

# The Man and the Boy

BY JULIE M. LIPPMANN



THE lonely stretch of uphill road, upon whose yellow clay the midsummer sun beat vertically down, would have represented a toilsome climb to a grown and unencumbered man. To the boy, staggering under the burden of a brimful carpet-bag, it seemed fairly unscalable; wherefore he stopped at its base, and looked up in dismay to its far-off, red-hot summit.

He was a slender little fellow, not more than eight years old at most. The rough "hands" at the "works" in Ketchum's, seeing his delicate mould and sensitive nature, derisively called him "Sissy," and that was one of the reasons why he was leaving Ketchum's. Ketchum's was the factory town that lay a couple of miles behind him, 'way back along the burning road, where he and his father had lived after his mother died. His father had worked in one of its "shops," but he had never liked Ketchum's—the boy remembered that—which was another one of the reasons why he was leaving it now. Still another reason, and the most powerful of all, was that he could not stay. Some inward impulse, as compelling as a strong hand upon his shoulder, was forcing him away. But now that he had got away from them, he remembered that though the men at the "works" had called him "Sissy," and had sworn a good deal, and got "tipsy," they had often been roughly kind to him; and Mrs. Hourigan, the "boarding-house lady," had even cried when his father was taken away; and, after all, they were the only friends he had now. He sat down on the carpet-bag and rubbed the sweat out of his eyes with his knuckles, and the harder he rubbed the faster the drops fell, until his shoulders quite shook, and he had to gulp a great deal to keep from choking.

The silence of mid-day was on the

birds; the air was intensely still. A clear heat quivered over the fields, as gas over a furnace.

The boy's elbows were on his knees, his palms propping his forehead. Suddenly his bowed shoulders stopped heaving, and he slowly, slowly raised his head. A gentle shadow had fallen upon him, which somehow seemed to shed a soothing coolness on the air. He slowly, slowly raised his head; he slowly, slowly raised his eyes. The object that stood between him and the sun did not move. It remained silently looking down upon him with a deep, steadfast, eloquent gaze. The boy got upon his feet as if moving in a dream; his face was pale and awestruck. He drew a step forward, his eyes never leaving the other's eyes. Suddenly his lips began to quiver.

"Father!" he whispered, breathlessly.

The man extended his arms, and the boy sped to his breast, and clung there in mute, impassioned joy, hiding his face in his father's neck.

A light breeze had sprung up. It came on very softly, first stirring the crests of the moving meadow-grass, then the under stems, and then the slender stalks themselves, until the whole field was in motion, as a tide. There were soft stirrings among the sun-parched leafage, sounding almost like footfalls. Through a break in the trees beyond was a far hill steeped in sunlight. Near by one could hear a hidden cricket chirp, while a sequestered song-sparrow and meadow-lark both turned tuneful of a sudden. The boy lifted his head, and saw the meadow-lark make a swift dart from its ambush and go skimming over the field, its white-tipped tail twinkling in the sunlight. The whole world seemed to the boy to be singing. He locked his arms about the dear neck and strained closer to his father's heart.

"I was goin' away from Ketchum's," he explained, with shy irrelevance.

The tall head bent forward in grave assent, and the boy unlocked his clasp and slipped gently to the ground.

He hesitated an instant before speaking again, and his cheeks flushed. "I—I—I didn't know you would come back," he murmured, diffidently.

The man made no reply.

"I—I—I didn't know," continued the boy, almost inaudibly, speaking as if to himself,—"I didn't know—you—you could ever come back, when you had gone—*there*."

Still the man made no reply, simply looked down at the child with liquid eyes of love.

"They—they wouldn't let me see you after—" confided the boy in an undertone. "They took you away without lettin' me see you. I cried all the night. All the nights I cried. I tried not to, 'cause you—you said men didn't. But I couldn't help it. I had to cry. It was so lonesome, an' I wanted you so."

The large hand tightened lovingly about the two little ones, and the boy looked up with a vivid smile.

"But—but you *knew* I was lonesome, didn't you?" he asked. "An' you came back 'cause a father couldn't leave his little boy alone like that, could he? An' now you won't go away again, will you, —not ever, ever again?"

Then for the first time the man spoke.

"Listen, son," he said, slowly, musingly, in a voice singularly low, penetrating, plaintive. "I came back to you because, as you say, a father couldn't leave his little boy alone—like that. There's love—and there's law. It was love brought me back. It's stronger than law, son, stronger than law. It was so strong it broke the bonds and I came back. But the law is strong too. Oh yes, the law is strong; and so I shall have to leave you again. But—don't cry, my man; don't cry, son. I'll have to leave you again, but not till the time is fit; not till I've found some one here to look after you as I would do. Come, take up your load and we'll go. I'll lead the way."

