

The Mother's Part

By Newel K. Young

PART I.

"Yes, Harry, the good men are coming to pray for you as soon as meeting is out."

The little fellow closed his dark eyes—they seemed coal-black now and large, too in comparison with the wan, snow-white, pinched face crowned with his black, wavy hair. The mother watched him closely as he pressed his lips together in a brave effort to endure, without murmur, the pain that was almost more than his little life could stand. After the fierceness of the spasm of pain had gone, the child began speaking in a faint, labored whisper. His mother, leaning low over his pillow, caught these words:

"Mama, it hurts—too—much. I want—to—stay—with you—to be your man until papa comes;—but I can't stand—the hurt. Let me go—to heaven—it won't hurt over there. Grandma will take care of me."

A noticeable struggle waged for a few brief moments in the mother's heart. Then her thin lips set tight in sign of a fixed purpose; a few big tears rolled from her sad, blue eyes down her pale cheeks. They were hastily brushed away for the boy's eyes were looking fast into the mother's face.

"Yes, Harry boy, you may go to grandma if the Lord wants you. Now rest until the elders come."

The mother withdrew into the adjoining room out of hearing of her child and knelt in prayer. "Father in heaven, Thy will be done; I am reconciled. Take Thou my boy, if it seemeth Thee good. But, Lord, stay near me. Give me the chance and strength to do acts of mercy for the sorrowing and needy; lead me, also in the company of little children to serve them that my heart may neither grow

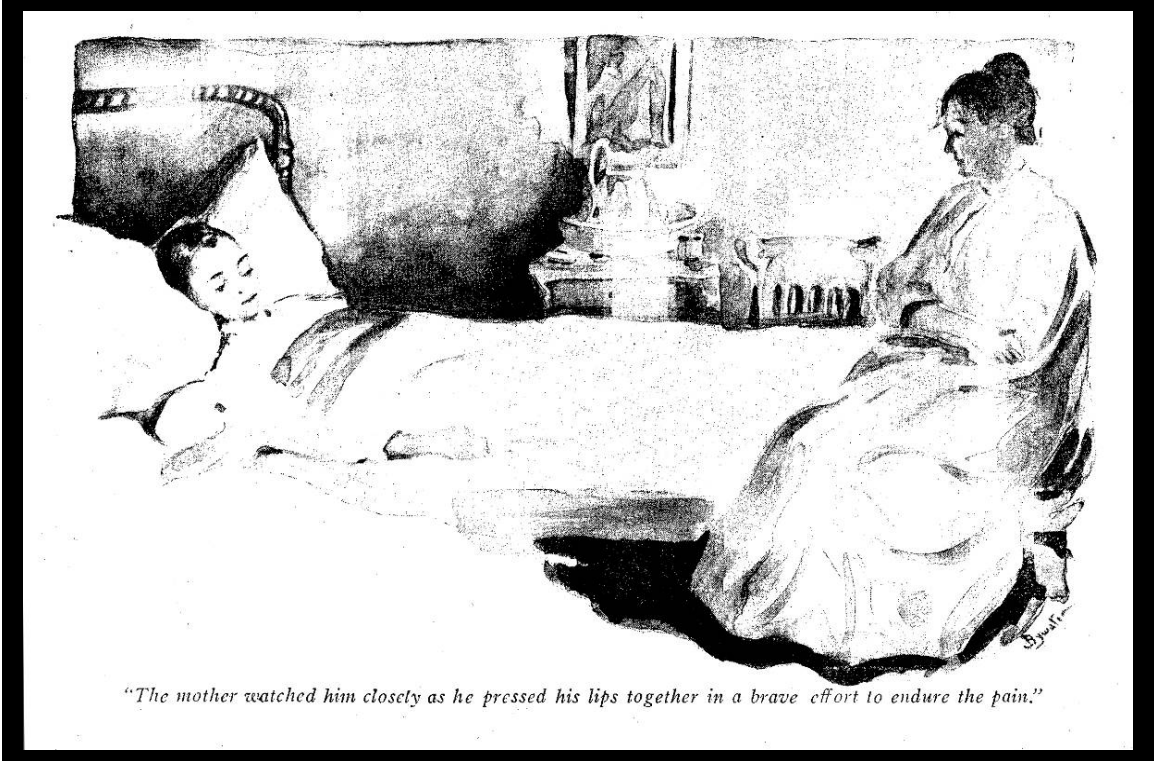
faint nor bitter. He is all I have. Take him gracious Father, forgive me if I have clung to him against Thy will. In the name of Jesus. Amen."

