

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication  
Copyright 2000 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and  
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with  
the restrictions stated in the B4UCopy.txt file on this CD.

## **CHILDREN'S PAGE STORIES -- 1967**

**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

\* \* \* \* \*

Digital Edition 08/25/2000  
By Holiness Data Ministry  
With the Author's Permission  
THESE STORIES MAY NOT BE COPIED  
IN ANY WAY EXCEPT FOR PERSONAL USE.

\* \* \* \* \*

### CONTENTS

Story 1  
A DIME FOR VICTORY

Story 2  
CHARLEY LONGHORNS

Story 3  
SASSAFRAS

Story 4  
THAT WHICH DOTHS COST ME NOTHING

Story 5  
LITTLE THINGS!

Story 6  
IN HIDING

Story 7  
LASSIE

Story 8  
A MARRED LIFE

Story 9  
MR. GOLD FINCH

Story 10  
LOST IN THE "WOULDS"

Story 11  
CHERI'S THANKSGIVING

Story 12  
THE CHRISTMAS SURPRISE

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, January, 1967

Story 1  
A DIME FOR VICTORY

"I'm going all the way to the front," Mark said, his voice full of eager excitement. "I like Brother Bailey. He's a good preacher."

"I'll go with you," Truman laughed. "I always hear more when I sit up near the front. The boys get so noisy in the back and I don't want to miss a single thing the preacher says."

"Dad likes for me to sit down near the front," Mark continued, "And I rather like it."

I sure wish George would get saved in this revival," Truman said as both boys cast quick glances backward to see who had just entered the doors.

"I'm glad he's come two times, Truman. That's better than none --which is the way he generally does during a revival. He didn't show up one time during our last revival -- even missed Sunday School!"

"Know somethin', Mark? Sometimes I wonder if I'm really saved."

Mark expressed astonishment as his friend continued, "Brother Bailey said something the other night that troubled me a lot and, and -- if he makes an altar call tonight I think I'll go. I hate to have such big doubts staring me in the face and troubling me all the time."

Mark swallowed hard, but the lump in his throat refused to go away. What was it Brother Bailey had said about wrong attitudes and so-called "little sins"? It was going to cause many to miss the Rapture! Mark turned pale and became silent. Could... could.., he be the reason George wasn't saved? He shuddered at the thought and suddenly buried his face in his hands.

"What's the matter?" Truman asked, his voice full of concern. Seeing the pale face he jerked himself around and faced his pal. "Mark! Mark! You're sick," he exclaimed fearfully.

"Not really. Just the kind of sickness you have--over doubts and question marks."

"Oh!" the friend exclaimed understandingly and simply as the song leader began the singing.

Strange, the boys pondered thoughtfully, but every song seemed to be about the covering blood and a "know so" salvation. Truman's doubts mounted before him now like huge mountains and by the time Brother Bailey was through preaching Mark's conviction was well founded and the lump in his throat had become many times its original size. He kept swallowing and swallowing -- hard, too--but the lump remained and before anyone could even bow his head for prayer the boys ran to the altar, each sobbing out the woe and condition of his own heart. Mark prayed hard for a while, then stopped suddenly. A heavy log of obstruction seemed to be thrust directly across his prayer pathway.

"Something in the way, Son?" And Mark's father, with one arm around the sobbing boy's shoulders and the other free hand wiping tears, looked longingly at his son.

"I...I...just can't pray any more, Dad."

"There's always a reason for that, dear boy. We only move the obstructions to prayer through obedience, Mark. Are you really and truly obedient?"

"Is... is... George here, Dad?" the boy faltered brokenly.

"Yes, He's here. Seems to like Brother Bailey's preaching a lot. This makes the third time he's..."

Mark never waited to hear. Tearfully he rose from his knees, and seeing George in his customary place on the very last pew, hunched far down in the seat, Mark ran to him and threw his arms around him. "Forgive me, George, for stealing your batter's turn at school. You were right-it was your turn. Since I love to bat I lied and said it was my turn. I lied, George, and did you dirty. Can you please forgive me? I'm going straight from here on out. I want to make Heaven my home."

Suddenly George sat straight and erect, a hungry look on his young face. "That's what I've been looking for," he cried heading for the altar. "Some fruit of professed Christianity."

As Mark and George fell penitently across the altar, Truman, with victory written all over his face and shining through him, testified happily.

"A long time back I took a dime out of Father's desk drawer. He saves certain dated dimes," he explained. "I wanted one for some: thing and knew Dad would never miss just one, so I took it. But that thin dime weighed on my heart like tons of lead or steel. The Lord showed me I'd have to confess to Father and ask his forgiveness if I wanted complete victory in my soul, and I'm

so happy I obeyed. The load's gone and so is my guilt and condemnation and all the doubts that I once had. A dime for victory! I'm so glad I paid the price. That little dime would have taken me to hell if I had not confessed. My sins are all covered by the blood right now. Every other time I confessed everything but the dime. Tonight I want you all to know that every doubt and question mark is gone."

Several more healthy shouts sounded just then; George and Mark struck the Rock. This time it was real! The Spirit witnessed to every Christian in the congregation as the obstructing logs of thin dimes, lying words, and wrong attitudes were completely moved out of the way by restitution and confession.

A thin dime? Yes, that's all it takes to stand between you and God!

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, February, 1967

Story 2

CHARLEY LONGHORNS

He was a beautiful, cuddly baby boy with a coat of bluish-gray soft wool. His mother licked his pretty wool until it shone, then gently nudged him with her warm nose to play with him.

He stood on his four wobbly legs and let out a soft "ba-ba-a" as he surveyed the new world around him. In a few minutes he was swept off his wobbly little legs and into the arms of a blue-eyed boy whose eyelashes drooped, then curled beautifully upward.

"Oh, Father!" he exclaimed gleefully. "This is the finest little ram that ever I have seen! Do look at him!"

"I see. I see, son," Mr. Withers said, fondly placing his big brown hand on the shoulder of his youngest son. "He is a fine one. Isn't he?"

"I love him," the lad said, gently pulling the frightened creature to him as the mother anxiously licked and nudged a woolly leg that hung down.

"Why not call him Charley?" Mr. Withers asked. "Your name is Charles and we'll call him Charley -- after you."

"Oh, Daddy! How wonderful!" Charles said gleefully.

In the days that followed, all the Withers children spent many enjoyable hours with Charley, who was becoming more and more hardheaded and whose playing became rougher and rougher. What's more, he had grown two curly gray-white horns! The smaller children shied away from him while the older boys teased and tormented Charley to watch him charge always being careful not to be in his path when he did so.

One bright sunny day when Mr. Withers had gone to town on business, Dale and Owen, the two oldest Withers boys, were sitting lazily beneath a leafy maple tree when Owen suddenly nudged Dale and said:

"Clyde's coming. See him? Let's have some fun." And they giggled and laughed convulsively as they whispered.

"He always has been a big sissy," Dale said, after they had made their plans. "Always afraid of everything on the farm," he added to his brother.

"Hi, Clyde," Owen called pleasantly from the shade of the tree. "Come join us. We were just talking and being kinda' lazy till Dad gets home," and Clyde settled wearily beneath the leafy tree. For a while the boys chatted happily; then, quite casually, Dale excused himself. In a short while Owen, too, arose. "Let's go down near the creek, shall we?" he suggested as Clyde obediently followed.

