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## **CHILDREN'S PAGE STORIES -- 1963**

**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

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Story 1-a  
IN SUCH AN HOUR

(Chapter 1)

The last dying rays of the sun filtered warmly through the big French windows and sheer curtains, then lingered caressingly on Margaret Ellen's soft pink cheeks as she carefully placed the last cup in the big china cupboard. Casually she glanced out the window to the fading sunset. A warm flush came into her already rosy cheeks. It was just such a sunset, twenty years ago, when she became Mrs. John Smithfield.

Proudly she glanced at the big Boston rocker where John sat, deep in meditation and Bible reading. His hair was still as black as the day they were married, and he was just as handsome and portly now as then; perhaps even more so: he had added some badly needed pounds to his towering six foot, four inches which enhanced his already striking features.

"You're feeding me too good, Margee," he frequently teased, addressing her by the pet name he had given her.

Quickly she turned away from him to the dying sunset. She knew she loved him -- too much, perhaps. Yet, things had changed recently. Especially since John had gotten sanctified holy and had begun attending the small, but neat, country church in Pleasant Valley. The three smaller children accompanied him also, while Tom, the eldest son, continued going with Margaret Ellen to the fashionable and worldly church on High Ave., in Ritztown.

"John, I do wish you'd not take your pastor's foolish preaching too seriously," and she stood looking down into his kind face; a cloud over her own beautiful features.

"Margee," he said tenderly, touching her hands lightly, "Not again, dear!" And a grieved, pained look came into his tender blue eyes. "He's coming again! I know He is; He said it in this

Book, and since I've been wholly sanctified and cleansed from all sin, something within me tells me that His coming is very near -nearer even than most so called Christians believe."

"Oh, John! Don't talk that way. I'm not ready for Him to come. Our home is just now beginning to look like Mrs. Highstreet's and Mrs. Proudheart's."

"My dear, dear Margaret!" John said, rising to his feet and laying his hands gently, but firmly, on his wife's shoulders, "How can you be so unconcerned and so . . . indifferent! Don't you realize that, should Jesus come this instant, you and Thomas would be left behind? Oh, Margee! How can you let material things blind you so!"

"But John, dearest, Rev. Powers said we'd all be sanctified when we died, and that this preaching on Holiness is all fanatical and a lot of nonsense. He said the world is getting better all the time. Look at all the improvements and . . . "

"In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh," John said tearfully, looking into her lovely face. "He also said, 'Behold, I come as a thief in the night; be ye therefore ready! Oh, no! It can't be! My own wife and son not going up in the rapture!' and his broad frame shook under his heart agony.

"John! John! Do not lose your composure! Our minister said it was all excitement and emotionalism and I believe he spoke the truth."

"If only you had never come into that inheritance, Margaret Ellen! It has changed you until you are trying to be impressionable and fashionable; it is robbing you of something very valuable, which none of your elite class of individuals can give you."

"I'm happy, John; and I think you should 'be too. After all, it has saved you thousands of dollars."

"How much happier we were when we lived in the little white cottage by the gurgling, laughing stream; where the birds sang us our wake up tunes and trilled us to sleep at night!" John said, looking deep into her hazel eyes.

"Those were good days, John, but so are these," she said brightly. "Now, let's forget all this silly stuff about Holiness and the Lord's return."

"No, Margee," John said, squaring his shoulders, "I'll never forget it! I know I'm sanctified wholly, and I know the Lord is coming back to take His Bride to the marriage supper of the Lamb; and, should it happen tonight I'd be gone, dear; also Mary Ellen, Rose Marie, and Jimmy. You and Tom would be left alone, to face all the dreadful things which will come upon the face of the whole earth after the Rapture."

A look of sadness stole into the young mother's face but she said never a word as she walked silently into the big family room where the children were reading and playing.

The new day dawned bright and cloudless. Lovingly, Margaret Ellen gathered the children into the living room where, since John's recent conversion and sanctification, they had met twice' daily for family worship.

"Be a good boy, Tom," father said, ere he departed for work, "And Tom, let the Saviour sanctify your soul. He's coming soon, and I do want our family circle to be complete and share the marriage supper of the Lamb."

"I love you very dearly, father, and esteem you most highly; but Holiness and the career I'm planning just won't mix too well. After I'm established solidly in business I'm going to let the Lord have full and complete control of my life. I believe in everything you've ever told us, and read to us, and some day I'm going to be exactly like you are," and young Tom gave father a warm hug.

"But suppose He'd come today! You'd be left behind. Oh, Tom! Put God first and forget about these trivial worldly ambitions. They're transitory. I'll be praying for you," and he slapped his son in a warm way on his broadening shoulders then strode, into the kitchen where he kisses each of the remaining family good-bye.

The school bus stopped by the big mail box in front of the large brick house and Tom burst into the kitchen, breathless and pale. "Mother! Mother! Where is Jimmy? and Mary Ellen didn't get on the bus either. Where are they?"

"Tom!" and mother turned ashen white.

Running quickly up the stairway to the nursery she burst into four year old Rose Marie's room where the child was to have been napping. It was empty! A shudder escaped her and she let forth a scream, then a wail.

"Mother! Mother! What has happened?" and Tom was by her side. Glancing into the empty bed he knew. Tenderly he folded his sobbing mother to his manly bosom.

"She's gone too, Tom! Do you suppose . . .? Oh, no!" and she hid her face in her hands.

"We'll call the police and . . . and . . . Dad, too," Tom said, trying to be brave.

The operator at the plant where John Smithfield worked tried vainly to locate him. "I'm sorry, sir," she told Tom, "He was here a moment ago, but he seems to have disappeared. Strange too! He was talking to his helper about the Bible and like the twinkling of your eye he disappeared."

Frantically Tom dialed the police station only to get repeated busy signals; but he kept trying. After a long time he got through and explained their predicament. "Funny things are happening here in the last hour." A gruff voice said, "Hundreds of folks have called that some of their relatives have disappeared; maybe right under their nose, too! We can't help you. It's all so mysterious and strange. Never saw nor heard anything like it. Sorry!" and the receiver clicked.

Weakly, Tom ran to the radio and turned it on: "Mystery of mysteries," the announcer boomed, "thousands of people are missing and there is no knowledge of their whereabouts."

Quickly Tom turned the radio off. A moan escaped his young lips as mother let forth a scream. "The Lord has indeed returned and we've missed it, Tom," whereupon she fainted and collapsed in a tiny heap on the hallway floor. (Continued next month)

What will happen to Tom and his mother? Read the next issue!

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Story 1-b  
IN SUCH AN HOUR

Chapter 2

Quite sometime after she had collapsed, Tom was able to revive his mother. He led her to the bed and made her lie down. Neither spoke. Words were futile and unnecessary. The Lord had returned and had taken the husband and father, along with the three younger children. Life no longer had meaning.

After her sobbing had subsided to some degree, Margaret Ellen reached for the bedside telephone and dialed her pastor's number as sirens wailed all over the city, and loud screaming and crying was going on in their usually quiet suburban street.

"Hello," a voice said shakily. "Rev. Powers," Margaret Ellen said coldly, "I knew you'd not be gone! You . . . you lied to me. The Lord has come and taken John and all the children but Tom. We alone are left to face the awful things which are about to break. You are a false prophet! I shall never be back to church. John was right! His preacher was right. You have caused me to miss the rapture. Your punishment will be great!" and she clicked the receiver loudly in, its cradle, not waiting for an answer.

The days that followed were days of indescribable misery. No longer did Margaret Ellen care for her luxurious furnishings and fine things; but all seemed like a hollow shell in void and without satisfaction. Tom, too, had changed his attitude and was growing more lean and pale daily. Together they began searching the Scriptures to see where John Smithfield had found all the things he had read to them. The blessed Holy Spirit too had taken His departure when the Bride was raptured away, so there was no gentle, tender, pleading dove to woo them. Alone they were left with the agonizing torture of having missed the rapture.

The first few years went along smoothly, business wise. The man who was now reigning over the world was a genius. The whole earth prospered under his early reign and was proclaiming him the greatest of all rulers. His speech was smooth as butter and, by his disguise of

true manliness and boundless political wisdom he captured the hearts of nearly all persons. He was admired, respected and worshipped.

Quite abruptly, one day, a drastic and sudden change came over the whole world. For some it was a time of great victory and earthly glory; but to Margaret Ellen and her son, Tom, it brought only a deepening of the already lengthening shadows and dark forebodings.

She had gone to the corner grocery store for a few staples when Mr. Wilson, the ever friendly grocery man, looked sadly at her.

"Where's your number, Mrs. Smithfield? Or the mark?"

