

HARRY^{THE} NEWSBOY

By Isabel C. Byrum



HARRY the NEWSBOY

**and
Other Stories**



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Harry the Newsboy

Ever since the death of his father, Harry Armstrong had sold papers. His home was in a small upstairs room of a large tenement building in the great city of New York. There he lived with his mother, and although the room was small and there was barely enough furniture in it to make them comfortable, Harry had never known anything better and he was happy because he had his mother to love and comfort him when he was tired, hungry, or cold.

Many times after he had been out for hours, walking up and down the street, shouting to the people that he had papers to sell, he would hurry home and find a cup of warm cocoa and some bread or something else that he liked as well, waiting for him on the little table over in the corner of the room. How good the food tasted! Sometimes he wondered why his mother did not always sit with him at the table and eat, but he did not know that at those times she had only been able to buy enough cocoa and bread for her little boy after the coal and rent bills had been paid. But Harry's mother did not mind going hungry herself if her little boy had all that he wanted to eat.

Harry knew that his mother was not very well, for she had told him that the time might come, almost any day, when she should have to leave him and go to be with his father. But Harry did not think that she would go away very soon. She had also said that when that time should come he must not be afraid, for he would have to be

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very, very brave and strong; and that he would have to do just the things that he thought were right and best.

Now Harry had passed his tenth birthday and he knew quite well the difference between right and wrong, for he had listened to a great missionary who was interested in newsboys. This missionary had been all through Africa and had said that someday he was going back to the land of the black people and the tigers. Harry and the other newsboys liked so well to listen to the stories that the missionary told that they went to hear him every Sunday when he was in New York. And, because the newsboys came so often, the missionary said that they could have a Sunday-school where they could come and study about the Bible when he wasn't there. And Harry liked to go to the Sunday-school after it was started.

Harry's mother had told him that it was wrong to smoke and chew tobacco, and the teachers talked about that, too. So when the other newsboys said that it would make him manly to smoke cigarettes he told them that he knew better. Then, when they tried to make fun of him, he shouted louder to the people as they passed, that he had papers to sell, so that he could not hear what the boys said. After that they did not ask him to smoke. And as for telling lies and stealing—Harry had learned from his mother that it was far better always to speak the truth and be honest.

Very often his mother told him Bible stories about men who had become great because they had been good boys. What she said about Isaac, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, John the Baptist, the boy Jesus, and Timothy pleased him more than anything else. Then she told him that it would be nice to try to be like these boys by being good and kind to everyone, but to remember that God had made every boy and girl a little different from every other

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person in the world so that it would be impossible to do exactly as someone else had done. To help him to understand just what she meant she had said, “Now just suppose that when Samuel was told to serve in the house of the priest Eli he had said, ‘Why, Joseph and Moses were rulers in the land, and I don’t want to be a humble servant.’ God couldn’t have blessed him as he did. If Samuel had refused to do the humble work that God had called him to do, his name would not have come down to us as one of Israel’s rulers.” And she had added, “I trust that my little boy will always be willing to do the little things that come his way, for this is the way that God takes to prepare his people for a greater and better place in life. Then he helps them to find their place if they will let him.”

Thus wisely had Harry’s mother talked to her little boy. She had also taught him to read and write and to spell, “for the time will come, Harry,” she had said, “when you will need to know many things, and I want to help you all I can while I am with you.” And one day, while Harry was out selling his papers, the thing for which the mother had been trying to prepare her little boy came to pass.

That night when Harry came home from selling his papers he found no warm cocoa or bread and butter upon the table in the corner of the room, and everything was very quiet. He called his usual greeting to his beloved mother, but there was no answer. Then when he went close to her bed he saw that that hand that had so often caressed him was cold and helpless. Then he remembered that his mother had said that when this time should come he would have to be very brave and strong. And he wanted to be all that his mother and the good missionary wanted him to be, so he sat down beside the bed and thought and thought.

One by one, the things that his mother had told him that he would have to see about after she was gone came into his mind.

