

Otis James

Toby Tyler: or, Ten Weeks with a Circus



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Chapter I.

TOBY'S INTRODUCTION TO THE CIRCUS

"Couldn't you give more'n six pea-nuts for a cent?" was a question asked by a very small boy, with big, staring eyes, of a candy vender at a circus booth. And as he spoke he looked wistfully at the quantity of nuts piled high up on the basket, and then at the six, each of which now looked so small as he held them in his hand.

"Couldn't do it," was the reply of the proprietor of the booth, as he put the boy's penny carefully away in the drawer.

The little fellow looked for another moment at his purchase, and then carefully cracked the largest one.

A shade – and a very deep shade it was – of disappointment passed over his face, and then, looking up anxiously, he asked, "Don't you swap 'em when they're bad?"

The man's face looked as if a smile had been a stranger to it for a long time; but one did pay it a visit just then, and he tossed the boy two nuts, and asked him a question at the same time. "What is your name?"

The big brown eyes looked up for an instant, as if to learn whether the question was asked in good faith, and then their owner said, as he carefully picked apart another nut, "Toby Tyler."

"Well, that's a queer name."

"Yes, I s'pose so, myself; but, you see, I don't expect that's the name that belongs to me. But the fellers call me so, an' so does Uncle Dan'l."

"Who is Uncle Daniel?" was the next question. In the absence of other customers the man seemed disposed to get as much amusement out of the boy as possible.

"He hain't my uncle at all; I only call him so because all the boys do, an' I live with him."

"Where's your father and mother?"

"I don't know," said Toby, rather carelessly. "I don't know much about 'em, an' Uncle Dan'l says they don't know much about me. Here's another bad nut; goin' to give me two more?"

The two nuts were given him, and he said, as he put them in his pocket, and turned over and over again those which he held in his hand, "I shouldn't wonder if all of these was bad. Sposen you give me two for each one of 'em before I crack 'em, an' then they won't be spoiled so you can't sell 'em again."

As this offer of barter was made, the man looked amused, and he asked, as he counted out the number which Toby desired, "If I give you these, I suppose you'll want me to give you two more for each one, and you'll keep that kind of a trade going until you get my whole stock?"

"I won't open my head if every one of 'em's bad."

"All right; you can keep what you've got, and I'll give you these besides; but I don't want you to buy any more, for I don't want to do that kind of business."

Toby took the nuts offered, not in the least abashed, and seated himself on a convenient stone to eat them, and at the same time to see all that was going on around him. The coming of a circus to the little town of Guilford was an event, and Toby had hardly thought of anything else since the highly colored posters had first been put up. It was yet quite early in the morning, and the tents were just being erected by the men. Toby had followed, with eager eyes, everything that looked

as if it belonged to the circus, from the time the first wagon had entered the town until the street parade had been made, and everything was being prepared for the afternoon's performance.

The man who had made the losing trade in pea-nuts seemed disposed to question the boy still further, probably owing to the fact that he had nothing better to do.

"Who is this Uncle Daniel you say you live with – is he a farmer?"

"No; he's a deacon, an' he raps me over the head with the hymn-book whenever I go to sleep in meetin', an' he says I eat four times as much as I earn. I blame him for hittin' so hard when I go to sleep, but I s'pose he's right about my eatin'. You see," and here his tone grew both confidential and mournful, "I am an awful eater, an' I can't seem to help it. Somehow I'm hungry all the time. I don't seem ever to get enough till carrot-time comes, an' then I can get all I want without troubling anybody."

"Didn't you ever have enough to eat?"

"I s'pose I did; but you see Uncle Dan'l he found me one mornin' on his hay, an' he says I was cryin' for something to eat then, an' I've kept it up ever since. I tried to get him go give me money enough to go into the circus with; but he said a cent was all he could spare these hard times, an' I'd better take that an' buy something to eat with it, for the show wasn't very good anyway. I wish pea-nuts wasn't but a cent a bushel."

"Then you would make yourself sick eating them."

"Yes, I s'pose I should; Uncle Dan'l says I'd eat till I was sick, if I got the chance; but I'd like to try it once."

He was a very small boy, with a round head covered with short, red hair a face as speckled as any turkey's egg, but thoroughly good-natured-looking; and as he sat there on the rather sharp point of the rock, swaying his body to and fro as he hugged his knees with his hands, and kept his eyes fastened on the tempting display of good things before him, it would have been a very hard-hearted man who would not have given him something. But Mr. Job Lord, the proprietor of the booth, was a hard-hearted man, and he did not make the slightest advance toward offering the little fellow anything.

Toby rocked himself silently for a moment, and then he said, hesitatingly, "I don't suppose you'd like to sell me some things, an' let me pay you when I get older, would you?"

Mr. Lord shook his head decidedly at this proposition.