Peace filled this quiet woman's heart as she arose and stepped to the door in answer to a knock for admittance. The brethren entered. There were four of them—the bishopric and patriarch Evans. The young bishop, Archibald MacDonald, a large, strong, fearless, quiet Scotch lad of twenty-eight years, spoke as he took the small, thin hand of the woman in his large, sinewy one. "Sister Brown, we have come to administer to your boy. We are fasting specially for him. He was prayed for by a united people today. He has been sick for a long time, a patient, brave sufferer of terrible pain—"

"Yes," broke in the mother in a calm, quiet voice as she divined the young man's thought, "Brother MacDonald, I am reconciled. I want you to dedicate my boy to the Lord. He wants to go on to my mother away from his pain. It is best that I give him up."

"God bless you sister; you are a brave woman," replied the sturdy Scotchman with a tremulous voice and tearful eyes.

The child was anointed with holy oil, and dedicated to the Lord by the elders through Patriarch Evans as mouthpiece. Just as the speaker was closing his prayer, he and the other brethren were charged with the Spirit of the Lord and the Patriarch said, "Harry, your mother has laid her *all* on the altar of God even as Abraham. Her offering is accepted of the Father. We promise you that by faith you shall arise from this bed of affliction and grow to manhood. You shall bear the priesthood and carry the gospel to a foreign nation bringing many to a knowledge of the truth. By



faith in God, and through obedience to your godly mother, you shall have strength to suffer deep afflictions and sorrows without bitterness or loss of faith. You shall endure to the end and have much joy in your ministry in the midst of the Saints. We pronounce you well and whole in the authority of the Priesthood and in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

When the other brethren made ready to leave, the bishop said, "I will sit with the lad awhile."

As the bishop and the mother turned to the sick-bed from the leave-taking with the elders at the door they were astonished to see the child sitting up in bed.

"Mama, get my clothes; and call Harold and Jane to play with me," cried the boy.

The mother protested, saying that he was too weak and sick to get up.

The child's eyes opened wide with wonder, his face was shadowed with disappointment as he said, "Why, Mama Brown, the good men prayed for me, and Brother Evans said I would be well and go on a mission. I am not sick any more."

And even so it was.

PART II.

In the Shadow.

In the party spending the day at Red Cliffs there were the nine who had won the baseball pennant of the Junior High School League the day before, their principal, Mr. Hanson, Bishop and Mrs. MacDonald and their daughter Katie, Mrs. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Namsen, Mr. and Mrs. Adams and their daughter Jane, and the Scotch piper, old and quaint with his magic bagpipes.

They had spent the night at the Namsen's canyon home a few miles away, coming early to the cliffs for the day. The old Scotchman entertained them with his bagpipes at their camp about the spring for a time after their

arrival at the cliffs. The rapt attention that these boys and girls in the first years of their teens gave to the piper's music was an eloquent tribute to his skill.

The young people were the first to break away from the spell of this Highland bard and his strange, wonderful music. The girls were hunting flowers, the boys were throwing and shooting, though some of them were soon enlisted to get flowers that were out of reach of the girls.

"Oh, see that spray of columbine! isn't it beautiful! I wish we lived in the days of chivalry. Then some brave knight would get it for me, and receive my homage and colors for his reward," called Jane.