Slowly they walked through the blossoming orchard, through a small meadow and down to the creek. Owen, all the while, cast quick glances to his extreme right. Suddenly he darted to the fence near by -- and just in time to see Charley come charging into Clyde. He got him from behind, throwing the frightened neighbor boy to the ground and, just as he got back on his feet, the ram charged the second time. Again he threw the boy to the ground, butting him soundly with his long horns and hard, hard head. Clyde became frantic and let out a frightful scream, only to be butted and thrown each time he stood upright. As the enraged Charley charged the fifth time to the Withers boys' sheer delight and glee -- Mother, who had been working in the kitchen and had a commanding view of the meadow and its happenings, ran swiftly to the screaming, frightened Clyde and, shoving Owen and Dale into the path of the ram, she helped Clyde to his feet and up on the fence. It all happened so fast until the amazed boys didn't know what to think. Owen got it first; then Charley, seeing Dale standing in amazement, charged back, and down went the startled boy screaming and crying as he did so. Mother, with a heavy club in her hand, met the seemingly wild ram with a sound, heavy pounding that downed him and finally sent him shivering off into the far corner of the meadow.

"Come!" she ordered the boys, who could hardly walk nor believe the might of the slim Mrs. Withers. Once inside the big farm kitchen she gently administered aid to the trembling, bruised Clyde and gave him a tall glass of cold milk with generous slices of homemade bread, but sent the boys upstairs to bed to await their father's return and then decide what further punishment should be administered.

"Clyde," she began softly, tearfully, "I'm sincerely sorry about this. Oh, I only hope I can now help you to see what you and your folks have been needing all along also my two older boys. Charley is like carnality in your heart. He is hard headed and cruel and will strike when you're least expecting it -- always from behind. That's why God told Abraham to put a ram on the altar. Rams are noted for their hard-headedness and fierce temper when stirred up as Charley was. That same nature is within you, Clyde, and will cause you to do the same thing Charley did to you. It's a hard-headed, stubborn and rebellious nature that so fills the unsanctified

heart with anger until you are not aware, many times, what you are doing. That's how many murders, lies and such things come about. Do you see it, Clyde? It's within your heart until God, for Christ's sake, sanctifies and cleanses you from every trace of inbred sin. Since you got saved you need the Holy Spirit to get rid of that awful nature within you. I pray God may help you to see this," Mrs. Withers said kindly, weeping.

"I realize it's there and I want to get rid of it," Clyde said.

He left with a shine from Heaven on his young face, "I'll tell my folks just how the Lord sanctified me Holy," he said. "I've never had such soul rest before."

"Pray for Owen and Dale," Mrs. Withers began. "They need help. I feel they've learned their lesson. They'll pay for whatever the doctor's bill is," and the boys winced as the soft breezes carried the words upstairs.

"I'll never do such a thing again," Dale said in deep contrition as he began praying and weeping bitterly to be joined by his big brother.

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, March, 1967

### Story 3 SASSAFRAS

"Mother! Mother! Come quickly! Something terrible's happened!" and Joy sounded like she was about to cry.

Mother hurried out through the screen door and ran to the big walnut tree where Joy and Sandy were playing. "Whatever is the matter?" she asked, breathless.

"It's Sassafra!" Joy exclaimed. "I thought she was a perfect little lady banty but I...I'm disappointed in...her," and she began to cry.

Mother looked from Joy to Sandy and back to Joy again. Then she spied Sassafra near the garden gate her feathers were still ruffled and all puffed up.

She...she... Joy began again, "Sassafra is a fighter and... and...I'm ashamed I ever picked her to be my pet."

"But, Joy," Sandy interrupted, "she wasn't at all like that when she was a tiny baby. You didn't know. You can't help it that she turned out to be a fighter."

"But...but, Joy, your Freckles isn't like Sassafra. He's a gentleman bantam."

Just then Sassafras flapped 'her' rapidly developing wings and let out a high-pitched, off-key try at "Cock-a-doodle-do."

"See there!" Mother exclaimed aloud, laughing musically, "It would be hard for Sassafras to be lady-like, wouldn't it? She's not supposed to be! She's a rooster, honey."

"Well, at least he could be a gentleman like Freckles, and not fight," Joy maintained.

"Sassafras is merely displaying his true nature . . . his real inner self. He can't help himself," Mother smiled sweetly. "He's like a lot of people whom I know. They are so obsessed with hatred and strife that their second name could well be called 'fighter,' like poor Sassafras."

"But Sassafras could hide her feelings," Joy said suddenly. "She doesn't need to put them on display for everybody to see what an ill-chosen pet I have."

"He," Sandy said, grown-up-like, "would merely be covering up his very nature. Why, Joy, he'd be a down-right hypocrite and I...I'd like him less for that. At least he's showing his colors -- a black heart, I mean," and she looked toward the garden gate where Sassafras was still in a ruffled state of affairs.

"And what would be so wrong with Sassafras' playing the hypocrite?" Joy asked, wounded deeply over the condition of her pet. "At least I could respect her -- er -- I mean, . . .him." Looking quickly toward the saucy little pet she burst out with, "Why didn't you keep that nasty old nature of yours down, Sassafras? At least everyone would have respected you and . . .and...not have found out what a fighter you really are. Why did you do it? You have poor old Big Sam's comb all bloody and sore and you even scared Blackie away. Oh, I'm sorry you're my pet!" and the tears began flowing again.

"Joy," Mother said, going to her blonde-haired daughter and placing her motherly arms around her shoulders, "Sandy is right; Sassafras would be a real hypocrite. . . trying to hold down that old nature within him. Sooner or later -- just like every carnal heart does -- that old nature would spring up and trouble him again. What good does covering up do, dear? So long as that desire to fight is there, one is just as guilty as if he had already fought. Sassafras is only a little banty rooster and his saucy little heart is full of fighting; don't worry about him -- he has no soul. Pray for boys and girls who have souls that need to be delivered from that awful nature.'"

"But...but...Mother, she's too pretty to fight. Just look at her . . .I mean, his beautiful feathers!"

"Beauty cannot cover up this awful nature," Mother began again. "That proves still another point -- Sassafras is only as his heart. That's why you're disappointed in him, dear. It's that sweet, beautiful, peaceful, fountain of the heart life that makes us beautiful, too. Always remember this."

"Poor Sassafras is just like a lot of boys and girls I know -- so very, very sweet when everything's going their way -- until the wind blows in the wrong direction, then their fighting colors show. Sassafras was challenged to a duel with Big Sam, who's been King of the Barnyard

for a long, long time now, and, well, that nasty something within him rose up and accepted the challenge -- to the tune of blood and hate! While he may be ruling as King for awhile, he lost every bit of respect you ever held for him and..."

"Oh, Mother!" Joy exclaimed, suddenly interrupting, "I see the entire picture now. Sassafras is just like my heart was before I got sanctified. I remember how my temper flared up at you, Sandy over nothing, really, and..."

Suddenly the sisters were laughing together -- thankful that each had had her Pentecost and the fighting nature was all gone... arguments, too.

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, April, 1967

Story 4

THAT WHICH DOTHS COST ME NOTHING

"You mean you're giving your big new fire engine to that poor family that comes to church?" Keith asked in a stunned, shocked voice. "Why, Sammy, you always wanted a bright red fire truck that squirted water and now that you have it you're giving it away! Are you crazy or what's happened to you?" and he shook his head in a puzzled way at his dark haired pal.