"My . . . my . . . mark? My number?" she asked weakly.

"Yes. Your mark," Mr. Wilson said. "There's a new law came into effect this morning. Anyone wanting to buy or sell must have the number; it's six hundred and sixty six. You may get it in either your right hand or your forehead. See!" and he lifted his hand for the trembling woman to see.

"I . . . don't . . . have it, Mr. Wilson, and I'll not get it," and Margaret Ellen Stumbled blindly toward the door.

"Sorry, Mrs. Smithfield, I can't sell to you without it. You can neither buy nor sell unless you take it. That's the law," and he shook his head sadly.

"And be damned forever!" Margaret Ellen said as she departed.

Quickly she hurried home and, taking John's well worn Bible from the bookcase in the dining room she turned to Rev. 13:16-18, and read, as she had been doing daily, and many times a day, since all the family had been raptured away,

"Tom," she said, weeping and wringing her hands, "We must be united. It's here. Exactly what your father said was going to take place: I can't buy food anymore. Mr. Wilson wouldn't sell me so much as a loaf of bread without the mark or the number. If we do receive it we shall be doomed and damned forever. Let us join hands, Tom, and make a vow that we'll be martyrs rather than be damned forever. Will you join me, son?"

Without a moment's hesitation the young lad slipped his brawny hands over his mother's fine, thin, ones and looking her squarely in the face he said:

"We'll die together if necessary, mother dear. I've been doing a lot of reading in the Bible since father's been taken, and I'd rather die a martyr than take the number of the beast and be lost forever. Rev. 14:9-11 says:

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture

into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

"And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."

A relieved look came into Margaret Ellen's face, and she patted his shoulders, saying, "you're becoming more and more like your father."

"We'll meet them again someday mother; for Revelation speaks of those who have come out of great tribulation:

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

"And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints."

For many days Margaret Ellen rationed out what remaining food-stuffs she possessed. She was eating less and less so Tom could have more. Her body was becoming increasingly thinner and her once pink cheeks were pale and sallow looking.

"I'll try again," Tom said one day. "You'd think with all our money they'd be happy to sell to us. I'll offer Mr. Wilson ten times as much as he's asking for the food."

"There's just no need trying, Tom. The law is strictly enforced and must be carried out. Our money means nothing to them. They know that we who have refused the mark and the number will soon be forced to either accept it, due to starvation driving us to it, or be martyred. There's no use to try. We are responsible for missing the rapture and we'll be paying dearly for our neglect and resistance of the truth. The Bible says every sin receives a just recompense of reward, and we are not excluded; even though we had a wonderful home in which we had family devotions and heard the Word read. No, we will not be exempt from what is about to break," and the mother wept bitterly.

Tom, with the hope of youth fresh in his body, vanished through the door saying, "I'll try, mother. Maybe he'll take pity on us."

After just a few minutes time had elapsed he returned, sad hearted and dejected.

"It's just no need trying, mother. Looks as though he really means it. Mr. Wilson said he'd be killed if they found out he'd given you those loaves of bread without the number or the mark. He said for us never to come back again unless we took the mark or the number," and Tom's thin body trembled.

What Next? Be sure to read the final chapter, (3), of "In Such An Hour."

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Story 1-c  
IN SUCH AN HOUR

Chapter 3

After Tom was denied a loaf of bread because of not having the mark of the beast in his right hand or his forehead, Margaret Ellen became even more conservative. Very sparingly she rationed out what few foodstuffs remained in the house.

Since there was no gas nor electricity the food was eaten right from the cans, cold. Potatoes were eaten raw and there was no bread or fine baked goods. Any, and all, methods of heating had been cut off, and no amount of money could persuade the man at the gas company to turn the Smithfield's gas on.

"Sorry, ma'am. Orders," he had said, then added tartly, "Go get the number. It's not going to hurt you. You afraid of marring that beautiful face of yours; or maybe those lily white hands?" and he laughed a hard, mocking laugh as he wickedly surveyed her beautiful features. Never had she been so humiliated. Timidly, and blushing red under his taunts and gaze, Margaret Ellen left the place of business, weeping softly as she walked toward home.

On her way home she passed the big, busy open air market, and smelled the sweet fragrance of hot spicy rolls baking. A nostalgic feeling overwhelmed her and her stomach gnawed and yearned for only one morsel of hot tasty food; but, with head held upright, she walked solemnly home. Everything had changed so rapidly for her and Tom. While the world was functioning much the same as usual, and the same noises and sounds were heard all around her, yet she and Tom had ceased to be a part of it all. They were isolated from even their once cherished friends, and more and more Margaret Ellen's once staunch and reliable friends refused to have anything to do with her: calling her a fanatic for not being willing to receive such an insignificant thing as the mark. Then too, some of the city officials had told her she would be guilty of murder should she allow her son to starve because of her stubborn refusal. Her mind was a turmoil of thought, but her heart was fixed. She would not receive the hated mark -- no matter what the consequences might be.

The nights were becoming increasingly colder and she and Tom were being forced to bed early to keep warm. The supply of candles had long ago been exhausted so there was no light for the house. If only she could find a few pieces of wood the big fireplace would afford cheeriness; but this too was impossible as no amount of money could buy any needs. Life was becoming more and more miserable and each night she wept herself to sleep.

"Oh, Tom!" she said next morning, "Why didn't you believe your father and get sanctified? I've caused you to miss the rapture and go through all this torture and misery. Can you ever forgive me?"

"I knew better," the thin lad said weakly. "I always knew father was right; but I wanted a career and a good business. I am to blame. I am no longer a child, but a young man of seventeen. So please don't blame yourself," and his head drooped heavily on his bosom as a sigh escaped his lips.

Margaret Ellen's worries increased as she saw Tom's body growing thinner and leaner. His mental faculties which were normally acute, alive, and alert, were becoming dulled and listless, like his body.

One rainy day as Margaret Ellen sat in John's favorite chair, a light rap sounded on the back door. Rising quickly, she walked to the door and opened it. A tinge of fear swept through her.

"Oh! it's you, Mrs. Newsom. Do come in," and a relieved look came into her eyes.

"Whatever will I do?" Mrs. Newsom asked, sobbing and trembling. "Jane's been out of her medicine for ever so long and she's dying. Dr. Long said she must never be without it, and now since we refused the mark and the number we can't buy anything. Oh, what will we do? Why didn't we listen to our godly pastor and get sanctified? I loved for the children to have worldly fame and popularity and look: what it has brought us to! We are responsible for our children," and she wrung her hands in great agony of soul.

"I know! I know! Only too well do I know. I too have learned too late," and Margaret Ellen paced the living room floor.

"Our food supply is now totally spent and exhausted. The girls who remained behind with us are begging for food and threatening to take the mark. Starvation's an awful thing," and Mrs. Newsom dropped her thin face in her hands and wept bitterly.

"Tom and I have barely enough for another week but you shall have some for the girls," Margaret Ellen said, glancing at Tom. Sensing a spirit of true manliness and courage in his blue eyes, she added, "We will die together. Never, never take the mark; you'll be doomed and damned if you do."

"Allan's been thinking seriously of taking it -- for the girl's sake, and mine; but I have plead with him and begged him not to." The friend said as she continued, "Oh, Mrs. Smithfield, this is far more horrible than I ever dreamed a thing could be! The merchants whom we've known all our life stand and give one a devilish grin when you ask for just one loaf of bread! Why didn't we permit Jane and Becky to get sanctified in our last revival? No, we had such high ambitions for those girls! Jane was such a good cheerleader in school and Becky was leading her class in so many ways, but what has it profited us! Our older girls have missed it! Oh, my two babies! How we do miss their cooing and their prattle!" and a loud, mournful wail escaped her lips.

"It is bad, indeed! Bad enough that we adults should have missed the rapture." Margaret Ellen sobbed, "But to think that I caused Tom to miss it! It drives me nearly mad at times. My influence was great and bad upon my own flesh and blood. I am happy though, to know the smaller children are safe with Jesus and John."

"If I can keep the girls from taking the mark of the beast I shall have accomplished a little good," Mrs. Newsom said. "They're ready to do anything for a morsel of food and some heat and lights. Oh, why? Why didn't I get sanctified?" and she let forth a spine chilling wail.

"So long as Tom and I have a morsel of food you too shall have some." With that Margaret Ellen walked resolutely to the pantry shelf which was all but emptied of its once many good things to eat, and divided with her friend. "Raw potatoes are better than starving," she said.

After Mrs. Newsom had departed she sat in the big Boston rocker and wept, wondering what would happen next.

Early the following evening a loud knock sounded on the front door. Tom answered it. A tall, broad shouldered man stepped into the living room, uninvited.

