Ain'd she stylish? Ain'd you fix her right?”

“You fixed her out o' sight, Miss Mogilefsky — out of sight. But her hair is too dar-

When I think of a bride her hair is always golden.”

“So?” asked Esther.

“Yes, so. Black-eyed and golden-haired she is, the girl I love.”

“So,” repeated Esther, with a gasp.

“Yes, so. And some day when I have a store with my name on it I will tell her how I love her and it will be our partnership store — mine and Esther’s. Her name will be on it too.”

“So,” sighed Esther, happily. Her English was limited, but her eyes were eloquent.

Isaac’s wooing had reached this happy but unsettled point when a new difficulty arose. On a day when “A holocaust of Laces, designed for the costumes of European royalty and secured by our special Paris representative,” had been featured, the crowd was so dense that Mr. Goldstone first



## THE WILES OF THE WOOER

pressed into service Miss Mogilewsky's small nephew, who had come to the store with the lunch for which she had not found time to go home, and had then — the clamor continuing — been constrained to desert his post upon the sidewalk and to assume charge of the center tables. There he did some eccentric measuring of laces, and juggling of change, and so much did he appreciate the opportunities of an indoor career that he determined to devote all his time to it. To that end he hung upon the breast of the waxen lady, over the "Facings of pure silk, emphasized with applications of Zaza braid and outlined with French dots," a card bearing the legend:

WANTED

A STRONG PULLER-IN

ITALION MAN

[ 225 ]

The strong Italian man applied, dozens of him, some with heavy Tipperary brogues. Mr. Goldstone selected one and was repaid by such an influx of indignant and shanghaied customers as he had never been able to corral. But then he had never been "likely heavy-weight material," had never swung a shillalah at an Irish fair — was not, in short, a strong Italian "puller-in," born in Kilcashel and trained in the Fourth Ward.

Mr. Goldstone was now at leisure to study the internal economy of his establishment. For a few days he suffered the pangs of despised love, for his dark-browed divinity turned her back persistently upon him in the pursuit of her calling, but he soon came to Mr. Blumberg's way of thinking, and saw that the changing graces of Esther Mogilewsky were more attractive than the fixed,

even if amiable, complaisance of his former favorite. And Isaac, seeing that he had added a dangerous rival to the list of his miseries, cursed the days he had learned to write and had laid this accomplishment at his employer's service.

Upon an evil day Mr. Goldstone bought, at some incredible discount, the stock of a small manufacturer of men's fleece-lined gloves, and commanded that an advertisement, setting forth their beauty and comfort, their economy and "single spear backs," should be sent to all the papers. "A great man's week" was to be inaugurated. The ladies, the children and the houses were to be thrust into the background. All the emphasis and the lime-light of publicity were to be centered upon the nobler sex. Fleece-lined, single-spear-back gloves, with

divertissements of fancy vests, Ascots, rubbers, and flannels, were to form the moral of Isaac's contribution to the press.

But the tried spirit of Mr. Blumberg revolted. His poet's vision showed him the store full of men, Esther at the service of men, Esther smiling upon men; himself fitting rubbers to the feet of men, and Esther looking upon him in that position. It was more than he could endure. But Mr. Goldstone was not lightly to be disobeyed. Only through guile could his commands be set at naught, and the evil star of Mr. Blumberg showed him a way of keeping the shop empty of men and Esther at leisure to listen to his suit.

Isaac wrote the advertisement in his most fluent style. It bristled with capital letters, it painted the Ascots and the vests in every

color of the rainbow, it represented the heating power of the gloves and flannels as equal to that of tons of coal. It was a triumph, and Mr. Goldstone made elaborate preparations for the expected multitude. The black-haired young person in the window was coyly smiling in the most fancy of the fancy vests, the most vivid of the four-in-hands, the smallest of the calorific gloves, and she carried in the hollow of her arm a discreetly folded scarlet bundle. Miss Mogilewsky wore an "almost alpaca Irene shirt-waist, with modish stock," and Mr. Blumberg gleamed in specimens of all the "features," whose price had been forcibly deducted from his salary.

The sale was to begin upon a Monday morning. The day came; the populace did not. The Italian Puller-in worked vigorously

but to little purpose, and Mr. Goldstone fumed and wondered. At ten o'clock a large wagon was backed almost across the sidewalk and two Board of Health officials disembarked. At sight of the blue cloth and brass buttons the strong Italian reversed his function and became a shover-out; but the men overawed that stalwart son of Tuscany and entered the emporium. Mr. Goldstone, with visions of vests and neckties sold at prices as fancy as themselves, hustled forward, and a look of horrified enlightenment dawned upon the face of Mr. Blumberg.

“Are you the proprietor?” asked one of the visitors. Mr. Goldstone beamed and bowed.

“Then we've come for the goods mentioned in the advertisement,” announced the other, drawing out Mr. Blumberg's latest effusion.

“All of them?” cried Mr. Goldstone, and he thought that his prayers had been answered and the yearnings of a lifetime fulfilled. “All of them?”

“Every last one of them. Get them out quick. You’ve got to come to headquarters to explain. You must have been crazy when you put that advertisement in the papers.”

“Crazy!” echoed the amazed proprietor. “Crazy? Sure not. I got the goods here all right. It’s for sure great man’s week. Who’s crazy?”

“You are, I guess. Hurry up, now; no nonsense. We are going to quarantine the place and take away all the infected stuff. Where is it?”

“What stuff?” shrieked the frightened and desperate Mr. Goldstone.

“This, of course,” answered the officer,

and read the finale of Isaac's swan-song, printed in small and unobtrusive type,—  
“We are offering these goods at epoch marking rates because they are from the stock of the late Mr. Jacob Abrahams. He died of smallpox on North Brother Island, and his family needs the money.”

For a moment blank bewilderment banished all expression from the face of the betrayed Samuel Goldstone. His eyes roved wildly over his domain until they fell upon the foresworn Mr. Blumberg, who, frantic of face and gesture, was trying to explain the situation to Esther.

“It was the men,” he was reiterating. “I could not bear that they should come, Miss Mogilewsky. I could not bear to see the men about you. But I never thought of this — I swear I didn't — I swear it.”



## THE WILES OF THE WOOER

It was sheer waste of energy on Mr. Blumberg's part to swear in the sputtering presence of his boss. Nothing was left to be said by any rival blasphemer. Even the strong Italian, who had deserted his post in the hope of a "mill," was impressed, and Esther covered her ears in terror.

"But didn't you write the thing?" queried the Inspector, "and didn't you know that something would happen?"