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Tears nearly blinded his eyes when he thought about the funeral. She had told him to see their neighbor Mr. Harper and let him attend to everything. Once she had said that usually a tombstone with nice things written upon it was placed at the head of a grave by some friend, but that he must not try to do anything like that, for he would not have the money to buy the stone. A great desire then came into his heart to place a tombstone at the head of his mother's grave after she was buried so that he could write some nice things upon it about her. He remembered that she had told him not to try to do it because he would not have the money to spare. But he said to himself, "I can do without my cocoa just as Mother did, and perhaps with what money I have, I can buy a small tombstone."

Harry had no pocketbook in which to carry his money. But his mother, before she had become so weakened by her sickness, had made him a little bag that was very strong. Drawing the bag from his pocket, he counted all the pennies and dimes. There was just two dollars and fifty-five cents in all, and he wondered if this would be enough to pay for the stone. Never before had so many things been crowded into his mind all at once. But above every other thought was the one desire to be brave and strong so that he could attend to all of the things that his mother had said that he must do.

Before going to see Mr. Harper, Harry kissed his mother's cold face and tucked the covers more closely about her. It was hard to leave her alone for even a moment, but remembering again that he was to be brave and strong he hurried away to find his friend. Mr. Harper was very sorry when he heard that Harry's mother was dead. He was a poor man, but he did all that he could for the little orphan boy. And Harry's mother was placed in a pretty coffin and was buried in the cemetery by the side of her husband.

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When the funeral was over the neighbors who had gone with Harry to the graveyard returned to their homes in the tenement house, but Harry did not go with them. And Harry did not know that Mr. Harper and the sexton were friends, and did not notice them talking near the gate about the funeral. Harry was thinking how nice it would be if he could get a pretty tombstone for his mother's grave. He was also thinking about a place that was called the Marble Yards where tombstones and monuments were for sale. The Marble Yards was only a short distance from the cemetery, and he was wondering if he could get a stone that was nice enough for his mother's grave with the money that was in his little bag.

Perhaps Harry remembered how he had sometimes hurried past the Marble Yards where the white and gray monuments and tombstones were kept and how cold and gloomy they had looked. He no longer felt that they were cold and gloomy, and he wanted to go right in among them and find the one that was the right size for his mother's grave. And then it happened that a little later Mr. Stahl, who was sitting in his office looking out of the window, saw a small boy enter the yards and go over to the place where some of his best tombstones and monuments were kept. He noticed, too, that the boy was feeling of the smooth side of a certain stone and was holding in his hand a small bag. He was sure that he had met the boy somewhere and then he remembered that he was the little newsboy that he had so often met on the street and from whom he had sometimes bought a paper. As he continued to watch the boy looking at the tombstones, he thought, "I believe that he is a good boy and I wonder why he has come to the Marble Yards today, and why he is rubbing his hand over that small tombstone in the corner?"

Harry may have thought that because that certain stone was so small it would not cost as much as those that were larger. But

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whatever he may have thought, he was soon standing in the office before Mr. Stahl and saying, "Mister, I want to get that smooth stone that is over there in the corner, to put on my mother's grave. You see she's dead and I want the stone so that I can write some nice things on it about her. It's all I can do for her now. If it doesn't cost too much money I think I can buy it, but I've only got two dollars and fifty-five cents. Will that be enough to pay for it, do you think?"

Now the stone toward which Harry had pointed had cost Mr. Stahl much more money than Harry had offered him, but Mr. Stahl was pleased to have Harry come to him in such a business-like way. And he said, "Yes, my boy, you may have that stone for two dollars and fifty-five cents." He then told the delivery man to take the pretty little tombstone over to the cemetery and to see that it was properly placed on Harry's mother's grave. And Harry—almost before he knew what was happening—found that he was back again in the graveyard and that the stone had been placed by the delivery man and the sexton at the head of his mother's grave and that both of the men had slipped quietly away before he had thought to thank them for their trouble. But Harry was very grateful to the men and had meant to thank them for their work.