"I hear you're determined that you'll not take the mark of the beast -- our great ruler and genius of the land -- is this so?"

"That is correct," Tom answered unwaveringly.

Margaret Ellen stepped lightly to her son's side.

"A new decree has been issued. You have your choice. A huge image has been made and it is decreed that all must worship this great and mighty image or be killed."

"We cannot worship a dead, bronze image when we are told in God's Word not to bow down to any idol or image," Tom said fearlessly.

"Very well," the intruder spoke, "You decide your own fate. Do you choose to worship the image and bow down to it or will you refuse and be stubborn and be murdered?"

"We choose the latter," Margaret Ellen and Tom said, standing straight and tall.

"But you can't mean this!" the tall man said, looking intently at the pair. "Certainly you don't mean for your fine son to be murdered, and you see it before your eyes!" and his gaze was hard and cruel as he searched the mother's face to see signs of recanting; but she stood as one spellbound, and whose features were now meant for another world as Tom spoke, clearly, strongly, and surely:

"We have already decided. Our decision is final. We cannot worship the image! We will not!" and his young eyes shone with a brilliance and a luster like Margaret Ellen had not seen since John Smithfield was last home, praying around the family altar.

"You choose death to freedom?" the impostor shouted angrily; then, grabbing Margaret Ellen's delicate wrists he shoved, her toward the door and, with his other rough hand he took hold on Tom. "You shall have what you are asking for," he shouted.

"You need not force us," Tom said calmly, "We go willingly."

"You have made your own decision. Come with me," he ordered.

Without a moment's hesitation mother and son walked bravely to a martyr's grave.

"Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."

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Story 2

## THE EASTER LILIES

William sat on the desert street corner and counted his few coins for the sixth time. He was tired and his feet hurt where the soles were worn through and tiny stones had become embedded. A look of hope flashed across his boyish face as he hurriedly picked up his wares and made his way down to Woodlawn and Fourth Avenue. Maybe business would pick up down there!

He stationed his small frame near the towering city building and, as the shoppers went rushing by, he feebly called out "Flowers! Flowers for sale! Buy your artificial flowers now! Two for a quarter and they're handmade!"

Some of the passersby cast a glance of pity in his direction while many of them never seemed to notice the thinly clad, pale, blue eyed lad.

'If I can only' . . . he thought, then put it far from him. Tomorrow would be Easter and he had only half the money he needed. Tears welled up in his eyes and a lump too big to swallow mounted up in his throat as he thought of it. He must have faith! That's what the kind, silver haired minister said as he left the crude mourner's bench where he found Jesus in sweet saving grace only a few nights ago. Miracles never ceased to happen if one had faith!

He lovingly felt the few coins in his pants pocket and breathed a simple prayer as a small, wrinkled, white haired lady walked toward him. Carefully she examined each soft flower, then, picking up eight of them, she placed a crisp dollar bill in his hand.

"God bless you, son," she said softly and sweetly. "You're a right noble lad to be doing this business on the street. Here's an extra coin for something special you may like."

"Oh! . . . thank you, ma-am! Thank you most kindly," William began, "and God bless you too."

She looked lovingly at the sweet, pale face, then vanished among the crowd but her smile lingered with the lad like the fragrant Easter lilies at Jethrop's Floral Shop.

He thought of the lilies and wondered if old Mr. Jethrop had sold the two he wanted so badly. Again he felt deep down in his pocket after the coins and the crisp dollar bill. A big voice brought him quickly back to reality as a well dressed man asked, "How much, sonny?"

"Two for a quarter, mister," his own voice said feebly.

"You make them?" the bass voice asked.

"Yes sir! My mother and I," William replied politely.

"Good job! Good job! And beautiful indeed. Believe my lady'd like a few herself," and he slipped another crisp dollar bill and a half into William's small palm, picking up the flowers as he did so.

"Oh thank you, mister! Thank you so kindly," the boy said, his faith mounting with the coins and two bills.

A couple of young women passed by, muttering as they did so, "Artificial flowers! Who wants them this time of year when everything's bursting with real life and real flowers? Why, my tulips ....." and their voice faded away with the city noise.

"Miracles never cease if one has faith," again the minister's kind voice seemed to be speaking. He must continue to believe God and trust Him for this as he did for Him to save his soul, even though he had only a little more than an hour before the shops would all be closing for the night. He hoped Mother wouldn't worry; but then, he had told her he'd be an hour or more late coming home tonight. She looked so tired any more and worked such long hours sewing and making flowers to keep the family together since Daddy had passed away. Again a tear started at the thought of Mother and her tired face. A hunger pain surged through his stomach as some shoppers passed hurriedly by eating sweet rolls and cookies. Mother must never know that he hadn't been eating dinner! Again he fondled the money in his pocket and made a few more sales. He had nearly another box of flowers to sell. Oh, if only he could sell them all! How surprised Mother would be! Again he prayed and ere he had finished speaking to the Lord a finely dressed couple came near him. Looking longingly at the fine thin features and pale face with enormous sky blue eyes, the woman clutched her husband's arm as she softly spoke.

"How like Jeff he looks, Henry! A lot thinner perhaps but the same blue eyes and ... and ... fine features," and she began to weep softly.

"Yes, yes. He does look like Jeff, Marie. Oh, Jeffrey! Jeffrey darling! How we miss you since you're gone!" and the man too wept.

"Pardon me, sir! But did I make you cry? I . . . I'm . . . sorry, sir. I didn't mean . . . to . . . make you sorrowful. Tomorrow is Easter, the day my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ arose from the dead. He said to the disciples, 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' Your...your... Jeff; is he dead?" William asked.

"I'm sorry, son, to cause you this grief, I mean," the man began, "but you are the image of our dead son. Your eyes, your features, your . . ."

"You can meet him again if you want to. I know! I got saved a few nights ago and the minister said if we'd repent of our sins and be converted we could see all our loved ones in Heaven. I'm going There to see Daddy some day."

"Thank you, son! Thank you!" the couple said. "We're going to make preparation to meet him again some day. What was that you just quoted?"

" 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' Jesus said this," the boy affirmed.

"Because I . . . live," the man said trembling "I believe it! Praise the Lord! I believe it! Marie, you too can have this hope if you'll believe as I did. Repeat it after me, slowly," he said tenderly.

"Yes! Yes, Henry! I too believe and feel He's here," and she smote her breast joyously.

"How much are the flowers, sonny?" the man asked, placing his hand gently and tenderly on William's thin shoulders.

"Two for a quarter, sir."

"I'll take all you have, dear boy. Every one of them," the finely dressed man said.

"But . . . but... Mister!" William began, then, remembering his prayer, he turned the box over to the couple. "Better count them," he said.

"Here's a bill that will more than cover the flowers. Get something special for yourself and your mother," they said, lovingly clutching the box like it contained some rare gems or jewels.

"Thank... you . . . folks, most kindly," and he began weeping for joy as they departed.

The big clock on Trumble's Department Store told William he had only thirty minutes until Jethrop's Floral Shop would be closed for the night. He ran down Fourth to Woodbine, then turned to Greentree and just as he rounded the corner he saw old Mr. Jethrop carrying in the last plant.

"Mr. Jethrop! Mr. Jethrop, wait!" he called as the man turned about to see the panting William hurry up to him.

"You're most out of breath, son," the elderly man said.

"My lilies! I . . . mean . . . those two lilies I've been looking at in the shop window; did you . . . sell.., them?" William asked

"No sir! Strange too, they're some of the prettiest, but it seems as though nobody wanted them so I reduced them down to one-fourth their price."

"You . . . you did?" William asked in amazed astonishment. "I'll take them, both of them, Mr. Jethrop," and he quickly thrust the money into the old man's hand and hurried out with his lilies.

He set the lilies down as he knocked on the door of a poor little cottage. A small, frail but attractive little old lady opened the door.

"Happy Easter, Mrs. Hitton," William said, depositing one of the beautiful lilies in her arms.

"I've... never.., had anything like . . . this happen to me," she said weeping.

"Jesus said, 'Because I live, ye shall live also,'" the boy quoted. "See you tomorrow at the church, Lord willing," and he rushed down the steps to home.

"Happy Easter, dear Mother!" he said, bursting in through the open door, "and may God be praised. Look what the Lord sent in today!" And he set the blooming, pure white lily on the kitchen table as he deposited the money in Mother's hands.

"Thirty five dollars, William!" she exclaimed in awe. "Thank the Lord! Now let's eat, then I shall take the tithe out for this cash and the price of the lilies. You're a wonderful' son, William! So like your father," she added misty eyed.