Murder and comprehension flamed into Mr. Goldstone's face. With an inarticulate snarl he rushed upon the bard of his bargains, and in an instant the shop was full of scurrying and pursuing forms. The boss chased Isaac; the Inspector, fearing bloodshed, chased the boss; the Puller-in, scenting battle, chased the other three. The Assistant Inspector, a knight at heart, caught Esther

as she reeled before the onrush of the chase and threw her on the high-heaped "Egyptian Balbriggan Underwear," of the center table; climbed after her; drew her to her feet, and from that commanding but insecure position they watched the progress of the battle beneath.

Around and around the shop flew Mr. Blumberg, his breath coming heavily, his heart laboring under the mockery of his fancy vest. After him — under counters, over tables — followed the boss, the Inspector and the Puller-in. Spaces were narrow and the bargain display was insecure. Heap after heap tottered and fell until the path of flight was strewn. The crash of tinware heralded the fall of the boss as he plunged into a maze of coffee-pots and dish-pans, and came ponderously to earth. The In-

spector joined him. The Puller-in forcibly extricated the combatants, and Esther clung tremblingly to the assistant. And then, as Isaac, once more on his feet, sped toward freedom and the door, and wondered if he might outstrip vengeance, the handle turned, the door opened, and Morris Mogilewsky, with a message to his aunt, stood upon the threshold. But brief was his stand. Mr. Blumberg escaped over the prostrate form of his angel of deliverance and vanished, hatless and panting, into the moving Grand Street crowd.

The specific charge against Samuel Goldstone was not proved, but weeks of officialdom and of inquiry followed. Torrents of disinfectants ruined the character of the store, the confidence of the public, the temper of the boss, much of the stock, the

assurance of the hot-headed Puller-in, and the peace of Esther's days.

For Isaac was gone, and she was very lonely in the transformed store, which smelled so acidly of chemicals; nor was its gloom relieved by the constant companionship of the soured and abusive Mr. Goldstone. He had long suspected that he had a rival in his clerk and was handicapped by no chivalric scruples against speaking ill of the absent. He spent hours at it; he railed at and abused the vanished Isaac bitterly and unceasingly.

“Und for why did he write that fool words? For why? For why? It ain'd business und it ain'd sense. I buy them gloves from off my friend Goldmark. Is Goldmark dead? Sure not. You seen him in de store yesterday. He ain'd died nowheres, und he says he died by Islands. Ain'd he crazy? Gott! I ain'd

never seen such a foolishness! It's goot he goes."

But to Esther it was very bad. For the first few days she suffered agonies of uncertainty as to his fate; and the sight of his deserted derby under the hosiery counter was almost more than she could bear. Then her doubts were resolved into an even more cruel certainty. Morris, her small nephew, appeared one afternoon with a tiny note, which he delivered to her when the eyes of the boss were not upon him. "The salesman gives it to me," he whispered. "I seen him by the corner."

The note was short. "Meet me at Grand, corner Essex, to-night. Give the boy a penny if you have it. Isaac."

"You seen him. What kind from looks did he have?" asked Esther wistfully.

“Well,” Morris admitted, “he ain’t got no more stylish looks. He has looks off of poor mans. Say, he puts him on mit a little bit of hat. It ain’t no fer man’s hat, und it makes him awful funny looks. Hangs a ribbon on it.”

“So,” was Esther’s only comment. Then she added, “You shall tell him I’ll be there at seven. Und Morris, here’s a penny for you. You don’t needs you shall tell your mama how you makes mit me and — Mr. Blumberg.”

The eyes of love are never keen, else would Esther have discovered the large part that clothes had played in the making of her man, for the figure which awaited her coming at the corner of Grand and Essex Streets that evening bore little resemblance to the dapper Mr. Blumberg of the emporium. Gone was

his assurance and his color, gone his ingratiating manner and his fancy vest. He was shrunk to half his former size, and the little Scotch cap perched rakishly over one of his hollow eyes added largely to the change in his appearance. But Esther saw none of these things. She saw only that he was thin, and ill, and miserable. She had thoughtfully brought his derby in a paper bag and when it was once more upon his head he seemed to recover some of his spirits. Nevertheless his report was gloomy and his hope at lowest ebb. He was out of work, could find no opening, had eaten nothing all day, wished that he was dead, and had asked Esther to meet him that he might bid her an eternal farewell, since his chances in Jew York were gone, and he must emigrate.

“But where will you go?” asked his lady

through her tears. "Are you going far away?"

"Very far," replied Isaac. "I may never see you again. I am going to Harlem."

"Mein Gott! So far!" wailed Esther. "So awful, awful far. Und the store mit our names on it — where is that little store?"

"It ain't nowhere." Isaac groaned from the depths of a depression to which only one of his race could reach. "It ain't nowhere, at all. It was a lie, that little store; only a lie."

"A lie — und I think so much of it. Ah, Isaac, that makes me cold in mine heart und tears in mine eyes."

"What else can I say?" asked her lover. "I have no money and no job. What can I say, but farewell?"

When Esther reached home, heavy of eye



and sick at heart, Morris was watching for her. Mr. and Mrs. Mogilewsky had gone to a ball, to which Esther had been invited, but from the very thought of which she shrank.

“Did you see him?” Morris eagerly inquired. “Didn’t he have funny looks? What kind from hats was it?”

His adored auntie, instead of answering, threw herself face downward upon the bed behind the door in a wild paroxysm of weeping. The boy was beside her in a moment, apologizing, explaining, comforting. Deftly and tenderly he removed her hat and jacket, murmuring the while —

“Don’t you have sad feelings, auntie. Don’t you cry. I guess maybe I don’t know what is stylish hats for mans. I guess it was a awful tony hat, only I ain’t never seen none

like it. Don't you have sad feelings over your fellow. He's a awful nice fellow."

Gradually Esther's sobs ceased and she allowed herself to be soothed and quieted by Morris's endearments and caresses, so that when the elder Mogilewskys returned from scenes of revelry, they found aunt and nephew asleep and peaceful.

Weeks went by; they grew to months; and no word came from Isaac. He had evidently deserted Esther, whose sorrow gradually changed to resentment. Why, she asked herself, did he not write to her? Why make no sign of love or remembrance? Slowly she came to believe that his farewell had been final, and slowly the vision of him, which in the first weeks of her bereavement had haunted the whole store, faded and died.

Mr. Goldstone was not an impetuous

wooer. He had waited for his store and was content to wait for Esther. He was patient, but assured. For what girl, he asked himself — and Esther — could refuse the inducements he had to offer. “Some day,” he would remark, “you can come in the store und buy all you want at half price — that is when you promise to marry mit me. Some day you come in the store and take all you want free — that is when you marry mit me.”