When Harry found that he was alone he drew from his pocket a piece of iron that he had found on his way over to the Marble Yards. The iron was sharp on one end, and bending over the pretty white tombstone he began to form the words that had all day been in his mind. But the rock was harder than he had expected it would be, and the sun was fast sinking in the western horizon when he had finished only the word "MY." He was so tired and weak that he could scarcely stand upon his feet when he went to step back and examine what he had done, but he was not discouraged. He was sorry to leave his work unfinished. But Harry, although but ten years old, had a

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business to look after, and he had been taught by his mother to be faithful in all that he undertook. So Harry went home. But the place where he had lived so happily with his mother did not seem like home to him any longer. He ate some hard bread that he found in the cupboard and went to bed. He could have cried himself to sleep, but he didn't, for he was trying so hard to be brave and strong. And he was still thinking about the nice things that he was intending to write upon the pretty white tombstone that was on his mother's grave.

In the morning Harry was awake very early. He felt much better after his good night's rest. After eating some more of the bread, that he had found in the cupboard the evening before he went out and sold his papers. Then as soon as the last one had been handed out he went at once to the cemetery. And, for several days, Harry spent every moment that he could spare in a place that one would least expect to find a child. And he was happy because he felt that he was doing something nice for his precious mother. He was adding one letter after another upon the smooth white surface of the tombstone. And near the end of the week this is what he had printed—"MY MOTHER, THE BEST FRIEND I EVER HAD."

There were many people who came to the cemetery, but there was no one so interesting to the sexton as little Harry. Many times during the week that followed the funeral he had found time to stand for a few moments near the grave to see what the next letter that Harry was forming was going to be. He thought often of his talk with Mr. Harper, and sometimes wished that Harry was his very own little boy. But his family was large and he was a poor man, so he said nothing about it.

As Harry left the grave that night he may have been intending to print some other nice things upon the tombstone about his mother,

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but he never had the chance. It was dark, and he was very tired as the small piece of iron, that was gradually becoming smaller, was slipped into his pocket. Then he found the gate a few minutes later and passed out into the public street. As the sexton listened he heard the gate click, and it swung to its place. Then there was a loud honking of an automobile horn as a large touring-car came suddenly around the corner of the cemetery from another street. But the sexton did not see little Harry fall, or know of the terrible accident that happened until he saw that the car had stopped. Then he heard the sound of excited voices asking if anyone could tell them who the boy was who had been run over by the automobile or how it happened that he was coming out of the cemetery gate at that hour of the night.

The sexton explained that Harry was the little newsboy whose mother had recently died and that he had been coming every day since the funeral to carve letters upon a tombstone on her grave. When everything was made right as far as it was possible to make such things right, little Harry was buried beside his father and mother. He was no longer an orphan, for the family were at last united.

But although Harry could no longer carry on his business as a little newsboy and his work upon his mother's tombstone may not have been finished, Harry was not forgotten. Mr. Stahl over at the Marble Yards thought often about the brave little boy to whom he had sold a tombstone. He wondered what so small a boy could think of that would be nice enough to write upon a tombstone. So one day Mr. Stahl was taken by the delivery men over to the grave where the tombstone had been placed. They found the grave and they wondered why another grave had so soon been made beside it.

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It was the sexton who explained. And when he told how Harry had worked so faithfully day after day until he had carved the little motto on the tombstone, Mr. Stahl said in a trembling voice, "How I wish that I had taken that boy home with me! He was a good boy! I was intending to keep track of him and later on hire him as an office-boy. I'm sorry now that I didn't talk to him about it the day that he was over to see about buying the stone. Boys like that are hard to find."

When the missionary returned to New York City and visited the little mission Sunday school, he missed Harry's bright face from among the crowd of newsboys that gathered to listen to some more of his wonderful stories and adventures among the black people in Africa. But when he learned from Mr. Harper of Harry's faithfulness, he also said, "Boys like that are hard to find." And he also added, "I'm so glad that Harry would not let the other boys teach him to use tobacco and do other things that were bad." When he told the other boys about it, he said, "It would be better to be a newsboy and have clean hands and a clean heart than to be the son of a millionaire without them."