"There's nothing wrong with me, Keith," Sammy said, misty eyed, patting the red fire truck fondly. "I'm only doing what I feel I should do."

"But . . . But . . . Sam, can't you see that it's foolishness to give your best and nicest things away? God doesn't expect me to give Toby away. I know He doesn't."

"Keith," Sammy said soberly, "I don't know what God is requiring of you, but I do know He whispered for me to give 'Fire Bug' and 'River Cruiser' to the Harbeson family."

"You . . . You . . . mean you're giving your boat, too?" the boy asked in greater astonishment.

"Sammy, you can't mean it!"

"But I do," his pal said softly. "What difference does it make to God what you give so long as you give.? Why, Sammy, you have that old boat that's nearly worn out and won't run any more. Why not give it?"

"God wants my best," the lad answered sweetly, "and He shall have it!"

"But . . . I . . . don't understand," Keith stammered. "God isn't getting your fire truck nor your boat, and . . . and . . . why ... would He care, anyhow?"

Mother always says what's not fit, or good enough for us to wear, isn't good enough for other people. Why, Keith," Sammy said, ,bright eyed, "don't you know it's more blessed to give than it is to receive?"

"I never found it that way," Keith retorted sharply.

"Maybe it's because you never really gave," Sammy replied thoughtfully.

For a long while Keith looked at his best pal, then said angrily, "Of course I've given. You know I have. I gave Charles Stillman a bow and arrow set last year and that old baseball I didn't want any more I gave to Teddy Rogers. You know that!" he almost shouted.

"I'm ,sorry, Keith," Sammy's soft voice began, "I , . I didn't mean . . . to . . . make you angry, for the Bible says not to provoke one another to wrath; but . .you . . . see . . . you really haven't given -- in a right way -- I mean. Let's go sail 'River Cruiser' one last time on the stream down in the meadow. Here, you take it, I'll bring the Old Black Tug," and he ran to the closet and got his old, well worn boat.

For a long time the two sailed the boats, wading in the cool, clear water behind the vessels; pretending they were sailing far out into the blue, blue Pacific.

For a long time they played peacefully together at their wonderful game. First "River Cruiser" was ahead, then the old, faithful Black Tug would glide gracefully by the beautiful shiny new Cruiser. The boy's laughed with glee and when both boats glided silently into a clump of water weeds Keith said,

"Let's rest awhile, Sammy. I'm tired." Then, settling his boyish form nonchalantly on the cool, green grass on the bank, he stretched lazily out on the ground and watched as the fleecy white clouds floated like marshmallows across the heavens, saying softly as he did so,

"I just don't understand you, Sammy -- wanting to give 'River Cruiser' away! Look at the good times we've had with her!"

Sammy looked down at the clear flowing stream and over to the clump of weeds where both vessels were bobbing gently up and down; then, facing his pal he said dreamily,

"Keith, some few days ago Father was reading in II Samuel the 24th chapter about king David for family worship. He read something that has been bothering me ever since. That's why I'm giving these things to that poor family. I don't have money nor food to give in that pounding our church is having for the Harbesons, but I know Jimmy and Myrle will have a wonderful time with my fire truck and River Cruiser. I asked Bro. Mickle if I could give something and he said it would be wonderful."

"What did your daddy read to you about giving?" Keith asked, sitting upright and facing Sammy squarely.

"Oh, there's lots in the Bible about giving -- both in tithes and in offerings," Sammy said, dreamy eyed. "I always pay my tithes and offerings and thought this would be kinda extra. You see, Keith, David the king said, 'Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.' That's why I'm giving! David bought the threshing floor and the oxen from a man named Araunah that he might offer burnt sacrifices unto the Lord to stop a plague that God had sent because he had numbered the people. It's really wonderful to give, more so when you need or want that very thing! It makes me feel good all over, especially way down deep inside. God loves a cheerful giver and I've learned the joyous blessing of giving, not to receive again, but just to be giving. It's really wonderful. I hope someday you'll feel exactly what I feel when I give," and he fixed his gaze intently on a mother robin who was busily engaged feeding her five hungry, young ones.

"Look, Sammy!" Keith exclaimed joyously. "That mother bird's giving, too."

Just as he finished speaking the robin flew gracefully upward and, perching her plump body on a topmost limb she broke forth into jubilant song, lifting her head in praise, upward.

"She's... she's..., really happy, too -- to be giving, I mean," Keith said in almost a whisper. He stood, suddenly erect and with shoulders squared he said excitedly, "Let's go, old pal. I have a lot to do if I'm going to get a box ready for the Harbesons. Somehow I can hardly wait to get home and get busy. I feel it already, Sammy, -- that wonderful, 'way down deep inside' good feeling that comes by just being willing to do and to give. Thanks, Sam, old pal, for your unselfishness. Excuse me now while I hurry home and get all my back tithes and offerings paid up and a box ready for the Harbesons," and away he ran toward the neat white bungalow.

The water lapped gently at the side of River Cruiser and Old Tug fondly; then, picking them gently up in his brown, sun tanned hands, he started homeward, golden sunbeams dancing for joy at his feet.

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, May, 1967

Story 5

LITTLE THINGS!

Scratch! Scratch! Scratch! went Danny's rake as he raked the twigs and leaves out of Mrs. Wiersma's yard. The sun was shining brightly and the perspiration dropped off Danny's pink chin to the green grass.

"Hi!" a voice called, and Danny looked up to see Brick coming down the sidewalk with Cheshire, the black French poodle. ....

"How about going for a walk with me?" Brick asked as Cheshire minced daintily on his well-groomed and freshly manicured feet.

"Sorry, Brick," Danny said, "I can't go today."

"Why not?" asked Brick. "This is a really hot day, and you'd rather be playing than working, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, it is hot," Danny answered, "but I'm sorry, Brick, I can't go. I promised Mrs. Wiersma I'd rake and mow her lawn and I'm going to stick to my word!"

"That's too bad," said Brick, "for Cheshire and I were going over to Rainbow Park to swing and just be lazy today." Then turning to go he called back:

"What are you going to do with your money, anyhow?"

"Well," Danny began, "first of all I'll pay my tithe, then I'm going to send money to our Missionaries."

"You won't have any left for comics and the show by then," said Brick.

"I don't buy comic books nor go to shows," Danny said, "then, too, I'm trying to lay up a little treasure in Heaven, as the Bible says."

"You're sure a funny boy," laughed Brick mockingly. "I don't ever need to work. My Dad has a lot of money and I can get anything I want." And he turned and walked rapidly away, his gray slacks and sport shirt blowing gently in the warm breeze.

As Danny rounded the house and began mowing the back part of the lawn four voices chorused out with:

"Danny-y-y! Hi, Danny! Come play with us!" He glanced up to see Tommy, David, Tim and Debbie perched like crows on a limb of the big maple tree.

"Sorry, Tommy," he said, "I can't play just now. I'm busy mowing Mrs. Wiersma's lawn."

"Stop and rest awhile," suggested Tommy. "She won't know you played a little."

"Thanks, Tom," Danny said, "I can't though. You see, she pays me by the hour and I'd be cheating on my time if I played with you while I'm supposed to be working."

As he worked on, Danny said to no one in particular, "Maybe I am a funny boy -- as Brick said m but I'm really having a good time. I guess poor Brick has never had the satisfaction of smelling the freshly cut grass -- cut by his own hands nor has he ever felt the joy of saving a tiny, helpless bird. I'm really a lucky boy!"