The boy inclined his head toward the bag. "It's heavy," he articulated,—*"dreadful heavy."*

The man's eyes held a smile in the depths of them that was too evanescent for muscles to register. "I came back to

help," he returned, but he did not move toward the burden.

The boy looked at him questioningly. The man nodded. The boy, seemingly little reassured, dragged himself unwillingly toward his burden and bent to brace for the heft of it. Suddenly a vivid light broke over his small, anxious face.

"Why, it isn't heavy almost at all," he shouted, in quick surprise. "It's ever an' ever much more better than it was."



It was sundown before they reached a town. The boy was tired, but not exhausted; the man showed no sign of weariness at all; but they had both of them fallen into silence long before. The town itself proved a much larger and more prosperous place than Ketchum's, boasting three churches, a town-hall, and what seemed to the boy a wilderness of shops upon the grand boulevard of its main street. There was a river somewhere beyond, shining opaline in reflection of the setting sun, and the boy wondered if a river did not, somehow, make a place seem clean. Certainly this place looked cleaner than Ketchum's. His father did not ask the way to lodgings; he appeared to know by instinct where they were to be had, for when they turned into an orderly gateway opening in upon a spruce door-yard, it appeared they had reached their destination. A neatly clad woman stood on the house-step with a baby on her hip. She listened to the man as he told her of their need of shelter for the night, and then, with baby hanging gurgling upon her arm, led the way up narrow, oil-cloth-covered stairs to a little room above, whose windows looked out upon the river, and were now illuminated with the emblazoning sun. Whatever their bargain was, it appeared to be closed at once without hesitation or distrust on either side, and soon the two were left to themselves to wash and make clean, while savory odors of tea and toast filled the air and gave promise of comfort to the boy's empty stomach.

"This is a nice place, isn't it, father?" queried he, surveying the limited quarters with the wide impartial eyes of boyhood.

The father nodded assent.



ELIZABETH CHAPPEL GREEN



gentle shadow had fallen upon him

"We'll stay here, won't we, father, unless it's too dear?"

"It won't be too dear, boy."

"Did you bring any money with you, father? I didn't know there could any one have any—*there*. I haven't got any, butceptin' what Mrs. Hourigan got out of your pockets after—before they—took you away."

The man bent grave eyes on the boy. "There will be enough," he said, simply.

They soon slipped quietly into a place of their own in the little community.

"He's a decent feller, the father is," their hostess assured her neighbors. "Dretful quiet and close-mouthed—scarcely ever speaks,—but pleasant-mannered, and has a certain way with him I never saw the likes of. The boy is a reel good young one; ain't a mite of trubble in the house; and the store them two sets by each other, it's a caution."

Undoubtedly the woman knew their names, but if she mentioned them to her inquiring friends at all, it must have been in a general, unimpressive sort of fashion, between sentences, as it were, for the two became known about the little place by the purely generic titles of "the man" and "the boy."

The man soon secured employment in one of the "shops" in the neighborhood, where his skill as a machinist stood him in good stead. The boy he sent to school as soon as the early autumn opened the doors of the district school-house.

Together they slipped into church every Sunday morning, sitting far back in the shadow of the pews under the organ-loft, and slipping out again in advance of the rest of the congregation as soon as "meeting" was over. The boy was drawn to attend the Sunday-school, and the man went with him there also. The minister often tried to waylay the pair on their way to or from service, but in some wise he always was thwarted. One evening, however, he saw them at a "sociable," the first they had ever attended. The boy was for the moment absent from his father's side, having been cajoled into the "refreshment-room" by some hospitable member of the reception committee. The man stood watching him from afar with a wonderful look of wistful love in his pale, ascetic face. The minister made a swift dart through the impeding crowd

of appreciative parishioners and held out his hand in cordial welcome.

"I'm glad to see you here, sir, very glad indeed," he said, with a hearty earnestness. "I've caught sight of you at church often, and at Sunday-school too of late, but when I've tried to get at you I've always been prevented. Now you will let me repair my seeming negligence, won't you? I'd like to call upon you at your home and become better acquainted with you and your dear little chap yonder. You're strangers here, I believe? Yes, I thought so. Not altogether a pleasant experience changing from one place to another, is it? Apt to be lonely at first. We ministers know what that means."

The man regarded him with deep, kind, unsmiling eyes. At length the pastor was called away, and when he again sought his new friend with his glance he was gone, and with him the boy.

One day the minister made a special pilgrimage to the "works" for the purpose of winning the man to make a formal profession "of the faith that was in him"; to gain his promise to unite with the church.

The man listened with earnest attention, but at the close he shook his head. "I cannot," he confessed.

The minister pressed him for a reason.