After a time, too, home influence was brought to bear, for Morris, whose eye for romance was always keen, had informed his mother that Mr. Goldstone held his assistant in admiring and sentimental regard.

“Sooner he looks on her, sooner he has glad looks,” Morris reported, “und sooner she looks on him, sooner he has proud looks. I guess, maybe, he could to have kind feelings

over her. Say, what you think, he gives me a necktie mit funny smells und a spot on it the whiles she's aunties mit me."

"Und how does your auntie make? Has she feelings?" asked the match-making Mrs. Mogilewsky.

"I couldn't to tell," answered Morris. "I don't know, even."

Neither did Mr. Goldstone. Neither, sometimes, did Esther. She did not intend to spend her life in mourning for a faithless lover, and yet — and yet — But Mrs. Mogilewsky did not approve of procrastination in an affair so important and so advantageous. She visited the Grand Street store; she invited the proprietor to spend an evening at her apartment. And Mr. Goldstone, divested of his derby and overcoat — a guise in which Esther had never seen him — proved

so affable and was so devoted that Esther felt that it might be pleasant to put away all thoughts save those of duty, and to bestow this very powerful and desirable brother-in-law upon her house. Her dreams that night were all of pomp and pride. She saw herself released from daily toil and living in the four-roomed flat over the Grand Street store. Mr. Goldstone had promised to engage it for her so soon as another engagement should be agreed upon. And there, with all her wants supplied and all her wishes granted, she should live in peace and plenty. Should she do it, she wondered, should she do it ?

On the next morning Morris, on an early visit to the bakery, met the long lost Isaac, and came tearing back to his auntie with a letter. "He sees me on the block," he panted.

“He’s awful stylish now, und he says like this: ‘Ain’t your auntie got no letters off of me?’ Und I says, ‘No,’ und he says —’cuse me—‘Damn Goldstone. I writes your auntie whole bunches of lovin’ letters. I guess Goldstone don’t gives them to her when she comes by the store.’ Sooner he gives me a quarter und this letter fer you.”

The letter was a masterpiece. The eloquence which had once swayed thousands, was centered now upon one. In flights of adjectives and flocks of capital letters, Isaac poured out his heart. He upbraided Esther for her disregard of his devotion, her unresponsiveness to his former appeals. He told her of his altered fortunes and of his unchanged heart. He announced his attainment to the post of floor-walker in a Sixth Avenue establishment, and laid at her feet

his love, his hand, his two-roomed home and a position in the millinery department of his new field.

Esther reached Mr. Goldstone's emporium in a flutter of happiness, and under the romantic influence of her "loving letter," she once more dressed the brown-browed lady in full bridal array.

Mr. Goldstone, arriving somewhat later, and still under the spell of the evening's joy, added the finishing touch. Sending Esther to the cellar upon some improvised errand, he plucked off the bridal veil and wreath, twisted the black locks into a hard knot, substituted an auburn wig from his stock of "human hair goods, all naturally curled," readjusted the veil and wreath, and awaited Esther's return. That she was moved he could not doubt. That she would not accept his

attentions was also made clear to him, and from this disinclination he could not move her, even by his gracious assurance that she might wear that identical costume, "as is" upon their nuptial day. He was puzzled and disappointed, but quite determined that she should either change her mind that very day or feel the weight of his displeasure.

Meanwhile Isaac, that impetuous lover, had decided not to wait for a written reply, but to venture bravely into the enemy's country and to watch for his divinity outside the Grand Street store. To that end he secured a half-hour's grace from his new employment and cautiously approached the scene of his joys and sorrows. From the opposite side of the street he reconnoitered. There was the gold and black sign, there the smiling lady and there the strong Italian. He



could see clearly into the shop, for the door was unobscured, but it seemed unaccountably empty. There were the high piled bargain tables, there the hanging samples of ladies' and gents' attire, the glittering heaps of tinware, the dangling rainbows of ribbon, but not a sign of life.

And yet one corner of the shop was full of action. Between the wood backing of the window space and the jewelry counter Esther Mogilewsky cowered before the vituperation of Mr. Goldstone who, having found his blandishments of no avail, had changed his tactics and was now screaming at his terrified assistant —

“Ten cents is gone, don't I tells you! Ten cents what I took from off a lady und lays by the towels counter. Who takes it? You. I'll get you arrested und sent by the Island. You

is thieves. You is robbers. Where is that policeman ?”

Her pitiful attempts at propitiation and explanation drove him further into fury, for he knew much more clearly than she could that the money was in his own pocket and that he had invented the charge to punish her coldness and exhibit his power. His face was distorted with rage and his gesticulations verged so closely upon blows that Esther cringed before them.

But Isaac saw none of this and his courage grew. Carefully he crossed the street, gingerly he approached, promptly he was seized by the strong Italian Puller-in, and vigorously he was dragged into the shop by the official he had added to the establishment, but who failed to recognize him in his official Prince Albert. And then Esther was yielding to

wild hysterics, while the Italion, with Celtic curses, was shaking Mr. Goldstone like a rat, and “landing” wherever land might be.

“Ye ould devil,” he cried, with characteristic Latin warmth, “I’d like to shake the black heart out of yer black carcass. Find her hat, my boy — find the poor child’s hat — and put some of those fancy fixin’s upon her. We’ll have the weddin’ this minute of time and I’ll lock this swine in here till it’s over.”

And by an alien power, without pomp or ceremony, Isaac and Esther were married. They were attended by that most sustaining of bridesmaids, most encouraging of grooms-men and proudest of witnesses — Terence O’Toole, the Italion Puller-in.

Mr. Goldstone’s emporium is now for Gents’ Furnishing *Exclusively*, but his life is

WARDS OF LIBERTY

not quite without female influence. In his garret he enjoys the companionship of a smiling, placid, silent lady, black of eye and black of hair, in full bridal regalia.

**THE GIFTS OF THE  
PHILOSOPHERS**



THE GIFTS OF THE  
PHILOSOPHERS

The morning prayer was over and a hymn in progress when the door of the Katharine Wellwood Mission Kindergarten opened cautiously, and a small, dark head with bright eyes and yellow cigar-ribboned braids presented itself. Concetta Maddalena Salvatori looked her first upon the scene of many future joys and sorrows. For a space she watched the circle of singing children, the goldenrod in its center, the birds in their cages, the plants in the windows, the sunshine pouring in. She turned her attention next to the teachers: to Miss Knowles, fresh and cheery in her white linen dress; to Miss

Parker, hard-featured and stern of expression; lastly, to Miss Martin. And slowly Concetta raised a short arm in a yellow satin sleeve, waved it encouragingly into the darkness of the hall, and ushered in Maria Annunciata Salvatori, her mother. Again Concetta encouraged seemingly empty space until Pietro Giuseppe Salvatori, husband and father, joined and completed the smiling family group.