"Yes, but no matter who brought you the flowers, or got your homage or colors, the Swede or the Brown kid would get your heart, and who would have the rest without that, I'd like to know."

While Dan was thus giving vent to his spleen, Harry and Joe were racing for the columbine. Harold was among the cliffs somewhere for ferns and a maiden-hair for little Katie MacDonald.

Joe's path soon came to an abrupt end and he was lost in the race. Harry reached the top of the cliff and came down an oak tree that was hugging a projection of the ledge a few feet from the flower. He climbed out on a limb until he reached the face of the cliff; there he felt his way along by finding little projections on which to put his feet while holding to grass or vines that were scattered about the face of the precipice.

"Don't try! Go back, Harry! Go back!" shouted Jane and Esther in alarm. Harold came out from the deep fissure of the cliff where his quest had taken him to a little shelf of rock just wide enough to stand upon, and saw Harry hesitating above him.

"Yes, go back laddie," shouted Harold. "You may fall or faint. Come back, and I'll get it for the dears." In

truth Harold was just a little piqued for he had seen the beautiful vine of columbine and claimed it for the black eyed Scotch lassie.

Harry, throwing caution to the wind, had pushed himself forward to the flower. Just as he reached it he gave a jerk to break the stalk, his footing gave way, and the bunch of grass by which he was holding pulled up by the roots, and down he came. He fell some twenty feet on a point of sharp jagged rock, over which he was tumbling and rolling. This stretch of jagged rock continued for about thirty feet, from where he would plunge one hundred feet to the bottom of the canyon.

Harold took in the whole situation and as quick as thought caught a branch of a squaw bush and threw himself into the boy's path. He fastened his left hand in a firm hold on Harry's shirt, while holding the bush with his right in an iron grip. All the strength and nerve of his Viking blood and training were needed to stand the strain. His hand holding the limb was torn and bleeding, but he held on and working his way back to the narrow ledge of rock, passed into the fissure and placed the body on the sand. His companion, ghastly white and seemingly lifeless, was still holding the flower in his left hand, though the other hung limp and open at his side. Harry was unconscious, with blood oozing from his lips. The bishop and the piper had heard the screams and witnessed the rescue from a cliff a hundred yards away. The bishop was the first to reach the boys; Joe with Jane came next, closely followed by the piper. The bishop felt Harry's pulse and baring his breast laid his hand over the boy's heart.

"Is he dead?" gasped Jane and Harold in the same breath.

"There is still life there," replied the man as he wiped the blood from the boy's lips. "Bring some water, Joe!" Before the crowd arrived the bishop laid his hand on Harold's shoulder as

he said, "Harold I have never seen a braver act. 'Greater love than this hath no man, that he give his life for his friend.' God bless you. No matter how this ends, you are not to blame yourself."

"I taunted him, like a crazy fool," Harold replied.

"I heard, but you are not to blame yourself; nor you, Jane."

The other boys and girls were crowding about; all were watching anxiously, the bishop keeping his finger on the lad's pulse.

"His pulse is stronger. Give me the water Joe," asked the bishop. Joe held his hat of water nearer the boy's big friend. The man bathed the boy's face with water, and wiped away the blood that continued to ooze from his lips.

"See, he is opening his eyes," whispered Jane, in tense voice. He opened his eyes for only an instant in which he smiled in recognition of the bishop.

"He knew you," said Harold.

Again he opened his eyes. "I—held the flowers—Jane—oh, here you are—they are yours—Harold—saved them." Here he lost consciousness again in a spasm of pain. When next he opened his eyes he simply said, "Does mother know?—My leg!" The bishop found his left thigh broken. But the blood oozing from his lips gave them their chief alarm.

In the meantime, Dan had been sent to tell the crowd at the spring of the accident; and to ask Mr. Adams to go with him to the ranch to phone for the doctor. The bishop wanted the Adams' car left with which to take the boy to the ranch, if they could move him, as it was easier riding than his own. He sent word for the women to remain at the spring as they could not reach the boy, but for Mr. Namsen to come to help carry the boy to his mother.