Jimmy's Friend

Jimmy was just a little boy. His home was in a large city in Ohio, and he was a very nice little boy. His hair was curly and his eyes were blue. And whenever he looked at you through those large blue eyes you could tell that he was a good boy. He was good because he had done nothing that he wanted to deny or to cover up. But although Jimmy was such a good little boy, he did not live in a happy home.

It was not because Jimmy was an orphan that he did not have a happy home. For his father and mother were living and they were at home. It was because they both drank beer and got drunk. Perhaps they did not know that it was wrong to drink beer. Anyway they liked the stuff and drank it every day. And the beer made them very cross when they were not asleep. They sent Jimmy to the saloon that was just around the corner for more beer, whenever the bucket was empty. And Jimmy did not know that it was wrong to drink beer. He tasted some one day and found that it was bitter. After that he never wanted to taste it again.

Because the father and mother spent all their money for beer and sometimes whisky, Jimmy had no nice clothes to wear. But he had never had anything that was better, and he did not think about his clothes as being ragged and dirty. And because he had so often to eat dry crusts of bread he hardly knew that there should have been any other kinds of food.

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But although Jimmy's clothes were ragged and dirty and he was often forced to go to bed very hungry, there was someone who wanted to be his friend. It was a tall lady who saw him when he went to the saloon to get the beer. And one day she came to his home to see him there. Before leaving she asked him to come to the Sunday school that her own little boy attended. Jimmy hardly knew what to say. But when his mother said that she didn't care where he went just so he didn't bother her, Jimmy said that he would go.

Jimmy was just going inside the meeting-house the next Sunday where the tall lady had told him to go, when a little boy called out to some other little boys, "Hey, boys, there comes Jimmy Jones. His father's Jerry Jones, you know, who's nearly always drunk. And his mother drinks beer too. Just look how ragged and dirty his clothes are, because they spend all their money for beer. Why, he goes down every day to the saloon for the beer. And my mother says that I must keep away from him."

This boy was not the son of the tall lady. But the tall lady and her son both heard what the other boy had said. And this is what the tall lady did. She went to Jimmy and said, "Jimmy, I want you to meet my son." And her own little boy came up very close to Jimmy and said, "I am glad to see you, Jim."

Poor little Jimmy! He did not know what to do. It was the first time that he had been told that his clothes were ragged and dirty, and he could see that they were not nice like the clothes that the other boys wore. He had just learned, too, that his father and mother were not doing right when they drank beer and were not considered nice people. He didn't know what to say. And he would have been very glad if he could have gone away some place where no one could even see him again.

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The tall lady seemed to know just how Jimmy was feeling. For she said, "Jimmy come this way. I want you to sit on a chair between Thomas and me while I tell you a story from the Bible."

Now Jimmy didn't even know that there was a Bible. He had heard about God and about Jesus. But he had only heard his father and mother talking about them when they were angry. But the story about Timothy sounded good. And when the tall lady said that he grew to be a good man and was a preacher he thought that he would like to be a preacher, too, though he didn't know what it would mean to be a preacher.

While the tall lady was talking, Jimmy quite forgot about his ragged and dirty clothes. But when she had finished he remembered what the boy had said, and again he wanted to hide. But when the tall lady and her little boy spoke to him kindly again, he did not feel quite so bad. Then the tall lady gave Jimmy a large bundle and told him to carry it home, for it had some nice things in it for him. And that was another time that Jimmy wanted to say something. But he didn't know what to say. He took the bundle and went home, and the boys didn't say a single thing to him about his clothes being ragged and dirty as he passed them. And, oh, how glad he was that they didn't!

When Jimmy got home the first thing that he did was to open the bundle. And this was what he saw: a nice little coat, and a pair of pants, some shoes and stockings, a shirt, and a cap. And none of them were ragged or dirty. Then he remembered that the tall lady had said that the things in the bundle were for him.

The next Sunday when Jimmy went to Sunday-school he wore all his new clothes, for the tall lady had been to his home during the week and had told him how to take a bath and what things to put on first. And Jimmy looked as nice as and even nicer than some of the

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other boys in the Sunday school class. For his curly brown hair was combed and his large blue eyes were so bright.