Miss Martin disengaged herself from the embraces of her two neighbors in the circle and approached to interview the visitors. The manner of Pietro Giuseppe was wonderful and perfect — in which it bore little resemblance to the staring curiosity with which the Katharine Wellwood Mission Kindergarten was regarding him and his in defiance of the whispered remonstrances of Miss



Knowles and the Medusa glare of Miss Parker.

“Get on to the Dagos,” began John Healy, while Pietro explained in florid English that the lady was his wife, newly arrived from Italy, and the bambina his daughter, simultaneously imported. Here the clan of Salvatori bobbed in unison and beamed in concert. And now, Pietro further set forth, their prayer was this: Might the blessing of a free education, beginning with the ladies and bird-cages before him, and culminating in college hall or convent cloister, be brought to bear upon the diminutive but “*ver smarta*” head of Concetta Maddalena Salvatori?

Again they beamed. Again they bobbed, and Miss Martin yielded. Pietro Giuseppe kissed her hand, gathered his wife to his

## WARDS OF LIBERTY



side, and withdrew, leaving Miss Martin face to face with a bambina of four summers, a bewitching smile, and not one word of English.

But if she was backward in the language of the land, she was well versed in the language of love. Miss Martin stretched forth an encouraging hand; the bambina kissed it rapturously, pressed it to the square bosom of her red and black apron, and laid a velvet cheek upon it. All blithely she allowed herself to be led to the circle, all blissfully she disposed a "ver shorta" yellow satin skirt upon her little chair, all happily she crossed her

## GIFTS OF THE PHILOSOPHERS



small hands in the lap of the red and black apron and set about enjoying herself. She was quite in the dark as to the words she heard, but she caught the spirit quickly and listened with sudden gurglings of delight to the story told by the teacher, to the shy contributions of Becky Kastrinsky, to the sledgehammer witticism of Isidore Lavinsky. Words were nothing to her, but here were flowers and playfellows, and Love.

When the children's vocabulary had been sufficiently paraded and enriched, Miss Martin swung the bambina to a point of observation on the piano's flat top and struck a

resounding chord of command. The children sprang to their feet and Concetta's heart leaped within her breast. Another chord reverberated through the room — and through the small candidate for college honors — and the bambina's eyes rolled widely until Becky Jacower laid a soothing hand upon one of the purple stockings and whispered the comforting but uncomprehended words:

“Don't you have no 'fraid, little Dago girl”—Becky was three years and a half old and small beyond belief—“it's on'y music. It ain't a-goin' to hurt you.”

“Ah-ah-ah!” gurgled Concetta, and, being thus reassured, began to suck her thumb.

She was later lifted down into a country of beauty and delight, a country where gracious ladies played upon pianos or sang

songs — with gentle swayings of arms and bodies — or danced and ran about with a grace and an abandon wonderful to see. And in this country there were children of lesser but still surprising charm and courtesy, who, following the example of the ladies, sang and marched and played enchanting games.

Before twelve o'clock the bambina was on terms of caressment with the youngest assistant, and of friendliness with all the world, with the possible exception of Miriam Sosnowsky, who had torn off and forcibly retained one of the yellow cigar ribbons. But that had occurred early in the morning, and Concetta forgot it as she worked her way, densely puzzled but supremely happy, through scenes of wonder and enchantment. Miss Martin was delighted. Here was proof

positive of the atmospheric influence disassociated from and independent of the speech medium. Here was a child who had heard no understandable word for three long hours, and who was nevertheless happy as a lark and alert as a fox-terrier. Concetta was, as the sociological assistant learnedly remarked: "A thorough Latin. So quick in yielding to a thought current, so ready to grasp an idea."

When the good-by song had been sung, and the babies were filing past their teachers with unsteady bows and awkward handshakes, Jacob Abrahamowsky whispered to Miss Martin: "Say, I guess the Ginny don't know what's polite. She's hookin' all things. I says I should tell you, und she makes a snoot on me und hooks some more."

And he was right. Concetta Maddalena

## GIFTS OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

had not confined herself to ideas. Sadly Miss Martin detained the "thorough Latin" and reclaimed the kindergarten property by her secreted, while the flippant assistant knelt by the small culprit's side and essayed consolation, and the sociological assistant made an entry in her note-book: "Mem.— To look up racial morality in Italy. Honesty?" But Miss Martin knew that she was face to face with an honest misunderstanding sufficiently difficult to explain to English-speaking children, but which she despaired of ever making clear to the "ver smarta" head resting against her shoulder.

For how could she make clear to this baby Herr Froebel's definition of the word gift? How persuade her to go gratefully home with her thought content enriched by the idea of cube and sphere while the real box and ball

were put back into the closet? How convince her that there had been sincerity and not guile in the smile of the lady who was now trying to reclaim the presents she had so graciously bestowed a few hours before?

And the bambina wept — not with the noisy vehemence of the Jewish babyhood to which the Mission was accustomed, but with large, slow tears and heavy sobs most disquieting to the hearers' nerves. Miss Martin rocked the sufferer in her kind arms and murmured endearments the while. The scientific assistant took copious notes. The flippant assistant brought a large spray from the bowl of goldenrod and pinned it to the front of the red and black apron. Gradually Concetta was soothed; her sobs died away; her smiles were restored; but she was a sadder and a wiser child when she rushed



upon her mother who had come to fetch her and broke into liquid Italian baby-talk.

Miss Martin did not know the Italian of "Indian giver," but she read the idea very plainly in Concetta's glance of disillusioned farewell. Under its blighting power she relinquished her claim upon the rainbow paper which Concetta had taken unto herself — she even added a few strands of dyed raffia and a little red ball. There were more bobbing courtesies, much pantomimic gratitude and more kissing of hands before Mrs. Salvatori wrapped the bambina in a circular knitted cape of pink and purple, and the kindergarten room was left to its rulers.

"A charming baby!" cried Miss Martin warmly.

"And with such taking ways!" added the flippant assistant.

But the sociological assistant wrote in her note-book: "Mem. — Are we ever really justified in compromising upon a moral point?"