The bishop said, "Tell Mrs. Brown her boy is seriously hurt, but we will trust God for his life," concluded Dan.

Three days later, at the hospital in the city, this brave patient mother sat near the bedside of her boy, dry eyed and silent, while five of the best physicians of the country and the bishop and Mr. Namsen in an adjoining room, consulted on the boy's condition; his leg would mend in eight or ten weeks. Outside, in nervous anxiety, were Harold and Jane. This examination of the boy was conducted by the physicians by the aid of the X-rays.

The verdict that the two friends were to give to the little woman was that her boy could not live; nothing more could be done for him. The doctors could not understand why he had not died within a day from the time of the accident. The injury done his lungs and spine were beyond help or cure.

"Oh, yes. That is all right for the doctors, but we know what the Lord can do. Call some of the brethren to administer to my boy. Patriarch Evans and Brother Adams are in town," spoke Mrs. Brown.

After a few minutes' study the bishop responded, "Yes, we will pray for your boy. But I would not have you cherish false hopes to be crushed. The boy is terribly hurt. But the Lord can heal him if He wills."

"Do you think my boy will die, bishop?" asked the mother looking searchingly into this good man's eyes. These strong men could never refuse this quiet, retiring, simple, woman the truth. Neither could they evade answering her questions at such times. She never asked idle questions; when she talked she spoke with a purpose.

"I do not know what the Lord will do. For him to live is a human impossibility. It seems almost too much for the faith of man. I have seen with the X-Ray his condition. I would not contend against the Lord's will."

"If it is the Father's will for my boy to go, I will give him up without a word or question. But—do you re-

member what the Lord promised my boy?"

"Not all, perhaps. I know he raised him suddenly from an apparent death-bed to robust health; and there were promises for the future. We cannot always know just when the Lord is speaking."

With deep earnestness the woman continued, "In your hearing the Lord through His servants has promised my boy that he should grow to manhood and work in the ministry though he should suffer much affliction and sorrow or pain; I would not have him escape necessary suffering, but I do want him to live until the Lord is through with him here. I don't want him to die for the want of faith. Now will you say that the Lord has changed His purpose regarding my boy or that the part of his blessing that referred to his living to maturity is not from the Lord: that our brother spoke of himself? You have the right to know. I believe it is God's word and that by faith Harry will live. But if you say otherwise I will bow my head in silence and never murmur against the Lord or His servants. But do not doubt, speak in certainty. I await your word."

"By unfaltering faith it shall be as God has spoken," rejoined Brother MacDonald.

"Have you the faith to go to Him in immovable trust? or shall I return alone to pray for my boy?" asked the lad's mother.

"I will pray with you. I was wrong, forgive me. Brother Namsen, call Brothers Adams and Evans, I will await them here."

Brother Evans offered a prayer. Brother Adams administered the oil, while the bishop is sealing the anointing spoke these words: "You shall mend from this hour, arising from your bed of affliction before many weeks, and you shall be sound and strong in every organ of your body. You shall live and fill your mission and ministry in the earth. We renew upon

your head every promise of the past."

All this circle of friends were brought even closer together than before by this child's affliction. The bishop and Mr. Namsen visited him daily giving help and comfort.

But Harold's and Jane's devotion to Harry and his mother during these weeks of suffering and anxiety was beautiful, indeed. These two boys grew to love each other as it is given to few young men to love one another.

And the association of the mother

and boy at this time when they were brought near the Lord became a mighty factor in the making of this boy's character. The contagion of the woman's self-denying courage and un-failing faith and love did much to help the boy to a full realization of a rich, full-orbed manhood. He began to feel the glory and joy and strength of his divine sonship.

How blessed are the experiences and discipline of sorrow and self-sacrifice!