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Story 3

GRUMPY, THE FROG

Becky sat on the top porch step, her lower lip drooping in a sullen pout. Grandfather stood in the doorway and milked his chin several times as he surveyed the situation.

"Ahem!" he went as the child lifted her pretty face and silken head toward him.

"You poutin' again, Becky?" he asked, a hurt look in his eyes.

"You just don't understand," the blue eyed girl said in self pity. "Debbie won't play what I want to play again."

"Well now, that's not so bad. In fact, it may be good, Rebecca Rose," the kind man said.

"Good? Grandpa! What could be so good about that?" she said stubbornly as she stamped her foot indignantly.

"Rebecca Rose, come into the house this minute," Mother called. "We don't ever talk to our elders in the way you just talked to your grandfather."

"I . . . I'm . . . sorry, Mother," the child said meekly as she saw the thin willow switch in Mother's hand.

"You go to Grandfather this minute and apologize, then come right here to me. The Bible says 'foolishness is bound in the heart of a child but the rod of correction driveth it far from him.' You've been very stubborn recently and I know a way to help sweeten you up a bit," and Mother stood by the kitchen sink waiting.

A short time afterward Grandpa entered the sunny kitchen saying, "Mind if I take Becky with me down to the pond today, Ellen?"

"That would be wonderful," his daughter replied, "but you're sure it won't be too much on you, dear? She's been so tart with you today and it bothers me. She loves you greatly and her actions distress me."

The silver haired man came close and laid his hands gently on his daughter's shoulders as he looked into her sweet, pretty face.

"Ellen," he began, "you're on the right track. Keep praying with Becky and . . . and . . . use the rod whenever it's necessary. She's going to make a good, godly woman like her mother. Remember, Mother and I raised five little girls of our own!" and he patted her cheeks tenderly. "She's learning and being molded as our own Ellen was, and look at the finished product today."

"Oh, Daddy," Ellen said tearfully, "you're such a wonderful father! How could any of us have been anything but Christians and good, after having the most wonderful mother and father in the world!"

"Now! Now!" the elderly man said, leaving the kitchen with Becky's hand in his big, steady one.

"Where are we going, Grandpa?" the child asked, her old sweet self again.

"Down by the pond to enjoy God's marvelous handiwork. There's something there I want you to see."

"Oh, good! I like to see new things," Rebecca said joyfully as she skipped by Grandfather's side.

"Now we'll sit real still and be unusually quiet, honey, or we'll not see what I want you to see," Grandfather said as they both sat on a fallen tree trunk at the edge of the pond.

"Why have the froggies stopped singing since we're here?" the girl asked in childlike curiosity.

"They hear us, but if we're quiet they'll begin again in a little while," Grandpa explained.

For a long time the two sat in profound silence, enjoying the warm sunlight as it fell on their backs. Rebecca watched a dragon fly flit lazily above the water's surface then dart quickly in an opposite direction.

"He looks like a tiny airplane," she giggled softly to Grandfather.

Suddenly, from across the old farm pond, a tiny frog began singing its mating song and was answered by dozens of others. They sang with such volume until it almost deafened Rebecca.

"I like to hear them," she commented. "I like lots of noise."

"None more truthful than a child," Grandfather thought; then, almost as suddenly as the chorus of frog voices had begun, they ceased, and again all was still and quiet around the pond.

"See, Rebecca!" Grandpa whispered, pointing to the biggest lily pad in the middle of the pond. "That big frog! See him?"

"Look, Grandfather!" the child said softly but excitedly as she stood to her feet.

"That's what I wanted you to see, honey."

"But but . . . Grandpa, what's he "doing?" the astonished girl asked.

"Oh, he's just wanting his own way all the time. He thinks he's boss over this pond. Notice how the other frogs never go too near him when they see him. I call him Grumpy! Many, many times I've watched him as we're watching him now, and always the same thing happens. He sits on that lily pad like a king on his throne and, should any of the other frogs dare to come near him, he . . ."

Just then Rebecca heard a harsh, coarse "herrumph" that seemed to come from way down deep inside Grumpy's throat. All the other frogs went diving deep into the pond away from the fierce sounding frog.

"See what I mean, Rebecca? Poor Grumpy! He has no friends simply because he is forever grumbling at all the other frogs. He wants to be boss and always have his way, but he's the loser in the long run. Notice how he sits alone -- always alone? While the other frogs are having such a gay frolicsome time in the water with each other, and around the water's edge, he sits there grumbling,

and like he's pouting. None of the other frogs care to come too near him! That's too bad when he could be having such a wonderful time by not always wanting to be boss and have his way."

A long moment of silence elapsed as the astonished girl sat in spellbound observation, then, very meekly she put her arms around Grandfather's neck as she said softly:

"Grandfather, I see it all and I'm very sorry. I never realized until now! I hear Susan and Miriam laughing with Debbie under the maple tree, perhaps I'd better join them too."

"That would be a grand idea, honey," the man said brokenly, "and always remember -- to have friends we must be friendly and forget self -- always put others first. This is the lesson Jesus taught and the example he set before us."

"I'll see you -- dear. dear Grandfather! You're the best in the world. But I must run along now and get caught up on this sharing business; I've been selfish too long. Bye, Grandfather! I love you," and she planted a hasty kiss on the wrinkled cheeks.

Like a chorus from Heaven, the frogs broke simultaneously into song. She turned and cast a long, loving look in their direction, then, hair blowing in the breeze, she disappeared beneath the cool branches of the maple tree and her soft, melodic laughter floated down across the pond and mingled happily with the frog voices.

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Story 4

#### SWALLOWS OVER THE COUNTRYSIDE

The earth lay clean and peaceful, having been freshly bathed by an early morning spring shower. The young apple and peach trees were bursting out all over in pretty pink and white blossoms while the robins worked industriously at building nests and finding the longest, fattest worms for their breakfast; ever singing joyously and happily.

Dawn, her hands working busily at setting out the last onion sets, planting more lettuce and carrot seeds, glanced heavenward as a robin perched on the topmost branch of a tree directly above her and sang so lustily that it seemed his throat would burst. An unguarded tear rolled carelessly down her fair young cheek and dropped in the onion row. A feeling of homesickness and yearning engulfed her and she worked the more furiously, trying to bury her thoughts with the pungent onion sets.

"Dawn! Sissy!" A small, well modulated voice called sweetly, "I want Mommie! Sissy, I want my Mama."

"Coming, Dorris, honey," and Dawn dropped her work and hastened to the neat kitchen of the old farmhouse where she gathered the tiny bundle of five into her arms, kissing away a river of tears at the same time.

"I want my Mommie," again the soft voice said, pleading sadly.

"I know, sweetheart! I do too." And Dawn set in the well worn rocker, cradling the dainty form of her beloved sister in her own young arms as the tears flowed freely. Then, quickly collecting herself, she brushed her tears aside and said pleasantly, "Honey, Mother's in Heaven and, oh, she's happy! So happy! She's seen Jesus and is with Him all the time. She can never come to us but we can go to be with her, dear. Now no more crying. It would grieve Mommie if she saw us crying so."

"But I want my Mommie!" Dorris said again.

"Remember what she said before she left us?" Dawn asked, folding the fair Dorris more tightly to her and trying desperately hard not to cry herself. "Mother told all of us not to cry because she was leaving us for awhile; she said she'd see us again. She saw Jesus, honey! In fact, Jesus was right here in our house; Mother said He stood by her side and told her He wanted her to live with Him in Heaven. Mother is happy, honey. Very, very happy and someday you, Daddy and I will be going to see her and then we'll all be together -- all the time. Won't that be wonderful?"

"Where is Daddy?" Dorris asked, suddenly brushing away her tears and sitting upright.

"He's milking the cows and doing the barn chores. He should be in for breakfast soon," Dawn answered brightly, adding tenderly as she placed her sister down on the floor, "Run along now and get your shoes on. Bring me the brush and I'll brush your pretty hair till it shines. Daddy will think indeed that he has a Goldilocks for his very own." And the happy child ran gleefully to her bedroom, laughing softly, "I Daddy's girl! I Daddy's girl."

That afternoon, as soon as the dinner dishes were washed and put back neatly in the big cupboard, Dawn gathered a sleepy Dorris into her arms and sang softly to her as she rocked back and forth in the rocking chair.

"Sounds like Mama," Dorris said, half asleep, half awake.

"Mother's looking on and watching us, dear. I know she is, for sometimes I feel her very near to me. Now go to sleep and may the Angels kiss you while you sleep." And Dawn placed a tender kiss on the soft cheek lying so peacefully on her bosom. She heard, too, the deep, soft breathing and gently placed the child in her bed.