"You talkin' to me?" drawled a feminine voice from the other side of the fence.

"No. No," said Danny quickly. "Just talking to myself!"

"I noticed how honest you are," the soft feminine voice continued, "and I'd be proud to have you for my regular yard boy. I want a boy who is honest and has a good clean conscience."

"Oh, thank you, Ma'am," said Danny, "I'll be happy to take care of your lawn. I'll see you as soon as I'm finished with Mrs. Wiersma's lawn." And again the lawn mower began to hum.

The sun seemed to be getting hotter by the minute and Danny's back was wet with perspiration. Sometime while he was trimming the lawn by the cobblestone walk, the devil perched himself on his right shoulder and whispered just loudly enough for Danny to recognize whom it was that was speaking to him:

"Why don't you sit down under the weeping birch and rest for awhile. After all, the lady doesn't expect you to kill yourself. Then too, what's a half hour rest! That's a little thing! Why, Mrs. Wiersma will never know. 'Come on! Rest! Rest . . . rest!"

"In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ whom I love and serve, get thee behind me, Satan," Danny said. "Mr. Devil, for your information, I'm not going to do one little thing you tell me to do. My Bible says it's 'the little foxes that spoil the vines: No sir! Mr. Devil; I'm not your slave.'" And with that Danny worked feverishly at his job. He knew it paid to be honest!

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, June, 1967

## Story 6 IN HIDING

Rickey stood his stick horse by the baseball bat in the corner of the screened in back porch.

"Did you call me, Mother?" he asked, standing in the doorway.

"Yes, I did. I ran out of lard and I'll have to have it to finish setting the bread. This was very careless of me."

"Where's the money?" Rickey asked, mopping the perspiration from his brow and hurrying to the sink for water. "Sure is hot today," he exclaimed as he got his second glass of water.

"I have the money right here for you," Mother said. "Now run along, dear, and don't stop to play or visit. I need the lard to start my bread mixture."

En route to the store Rickey met Mark and Allan and Bruce and . . .

"Sorry, fellas," he exclaimed in a sort of mannish way. "I can't stop to play or visit. Mother needs lard badly and she told me to come right home," and he went whistling on his way.

"Hello there, young fellow," Mr. Barton greeted as Rickey entered the store. "What can I do for you?"

"My mother needs lard," Rickey said.

"How much, son?" Mr. Barton asked, scratching his head thoughtfully.

"Here's some money and a note," Rickey said, handing the grocery man the tightly wrapped money and note.

"Hm-m!" was all Mr. Barton said as he walked away. Rickey stood watching him. Everything about Mr. Barton looked clean. He was a real Christian and Rickey knew this made him look clean and holy; then, too, he always wore white -- everything white -- white pants, white shirt, long white over jacket and a funny looking white hat.

"Can't you sit down and talk with me a little while?" Mr. Barton asked, handing the bag to Rickey.

"I'd sure like to, Mr. Barton, but Mother told me to come right home. I'd better be going now. Good-bye. Maybe some other time," and Rickey started out the door.

"Good boy, Rickey. Always be obedient. You'll have God's favor upon you if you obey your parents."

"That was a wonderful boy!" Mother exclaimed fondly as Rickey entered the door. "You've been very obedient and I shall tell Daddy about this."

Rickey beamed, for more than anything else, he wanted Daddy to be proud of him and to approve of his actions and deeds.

That night Rickey stood on the little white gate, swinging back and forth, watching and waiting for the car that would bring Daddy home.

He saw the shiny black car round the bend down the street and in a moment's time he was running down the sidewalk, laughing, "Daddy, Daddy."

"Rickey's been a real good boy," Mother said, after she had greeted her husband.

"That's good news," Daddy said, lovingly patting his boy on the top of his head.

For many days everything went well in the Maxwell household. Rickey was trying exceptionally hard to be good. Then one day it happened!

"Rickey," Mother called. "Ricke-y-!" But no Rickey answered.

"I saw him go down Pine Street with Steven," Mrs. Pinkerton said, coming out on her front porch steps.

"You don't suppose . . ." and Mother raced down to Pine Street. "Did you see Rickey?" she asked Mrs. Dowd, who was working in her rose-bed.

"Why, to be sure, I did," she said, brushing a bit of unruly hair out of her eyes and back beneath the pretty yellow sunbonnet she was wearing. "Steve said they were going wading in Thornapple river," and Mother waited no more.

"Thank you!" she said hastily as she ran toward the river.

"Rickey. Rick-e-y," she called. As she neared the river she heard loud laughter and a splashing noise.

"Rickey!" she exclaimed, breathless. "Come out. We'll be going home."

All the way home Rickey felt the persuasiveness of a small lithe willow branch.

"I'm sorry you disobeyed, son. I shall have to give Daddy a bad report tonight, and you know what that means."

Only too well Rickey knew! "We told you never to go near the river, Rickey," Mother said brokenly.

"But Steve knows how to swim!" the boy defended.

"And you .don't," Mother reminded sternly. "You could have been drowned."

That night there was no bright-eyed, freckle-faced boy swinging on the gate waiting to welcome Daddy.

"Hi, there"" he greeted his pretty wife as he ,entered the door. "Where's my boy?" This always thrilled Rickey.

"He's in his bedroom," Mother answered.

"Naughty?" and Mr. Maxwell sobered.

"He went wading in the river with Steven."

"Oh, no!" and Daddy started for the bedroom. "Rickey," he said. No answer. "Rickey." Still no answer.

"He's not in here," Father said. "Yes, he is", Mother said, coming to the bedroom door and peeking under the bed.

"Rickey, come out," she said. A sad faced, red eyed lad crawled slowly and reluctantly from beneath the bed.

"It's too bad you were so naughty and disobeyed your mother and me," Daddy said, putting his big hands on the boy's shoulders. "You know what our slogan is around this house?"

Rickey nodded and burst into tears.

"All this could have been avoided had you not been disobedient. You realize that, don't you, Rickey?"

"Yes, sir; and I'm sorry."

"We shall have to punish you, dear. This may help you to remember to always be obedient," and Mr. Maxwell took the thin, lithe willow switch to help Rickey remember.

"Oh, Daddy, I want to be good. I really do; and I even try real, real hard to be good; but today the river sounded so good when Steven asked me; and before I thought, I said I'd go," and Rickey repented with bitter tears. "I like for you to always approve of what I do, Daddy."

"And the reason you hid was because you knew I'd disapprove of what you had done! Mr. Maxwell sat the boy on his knee, "Can't you see how our Heavenly Father feels when His children disobey and are sinful? He hates sin and I hate sin. To keep the favor and approval of the Lord Jesus Christ, one must always live Holy and righteously. Then, at His appearing you'll not need to try to find a hiding place. There is no hiding place for sin, son! Jesus sees our heart like an open book and knows the very thoughts and imaginations of our heart."

"I shall pray more, Father, and the Lord will make me to be good. I want to have Him smile on me."

"And you'll be able to meet Daddy at the gate every night."

"I sure will," and Ricky threw his arms around father's neck.

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, July, 1967

Story 7  
LASSIE

Teddy made one entire cutting around the half acre of lawn then stood back and surveyed the loveliness of the mowed path. Every time he mowed now he would be getting closer and closer to the center and the finish line.