Weeks passed, and Concetta learned all the customs and laws of the kindergarten except that of coming at a seasonable hour. Miss Martin's remonstrances were careful, copious and vain. This one of her charges who stood most in need of the language training of the morning circle was always late for it. Other children were sometimes absent, sometimes delayed, as when Simon Siskousky's father's sister was married, and Simon went on a family spree which marked the ceremony; or when small brothers and sisters of other students fell ill — or down stairs — and required tendance. These things Miss Martin could understand, deplore,

forgive, but the unfailing irregularity of Concetta was more difficult to cope with. At some varying hour between nine-thirty and eleven she would come trippingly in — all beaming smiles and gleaming safety-pins. Always Miss Martin's glance of pained remonstrance changed the smiles to puckers of contrition; always the flippant assistant comforted her favorite; always Miss Martin relented; always the learned assistant added to the data she was collecting for a paper to be used before the Federation of Mothers' Clubs on "The Futility of Sporadic Discipline in Primary Education."

Concetta unconsciously contributed to the psychologic literature of the day. The other children were typical, but she was a variation, and the workings of the "ver smarta" head were observed and analysed with an eager

hunger. C. M. S.—in psychologic as in medical literature the patient is initially identified — belonged to the visual sensory class of psycho-organisms. Under her tightly-twisted and firmly-tied braids the genetic unfolding of the emotional soul —“Gemuth” — went bravely on through the second or separate stage of the Ego. When Miss Knowles heard these tidings her concern was very great.

“You’re quite sure it won’t hurt her?” she asked. “And where is she going next?”

“Back to the Gifts. Out of the Derivative we pass back to the Originative through the Point.”

The “Gemüth” was just then unfolding on the floor, and the flippant assistant picked it up and cuddled it.

“Ego, dear,” she began.

“Dago,” Nathan Balcowitsky politely corrected.

“What?” asked the flippant assistant.  
“What did you say, Nathan?”

“Well, Missis Parker she says we dassent to call her that, und we dassent to call her Ginny, neither. But anyway, it ain’t Ago. It’s Dago. She don’t likes you should call her that. She could to cry.”

“Then I won’t,” Miss Knowles promised demurely. “And thank you for reminding me.”

“You’re welcome, all right,” responded the boy; and Miss Knowles turned to the placid bambina.

“Do you know where you’re going?” she demanded. “Aren’t you lucky to be neither a rich man nor a camel? For you — my child, I hope you appreciate

your privileges — are going through the Point.”

“Si, signorina mia,” lisped the “Gemüth,” and gurgled entrancingly.

But there was one stage of unfolding to which the bambina persistently objected. She could not be reconciled to parting with the Froebelian gifts at twelve o'clock each day. Daily the tendrils of her being clambered and clung to the “type solids,” and daily the “gift thought” had to be repeated for her rebellious ear. What did it profit to her that cubes and spheres had done their subtle service and were “bending back towards the Point?” She wanted to take them home, wanted to show the smooth wooden treasures to her mother, wanted, more than all else, to take them to bed with her. Her masterpieces of sewing, folding and painting were

pasted in a book, but she did not understand that, in the fulness of time, she would become sole proprietor of her collected works. Even had she known she would still have been far from contented. She wanted things now.

When she could forget her depraved yearnings after carnal things she found the kindergarten a very pleasant place. The children understood her through the inarticulate language of childhood. Little blossoms of Italian began to adorn the English of Miss Martin and of the flippant assistant. Little sprigs of English sprang up in Concetta's soft Tuscan. And to make the close bond between school life and the home which educators advocate and teachers suffer, Concetta's mother washed curtains and towels for Miss Martin and did sewing for

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

Miss Martin's mother, until a great and mutual admiration bound the house of Salvatori to the house of Martin.

In the beginning of December, Concetta Maddalena Salvatori, who had labored darkly through November and the "Thanksgiving Thought," around which all true kindergartners know that the October and November suns do roll, found herself in familiar and peaceful waters. Pumpkins, corn, snowy landscapes, Puritans in queer costumes but accustomed amity, the enticing and deceptive cranberry, all vanished and gave place to sweet-eyed Madonnas — old favorites of Concetta's and associated in her memory with incense, and soft bells, and chanting choirs, and white-robed processions.

Life was gradually set to a faster and yet



faster measure. Occupations lost their symbolic nature and degenerated, so the sociological assistant noted with disgust, into the pasting of endless chains and ornaments for the decoration of the Christmas tree. There were no more songs of dogs and fishes and birds.

The pictures on the wall were different, too. They showed forth in distracting repetition a stout old gentleman with a very red suit, and a very red nose to match it. Concetta was told that this person's name was Santa Claus. In vain she looked for the halo of sanctity about his head, for the calm eyes, the decorous robes of her own familiar galaxy of saints. In vain, too, she questioned her mother as to this gentleman's place in the Litany. There was no such saint, Mrs. Salvatori maintained; yet there were his

pictures all about the kindergarten. Between Abraham Lincoln and Sir Galahad, between her own Madonna and the flags of all nations, between the Colossi of Memnon and George Washington, this new saint was driving horses with ears like trees, climbing down chimneys, looking benignly upon sleeping children, laughing, winking, scrambling up the side of the house. Never had the bambina dreamed of such undignified sanctity!

It was yet ten or twelve days before the Christmas of the calendar when the change in the spirit of the kindergarten reached its climax. The Christmas celebration of the school always antedates that of the world. Concetta arrived one morning to find a large tree in the middle of the room and excitement and desire in the air. If she had been in time she might have understood that Froebel's

definition of "gift" was to be superseded, on this one occasion, by that of Webster. But she was late, and the distribution of presents had already begun when she slipped into her place in the circle; and to her the treasures with which Miss Martin filled her lap differed only in attractiveness from the other temptations with which her ways had been beset. But the difference was great and hard to resist, for in her arms she held a doll: a smiling doll with tiny teeth, a large, immovable bonnet, and eyes that opened and shut.

The conscience which had withstood Froebel's whole series, which had passed unscathed out of the Derivative, back to the Originative, and through the Point, fell down before this pink and white bambina staring so pleasingly with her wide blue eyes and smelling so alluringly of fresh glue and

varnish and of new satine. Other toys lay upon the floor, but Concetta hardly glanced at them. All her eyes were for the pink bambina and all her heart was in her eyes. Stealthily she left her place in the circle; stealthily she crept to the closet and found her gay blue reefer; stealthily she buttoned it over her own fast-beating heart and the bambina's changeless smile; stealthily she reached the door of the school-room and escaped.

"Dagos is funny. They don't know what's polite," commented Isidore Lavinsky. "She don't say 'thanks' nor nothin'. She just scoots. She don't takes all her presents even. Crazy little Dago!"