"I cannot," the man repeated. "I never did—I cannot now."

"Ah, but that is hardly what I should expect of you," persisted the other. "That is scarcely the intelligent view. Because we have not done a thing is no reason why we should not do it—if it be a good thing. Since you have not already done it, now is the best time."

But the man still repeated he could not; not obstinately, rather in the tone of one who accepted an inevitable limitation. The clergyman left him at length, disappointed but not discouraged.

"If I could only bring him to recognize the fact that his former neglects need in no way fix the bound of his duties now," he said to himself as he went his way. "But when I brought up his love for the boy as an illustration, he replied: 'I always loved the boy. If I had not, I could not begin now. I would have given my life for him. I am—I would do it now. But if I had not loved him, I could

not begin now. You cannot understand. I cannot explain.' And that's how it lies. But I'll bring him round some day."

The boy seemed to take an interest in the simple social diversions of the little place, and although the man presently realized that there was a good deal of gossip afloat concerning him, he did not let it prevent him from accompanying the little fellow to whatever service or gathering he chose to attend. The minister felt an inward drawing to the silent, uncommunicative stranger, and went out of his way to be cordial to him, although his wife cautioned him repeatedly against any overt evidence of interest, lest it later prove compromising.

"You know, Arthur," she explained, "they say he was imprisoned somewhere—I can't say where or for what,—but it's quite generally known that he was in custody somehow. I think the boy told some one—said his father had 'come back,' and referred to 'when they took him away,' and things of that sort."

The minister nodded gravely. "Well, Janet," he said, "then there's all the more reason why we should give him a helping hand, and I for one mean to do it. If—if—Robin had lived, he'd have been pretty much the sort of little chap that boy is, I fancy. Sometimes it almost seems as if I could see a look of Robin in him. I gave him a dime the other day, and he looked up to thank me with eyes so like Baby's when he was pleased that it made my heart leap. I declare, if I could I'd adopt that boy, Janet, and make the man of him I meant to make of Robin."

He repeated this to the boy's father himself an evening or so later, thinking to please him through his love for the child, but he was quite unprepared for the effect of his words: the look of transfiguring joy that swept, like a sunburst, over the usually grave and pallid face; for the deep, impassioned significance of the tones that made the man's utterance seem like a sacrament.

"You say," he demanded in almost a whisper, "you would take him—the boy? Make him your own? Love him as if he were your own? Rear him in honor and righteousness, to be the man he ought to be? You would guard him, guide him, govern him? Watch over him through

the uncertain days of his childhood, his youth, his manhood? You would curb him and chide him with the love that sees? You would bear with him and believe in him with the patience that is blind? You would cherish his love for you, and faithfully seek to be, as far as in you lies, the man that in ideal is the man he would so love? You would do all this? You would be—his *father*?"

The minister lowered his head as if he had been taking vows before an altar. "I would," he said.

There was a deep silence. Then the man lifted his bowed head, and the clergyman, looking up, saw that his eyes were suffused with a great light, before which his own grew dim.



AT the works the business of the day was being accomplished to the accompaniment of tapping hammers, buzzing wheels, and the occasional shrill hiss of escaping compressed air. A wilderness of leathern belts revolved, perpendicularly and horizontally, with dizzying rapidity. A soft yet pungent odor of oil was in the air. There were no distinguishable human sounds. Here in this world of wheels it was the machinery that was articulate, the men that were mute.

Depending from the roof-beams of one of the larger "shops," on horizontal rails that ran the length of the room, was a slender frame-work of iron. From time to time a mighty arm swung out from under this, caught up a colossal hulk of iron, and carried it, groaning, to some distant point. This was the travelling-crane. A thing of might and majesty, fed by the breath of compressed air, and capable of lifting the weight of a score of tons.

The man had been prompt at his post as the whistle blew seven, and now, in the late afternoon, he was still laboriously toiling away, striving with the stubborn metal before him until it should take on the form of some specific part of a machine that was one day to revolve and chatter and whirl as these about him were doing now. His face was singularly pale, his eyes full of a strange lambent light. More than one of his fellows had noted

the extraordinary pallor and the unusual radiance.

In the outside world the light was growing mellow. A church-bell in the distance sent softly vibrating notes along the air, announcing even-song. The hills across the river were purple, dim, ineffable. The man let his eyes wander from his work and through the window, beyond which all this beauty lay. His hand still guided mechanically the metal plate he was "feeding" between two revolving cylinders. His lips moved, but he did not speak. A little knot of men a few yards off were tackling a huge dead-weight of iron to the arm of the crane. A moment later they shifted place, and the mammoth thing stirred, lifted, swung. The din grew louder—which was always the way when the crane was set in motion. The man did not hear; he heard nothing save the softly vibrating notes of the bell that was chiming for even-song. He did not hear the sudden harsh clang of slipping chains; he did not hear the quick, hoarse shouts of horror that followed it. He heard nothing—nothing but the bell announcing even-song.