Noiselessly she slipped out the kitchen door to the henhouse and, after gathering the eggs, she sat on the big stone step that led into the feeding stalls of the horses where she had a commanding view of the valley as it sprawled out before her. She saw the cows grazing peacefully and contentedly in the lower meadow and watched as the many new born lambs skipped, frisked and played with each other. She saw a strip of land carpeted yellow with dandelions and

buttercups, and she knew that soon the daisies would be bursting out in blossoms and bloom, for she had many times brought Mother a bouquet from the same strip of land. Tears smarted her eyes and stung her cheeks. Suddenly she felt a strong, kind hand laid gently on her shoulder.

"Daddy! I'm... I'm... sorry you caught me crying! Forgive me! Mother wouldn't want it and . . . and ... I . . . know it's . . . dreadfully hard . . . on you," Dawn sobbed.

"That's quite all right, honey," the kind man said softly, tenderly, as he put his arm about the shoulder of his oldest child.

"This has been a keen disappointment to all of us, dear," he said with bowed head, "but God is good and makes no mistakes, so we must never question His doings. Someday He'll make it plain to us though now we can't understand. But look, Dawn! Look!" he said, pointing to the old rafters on the barn shed. "The swallows are here! See! They're repairing last year's nest! Spring is indeed here! Oh! Dawn, my child," and a far away look came into his tired looking eyes as he continued, "she's close to me yet, and so very dear! Every year about this time, when the blue winged swallows would return we'd sit on this step to listen and watch. 'Daddy,' she'd say softly, as only your Mother could, 'Truly death is not the end; there's a glorious resurrection day coming! Just look at our swallows! All winter long the earth seemed dead and bleak, but with spring comes the swallows, the leaves, blossoms and life! Look, Dawn! See how those two birds seem to be talking to each other and planning for their little babies! Just as surely as the swallows are over the countryside and come back every spring to raise their young in the nests under our barn shed, even more sure am I that we shall soon be dwelling eternally with Jesus and your mother. To the Christian death is only a stepping stone that connects earth to Heaven, and they who remain true and faithful to Christ shall inherit eternal bliss and happiness in Heaven."

"I know, Daddy!" Dawn said seriously. "This morning while in prayer I told the Lord I was going through with Him. Ever since He saved me four years ago I have had a purposed heart like Daniel."

"Did your mother ever tell you how you got your name?" the father asked, looking over the green meadow.

"No," the dark haired girl said. "I shall tell you then. Dawn," he said, "you are not much past twelve and already you have had more responsibility thrown upon you than many an eighteen or nineteen year old girl; but you have met every expectation your mother and I have ever had for you. You see, when you were sent into our home you were only a tiny, pink bundle of six pounds and eight ounces. You looked delicate and almost fragile. Mother and I thought of name after name for you but none seemed fitting for you. One morning as Mother lay in her bed with you in her arms she saw a glorious sunrise and watched the dawn of a new day being born. 'I know her name, dear' she said, touching me lightly on my arm. 'We'll call her Dawn! She has been like the beginning of a new and even happier day for us.' So we called you 'Dawn' -- our brightness, our beginning and our sunshine."

"How beautiful!" the child said softly as she heard the swallows making bird talk to each other, then dart gracefully out into the open after gnats, flies and insects for their supper. "I must

go, Daddy. I have some of Mother's dried beans on the stove cooking and I don't want them to burn."

"You've done an excellent job, my daughter," her father said proudly, "and after Aunt Mary gets here you'll not have it so hard."

"I'm happy, dear Father. Happy that I am able to work and happy that the dear Lord left you here for Dorris and me to have. I love you, Daddy," and she placed a childish kiss on his bronzed cheek ere she cast one long look after the industrious blue-winged swallows and ran happily to the kitchen.

She would meet Mother again and fly into her waiting arms on the resurrection morning or meet her in the rapture in the skies! The swallows had returned and just so surely -- yea, more so would their family circle be reunited again. Softly she began singing, "I will meet you in the morning" while the golden sunbeams danced all about her and her face looked more like that of an angel than a human being.

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Story 5

THE WINDING TUNNEL

The day seemed unusually hot and humid as Knox and Bradley pulled off their shoes and waded in the cool waters of the meandering stream that wound in and out among the meadows, clover and corn fields of Grandfather's big farm.

"I know where there's a big patch of wild strawberries," Knox said to his cousin.

"Where?" Brad asked excitedly as he kicked and splashed water in every direction.

"I'll show you after awhile," Knox said. "Better roll your pant legs higher or Grandma will scold if you come in dripping wet," he added as he too sent the water flying in all directions.

"I'm soaked already," Bradley said, lifting one foot high above the water "Look, Knox! What will I do?"

"Have to hang you up to dry, I guess," the red haired cousin laughed. "Better yet, I know what we'll do," he added. "We'll go to the strawberry patch and you can stand in the sun; the wind and hot sun will dry you off pretty good."

"Wind? Where is the wind?" Brad asked, wiping the perspiration from his brow "It's really sticky and hot today."

"I know; but I believe the rays of the sun will help dry you off. Come," Knox said. "Let's get into our shoes and go after the strawberries." Whereupon both boys pulled socks over wet feet and, after managing to get their shoes on, they raced to the patch of luscious wild berries. They ate until their stomachs would hold no more; then, filling Bradley's straw hat and with hands sticky and fragrant from the goodness of the vine, the boys hurried home to Grandmother.

"Look what we brought you, Grandmother," they said gleefully as they placed the straw hat on the table.

"Wild strawberries! How nice!" the white haired lady said, gathering both grandsons into her strong arms and kissing them soundly on the top of their heads. "We shall have fresh preserves with hot biscuits, and strawberry shortcake for supper. How's that?" and she patted them gently as she continued, "I want you to go to Mr. Brower's farm and take them this vegetable soup I made. Mrs. Brower's sick in the bed and I know they'll appreciate something like hot soup."

"Oh, goody!" Bradley said. "May we go through the tunnel? Please, Grandmother?" he begged.

"Has the train gone down the track this morning?" the little old lady asked thoughtfully. "Not yet," Knox answered.

"I don't like to do this but maybe just once I'll permit you to go through the tunnel. However, you must leave as soon as the train goes down toward Centervale. It makes only one try a day and it's usually around four o'clock before it comes back again. I'll let you go under one condition." "What's that?" the boys asked. "That you don't linger by the way and never ask me again," she said sweetly but firmly.

"You're the best Grandma in all the world," Bradley said fondly.

"And the sweetest," Knox added as Grandmother's face flushed a delicate pink.

"Now, now!" she said. "Don't try to give me the 'big head'," and she laughed softly as she added, "Run along now and watch for the Little Bug."

In just a few minutes the boys raced up on the big front porch, loudly exclaiming, "It's coming, Grandma! The Little Bug's going down to Centervale now! May we go now?"

Grandmother walked to the south window where she could see the train winding its way along the hillside toward town. "Yes, you may go now, but no lingering! Do you hear? You'll have plenty of time to get back before it returns."

"I'll take my flashlight," Knox said to Bradley as he ran to the bedroom they shared and deposited his trustworthy light deep in his pocket.

"You scared?" Bradley asked as they started across the fields toward the winding tunnel.

"No, not really! But we'll make better time if we can see where we're going and it's dark inside the tunnel. It's not a long tunnel but it curves and winds. This shuts off the light from the other end," Knox said.

The hot soup was received with thankfulness by the Brower family, also two loaves of Grandmother's homemade bread and, upon returning home, arms free, limbs nimble and light, the boys climbed wild grape vines and swung for a long time on them unmindful of the time; for, with youth and health, time seems of no significance whatever.

The boys walked briskly down the rail ties of the old, well worn railroad and, as they rounded the second curve inside the dark tunnel, a shrill, loud whistle echoed and re-echoed through the tunnel.

"The train!" Brad shouted. "It's the train, Knox. What'll we do?"

"Don't get panicky," Knox shouted back, then, flashing his flashlight to the side of the tracks, he shoved his cousin tightly against the damp, black wall of the tunnel, at the same instant pushing his own slender body up tightly against the protecting wall, fearing even to breathe. In a rush the Little Bug whizzed by, so close to the shivering, shaking boys that, dared they do it, they could have reached out and touched the hard sides of the speeding mail and milk train. Its wheels rumbled and thundered in the tunnel, then, as quickly as it had entered, it was gone.

For a long time after neither of the boys moved or spoke. Knox broke the silence with a tearful:

"We almost got it, Brad, but not quite."

"I . . . I . . . know," Bradley said, quivering with fright. "We ... we... disobeyed Grandmother and... and... I'm... ashamed." "Worse than that, we sinned and broke one of the ten commandments! What does the Lord think of us?"