"She will come back for the rest," the flippant assistant prophesied while the sociological assistant noted "the dawn of the mother-soul in C. M. S."

Mrs. Salvatori had been notified of the Christmas holidays and was quite prepared for Concetta's refusal to go to school on the next morning. She also unhesitatingly accepted her small daughter's announcement that the beautiful bambina with the eyes that shut, the teeth that showed, the bonnet so wide and so immovable, had been presented by Miss Martin. And Concetta, with a theft and a lie upon her conscience, loved the smiling cause of all her sinning so persistently and so demonstratively that the pink bonnet grew dissipated in its outline and the pink skirt limp and dowdy in its folds. But Concetta saw nothing of her idol's waning until, under the stress of a paroxysm of affection, the bambina shed its arms and legs and drooped its head forlornly upon an appalling length of elastic neck.

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

Then wild was the terror of Concetta Maddalena, and wild her attempts to incarnate her joy. All vainly and all sobbingly she tried to recombine the fragments of which, moment by moment, she grew more shudderingly afraid. Confession brought no assuagement of her grief, for when Mr. and Mrs. Salvatori understood that their Concetta was qualifying for prison cells, rather than for college halls or convent cloisters, they fell into one another's arms and wept, nor ceased from their bewailings until the stairway was blocked by sympathizing neighbors. And thus into the new-born mother-soul of Concetta the world-old mother-sorrow entered.

On the evening of that same day — and it was Christmas Eve — the house of Martin was in festal array. Dinner was over, the

tree was lighted, and the small nephews and nieces in the full tide of enjoyment, when Miss Elizabeth was summoned to the hall.

Under the mistletoe and holly she found the clan of Salvatori gathered in a dejected group. The mother carried a tear-stained bambina. The father carried a paper bag. At the sight of Miss Martin in a soft and low-necked gown of white, Concetta's weeping broke out afresh. She was prepared to cling for comfort and forgiveness to the shirt-waisted Miss Martin of the kindergarten, to kneel in confession and repentance at a tailor-made knee. But this transformation terrified her. In deep abasement Pietro began his explanation, while Maria Annunziata's conflicting love and anger led her alternately to soothe and slap the "ver smarta" head in the hollow of her arm.

When Concetta's depravity had been explained and mourned Pietro slowly drew out the ghastly sections of the disintegrated pink-robed doll.

And Miss Martin, after a moment's puzzlement, caught the bambina from Mrs. Salvatori's arms and fell to crooning over her and to rebuking Mr. Salvatori in one incoherent address:

"Poor little baby," she began, "did her nasty old teacher give her a nasty old breakable doll? Nonsense, Mr. Salvatori, Concetta never would steal. And did she come to her teacher for another doll? You might have guessed that it was a present! Well, Miss Martin will give her a much better doll, with longer curls and brighter eyes, and clothes that come on and off. I should have expected you to know your own child. I tell you she



is as honest as she is dear. Come and see the Christmas tree, darling, and get some more presents. And you and Mrs. Salvatori must come, too. There are presents enough here for every one."

But Concetta had learned her lesson. When the joys of Heaven had been showered upon her and it was time to go away, she laid her treasures at Miss Martin's feet and encouraged her parents to do likewise. And suddenly Miss Martin understood. In deep abasement and contrition she undid the training in stoicism to which she had devoted so much time. She even persuaded Concetta that the "Indian giver" attitude was not her constant one, and reduced that mystified young criminal to a state of tremulous but happy puzzlement. She stood upon her threshold and watched the departure of her

guests, and when they had disappeared, still chattering and gesticulating, she apostrophized the land of stars in which benign philosophers may be supposed to dwell.

“Herr Froebel oh, Herr Froebel!” she sighed; “we have made a dreadful mistake, you and I. Consider what we have done to that flower of a baby. But you didn’t know English, I don’t know German, neither of us knew Italian, and which of us could ever hope to understand the heart of a little child?”

# STAR OF BETHLEHEM



STAR OF BETHLEHEM

“Lord God of Israel, hear my wrongs,” the rabbi prompted; “grant me vengeance on the accursed Christian.”

“No, grandpa; I don’t needs I should say mine wrongs prayers,” Isidore pleaded; “I don’t needs them.”

“Recite thy wrongs,” the rabbi commanded; “stand upright and begin.”

“ ‘Lord God of Israel, hear my wrongs,’ ” Isidore began in measured and sonorous Hebrew. “ ‘Let thine ear be attentive and thine arm swift to avenge. Look down upon thy servant and mark his suffering. Out of the town of a far country where we dwelt in

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

love and peace with all men, out of the temple where my grandfather spent the years of his long life, out of the house wherein my mother was born and wherein she bore me, away from the friends who loved us, away from the friends we loved, the tyrant drove us. We came to the tyrant's land. Behold, there was no other place. With curses they received us; with indignities they welcomed us. And my mother —' " Rabbi Meirkoff covered his eyes with one long thin hand and half sobbed, half groaned, "Thy mother!" Always at this point in the "wrongs prayers" he did these things, and Isidore, understanding as little of what he was saying as many another six-year-old understands of the Lord's Prayer, regarded this interruption as essential to the proceedings. So he resumed:

“ ‘My mother, the only child and daughter of this old man, they carried off to be their plaything for such time as her beauty should endure. My father they foully slew, and there remains of our ancient house a man too old for vengeance and a child too young. Cast, then, thine eyes upon me, and hasten the day of my strength.’ Now can I go by the block ?”

“Yea,” said the rabbi, weakly; for no repetition could dull the agony which, at each new recital of his wrongs, tore his tired old heart with savage hatred and black despair. Each evening Isidore dragged him again through the scenes of that night whose evening left him in his stately library surrounded by his books and by his little family, and whose morning found him with other fugitives fleeing toward the frontier, a crying



*"The Block"*



child beneath his cloak and a great fear in all his being. Five years had passed since then, and he was still afraid; still dazed; still, too often, hungry.

“Can I go by the block?” asked Isidore.

“If thou wilt shun the oppressor, hold no communion with him, and touch not of his food. And woe to them upon whom that monster of fire and flame which they call fire-engine comes suddenly! Go now, and with my blessing.”

Isidore clattered out into the squalid hall and a door at the farther end opened cautiously. With a rapturous chuckle he threw himself into the darkness beyond it and was caught in a close embrace.

“Boy of my heart,” whispered a fond old voice, “how are you to-night?”

“I’m healthy,” Isidore replied as his

hostess closed the door and lighted an inch-long candle which shone upon them redly from the cracked sides of what had once been a sanctuary lamp. "I'm healthy and I guess I goes by the block."