For one moment he stood there, pale, motionless, listening. Then—

The men about him were blinded with consternation. They could not see. They knew it all, but they dared not look. The chains had slipped; the weight had fallen; the man was dead.

Strong hands that trembled weakly readjusted the tackle to the weight. The mighty hook was secured. Again the way was cleared for the passage of the crane. It took a deep draught of the air that fed it, waited as if to fill its lungs, and then—slowly, slowly the weight was stirred, was lifted, was swung aloft.

The crowd of men drew closer and gazed at the spot where the weight had been; gazed at first with sickening expectation, then with wonder, then with awe. The thing they had shuddered to think that they must touch was not there. Nothing was there!

It was the minister who consented to tell the boy. He dimly wondered as he went along what phrases he should use that would inform the lad; that would not, on the contrary, hopelessly bewilder him. He could not, though

he painfully tried, succeed in finding the right ones, or ones that approached the right ones. He almost lost courage as he reached the gate, and his steps lagged as he passed through it and up the little garden path.

THE boy was sitting upon the door-step with a bulging carpet-bag beside him. His elbows were on his knees, his forehead propped by his palms. He did not raise his head as the minister drew near. He did not raise it when the kind hand was laid upon his shoulder, but his slender body shook.

"My boy," began the minister, softly.

The boy did not look up.

"My boy," repeated the pitying voice.

Suddenly the child raised his eyes, great tear-filled eyes, to the minister's and gave a choking sob.

"I—I—I didn't mean to cry," he explained, piteously; "*he* said I mustn't—and I didn't mean to,—but—but—your voice—it harks so sorry it *makes* me cry. An'—an'—he's gone, you know, an'—I can't help but cry."

The minister's eyes deepened. "Gone? Then you know? Some one has told you?" he whispered.

The boy nodded sadly. "*He* told me himself. I knew it before. He told me right away—when he came back, first-off. But then he stayed, an' I almost forgot, an' then—this morning—when he went away—he told me again, an' now—he can't ever come back, 'cause there's you to take care of me, he said."

The minister thrust forth his hand and grasped the door-frame tremblingly. He did not understand!

"Your father is *dead*," broke out the clergyman, with brutal bluntness born of his bewilderment. "He was killed at the works an hour ago. He *couldn't* have told you *that*."

The boy made no reply. He opened his coat and took from his bosom a wad of crushed newspaper. He smoothed its wrinkles neatly out with nervous precision, and then offered it to his companion.

The minister took up the flimsy sheet and scanned it carefully. It bore the



description of a fatal accident that had occurred a year ago to the man at the Ketchum's works. It was in every particular and to the last detail an exact repetition of the story he had just heard of the death of the man that afternoon. The newspaper bore the date of a twelve-month since.

The boy waited in patient silence while the minister read and re-read the article. Then he softly ventured:

"He said—my father said—when he came back—that love—love was stronger than— I guess I've forgot what he said it was stronger than, but he said it was so

strong it helped him to come back. He said I was too little—a fellow to be left alone; it wasn't fair; I wouldn't know what was right,—an' at Ketchum's they wasn't presackly good,—an' he said—my father said, that love was stronger—an' he came back, but he couldn't stay, an' I knew it, an' now—he told me not to cry, an' I want to mind him; but—he told me you had said—"

A sudden wave of recollection swept across the minister's mind. It brought with it illumination.

He bent down and took the boy's hand in his. "Come, my son," he said.

## The Crowing of the Cock

BY S. H. M. BYERS

THE cock crows loud from yonder barn  
His midnight bugle call;  
Though darkness hangs o'er field and tarn,  
And silence over all.

He watches for the setting star,  
The daybreak coming on,  
And trumpet-throated, near and far,  
He welcomes in the dawn.

O bird of joy, no saddened note  
From thee has ever sprung;  
No ring-dove's moan is in thy throat,  
Thy heart is ever young.  
Brave—to the death, and if perchance  
The battle, long and grim,  
Fall to thy own victorious lance,  
Thou singst a battle hymn.

Proud of thy splendor, warrior bird,  
And of thy clarion tone;  
No Orient breezes ever stirred  
A radiance like thine own.  
No other voice but sometimes sings  
A note at sorrow's call;  
Thou singst the song the morning brings,  
Or singest not at all.

Like thee, I too would joyous be,  
Like daylight's coming on.  
And call to heaven and earth and sea  
The gladness of the dawn.  
Though but a single note were mine,  
If it with music rang,  
I'd fill my cup with pleasure's wine  
The happiest bard that sang.