He started the motor at full force again and started on the second round, then the third, fourth and fifth. He looked up long enough to see Randy and Jerry playing ball in the vacant lot by the Handy's and his heart longed to join them. Sudden bitterness filled his young heart and he felt he loathed the job of mowing lawn. Why couldn't he be free to play ball like the other boys!

As he started around for the twelfth time, his heart deeply absorbed in bitterness now, Lassie, with a last struggle at the chain where she was tied, lunged suddenly forward and was free. Playfully and happily she bounded across the lawn, barking joyously at her sudden freedom and dragging the long chain behind her. She ran merrily around the mower, fastening the chain in a tight loop each round she made.

Teddy, too full of evil and bitter thoughts, completely ignored the playful creature until the mower gave a grinding, sickening sound and died.

"Now look what you did!" he exclaimed angrily, jerking her harshly and uttering a bad, sinful word at the same time. A sudden arrow of conviction pierced through his young heart and he rushed quickly into the house and mother.

"Mother. Oh, Mother!" he exclaimed bitterly and burying his face in her clean, heavily starched apron. "I'm going to go to Hell. I said a bad, bad word and I'm terribly sorry. I never said bad words before. Honest, I didn't, Mother. Will Jesus forgive me? Will He, Mother? I'm truly sorry, I didn't mean to do it."

"Where did you hear bad words, Teddy? From whom? We never use any bad words around here. Who said the bad words that you heard? Tell mother."

"Well, I . . . I . . . hear Randy and Jerry use them all the time -- when they get mad and things don't go their way," he confessed sadly.

"I'm so sorry to hear that," and mother bowed her head sadly. "I shall do more to try to help them. The devil prompted that bad word to you, Teddy, and you listened to him and said it."

"Can Jesus forgive me, Mother? And will you? Please?" he begged, great tears spilling down over his ruddy cheeks.

"Of course I'll forgive you, Teddy... with all of my heart. And I know Someone else will, too. He's waiting for you to come to Him and tell Him just how sorry you really are for sinning, for He said, 'If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness'."

Without further word the lad rushed into the church next door and ran down the long aisle to the altar where he fell across the beloved thing and poured the heavy burden of his sin-sick soul out to a loving, merciful and compassionate Saviour.

For well over an hour he remained there, and when he returned to the yard his face shone with an inner, Heavenly light he had never before possessed.

He rushed over to Lassie, who was lying contentedly and dutifully beside the mower. Her long chain was still in a grand mess of tangles m wrapped securely about the big power mower. With tears in his eyes he threw his arms around her shaggy neck.

"Forgive me, Lassie." He began. "I'm sorry I scolded you and said a bad word to you. I didn't mean to do it, but the devil in my heart made me do it. He's not there anymore, Lassie: I asked Jesus to please save me and come into my heart and take the devil out and He did it, Lassie. I'm a brand new boy, now, and I'll not say any bad words anymore. You see, I have a new Master, Lassie. His name is Jesus. He filled my heart with the most wonderful peace and joy a boy ever had. And, know somethin', Lassie? I believe . . . I just believe . . . that maybe I can help Randy and Jerry now, too!"

Lassie rubbed her cold nose on Teddy's hand and snuggled up close to his side as if to better understand just what had happened to her master.

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, August, 1967

Story 8

A MARRED LIFE

The camp ground was beautiful. Large virgin oak and thick, symmetrical maples grew in profusion and cast a dense shade over the grass-carpeted grove as the Bright trio walked toward the large tabernacle.

"Isn't this beautiful?" Joe said to his two sisters, "And so large!"

"It really is," Dotty said softly. "Look at all those people inside! I'm almost scared."

"Just pray and ask the Lord to help us," Mildred whispered. "He always has before and He's not going to fail us here." And a sweet, confident smile lighted her young face as they stepped up to the platform.

There were loud shouts of praise and much rejoicing during the congregational singing and the young trio contributed much to the service with their singing, playing, and deep spirituality.

After they had sung their second special number in song and were seated behind the pulpit on the platform, Dottie gave her sister a gentle nudge.

"Don't look now, Sis," she urged, "but after awhile look at that pitiful looking woman on the sixth seat of the third row of seats to our left. She . . . almost scares me," and her whispered voice trailed off.

It was just between daylight and darkness and the trio, after having eaten supper, headed for a place of privacy and seclusion in the beautiful wooded area to pray; when Mildred heard an appealing, urgent voice calling to them. She stopped and turned about face. Coming towards them was a woman hobbling on a cane. Her back was crooked and stiff and her walk feeble and unsteady.

She approached the trio, then laying a shaking hand on young Dottie's fine slender shoulder she began talking and weeping convulsively.

"Don't! Oh, don't ever lose Jesus and wander in sin!" she began, then stopped because of her loud sobbing.

The trio noticed the awful telltale lines of sin on her face and a shiver went spiraling up the girls' spines. She was wrinkled, grayed and freakish-looking and only when she began speaking again in a well modulated, soft tone did they realize that she was once a woman of refinement and culture.

"Look at me!" she urged, pleadingly, tenderly. "I wasn't always like this. One day I too was a beautiful young girl with a life as pure, clean and spotless as a lily. God was using me greatly in His vineyard and I was singing and winning souls to Jesus as you are ....." Here she paused, and for a long while her broken heart poured out its pitiful sobs to Heaven as her crippled body swayed beneath the burden. The stately oaks sensed her plight and, as an errant breeze danced by their branches quivered and shook violently in profoundest sympathy.

"We were, one day, a very poor, but extremely happy family Mother, Father, and I. We came into a sizable amount of money through inheritance when I was sixteen. For a long while things in our life continued much as in the days when we were poverty stricken. Then Father began associating with men of high social standing. He began drinking and smoking. Soon Mother had joined him. Trying vainly to keep the social gatherings a 'family affair' -- for previously we were always together -- I was taken to these 'Hell' gatherings and discovered I had lost Christ. My nights were now nights of dancing, drinking, smoking and loose living, and, oh, the ache within my soul! Something priceless and valuable was lost and gone! I wished to get back to God, but couldn't restrain my inner cravings after drink and the many sinful habits which were now binding me -- choking me slowly to death.

"We had one of the most fashionable mansions, our own chauffeur and everything that money could buy. One morning, between three and four o'clock, we were returning from a night of sinful revelry, drunkenness and dancing when we had a serious accident. Mother was instantly killed and is in Hell today ....." Here a sob rent her body and soul which caused the three to weep with her. "Father was spared long enough to repent and get saved -- our chauffeur, too, was spared, but never repented. Why God spared me, I shall never know, but I was spared and a few years back I found my weary way to an humble Mourner's Bench and God! Oh, young folks! Look at me! I was one day as beautiful, as pure and as innocent as you three are today. My face wasn't hard and marked as you see me now!

"See these lines? These marks?" and she ran a wrinkled, trembling hand over her once fair face as she said quietly, "This is the outside results of a distorted inward life -- a life of sin -- a marred life! Use me for an example wherever you sing. Warn young people not to lose Christ and play with sin. It's dangerous! Its last bitter end is death and Hell! I look like an old woman, but I'm not. I am now only forty years old and soon, soon I shall be resting in the graveyard by Mother and Father. Sin has taken its awful toll on my life. Live close to Jesus, dear children, and hide far back in Him and His love. Your life now is so pure, clean and innocent; stay that way and keep singing and shining for Jesus. Sin is an awful thing to get tangled up in." And, with a gentle pat on the girls' shoulders, she hobbled away, sobbing bitterly.