"Grandma's not our parents," Bradley answered thoughtfully.

"She's over us like our mother and father if they were here, but, since they're at home in the city and not here, they told us to obey Grandma and Grandpa like we're expected to obey them when we're home. I . . . I . . . feel so . . . guilty and . . . and . . . badly. We've sinned, in God's sight, and Brad, I'm going to talk to Jesus about it. I want to go to Heaven when I die and we'd not go there if anything happened to us now, for God's Word says if we break one commandment we're guilty of breaking them all. I'm going to pray." Before his cousin could make any reply he was weeping and calling on God for forgiveness. Kneeling by his side on one of the railroad ties was Bradley, tears flowing down his boyish cheeks in true penitence. The light of Heaven seemed to illuminate the tunnel of darkness as the load of guilt and condemnation was lifted from their souls and buried as far as the east is from the west.

As they came out of the tunnel into the light of day, Grandmother and Grandfather ran toward them arms outstretched and laughing joyously as shouts of praise to God ascended Heavenward.

"Forgive us, Grandma. We're sor--"

But the boys got no farther. Fondly the white haired lady gathered them in her arms, and, as tears coursed down her chubby cheeks, she said tenderly, "It's all right! He has cast your sins behind His back to never be remembered against you again, and Grandpa and I forgive too. Thank God! Thank God you're alive. Now let's be getting home. The strawberry shortcake's going to be cold, and the biscuits too."

The boys looked at each other in astonishment. So that's why Grandma and Grandpa were here! It must be five o'clock always the same time for supper! They had learned their lesson! Never, never would they go through the tunnel again.

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Story 6

#### THE MISSION BELLS

The late afternoon sun cast long willowy shadows over the green hillside and a soft, warm breeze carelessly kissed and played with the fluttering, quaking cottonwood leaves. Young Eli, his hands already bronzed and callused from both the sun's hot rays and hard work, gazed over the large flock of sheep and new lambs with both pride and admiration. Only a few months ago he had been told by his kind father and mother that he was now a young man and could, therefore, herd the flock of beautiful sheep: A job he had long waited for; for only those with a brave heart and unflinching courage were allowed this task. All too frequently were the young sheep and lambs attacked by some wild, ferocious and blood-thirsty beast

He watched as the sun and wind caused the long shadows to dance over the green pasture land and saw several brightly colored birds dart gracefully after an insect, then soar off into the paling heavens All about him sprawled the verdant green pasture land except on his left, where was a dense thicket of scrub cottonwood, tanglewood and bushes of most every description. From there many of the blood curdling wild beast cries came and he must carefully guard the sheep throughout the night. The thought of approaching night and new adventure sent a thrill through his young body. No longer was he afraid but, like David, the Psalmist of the Bible, he trusted in the Lord and never once, since he had found the Christ of the missionaries' faith, had any harm befallen either him or his father's sheep.

The sun, throwing one last golden kiss to the meadow, sleepily tucked her head behind the western horizon and darkness settled in, both awe inspiring and mysterious. Eli loved this time of evening for every cricket, frog, toad and night bird seemed to come alive and awaken to keep him company in his night vigil.

The sheep had settled down peacefully and, by the soft sound of their breathing, the young lad knew they were resting. His heart was meditating and musing on the Scriptures he had read that day on the hillsides when a loud, shrill laugh broke in unannounced upon his heart musings.

"That's just what we'll do!" a loud voice said as another continued, "You got it now? All of you?"

"Go over it again," another said. "We want everybody to fully understand, and no mistakes! Do you hear? No one here a traitor, is there? Too bad if there is one," the harsh voice continued.

"There'll be no mission bells ringing this Sunday morning," a shrill voice laughed. "That silly missionary family will wish they never had come to our land. My father's angry with them since Mother has turned to their faith and God. She burned all our little gods and idols and doesn't even act the same since she got saved -as the Missionaries call it."

"No harm to the Missionaries," a big voice ordered. "Do you understand? Only burn down the church house so they can't have services any more."

"We got you," several voices came echoing through the dense thicket. "Twelve o'clock tonight! Everybody in his place! Now let's get back to the village or we'll be missed and cause suspicion."

Eli's heart raced within him like a propelled motor and he knew he must do something, but what? To leave the sheep would not be safe, for already the wild beasts were stalking the land, and not to leave them meant certain destruction to the newly constructed mission station. This must never; never happen! No more would he hear the soft, musical peal of the bells when evening came and a clear, rightly directed breeze wafted the melodic notes to his happy ears. They even seemed to relax and calm the sheep! A tear fell unashamed to the good earth upon which he sat. Hastily he fell to his knees and, with child-like faith and fervency of spirit, he entrusted the entire sheep herd to his Heavenly Father's keeping as he took to the hills and through the thicket to the village.

A small, yellow, half starved dog barked loudly as he entered the darkened village but this didn't stop him. Frantically he raced along the edge of the black huts until he came to the Village Chief's house. He knew if he could speak with him the Mission would be saved, for the Chief was almost persuaded that the Missionaries' religion was the right way. He had forsaken his old life of sin, and he, too, had burned all his many idols and wooden gods and was seeking to find the Lord whom Eli, his father and mother, had already found and loved.

He tapped ever so lightly on the bamboo hut, whispering as he did so, "Mumbami! Mumbami! Let me in."

"Yes," a sleepy voice finally answered from within. "What is it?"

"It is I Eli!" the lad answered softly. "Please hurry, Mumbami! It is urgent!"

After he was safely seated on the dirt floor of the Village Chief's hut, Eli quickly related the happenings of the early evening and, before departing he urged strongly, tearfully:

"Go at once to the Mission, Mumbami! Get my father and the other villagers. Tonight, at twelve o'clock they plan to burn down everything about the Mission Station -- except the missionaries' house Now hurry! I must get back to father's sheep else I would watch and prevent this."

"Good. Very good, son!" the big, brawny chief said as he lovingly patted the young lad on his broadening shoulders. "Have no fear. The Mission will not be burned and the bells will ring as usual tomorrow morning -- and each evening. We shall catch the culprits. Now be on your way and . . . and . . . pray that I too may find this wonderful Christ, under Whose wings your folks, you and so many of my people have come to trust. I want Him, son! This is the way!" and silently, noiselessly he slipped through the doorway as Eli ran to the village edge and back to his sheep herd.

The soft breathing of the sheep assured the boy that all had been well in his departure and he realized anew that his Heavenly Father tenderly watched over him and the flock at all times. He heard a shrill cry from the thicket and knew, as it was answered from the hill above him, that at least two shiny black panthers were close by. His faith reached through the darkness to an unseen, but much felt Presence, and he was not afraid. He who had set bounds to the ocean and rivers would set bounds--for the wild beasts of prey. The sheep, sensing the trust and calmness of their shepherd, rested peacefully the entire night and, when morning dawned, clear, fair and bright, Eli's heart was lifted in praise to God. He raised both hands heavenward and let the tears fall in warm streams down his cheeks as the mission bells rang joyously out across the valley, calling all the believers to early morning prayer. Reverently he fell to his knees as his father came through the thicket clearing and joined him.

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Story 7

BE-DONE-BY-AS-YOU-DID

"No! You can't have that ball to play with! It's mine!" Ned said emphatically, grabbing the soft red ball selfishly away from Mark. The latter looked on, wounded and hurt, but never uttered a word as he walked silently away.

"Ned!" Mother said brokenly. "Dear, dear Ned! Whatever has happened to you? You used to be so sweet and kind, so unselfish and good!" And she quickly drew him into her arms as she wept over his sandy colored hair.

"I . . . I'm sorry, Mother," the lad said, "but that's my ball and bat and I . . . I . . . wanted to play," he added lamely.

"Did you, Ned? Did you. really?" Mother asked. "In all truthfulness, did you really, Ned?"

"Well . . . I . . . that is . . ." the boy stammered.

"Come, Ned," Mother said, leading the way to the big rocking chair. "We'd better pray about this. Gradually your young heart is becoming selfish and unkind. We need to pray about lots of things."

That night during family worship they prayed about it again, still Ned was stubborn and unyielding.

Sometime during the night he dreamed a dream. Quite pleasant at first. He wandered down a verdant green pasture-land, butterflies of every size and description flitted gracefully among the sweet scented clover blossoms, birds sang softly and sweetly, and somewhere, not too far in the distance, he heard the laughter of a rippling brook. The whole of earth was bathed in sunlight and happiness as he wandered aimlessly onward toward a distant forest.

His young nimble limbs seemed to be gliding as he entered the beautiful forest and a playful fawn darted gracefully off in an opposite direction as he walked briskly beneath a spreading hemlock.