From the tall lady he soon learned what it meant to be a preacher. He learned, too, that while the tall lady was his friend, there was someone else who was interested in little boys and could be a far better friend, not only to little boys, but to men and women, and that the name of that friend is Jesus.

To preach, the tall lady told him, is to tell the people about this great Friend and to get them to invite him to their homes. For that was what Timothy, the boy preacher, did. And through what Timothy said many people were made very happy. So, like Timothy, Jimmy began to preach when he was a very little boy. After he knew that it was wrong to drink beer, he told his father and mother what the tall lady had told him. But they only laughed and said that he didn't know what he was talking about.

Now Jimmy is a man, and like Timothy he is a preacher. He has a happy home of his own and never has to carry any beer. And he does not ask his little boy to go to the saloon for him. He has no use for beer, for he knows that it makes the people who drink it sick and unhappy. He tells his little boy about the first time that he went to Sunday school, and was so ragged and dirty. And he says, "My son, never tell anyone who does not wear as nice clothes as your own that he is not fit to play with boys who are well dressed, for you do not know why they are so ragged and dirty. Instead be like the tall lady, and give them a large bundle of good clothes. Be a good friend to them, for Jesus loves them and wants you to be good to them and love them, too. And if necessary help them to get ready for Sunday school. Then when you grow up to be a man, you will be glad you helped instead of made fun of the little ragged boys."

“What Will Jesus Think?”

In a beautiful home, on a fashionable street in London, England, lived a little girl by the name of Ada Bartlett. Ada was an only child, which means that there were no brothers or sisters in her family, and she had no playmates except those who now and then came to visit her. Because of this, her parents tried in every way that they could think of to make her happy. They wanted their little daughter to be the sweetest and the most contented child that they knew.

But although Ada’s parents were able to buy her beautiful clothes and many costly toys to play with, they did not know how to make their child truly happy. For they were not Christians and knew nothing about the happiness that is enjoyed by those who love the Lord.

When Ada was about five years old, it happened that she went to visit in the home of a friend who not only knew about the Lord Jesus but was a good Christian woman. And it was while she was there that Ada, for the first time in her life, heard the old, old stories about the angels, the shepherds, and the wise men’s visit to the stable in Bethlehem. There she heard about the tiny baby boy who came to live upon the earth long enough to tell the people many things about God and their beautiful home in heaven that is being prepared for all who love him.

Oh, it was so wonderful! Ada could scarcely wait until she could return to her home and tell her mama all that she had heard

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about the Savior of the world. She did not know that her mama had already heard the stories that had so thrilled her own heart. And she could not understand that it was because her mama was a very proud woman that she was not a Christian.

When Ada saw and told her mother all that she had heard about Jesus, her mother was not pleased. But when she sang the sweet little songs that she had learned, her proud mama listened and was glad that her little girl was no longer the naughty, selfish child that she had been before she went away.

Ada was not told that she must not repeat the stories nor sing to others. So many happy hours were spent by the little girl among her friends telling and singing about the things that she so much enjoyed.

When Ada's mama went to and from the stores to do her shopping she rode in a carriage that was drawn by handsome horses. Sometimes Ada went with her, but at such times she was usually left in the care of the driver and the footman, who always accompanied her on such occasions. One day while her mama was in one of the largest and most fashionable stores in London, Ada said to the footman, "John, I want to speak to you."

"Yes, Miss," John answered, "what is it?"

"I want to sing!" said the little girl.

John, knowing that he must be very courteous to his little mistress, as well as to her mother, replied, "Yes, Miss, and what do you want to sing?"

"I want to sing, 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.' "

"Very well," John answered. But in a moment he added, "What

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will all these people think, and what will your mama say if you sing?”

“Oh, John,” Ada exclaimed, “I was not thinking what Mama and the people would think if I sing. I was thinking what Jesus would think if I did not sing.”

The footman said no more. And as the sweet song went forth upon the still air, the people gathered one by one to listen to the words that the little child was singing. When the mother returned from the store her proud heart was softened. And do you not think that Jesus and the angels were glad that Ada sang?