"I didn't s'pose you would," said Toby, quickly; "but you didn't seem to be selling anything, an' I thought I'd just see what you'd say about it." And then he appeared suddenly to see something wonderfully interesting behind him, which served as an excuse to turn his reddening face away.

"I suppose your uncle Daniel makes you work for your living, don't he?" asked Mr. Lord, after he had rearranged his stock of candy, and had added a couple of slices of lemon-peel to what was popularly supposed to be lemonade.

"That's what I think; but he says that all the work I do wouldn't pay for the meal that one chicken would eat, an' I s'pose it's so, for I don't like to work as well as a feller without any father and mother ought to. I don't know why it is, but I guess it's because I take up so much time eatin' that it kinder tires me out. I s'pose you go into the circus whenever you want to, don't you?"

"Oh yes; I'm there at every performance, for I keep the stand under the big canvas as well as this one out here."

There was a great big sigh from out Toby's little round stomach, as he thought what bliss it must be to own all those good things, and to see the circus wherever it went. "It must be nice," he said, as he faced the booth and its hard-visaged proprietor once more.

"How would you like it?" asked Mr. Lord, patronizingly, as he looked Toby over in a business way, very much as if he contemplated purchasing him.

"Like it!" echoed Toby; "why, I'd grow fat on it."

"I don't know as that would be any advantage," continued Mr. Lord, reflectively, "for it strikes me that you're about as fat now as a boy of your age ought to be. But I've a great mind to give you a chance."

"What!" cried Toby, in amazement, and his eyes opened to their widest extent, as this possible opportunity of leading a delightful life presented itself.

"Yes, I've a great mind to give you the chance. You see," and now it was Mr. Lord's turn to grow confidential, "I've had a boy with me this season, but he cleared out at the last town, and I'm running the business alone now."

Toby's face expressed all the contempt he felt for the boy who would run away from such a glorious life as Mr. Lord's assistant must lead; but he said not a word, waiting in breathless expectation for the offer which he now felt certain would be made him.

"Now I ain't hard on a boy," continued Mr. Lord, still confidentially, "and yet that one seemed to think that he was treated worse and made to work harder than any boy in the world."

"He ought to live with Uncle Dan'l a week," said Toby, eagerly.

"Here I was just like a father to him," said Mr. Lord, paying no attention to the interruption, "and I gave him his board and lodging, and a dollar a week besides."

"Could he do what he wanted to with the dollar?"

"Of course he could. I never checked him, no matter how extravagant he was, an' yet I've seen him spend his whole week's wages at this very stand in one afternoon. And even after his money had all gone that way, I've paid for peppermint and ginger out of my own pocket just to cure his stomach-ache."

Toby shook his head mournfully, as if deploring that depravity which could cause a boy to run away from such a tender-hearted employer, and from such a desirable position. But even as he shook his head so sadly he looked wistfully at the pea-nuts, and Mr. Lord observed the look.

It may have been that Mr. Job Lord was the tender-hearted man he prided himself upon being, or it may have been that he wished to purchase Toby's sympathy; but, at all events, he gave him a large handful of nuts, and Toby never bothered his little round head as to what motive prompted the gift. Now he could listen to the story of the boy's treachery and eat at the same time; therefore he was an attentive listener.

"All in the world that boy had to do," continued Mr. Lord, in the same injured tone he had previously used, "was to help me set things to rights when we struck a town in the morning, and then tend to the counter till we left the town at night, and all the rest of the time he had to himself. Yet that boy was ungrateful enough to run away."

Mr. Lord paused, as if expecting some expression of sympathy from his listener; but Toby was so busily engaged with his unexpected feast, and his mouth was so full, that it did not seem even possible for him to shake his head.

"Now what should you say if I told you that you looked to me like a boy that was made especially to help run a candy counter at a circus, and if I offered the place to you?"

Toby made one frantic effort to swallow the very large mouthful, and in a choking voice he answered, quickly, "I should say I'd go with you, an' be mighty glad of the chance."

"Then it's a bargain, my boy, and you shall leave town with me to-night."

Chapter II.

TOBY RUNS AWAY FROM HOME

Toby could scarcely restrain himself at the prospect of this golden future that had so suddenly opened before him. He tried to express his gratitude, but could only do so by evincing his willingness to commence work at once.

"No, no, that won't do," said Mr. Lord, cautiously. "If your uncle Daniel should see you working here, he might mistrust something, and then you couldn't get away."

"I don't believe he'd try to stop me," said Toby, confidently; "for he's told me lots of times that it was a sorry day for him when he found me."

"We won't take any chances, my son," was the reply, in a very benevolent tone, as he patted Toby on the head, and at the same time handed him a piece of pasteboard. "There's a ticket for the circus, and you come around to see me about ten o'clock to-night. I'll put you on one of the wagons, and by to-morrow morning your uncle Daniel will have hard work to find you."