"Stop!" he called. "Stop and play with me. I'm your friend." At the sound of his voice he heard the small frisky creature plunge deeper into the thick brush laurel and underbrush.

On and on he walked, deeper and deeper into the moss carpeted woodland He came to a small clearing where stood a beautiful and inviting cottage, kept meticulously clean.

The roof was made all of chocolate drops, laid end upon end over each other while the rain spout perpetually dropped the most delightful looking chocolate ice cream his eyes had ever beheld. The hollyhocks that grew in abundance seemed to have baseballs of every size and description up and down their stems. There were bright reds and yellows, oranges and white. He reached up to pick one of the biggest, brightest balls off the stem when a small voice said,

"No! You can't have that ball. It's mine!"

Frightened, he began to run when a hand firmly and quickly pulled him back. He began to scream and kick, only to have his own mouth silenced by the other firm hand.

"Let me go!" he cried. "Let me go! I want to go home! Who are you anyhow, and why are you so selfish?"

To this the lad was turned squarely around, and with her hand still holding him firmly she began.

"I am Mrs. Be-Done-By-AsYou-Did and I am not selfish not really," she added, laughing a ripply kind of laughter that reminded Ned of the brook he heard as he came through the meadow

"This is my cottage! A pretty thing, isn't it?"

"But I'm hungry," Ned began, "and I want to eat some of those chocolate drops and that wonderful smelling ice cream."

"No, no!" the small woman said emphatically. "That's not for you."

"You . . . You're ... selfish!" Ned said again in a nasty voice. "Do you think so?" the little woman asked. "Most children love me. They love to come here and eat to their heart's content. I am Mrs. Be-Done-By-As-You-Did," she added brightly, but more emphatically.

"You . . . You're . . . Oh!" and Ned bowed his head in shame as the truth dawned upon him.

"Yes! Yes! Ned, my boy!" she added with a smile. "Do you understand now?"

"I . . . I think I do, and I . . . I'm truly sorry. I remember dear Mother and Father reading to me from God's Word: 'And as ye would that men should do to you; do ye even so to them likewise.' Yes, I really understand now, and I . . . I . . . want to go home and ... and repent of my sinful ways."

("Then go, Ned! Take my blessings with you and a pocket full of chocolate drops May your life begin to drop goodness, kindness and unselfishness like my roof drops good things to eat. Go, Ned! Be fast about it and do a thorough job of repenting," and she gave him a gentle shove homeward.

Ned suddenly awoke and, sitting upright, he let the tears flow freely as God, the Holy Spirit, melted and broke his stony heart. Silently he slipped over to Mother's room, then placing his arms gently about her neck he whispered softly in her ear:

"Let's pray, Mother. I want God! I've been so selfish and stubborn but I'm truly sorry this time."

Quietly the pair slipped back to Ned's bedroom and together they prayed until Jesus came back into Ned's heart in saving grace.

"Oh, Mother! I have such wonderful peace," he said as she tucked the sandy haired boy safely beneath the covers. "I want to die out to all of me and this self life now; then I'll really be filled with all of God."

"Yes, son! Yes!" Mother said. A glorious ray of light shining in her pretty blue eyes, "You'll be my Ned again. My kind, good, unselfish Ned!"

The big grandfather clock in the hallway chimed out the quarter hour but to Ned it seemed to be saying, "Glory to God! Our Ned's Come home." A drowsiness enveloped him and he fell soundly to sleep.

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Story 8

(THIS STORY IS MISSING)

I did not digitize it because part of the story had been snipped out of that issue of the Missionary Revivalist. -- DVM

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Story 9

HONESTY PAYS

Tom sat silently, watching as Mother packed a few more warm rolls into the already overflowing basket.

"Take these to Miss Pruella, Tom," she said softly, "And give her my regards, too."

"Oh, Mother," Tom began, "I wish I didn't need to leave home to go to school," and he dropped his head sadly.

"I know, dear," Mrs. Brown said as she lovingly placed her arm about the young shoulders, "but this is a part of the sacrifice that goes into being a missionary. Not only must the parents be willing to make sacrifices, but the children too must be made to realize this. Someday you shall be rewarded for it all, son." And an understanding smile stole across her sweet face as she hastily brushed a hot tear away.

"I never have enjoyed being away from you and Dad, Mother; but it's especially hard this time. You see," and the young man paused a long time, then finally faltered, "Miss Pruella's taking in another boy!"

"That's fine, Tom" and Mother's face suddenly brightened up. "Maybe you'll riot be so lonely then."

"Loneliness isn't bothering me, Mother, for I stay too busy helping Miss Pruella in her store after school; but it's money," the youth said brokenly.

"Money!" exclaimed Mother. "I'm afraid I don't understand, Tom."

"Oh, it doesn't bother nor tempt me; but she keeps it lying all around the house, then sends me after something like thread, scissors, and such; and Mother, I'm beginning to wonder if she's testing me, for she always has a bill lying near the thing she sends me after and.., and.., suppose .. the new boy ....."

"I see," Mother said softly. "You're not sure that he'll be honest and this is worrying you. Is that it?"

"Yes, Mother," the youth said with bowed head.

"Tom," Mrs. Brown said as she looked at him squarely, "you've always been an honest and upright boy and God will see you through this. Remember what John said, "If our heart condemn us not ....."

"Yes, Mother. Just pray hard for me. This new boy doesn't look too honest."

"Ye are the salt of the earth," Mother quoted. "You may be able to help the lad, son. At any rate, retain your honesty and uprightness and place the new boy in God's hands." Then giving him a quick kiss she placed the bulging basket in the boy's arms saying, "Your father's ready now. We will be praying for you and will anxiously await your return home in a couple of months if the weather remains favorable.

Everything in the stern Miss Pruella's household went along fine for the first few weeks of Jim's arrival. The boys got along fine and worked together harmoniously although Jim always kept himself aloof from Tom. Try as he might, Tom couldn't penetrate the wall that seemed to be constantly taking the two farther and farther apart, and the hard glances Jim constantly gave him bothered the lad terribly. "Ye are the light," Mother's soft spoken words came reassuringly to him. A light must shine in darkness to dispel that darkness, he reasoned silently as he sat down to doing his homework.

"Tom! Jim!" Miss Pruella's shrill voice called as both boys had just settled down to diligent studying one night. "Come here this minute." And the sternness of her tone caused a shiver to race up and down Tom's spine. Jim sullenly arose, all the while casting wary glances at Tom.

"Sit down on the sofa," the prim, slender woman ordered as the two entered the sitting room.

"Yes Ma'am," Tom said politely. Jim said nothing but looked hard at the oriental rug in the big room.

"I shall come directly to the point as I find no need for detours and such," the aging woman said, sitting erect on the edge of the big Boston rocking chair. "I'm missing five dollars and thirty cents. Who's guilty? One of you took it and you know where it can be located. I'll expect it by morning or else .." and the preciseness and sharpness in her voice trailed away as she continued,

"You may get back to your studies but be sure the money's back where it was stolen from by morning! Now go."::

Tom finished his lessons the best he could, then hurried to his small bedroom. Long after the household had settled down for the night he knelt by his bed praying and weeping. The moon came up big, and full and round, casting a pale, soft glow all about him, transforming the few necessities of his room into a dreamy livable place. The night shadows and the soft moonlight reminded him of the cozy bedrooms at home and a tinge of loneliness enveloped him as he began weeping softly.

His door opened quietly and a hushed voice said softly, tenderly, in a tone he had never before heard Miss Pruella use:

"Tom! Tom! Go to bed, son. I know you're not guilty. Stop worrying; you've proven your honesty to me long before Jim came. I know you haven't done it. You're a real Christian and I too hope to turn from my faith to your true and living God. Come summer I shall be going to the Mission compound to learn more about Jesus. I believe on Him and know He's the Son of God, but I want my heart changed like yours is."

"Oh," and Tom caught his breath. "You needn't wait till summer to get saved, Miss Pruella. You may turn to Him right now if you want Him badly enough."

"Go to bed, son," the soft feminine voice continued. "I'll be finding Him soon at the rate I'm praying; and have no fear, Tom, about the money. Pray for Jim," she said as she came over by his side and placed a hasty kiss on top of his forehead, then went quietly from the room, closing the door after her and locking it.

"Why would she lock his door!" Tom wondered as he crawled down between the sheets. The thought of her calling him: 'son' sent a sudden thrill through his boyish being and as a drowsiness settled in upon him he prayed for Jim. 'Ye are the light,' Mother's soft voice seemed to be saying as he fell asleep.

