

starting to run down the street to those other fellows, thinking to help them make a little more noise."

"It is well for you, you got knocked down then," said Frank. "Those 'hoodlums' are a nuisance to civilized people, and a disgrace to the community. There ought to be the law against such doings. Shouldn't think your father would approve of your taking part in their rowdyisms?"

"He doesn't," I confessed, feeling my face flush, "but it's awfully dull, staying at home always." "Do you live here?" asked Frank.

"Yes. Come in wont you?" I said quickly, for I liked Frank, who was a jolly fellow, getting to be quite an oldish young man, twenty-five or six and making good wages, but not a bit stuck up; just as sociable with a boy like me, as with any of the men.

"Is your father at home?" he inquired.

"No, gone to his quorum meeting."

"And you, spending the evening all alone?"

"Not exactly; father has other children." "Boys?"

"Only one besides me, and that a baby; but a real nice girl who never makes fun of any one. Wont you come in? She is a lovely reader, and was going to read to me. Come in, wont you, Frank? My sister always selects good things to read, and I know you would like the story she will read to us—come on in Frank!"

Frank laughed a little now, at my eagerness; then asked.

"Really Mark, were you not hurt by our fall and scramble?"

"Not a bit," I answered, laughing again at thought of it. "It did me good, gave me the laugh I've been sick for all day."

"Some of those 'beautiful' bushes that I tumbled into have scratched my wrist rather badly," said Frank, wrapping his handkerchief round it.

"My goodness!" I exclaimed, "and I hadn't sense enough to ask if you were hurt. Forgive my thick-headedness, Frank. And now, you must come in, and have the wound dressed; Ruth is splendid at such things, the best doctor I ever saw. Come on now," and taking his arm, I directed him to the door.

As I stepped inside, my sister said without looking up from her work, "Oh! good Mark. I am so glad you have come in again; I was so worried about you; but I prayed for you, as mother used to, and"—She looked up suddenly, and saw Frank as I led him forward. Then she arose, blushing deeply, and laid down her work.

It was an awkward moment for us all. I felt real guilty myself, for taking Frank in like that, without first asking permission.

Father and Ruth were both very particular about who visited the house; and I had urged Frank so to go in, it made me afraid I should be blamed very much. While I was thinking all this over, forgetting that the injury to Frank's wrist was sufficient cause to justify my action, in the eyes of harder hearted people than mine, poor Frank and Ruth stood looking first at me, then at each other; and at last, in their embarrassment, he began to twirl his hat on his hand, and she to strike her teeth with her thimble, like two bashful school children. The idea began to draw upon me that I was all right, and that only an explanation was necessary, when Ruth recover-

ed her senses sufficient to say, "Well, Mark, has anything happened?"

Then I started trying to think where to begin the explanation I was to make; and, like the dunce I felt myself to be at that moment, thought clear back to where our adventure commenced, and instead of saying a word, burst out laughing harder than I had done before. And Frank, although he looked much confused, and Ruth, for all I could see she felt disgusted with me, both joined in and we all laughed and laughed, as if witnessing the most comical farce in the world. I never could see what there was to laugh at; but to this day, we never recall the incidents of that evening without having a good, hearty laugh.

I felt as though I would like to punch my own head for my stupidity. What else is there on earth, anyhow, that can be quite as stupid as a stupid twelve year old boy?

After awhile, we sort of cleared up; but before I was able to speak, Frank cautiously unwrapped his bleeding wrist, noticing which, Ruth stepped pretty close to him, and said, "I see you have been hurt sir; I am very sorry for you; please sit down."

Frank took the chair she offered him saying, "Your brother and I accidentally collided at the gate and were thrown about in the rose and lilac bushes, and my wrist received a rather severe scratch."

Ruth quietly got some sugar and camphor, and clean, white cloth, and did up the wounded wrist in a way that I knew would be all it would ever need; for I knew, personally, how effectually Ruth's medical treatment operated on such things.