"Is it like that you'd go?" Mrs. Keating demanded. "I'll have to wash your face first."

"But you washed it yesterday," the boy objected. "I don't needs you shall wash it some more."

"Then you can't go out," said she.

"Then I'll stay in," said he.

Which was exactly what Mrs. Keating desired.

They spent a delightful evening: one of many, many such. The hostess entertained the guest with reminiscences of far-off days in Connemara when her heart and her life

## STAR OF BETHLEHEM

were young. She was a relic of the time when East Broadway and all its environs had been a prosperous Irish quarter, and the years which had changed these stately homes to squalid tenements had changed her: once the gracious mistress of one of them: to the worn and fragile sweeper of St. Mary's Church.

"My mother," she told the boy, "was a lovely girl; her hair was as black as the night, and her eyes were as blue as the sky."

"Mine mama had from the gold hair," the guest interrupted, "mine grandpa he tells me. From the gold hair, mit curls. On'y somethings comes by nights and takes my mama away."

"The saints preserve us! What kind of a thing?"

"I don't know what kind from a thing

he was. I don't know the name from him out of English; on'y he kills my papa, and he takes away my mama, and he hits my grandpa a fierce hack. I guess maybe he had looks off the fire-engines. My grandpa he has a' awful fraid over fire-engines."

Mrs. Keating crossed herself devoutly. "And it was walking around alone?" she asked.

"Walkin' and yellin'."

"And it never touched you?"

"It ain't seen me; I sneaks behind my papa where he lays on the floor; they had a fraid from him, and while he was dead, blood comes out of him. It goes on mine dress. That's what my grandpa says."

"That's right, my dear; that's right," said the old woman. "Your dress was stiff with it when I found you."

STAR OF BETHLEHEM

“Tell me about how you found me some more,” Isidore pleaded; “it is a’ awful nice story.”

“Well, I will,” Mrs. Keating promised. “But first I must show you what I’ve got for you. I found it when I was sweeping the church.” And she bestowed upon him a limp and shrunken paper bag containing six peanuts. As he rested happily on her knee and consumed this light refreshment, she began the story of which he, being the hero, never tired.

“It is five years ago this December, on a snowy night just like this, that I found you crying in the next room. You were all alone and very cold.”

“Und I had a mad,” the subject of this biography added with a chastened pride.

“You were as cross as two sticks,” said

his friend; "and you were dirty, and your dress was torn, and ——"

"It had blood from off my papa?"

"Well, I didn't mind any of those things; I wanted a little boy, and I was glad to get him — glad to get even a dirty little boy."

Isidore's sensitive face flushed and his lip quivered. This was a digression and not at all to his mind.

"I was a baby," he urged; "a little bit of baby. I couldn't to wash mine self, und mine grandpa he had a sad."

"Dear heart, that's a joke. I was only too glad to see you. You were as welcome as the flowers of May; and I picked you up and brought you here, where I had everything ready for you, because I knew that you were coming. I had waited years for you. I had prayed to Holy Mary for you."

“Holy-Mary-Mother-Mild,” said Isidore, devoutly.

“‘Mother of God,’ I used to pray to her, ‘you see that I am lonely; you know that empty arms can ache. Send me something to take care of; send me —’”

“And she sent you kittens,” the enthralled audience interrupted. “She sent six crawly kittens mitout no eyes and mit whiskers by the face. She was awful good.”

“The woman on the next floor was moving and gave them to me. But they soon grew up, and I was as badly off as ever.”

“So you prayed some more,” he said.

“I did, indeed; and Mary —”

“Holy-Mary-Mother-Mild,” he again insisted.

“Send me a little boy to take care of.”

“Und you lays me on your bed, und you

WARDS OF LIBERTY

gives me I should eat, und you makes me I should sleep, und by mornings comes my grandpa mit fierce mads.”

“Glory be to God! he was the maddest thing I ever saw; I thought he would have had a fit. First he cried over you, and then he cursed me — I didn’t understand a word he said, but I knew by the look of him — until he was as weak as a kitten.”

“On’y Holy-Mary-Mother-Mild ain’t sent *him*?” the boy interposed again.

“Indeed, she did not. And then he took you away into the next room and warned me — I didn’t understand a word he said, but I knew by the look of him — never to go near you or to touch you again.”

“And it makes mit you nothings?” laughed the boy.

“Nothing at all; when he was out I’d



go and take care of you and feed you and dress you in the little shirts and things I made you out of Father Burke's old surplice and the tail of Father Jerome's cassock. And your grandfather, poor old gentleman! so queer in his head and so wild in his ways, walked up and down Grand Street all day long — a sandwich-man, God help him! — and came home too tired to notice the clothes that were on you or to ask where they came from."

"He never says nothings on'y prayers," said Isidore, sadly. "All times he says prayers. I don't know what he says — they is out of Jewish; on'y they makes him awful mad."

"Dearie, you mustn't bother him when he's like that. Just try to take care of him, like a good boy. Because if you're a good boy now you'll grow up to be a good man."

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

“Und I’ll go and kill that thing what kills my papa und steals my mama away — my mama what had from the gold hair, und a light face, und was loving *so* much mit my grandpa und mit me.”

“Of course,” said Mrs. Keating, “you must kill the beast — and oh, it must be a cruel beast to harm a lovely lady! I know she was a lovely lady,” she explained as she laid her hand upon his golden head and turned his beautiful little face up to her own loving one; “I know she was lovely because a little bird told me so.”

“I guess she was,” Isidore agreed, “the while she was loving much mit us und my grandpa was loving much mit her; her name stands like that Leah, und all times my grandpa he makes prayers over it. By times he makes sad prayers over it; by times he

STAR OF BETHLEHEM

makes mad prayers over it; by times he don't says no prayers at all, on'y 'Leah, Leah, Leah!' My poor grandpa! He has it pretty hard."

"He has, indeed," said the hostess; "and he'll be no better as long as the beast lives. So you must grow as strong and as fast as you can, and then go home and kill it. And you'll never grow at all if you stay up late like this, talking to a foolish old woman. So come and say the prayer I taught you, and then go to bed. But first I'll light the altar."

Isidore helped her; it was his greatest joy, this little altar whose foundation was a three-legged table and whose crowning glory was a much defaced and faded but still beautiful copy of a Raphael Madonna. There were other holy pictures of lesser size, several cracked red-glass bowls, some broken

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

vases, a paper flower or so, a spray of dried grass, bits of tinsel and scraps of lace-edged linen.

Isidore was supplied with a broken-spirited taper and spent five minutes of reverent joy in lighting the innumerable candle-ends which his hostess had fixed to pieces of broken china or to circles of tin cut from the tops of corn- and tomato-cans.