"She's the woman we were telling you about at the supper table, Joe," the girls said as they hastened to a big maple tree to pray.

"I want more than anything to pray," Joe said as he began weeping.

The prayers of the three young singers ascended Heavenward like a sweet vapor to God; and the skies were rent as God came down. The old maple tree clapped soft Hallelujahs as the breezes rustled the leaves together.

(Written from a true account of our singing days.) SIN WILL DAMN YOUR SOULS,  
DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS! RUN FROM IT!

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, September, 1967

Story 9  
MR. GOLD FINCH

The day was sunny and bright and warm. Perkiomen, the big yellow-black cat stretched the full length of his furry body then settled lazily back beneath the shade of the lilac bush and watched the butterflies flit back and forth among the petunias and cosmos in a bed near him. Ordinarily this would have presented a challenge to the beautiful cat but today he was too hot and lazy to care much about any pretty butterflies. Besides, he was hungry. He wanted something bigger and tastier than butterflies! He swished his long yellow tail back and forth on the hot dusty earth and 'meowed' loudly when Susan skipped happily by, counting "one, two, three, four," as she jumped nimbly over the rope she was swinging before her.

Susan stopped as abruptly as she had appeared and stood in perfect silence. She was watching something! The very same thing Perkiomen was watching, too! The tiny, bright yellow goldfinch (or wild canary) had found the tall sunflower in the corner of the Grossman yard and was having a feast on the seeds which were ripened and hard. He cocked his saucy little head at an angle and looked longingly toward the tall slender cosmos bushes as they swayed gently in the breeze, their delicate, fern-like leaves making soft swishing sounds. Happily and joyfully the goldfinch darted down to the plants and lighted hungrily on the top of the biggest cosmos. Down,

down, down bent the slender plant as the hungry little bird fed contentedly from the many tiny seeds he so dearly loved.

Perkiomen, seeing the lovely creature not as a bird of beauty but as a tasty morsel of food, sat suddenly erect and crouched his big full body along the hot ground, prepared in an instant to spring upon the unwary, unsuspecting bird. Mr. Goldfinch chirped gaily and continued feeding on the cosmos plant. Down, down, down dipped the fragile, slender plant and down, down went Mr. Goldfinch . . . after another seed. Up sprang Mr. Perkiomen, no longer concealed beneath the lovely lilac bush. Susan screamed, loudly and wildly, and not a moment too soon. The little creature soared upward, dropping a seed in its haste. Perkiomen looked disgusted and hurt at his mistress. Only one or two inches had separated him from a tasty dinner of goldfinch!

"You naughty, naughty cat!" Susan scolded. "That explains why you don't like the food mother and I give you. You prefer to kill our beautiful song birds. Now, run!" and she chased Perkiomen away, looking anxiously in the direction of the escaped bird.

"What happened?" Mother asked as she hurried down the porch steps. "Paul and I heard you but couldn't leave what we were doing before this."

"Oh, Mother," Susan began tearfully, "I'm terribly disappointed in Perkiomen."

"But, why, Susan? Perkiomen's a perfect pet."

"Maybe so; but he's a . . . a . . . menace to our beautiful song birds. He would have eaten a lovely goldfinch if I had not been jumping rope and seen him. When I screamed the tiny, dear, little thing flew away. I scared it so Perkiomen wouldn't get it. He was so hungry and was eating the seeds from our cosmos plants. He kept getting nearer and nearer to Perkiomen who was hiding beneath the lilac bush. That's when I screamed. I saw Perkiomen crouching for the kill."

"Susan," and mother dried her wet hands on the apron she was wearing, "come here, dear."

"Yes, Mother. What do you want?"

"Aren't you like the little goldfinch . . . maybe?"

"Me? What made you say that, Mother?" and the girl brushed the perspiration from her forehead.

"Perkiomen was like the devil is with you, Dear."

Susan gasped loudly as her mother continued,

"First, you begged your father and me to go over to Sally's house . . . to study, you said. But we found out you wanted to watch a program Sally had told you about. Next, you sneaked over to her house and actually did watch T. V. Now you ask to go to the fair 'like all the other girls'. Oh, Susan! Can't you see how like the goldfinch you are..., ever getting nearer and nearer to the devil's

traps where doom and destruction wait for you. You need backbone, Dear. Only Jesus can give you this. But first you must let Him come into your heart. Jesus said "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him." So you see where that puts you."

The girl hung her head in shame then hot tears stung her eyes and hung heavily in her long dark lashes. "I . . . I... want to ..\_ love Jesus, Mother, but this love for the world won't turn me loose. Pray with me, Mother. I want to be good and please Jesus."

There by the lilac bush and the cosmos bed Susan poured her heart out to the Lord as mother prayed for her and the dear Lord Jesus came into her heart and forgave all her sins. Perkiomen came up beside her (he was back already) and rubbed his long fur along her dress.

"I see now what you meant, Mother. The devil was gradually getting me to doing bigger and bigger things. Then, one day he'd have me so in his clutches and grasp until I couldn't have freed myself. Why..." and she gasped loudly again as she clutched her throat with her hands, "I... may never have gotten saved then! Just like Mr. Goldfinch would never have gotten away if I had not screamed. Thank you, dear Mother, for telling me the truth. I love you and I know that I'm saved. Thank you, dear Jesus, for rescuing me now." she said heavenward, as a pretty, bright-colored yellow goldfinch with black markings on his body dipped joyously by, eyeing the cosmos bed again.

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, October, 1967

Story 10  
LOST IN THE "WOULDS"

Tommy sat down on the back porch step and cupped his round, fat face in the palms of his chubby hands -- sulking and pouting. Muffin, the roly-poly, toasty brown cocker, settled herself by his side, every now and then venturing a sad, chalky-eyed glance in his direction. She didn't like it when Tommy got in one of these peculiar moods. No, sir! Not one little bit! It made her feel ill at ease and kinda like she ought to run and hide. She whined softly, pitifully, then brushed her cold little nose lightly over his hand. Maybe that would make him smile again! But no, Tommy never even moved; he kept staring hard at the field across the fence, where Don and the neighbor boys were laughing and playing ball.

Muffin, most unbiased in her opinions and congenial with everybody, looked sadly at Tommy and then ran down the steps and out to the field, where she caught a fly ball between her sharp little teeth. The boys jumped up and down with glee and showered the happy cocker with praise and loving pats.

"I'm going to choose Muffin for my side next time," one of the boys laughed.

"Leave her alone!" Tommy exclaimed, shouting across the fence. "She's my dog!"

"Why, Tommy!" and Mother was shocked -- you could tell that right off. "She's Donald's dog, too, and he's out there Why aren't you playing?"

"I would be if Phillip had chosen me on his side. But no, he picks the new Mangel boy and that Brainerd boy, and . . ."

"You aren't jealous, Tommy? Or are you? I think Phillip's being like Jesus... choosing Ted Mangel and Dicky Brainerd. After all, they're new here and don't know too many of the boys in the neighborhood."

"But, Mother, nobody likes them," and Tommy got to his feet and started for the kitchen.

"It looks like your brother likes their company, Tommy, plus a field full of other boys. Did you ever try to like them? Did you give yourself the chance to be friends with them?"

"Well, I . . . er... I would if . . . ,Phillip would give me a chance.