When she had finished the work, she looked at me again, rather soberly, as if she was fearful of another outburst; and with strong determination not to laugh any more. I answered her look by saying, "It is Brother Wilber, Ruth, he works where father does."

"Brother Wilber arose as I offered this clumsy introduction, and Ruth extended her hand to him, which he held in his own while he thanked her gratefully for the relief she had given him."

"Frank," I said, after a moment's silence, "I wish you would hang me up by the heels and stretch my neck awhile, and see if I really have got any brains."

"Sh, don't say such things as that, Mark!" said my sister gently.

And that settled the matter all right; and in another moment a pleasant conversation was begun, and ran on for quite awhile. When it lagged, I asked Ruth about the story she had promised to read to them.

"I said I had a story for you to read, Mark, and that I should have to work," answered Ruth. And she stitched away vigorously. "Shall I get the book?" she asked presently. "Do you like stories Mr. Wilber?" she continued, turning to Frank.

"When they are sensible, and well read," Frank replied, smiling.

"Mark reads fairly well, but does not like reading so well as listening," said my sister, arising, and taking the book from the shelf. "This is a fine story of winter life in Holland, translated from the German by Miss Forten, she added: "How would you like reading it for us, Mr. Wilber?"

"I like reading all right," said Frank, "but my reading might not be such as

you and Mark like listening to," answered Ruth.

"But Ruth and I succeeded in convincing him that we would be glad to hear him; and he very pleasantly complied with our request, politely placing his chair nearer the stand on which the lamp sat, so that both he and Ruth could have the light.

I discovered very soon that Frank was a charming reader, almost equal to Ruth herself; and was sorry when the story was finished that it was not longer.

But father came in soon after, and although surprised at finding Frank there, to my great delight, was not displeased.

I expected a lecture some time, for the part I had taken in that evening's doings, but it never came; no one ever said a regretful thing in my hearing concerning it.

After a few moments conversation with father, Frank said he must go; that he was on his way to call on his sick aunt, when the accident which had detained him occurred.

Father and Ruth both asked some questions concerning the sick lady and the nature of her illness. Frank answered them, and then said, "If you are not too tired, Brother Price, I should like to have you go over with me. Aunt always rests better after a visit from some of the brethren."

Father put on his rubbers and overcoat again, and went out with Frank.

The next day I worked awhile, and Frank told me, towards evening, that his aunt Minnie was much improved; but he thought the doctor ought to see his wrist again, and asked if I thought it would be all right with her, if he called as he went home from work, or if she could give the wound a new dressing more conveniently later in the evening.

I knew Ruth wouldn't want to see him before supper, and said so. And he concluded, after considering his own affairs, where he would have to go, and what he would have to do, that I better tell her he should call about half past eight.

Supper was ready to put on the table, and Ruth was singing a low lullaby to Joseph and Mary when father and I got home. I went in to tell her what Brother Wilber had said; but Joseph poked up his head and wanted me to play with him, and Ruth motioned me to go away till the babies were asleep. So I went into the kitchen and got supper on to the table, and never thought of Frank again until he came to the door at exactly half past eight.

Father had gone out on some errand, and I was studying my lessons.

After making some kind of an apology for my forgetfulness, I went on with my studies; only noticing that Ruth bathed the wounded wrist with warm water and castile soap, that she seemed to tremble considerably, and that her face remained the loveliest rose color I ever saw, all the while her medical skill was being taxed. Frank noticed her agitation too, I think; for when her work for him was finished, he said, very feelingly, "I fear you find my case an unpleasant and difficult one; you must make your charges accordingly. I shall be glad to pay a high price for your soothing applications."

"Ruth laughed slightly and replied pleasantly. "Please do not mention such a thing, Mr. Wilber; as my father's and brother's friend, you are quite welcome to all the good my simple remedies can do you. Please feel free to call for