Then the tinsel shone, the linen gleamed, the red-glass glowed, and the gentle-eyed Madonna looked down upon a little face as fair and as pure as that resting against her breast, as Isidore knelt before her to say his evening prayer:

*Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look on me, a little child;  
Pity mine and pity me,  
And suffer me to come to thee*

At the door he turned. "Good-night, dear Lady-Friend," said he; and then, to the painted family over the altar, "Good-night, Holy-Mary-Mother-Mild; good-night, Gentle-Jesus-Meek-and-Mild." "Mild" he had decided was the surname of the holy family.

Upon his return to his own room Isidore was greeted by his grandfather's sad eyes and the constant question, "Thou hast held no communion with the oppressor?"

"No, grandpa," answered Isidore; "I ain't seen him even."

"There is time," said the Rabbi Meirkoff; "thou art as yet too young. But the God of Israel will grant thee vengeance. For has He not written, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth' ? Aye, but what for such wrongs as ours ?"

WARDS OF LIBERTY

“Boy of my heart,” said Mrs. Keating some mornings later, when Isidore knocked at her door, “is the old gentleman gone?”

“Sure he is,” answered Isidore; “he puts him on mit them boards and he goes by Grand Street. He won’t never let me put me on mit boards. I likes I shall wear them. Und my grandpa he *don’t* likes he wear them. He has a fraid over the streets. He likes he shall sit where no noises und no peoples is. He has it pretty hard.”

“God be good to him, indeed he has. A sandwich man afraid of the streets and wanting a little bit of quiet to end his days in. The saints pity him! But I have a treat for you, my darling, to-day. I’m going over to the church to help with the crib and I’m going to take you with me. You will be good and quiet won’t you?”

“Sure will I,” said Isidore in his unchanging form of assent, and he began to be quiet and good upon the instant. He sat upon a cushion which once had graced a *prie-dieu* and still smelt faintly of dead incense while his friend bonneted and shawled herself. He loved the church. To his mind, the only place approaching it in attractiveness was a stable, two blocks away, where a dejected horse and three dejected dogs lived in peace and unison with a dejected pedlar. They were all his friends, though Mrs. Keating frowned upon the intimacy.

But of the church she approved and in the church he was happy. The peace, the coolness, the spaciousness of it appealed to the innate refinement of his little soul. The mystery of its dim-lit arches, its high galleries and choir, its sometimes sounding

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

organ, and its one high lamp pleased the poet in him. And everything interested the boy he was. But most of all he loved the flowers. The only other flowers he knew were in a florist's window with cold glass interposed between them and their small lover. But in the church were less distant flowers, and one might touch them, smell them, fondle them, if one was so fortunate as to have a Lady-Friend whose privilege it was to dust the altar. Also there was a bell — a wonderful bell three stories high and of an entrancing brightness — and from it one might extract booming responses with a small tight knuckle when the attention of one's Lady-Friend was centered upon dusty cushions.

But to-day there were other things to watch and to wonder at. There were lights



and people inside the high gold railing which separated the altar from the common ground. A noise of hammering echoed strangely through the silence which had never in his experience been disturbed save by the distant jangle of a horse-car or the rumble of a truck. And when Isidore's dazzled eyes grew clear he saw that the small altar where Holy-Mary-Mother-Mild had always stood had undergone a transformation. It was no longer an altar: it was a stable. And Isidore was very glad, for his Lady-Friend could never again object to his visits to the pedlar, the dejected horse, and the three dejected dogs; since here was the whole heavenly choir assembled in a barn, benignly associating with a very small, very large-eared horse, a wide-horned cow, and three woolly lambs. Holy-Mary-Mother-Mild, discarding her crown

## WARDS OF LIBERTY

and lily, had come down from her pedestal to kneel beside the manger. Behind her stood Holy-Joseph-Father-Mild; while three other gentlemen whom Isidore knew to be saints because they wore "like ladies clothes and from the gold somethings on their heads," offered gifts of price. Two long-winged angels knelt at the end of the manger, and in it, lying on shining straw, was Gentle-Jesus-Meek-and-Mild. Isidore was entranced. Mrs. Keating opened the golden gate and led him into the quiet group of adorers, where he knelt as reverently as any one of them and looked as much a part of the picture. His Lady-Friend knelt by his side, and they said their prayers together, while high above them the great star of Bethlehem shone with an unsteady luster.

Now the star of Bethlehem was used only

## STAR OF BETHLEHEM

on great festivals and its attachment was insecure. As Isidore and Mrs. Keating prayed, a decorator at the main altar threw a heavy green garland over the high-hung gas-pipe which crossed the chancel. There was a quick cry of warning and Isidore looked up in time to see that the star of Bethlehem had broken loose and his dear Friend was in peril. The heavy blazing iron crashed down upon her thin shoulders but Isidore's little body bore the brunt.

Some hours later he opened his eyes upon the scene of all his joy and cherishment. Holy-Mary-Mother-Mild smiled down upon him from her accustomed frame and he lay in his Lady-Friend's arms.

"Boy of my heart," she greeted him, "you shouldn't have done it."

WARDS OF LIBERTY

“It was polite,” he said. “Stars on the neck ain’t healthy for you, und so I catches it. On’y say, it makes me a sickness.”

“Go to sleep, dear,” said Mrs. Keating. “Shut your pretty eyes and go to sleep.”

Obediently Isidore closed them, and then suddenly reminded her:

“I ain’t said mine prayers.”

“Say them, then, sweetheart,” she humored him. And, when he had reconciled himself to a stiff unresponsiveness of his body which forbade his kneeling or even folding his hands, he turned his face to the lights and began:

*Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,  
Look on me, a little child;  
Pity mine and pity me,  
And suffer me to come to thee.*

“To come to thee!” Mrs. Keating echoed.

“Dear God to come to thee!”

“Und now,” said Isidore, after some pause, “I guess I says mine wrongs prayers,” and addressed the Lady of the altar in the tongue which had been hers in the days of her white virginity at Nazareth:

“ ‘Lord God of Israel, hear my wrongs! Grant me vengeance upon the accursed Christian! We came unto their land. With curses they received us; with indignities they welcomed us ——’ ”

“Go to sleep, my darling,” crooned his Lady-Friend and kissed him. “You can finish your prayers — later.”

And presently she laid him — quite still — among the lights and the paper flowers on the altar of that faith whose symbol

WARDS OF LIBERTY

had crushed him, whose perversion had crushed his people, but whose truth had made all the happiness which his short life had known.

THE END