"Well, since you don't want to cooperate with the other boys, and since you choose pouting and sulking rather than playful exercise. you go over to the tomato patch and get busy weeding for Grandma Thorne."

"Oh, Mother, I'd gladly do it if she was my very own grandmother, but she's not; and suppose I pull her tomatoes out thinking they're weeds!" and a loud moan escaped his lips.

"You pull the plants out, Tommy, and you'll have another job . . . resetting new plants where the old were pulled. The lawn needs a good mowing, too. Get busy, Tommy. This is your week to mow; Donald did it last week and..

"Oh, Mom, I would, but my back's hurting me. I just can't push that big old clumsy lawn mower. I can't!"

"Thomas DeGraff, sit on that chair behind you -- right away!" and Mother's orders were firm. "Now then, Son, you stay right there until you find your way back -- out of the 'woulds' the pouts and the sulks. Then, after you have properly located yourself, you may leave for poor old Grandma Thorne's tomato patch to pull weeds -- every one of them. Then when you're finished with the tomatoes you come home and mow the lawn with that 'big old clumsy lawn mower.' Stay where you are, Tommy, until you find your way out of the 'woulds'."

"But, Mom, I'm not lost in any woods."

"Oh, yes, you are, Thomas. 'I would' weed Grandma's tomatoes, but...; 'I would' play ball, but...; 'I would' mow the lawn, but . . . It's a shame that a boy who could be really nice, kind and helpful should get lost so young in the awful 'woulds', " and Mother began vacuuming the living room, leaving Tommy to his own musings and the 'woulds.'

A loud cheer from the big field across the fence made Tommy stretch up high and tall on his chair. Ted Mangel had hit a home run and Donald was bending over him, slapping him on the shoulders and laughing with glee. "I knew you could do it, Ted, I knew it!" And all the boys huddled around Ted. He was a hero!

Suddenly something rose up within Tommy -- something he didn't like. It scared him.

"Mother," he called, "can you pray with me? I'm in trouble. I -- don't want to stay lost like this! I -- I'm -- my heart's full of envy and jealousy, but I know Jesus can deliver me. Please pray for me."

The hum of the vacuum cleaner died slowly away and Tommy, too miserable to care about what anyone else was doing, fell to his knees, sobbing tears of deepest sorrow for having allowed the carnal nature to remain in his heart.

Just as the boy prayed through, Muffin bounded happily up on the porch, followed by the entire group of excited, cheerful ball players.

"Mom! Mom!" Donald exclaimed excitedly, "Ted hit a home run and Dicky was best pitcher today. Isn't that wonderful! I knew they could do it even though they said no other boys picked them to be on their side. Phil and I always did feel they had, well, as Dad would say, 'potentials.' And they sure have! Is there any lemonade? We're thirsty." Suddenly noticing Tommy he asked, concerned like, "What's the matter, Tom. You hurt or somethin'?"

"Not any more, Donald. I just found my way out of the 'woulds,' and after I'm finished weeding Grandma Thorne's tomato patch and have the lawn mowed I'll join you fellows in a game of ball. I'm sorry I pouted and sulked. Forgive me. I got it all fixed up and settled and I'll be seeing you in a little while." And he ran down the back porch steps and went whistling toward Grandma Thorne's tomato patch, with Muffin tagging happily along.

"Let's get busy on the lawn," Dicky suggested sweetly, "then Tommy can join us sooner and we'll all have a better time."

"Let's," Ted said, laughing, and downing his third glass of lemonade. "It'll seem normal again when Tommy's with us." And the group of noisy merry-makers marched happily off the porch toward the lawn and the 'big old clumsy lawn mower.'

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, November, 1967

Story 11

CHERI'S THANKSGIVING

Cheri was a little girl with shining black hair and a funny little brogue that attracted all her tiny playmates much to her.

"I wish I could talk like you," Marl Beth said one day. "You say your 'v's' so pretty and broad and...."

"I like to hear you talk," Anna, belle interrupted pleasantly.

Now Cheri didn't realize she had been talking any differently than any of her friends and so she just looked at her lovely friends and smiled understandingly. Cheri was a pleasant little girl with a ready smile and a helping hand. She was called "Cherry Blossom" by her mother and daddy.

Thanksgiving day was getting very, very near and Cheri had a sudden bright idea.

"You can't do that!" Marl Beth exclaimed as her little friend unfolded her plans.

"But why can't I do it, Mari Beth? I love Paulette."

"But she doesn't like you, Cheri. I know, she told me so. She said everybody pampers you because of your funny little brogue. She even said you put it on. And now you're going to...."

"Then I must try to make Paulette like me," Cherry Blossom said thoughtfully. "I want her to be my friend. Oh, Marl Beth, I like friends."

"What a funny, funny girl you are! Not only do you have a funny little brogue but you have funny little ways, too. But, know somethin', Cheri, I like you just the way you are." And the golden-haired Marl Beth rushed over to her friend and threw her small arms around the other's neck.

"The Bible says something about being friendly if one would have friends, so it's up to me to let Paulette see that I have Jesus living in my heart and that I want to be her friend . . . really and truly so."

Thanksgiving day dawned. Cheri awakened and set up in bed and rubbed her sleepy eyes, then tumbled out of bed and dressed. Already she could smell the tempting odor of the turkey as it browned ever so slowly in the oven downstairs and the spicy fragrance of the pumpkin pies that mother had baked while she slept. She glanced out through her window and saw the snow flakes falling lazily earthward. Oh, they were so tiny and clean looking! Rambunctious, the golden cocker spaniel, must have felt just like Cherry Blossom, for she took off across the big yard and rolled and rolled and played in the fully white stuff. She stopped playing long enough to look toward the upstairs window.

"I'll be right down," Cheri called loudly to the playful dog, and away the little girl ran, down the stairs. Grabbing her coat and hat she called to mother, "I'll not be long. I have a little business to do . . . Rambunctious and I," and out the door she ran.

Rambunctious, seeing her little mistress, jumped high in the air and rolled over and over in the snow, then bounced quickly to the girl's side.

"Come, Rambunctious," Cheri called, "follow me. We're going to make a new friend today." And away the girl ran, the frisky dog cavorting happily along.

Cherry Blossom never stopped to get her breath until she stood in front of Paulette's house. She knocked ever so lightly.

"Good morning, my little girl," a woman said kindly.

"Is Paulette home?" and Cheri smiled sweetly.

"She's here," the woman said. "Do come in. It's cold outside."

"Thank you," Cheri said politely, "but I'm not cold . . . not one tiny bit! My heart is warm and I feel warm all over." She stepped inside and waited for Paulette.

"Hello," Paulette said coldly as she entered the room.

"Could you come out and play a while, Paulette? Could you? Rambunctious and I would be delighted to have you come over to our house and play sometime today."

For a long time the girl looked at Cherry Blossom. She knew what ugly things she had said and her heart felt ashamed to face this little friend. Rambunctious bounced playfully over near her just then and Cheri laughed, "See? Rambunctious wants you, too, Oh, will you come? We could have such fun together."

Paulette looked at her mother, who nodded sweetly.

"I'll see you this afternoon then" Cheri called as she ran home.

After dinner a different Paulette knocked softly on the door of Cheri's house. Without any waiting, she was greeted by the little girl with the funny little German brogue. "Oh, I'm so glad you've come, Paulette. I love you very, very much, and I want to be your friend; just like Marl Beth and Annabelle are my friends. Now, what shall we do that you would like ever so much to do?" and Cherry Blossom looked honestly at her friend.