Jim was absent from the breakfast table the next morning and Tom, though asking no questions, had a puzzled look. Miss Pruella noticed it and explained with:

"He left sometime early this morning, Tom. I watched from the closet in the hallway all night. He tried to get into your bedroom with the money to make it appear you had stolen it; I was afraid of this so I locked your door when I left you last night. He put the money back in the sewing box -- all but two dollars, Poor boy!" and she sighed deeply as she passed Tom more ham.

For a long time there was intense silence, then carefully Miss Pruella chose her words.

"You've proven your honesty, Tom. My customers in the store have told me of your uprightness. You're still a young boy, son," and a sweet smile played across her face when she said the word, "but someday you shall be a young man. I've been searching for someone like you. I

am getting up in years and if your father and mother are willing, the entire business and corner lot here shall be theirs for a new Mission station."

A salty tear of gratitude rolled carelessly down Tom's ruddy cheek as he said softly, "That's really generous of you, Miss Pruella, and I know Father and Mother will be praying over the proposition when you mention it to them. But what about Jim? Where could he have gone?"

"That I don't know," the prim lady said, "but I want to make a small present to you for being honest." Then, reaching in her stiffly starched white apron pocket, she pulled out a crisp new ten dollar bill and lovingly placed it in the boy's hand as she said, "Honesty pays, Tom; every time."

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Story 10

### THE LIGHT OF THE STAR

Timothy dug his toes deeply into the sand as he gently filtered handfuls through his crippled fingers. He liked the feeling; it was cool and soothing to his aching joints.

A dove perched on the olive tree near him and cooed him a soft, soothing song. How far away she sounded! And how sad! Timothy stopped his playing long enough to find the shy, gentle creature with his eye. For a long time he watched the bird, wondering if she, too, was sad and hurting with pain. Not the pain that comes by being crippled but the pain that comes by not being wanted, desired, and loved. A sudden, unannounced tear coursed down his olive skin and dropped to the sand below as again the beautiful bird seemed to coo only for him. This was her third trip to the leafy olive tree for that day. A strong sense of love enveloped the boy as he watched her.

Not too far away, in one of the narrow streets, he could hear the merry laughter of the children at play, among them, his own healthy brothers and sisters. They were, undoubtedly, preparing for the great yearly celebration which was soon to take place. How he longed to see, just one time, what went on!

The beautiful dove, as though sensing the boy's loneliness and yearnings, flew to the very bottom limb and cooed and soothed as she eyed him without fear.

"Oh! I love you!" Timothy exclaimed out loud, turning his crippled body so he could watch her every move.

The dove, sensing the lad's adoration, walked to the very tip of the branch and, looking fearlessly at him, began another medley of soft cooing; then, just as quickly as she had come, with a soft whir-r-r of her gray, white wings she flew away.

"Don't leave me," Timothy begged. "I love you. Come back, little dove! Come back and talk to me," and the tears began flowing as he dug his crippled feet more deeply into the cool sand.

"Don't weep, my boy," a soft voice said just then.

"Oh! Oh! I'm sorry! I didn't mean for you to see me cry, Eli." And a radiance came into his young eyes at the sight of the aged parson.

" 'Tis quite all right, my boy. Quite all right," the white haired man exclaimed, laying an understanding hand on the thin shoulders.

"I . . . I . . . guess I'm lonely again." And a fresh volley of tears fell as the lad touched his crippled hands to the kind parson's stout, muscular arms. "It must be wonderful to be strong!" he said again, as he so often had.

"It is indeed wonderful to have good heath, my son," Eli said tenderly, "and some day soon you shall have good stout legs and arms; but what are you doing about these priceless hours now? You have much time to pray, think, and meditate. Are you making use of this time?"

The boy's face reddened slightly, then, looking the elderly parson in the face, he said earnestly:

"I have been reading the Word many hours a day, and . . . and . . . studying and memorizing it too. Listen to this!" and he quoted Matthew 5 through, to the approval of the delighted Eli.

"Good! Good! Very good, son! God is preparing you for a task far greater than any of your kinsfolk. Does your father know what you have told me?"

"No, sir. No one knows but you. Father would beat me severely if he knew." And Timothy's young body shook and trembled at the thought. "I could not stand another beating," he added softly.

"Where is your father, son?"

"I do not know," the lad said sadly. "I rarely ever see him. He is gone so much of the time. Mother cares less and less about me. Her friends all tell her I am cursed and will bring a curse upon the family."

"You are hungry?" the kind man asked, drawing a sack of food stuffs from his robe and changing the subject.

"Oh! how good it smells!" Timothy exclaimed, reaching hungrily for the sack.

"It's all yours," the kind man said. "Eat it all. There will be more for you when this is gone."

"Oh, Eli!" Timothy began, his voice breaking with emotion. "The Lord has been so good to me! He gave me salvation through His blood and sanctification through His blood and now, as

though that isn't enough, He feeds me through you, like He cared for Elijah. He shall have all my life in service for Him. 'Tis the least I can do."

"'Tis a miracle indeed!" the aged Eli said, "How God led me through the broken fence into your yard, and then how you came to believe on the true God. This Christian way, though despised by our people, is the only way to Heaven, Timothy. It is a despised, persecuted way; but 'tis worth it indeed. Is it not?"

"Yes, yes!" Timothy assured, "I have never had peace of soul and mind until I found the Lord Jesus Christ. I found true happiness."

"Twill last forever, son. If you remain true to the One our people hate and despise."

"I mean to do all I can to lead them to Him," the boy said as he ate of the good food.

"Miracles are happening every day," Eli said. "'Tis not too hard for Him to heal you when He sees fit, and I feel that day is not too far away. But," and he looked squarely at the young boy, "would you not be missed? Surely they would not permit you to do as you plan to do!" .... I rarely ever see Father," Timothy said sadly, "and Mother cares less and less. For days she refuses to see me. Were it not for a kind neighbor, I would remain in this very spot day and night, but she helps me into a small room on her porch at night so I'm not left to the cold winds that blow."

A look of pity came into the elderly man's face as he said tenderly, "God is watching over you, son. He will continue to lead and guide you. I am getting to be an old man and I have been praying earnestly for God to send me a dedicated, holy, young man to take up the work when my time comes to go. 'Study to show thyself approved unto God; a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.' "

"All that you tell me I shall do. I long for more knowledge of the Holy Word," and a far away look came into Timothy's young face as he continued, "I long so to get into the church and worship."

"That day will come, if you continue to have faith and believe," Eli said unwaveringly.

A new surge of faith came to the boy as he looked heavenward and, smiting his crippled hands to his breast, said tearfully, "Lord, I believe! Help Thou mine unbelief! Oh, Eli! I know the Lord Jehovah's going to heal my body."

The days that ensued found the patient dove and the tender Eli making daily visits to the young cripple. Each new day his faith mounted higher and grew stronger in the Lord, his God.

One starry night, when all the heavens were aglitter and aglow with the scintillating beings and a soft, chill wind was sweeping across the hillsides, Timothy, alone in the sand, heard the noise of voices in the narrow, winding streets. First there was loud clamor, then loud, shrill music making. He knew what it meant; this was the all night of celebration and everybody took part in its sin and festivities. The noise was now deafening and the boy longed to get away from it all.

Silently he prayed; and, as he raised his eyes heavenward, he saw a star -- not an ordinary star -- this one was moving! His heart seemed to stand still with awe and wonder.

"Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men," a gentle voice urged.

"Come?" the lad questioned, trembling all over as he saw the shining star move ever so gently across the heavens.

"Yes. Come! Follow me!" the soft pleading continued.

Without a moment's hesitation the cripple raised himself to his feet -- "by faith" the voice whispered. He was standing -- alone! No! Not alone; by faith! He began to weep for joy when again the command was spoken softly.

"Follow me. See yonder star? Keep your eye on it and follow its light until it stops."

One step forward, two, three, four . . . he was walking! No, running! He leaped for joy and ran, by the light of the star, to the church at the edge of the village and city. There the star stopped and hung suspended in mid-air, above the humble place of worship. Running in through the open door the lad cried happily, "I'm healed! I'm healed! Oh, Eli! what God hath wrought!"

The aged minister, kneeling by the altar, rose to his feet and, lifting his hands in holy benediction exclaimed, "Bless the Lord, oh, my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who healeth all thy diseases; who crowneth thy years with goodness. Bless his holy name!"

"I am ready now to be of service to Him," Timothy said humbly. "He shall have my most faithful service and all my years shall be His. I choose to labor here in this humble place of worship rather than the synagogue of my fathers. The Lord Jesus Christ is my Saviour. Bless His holy name!"

Outside the star shone brighter and brighter as the humble Christians began gathering into the church to worship the Christ child, their new found Lord and King.

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THE END OF THIS FILE