

over a sputtering pan. "Where's the girl?" she said. "I don't know." She sat down, wearily. "Mrs. Conley is very sick." The pan sputtered. "I'm going back after supper." No answer. "What have you got there?" "Eggs 'nd bacon."

After supper, Mrs. Liner said to Mr. Liner, "Enoch, I wish you'd put Tom to bed, Eliza has gone home. She is afraid of the fever. I ought to be over seeing to Mrs. Conley." "I sh'd think you ought to be seein' to Tom," said Mr. Liner gruffly.

But he put Tom to bed. He took off the little gilt shoes very gently. Then he sat and looked at them, for a long time. After awhile he rose, looked at the dusty little heap, and said, "Too bad to wake him up. Let him sleep." Then he lifted the child and placed him softly between the sheets.

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Tom was crying. He was not sitting on the grassy lawn. He was sitting on the floor of his mother's bed-room. There was no one there. He had pulled out all the loose threads that he could find in the carpet. He had pushed over a work-basket and played with everything in it. He had pulled down three tidies from the chairs and a pillow from the bed. He was tired. He cried wearily. How could he know that Mrs. Conley was worse and his mother could not take him there? How could he know that his father was coming at this very moment up the long stairs, four steps at a time, at the sound of that tired wail?

Mr. Liner opened the door, Tom stopped crying, and stretched out his dirty little hands. His father held out a pink wild rose. Tom laughed and reached for it. All the thorns had been broken off. He held it in both hands as his father picked him up, set him on his shoulder, and began to walk about the room. Soon Tom began to cry again.

"Is Tom tired?" said his father. "Poor little Tom. Tom hasn't any good papa and mama, Tom's papa and mama go off and leave poor Tom alone."

A listener would have smiled to hear those gruff tones lowered to a subdued growl as Mr. Liner paced the floor, back and forth, back and forth. He stepped over the spools and cotton and darning balls that had come from the overturned basket. He walked and walked. Still Tom whimpered and fretted. At last his father tried a song. "There's a land that is fairer than day," he hummed hoarsely. He forgot how the tune went on, then, but the air of the first line was good enough. He went on with the second as the first, and so on through the song. Baby Tom had never studied harmony. When the song ended, he was asleep. The rose was clutched in his tiny fist.

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Little Tom was asleep. He was not in his mother's bed-room. He was lying on one of the long seats of a little church. His mother sat on one side of him. His father sat on the other side. It was an enthusiastic meeting. A revivalist was there. He had called for testimonials from the believers. Mrs. Liner arose. She looked at Mr. Liner and sighed profoundly. "You don't know, brothers and sisters, and I can never tell you, the obstacles I have met with in my Christian life. Once I was happy. My feet trod the shining way, and I walked with my face like a flint toward Zion and the glory in my soul. I am not what I was then. My life is not a happy one. Brothers and sisters, I ask your prayers. I am not what I once was. My husband knows why." She buried her face in her handkerchief and sobbed audibly. Mr. Liner sat motionless, gazing upon the sleeping face of little Tom. Mrs. Liner went on talking. A fly lighted on the child's face. Mr. Liner took his hat and fanned it away.

Presently he found himself listening again. What was she saying? Something about lack of sympathy in her works of charity. Something about her precious child whose father— He looked once at her face. Then he went on fanning the child slowly with his hat.

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