"Do... do... you have a pretty doll I could play with?" Paulette asked shyly. "Marcia tears my dollies to pieces," she explained.

"You shall have my very prettiest," Cherry Blossom said, leading the girl to her room. "Let's play house and have Thanksgiving all over again, Paulette. Mother won't mind if we set my play table and have a real Thanksgiving dinner in my toy room. She has lots of pumpkin pie and turkey left."

Two little girls sat down to the small table to eat . . . two little dollies by their side.

"You offer thanks, Paulette," Cheri said, in honor of her guest, "then I'll pray, too."

"Thank You for Cheri, Jesus. She is so much like You. Please help me to be like that. Amen."

"And thank You for Paulette, dear Jesus. Help me to always be like Thee . . . more and more." Cheri said.

"This is the nicest Thanksgiving day I've ever had, Cheri. I was jealous of you, but I'm not anymore . . . since you prayed for me and I asked the Lord Jesus to come into my heart." Paulette said, smiling as she prepared to leave the house later that day.

"We'll have a lot of good times together," Cheri called after her friend, "you and Rambunctious and I. Come over tomorrow. You may ride my new sled all day."

Cherry Blossom felt good and happy all over .... She had been kind!

\* \* \* \* \*

Published in The Missionary Revivalist, December, 1967

Story 12

## THE CHRISTMAS SURPRISE

Margaret Ann heaved a little sigh as she settled herself near her mother.

"My little girl's all ready for bed." Mrs. Kinner smiled, trying hard to conceal the hurt in her heart.

"Do you think Jesus will send me what I asked Him for, Mother?" the blue-eyed girl asked anxiously.

"He said, 'Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them', honey. Now run along to bed and trust the Lord. I know we're poor but I know we have a wonderful Heavenly Father who watches tenderly over us and Who owns everything.

Laughing happily, Margaret Ann ran through the doorway into her small bedroom. "I do believe, Mother," she called from the bed. "Goodnight. Peter and Mother, and may the Lord grant each of us our desires."

"She has such simple faith." Peter said after some time. Tears glistened in the youth's tender eyes as he excused himself and hurried to his room upstairs.

The house was suddenly very still and quiet. "Please, dear Lord. don't disappoint her." Mrs. Kinner prayed as she took the rag doll from its place of hiding and worked feverishly to finish the few last details on the soft cuddly toy. "And help Peter not to be too disappointed. Fill him with Thy presence anew and afresh until he'll not notice the few gifts."

On and on into the night hours the tired, overworked mother sewed. She must finish the new shirt for Peter! He needed clothes so badly. And Margaret Ann's rag doll must be finished. Save for the home-made taffy she was able to make, there would be no sweets. She let the tears fall now . . . unrestrained. Not that she hadn't told the two children the Blessed Christmas story over and over and not that they didn't know the true meaning of Christmas!

Ah, no! But there were so many things both needed. And Margaret Ann had wanted a kitten for as long as she could talk!

The midnight hour had long since passed and the clock on the mantel struck out the quarter hour. Mrs. Kinner looked up from her sewing. It was quarter till two! She must hurry!

A muffled footfall on the porch sent the poor woman quickly to the window. Outside, everything was dark and sleepy-looking. A loud knock suddenly sounded. Who could be at her door this hour of the morning! She stifled a quick urge to call Peter. God would protect her, she knew. Hadn't He cared for, and protected her all these years since her husband's untimely death when Margaret Ann was still a tiny infant!

A loud "Meow" sent her hurrying to the door. Silently, carefully she opened it. A great box fell immediately inside. Not a soul could the happy woman see. Carefully she dragged the big box inside, calling a soft, heartfelt "Thank you" to the person who had delivered it and whom she knew couldn't be too far in the shadows.

A soft, cuddly, fat, blue-gray kitten bounced happily out from its prison-box and looked pleadingly up into her face. Mrs. Kinner picked the beautiful creature up in her arms and stroked it tenderly, praising the Lord with every new stroke. Still cradling the furry little creature in her arms she hastened to unpack. There was not one, but five new shirts for Peter and a pair of new wool pants and dress shoes, a warm scarf and gloves, overshoes and a pair of ice skates, a beautiful new Bible and many other articles of great use to the growing boy. On and on she went, deeper and deeper down into the great box . . . dresses for Margaret Ann, shoes, too, and stockings; and the finest china doll the mother thought she had ever seen. She wept freely . . . great tears of joy and thanksgiving to her God, as she unpacked all necessary clothing articles for herself. How unselfishly her Heavenly Father had provided! At the very bottom, in a heavy wooden box by itself, was a crate of apples and oranges. She must get to bed so she could be ready for the excitement of the new day which was almost upon her! Leaving the almost finished shirt (she could make the buttonholes after Christmas, now) and the last few hand stitches on the rag" doll she made her way into Margaret Ann's little room and very tenderly and quietly placed the fat little kitten on the braided rug by the bed, then tiptoed to her own room.

Margaret Ann was the first to awaken. "Mother! Mother!" she exclaimed with childish glee, "Jesus did answer my prayer! He did! He did! Oh, Mother! Come look. See my kitten? She's

playing with a ball of your yarn!" Again a loud peal of laughter ensued, after which the child picked the small furry bundle up in her arms and cuddled it close to her bosom then knelt by the bed and prayed a prayer of thankfulness that left the mother utterly astonished. Never had she heard such elegance in thankful, childish simplicity and sincerity!

Peter ran quickly to the bottom of the stairs and stared in wide-eyed wonder. Then, reverently he bowed his head and let tears fall unashamed. Their God had answered prayer! A soft knock on the door just then sent Peter scurrying back upstairs.

"A present for you, Ma'am," a strange man greeted the astonished widow woman as he pushed a washing machine inside.

"You... you..., must have the wrong address, Sir. I . . . that is, we could never afford such a washing machine," and her hands flew to her throat at sight of the shiny white thing.

"You Mrs. Kinner?" the man asked.

"Yes, Sir," and the mother's voice trembled.

"It's for you, then. A blessed Christmas to you and yours," he called as he departed.

With trembling hands she closed the door and turned to face the washer. A bright red tag fluttered slightly . . . "To my dearest Mother. With all my love, Peter." it read.

"Peter! Why...why...how could you, my son?" and Peter stood in the stair doorway now.

"It's not new. Mother; But it's the very best I could do. Old Mr. Petersimes had this and never used it since his wife passed away. So I asked him if he'd sell it to me. He said I could have it for twenty-five dollars and ....."

"But where did you get the money, Peter?"

"I've been saving for nearly a year, Mother. I did many odd jobs for Mr. Petersimes that you knew nothing about . . . after my regular work hours were finished. I really wanted to get you a brand new one from Hargitt's Hardware, but they were all too expensive."

"Oh, Peter. this is beautiful! Thank you, my Peter. I love you. The love that prompted this gift of yours is the most beautiful thing of all. Now, come. There are many things for you to see and to open . . . sent to you by our Heavenly Father," and the meek little woman led the way to where the big box was. Before either child looked at the lovely items in the box the mother read the simple message on the tag: "A gift for you., prompted by the proddings of your Heavenly Father."

Together the happy family knelt for praise and thanksgiving e'er opening the box together.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE END OF THIS FILE