If Toby had followed his inclinations, the chances are that he would have fallen on his knees, and kissed Mr. Lord's hands in the excess of his gratitude. But not knowing exactly how such a show of thankfulness might be received, he contented himself by repeatedly promising that he would be punctual to the time and place appointed.

He would have loitered in the vicinity of the candy stand in order that he might gain some insight into the business; but Mr. Lord advised that he remain away, lest his uncle Daniel should see him, and suspect where he had gone when he was missed in the morning.

As Toby walked around the circus grounds, whereon was so much to attract his attention, he could not prevent himself from assuming an air of proprietorship. His interest in all that was going on was redoubled, and in his anxiety that everything should be done correctly and in the proper order he actually, and perhaps for the first time in his life, forgot that he was hungry. He was really to travel with a circus, to become a part, as it were, of the whole, and to be able to see its many wonderful and beautiful attractions every day.

Even the very tent ropes had acquired a new interest for him, and the faces of the men at work seemed suddenly to have become those of friends. How hard it was for him to walk around unconcernedly: and how especially hard to prevent his feet from straying toward that tempting display of dainties which he was to sell to those who came to see and enjoy, and who would look at him with wonder and curiosity! It was very hard not to be allowed to tell his playmates of his wonderfully good fortune; but silence meant success, and he locked his secret in his bosom, not even daring to talk with any one he knew, lest he should betray himself by some incautious word.

He did not go home to dinner that day, and once or twice he felt impelled to walk past the candy stand, giving a mysterious shake of the head at the proprietor as he did so. The afternoon performance passed off as usual to all of the spectators save Toby. He imagined that each one of the performers knew that he was about to join them; and even as he passed the cage containing the monkeys he fancied that one particularly old one knew all about his intention of running away.

Of course it was necessary for him to go home at the close of the afternoon's performance, in order to get one or two valuable articles of his own – such as a boat, a kite, and a pair of skates – and in order that his actions might not seem suspicious. Before he left the grounds, however, he stole slyly around to the candy stand, and informed Mr. Job Lord, in a very hoarse whisper, that he would be on hand at the time appointed.

Mr. Lord patted him on the head, gave him two large sticks of candy, and, what was more kind and surprising, considering the fact that he wore glasses, and was cross-eyed, he winked at Toby. A wink from Mr. Lord must have been intended to convey a great deal, because, owing to

the defect in his eyes, it required no little exertion, and even then could not be considered as a really first-class wink.

That wink, distorted as it was, gladdened Toby's heart immensely, and took away nearly all the sting of the scolding with which Uncle Daniel greeted him when he reached home.

That night – despite the fact that he was going to travel with the circus, despite the fact that his home was not a happy or cheerful one – Toby was not in a pleasant frame of mind. He began to feel for the first time that he was doing wrong; and as he gazed at Uncle Daniel's stern, forbidding-looking face, it seemed to have changed somewhat from its severity, and caused a great lump of something to come up in his throat as he thought that perhaps he should never see it again. Just then one or two kind words would have prevented him from running away, bright as the prospect of circus life appeared.

It was almost impossible for him to eat anything, and this very surprising state of affairs attracted the attention of Uncle Daniel.

"Bless my heart! what ails the boy?" asked the old man, as he peered over his glasses at Toby's well-filled plate, which was usually emptied so quickly. "Are ye sick, Toby, or what is the matter with ye?"

"No, I hain't sick," said Toby, with a sigh; "but I've been to the circus, an' I got a good deal to eat."

"Oho, you spent that cent I give ye, eh, an' got so much that it made ye sick?"

Toby thought of the six pea-nuts which he had bought with the penny Uncle Daniel had given him; and, amid all his homesickness, he could not help wondering if Uncle Daniel ever made himself sick with only six pea-nuts when he was a boy.

As no one paid any further attention to Toby, he pushed back his plate, arose from the table, and went with a heavy heart to attend to his regular evening chores. The cow, the hens, and even the pigs, came in for a share of his unusually kind attention; and as he fed them all the big tears rolled down his cheeks, as he thought that perhaps never again would he see any of them. These dumb animals had all been Toby's confidants; he had poured out his griefs in their ears, and fancied, when the world or Uncle Daniel had used him unusually hard, that they sympathized with him. Now he was leaving them forever, and as he locked the stable door he could hear the sounds of music coming from the direction of the circus grounds, and he was angry at it, because it represented that which was taking him away from his home, even though it was not as pleasant as it might have been.

Still, he had no thought of breaking the engagement which he had made. He went to his room, made a bundle of his worldly possessions, and crept out of the back door, down the road to the circus.

Mr. Lord saw him as soon as he arrived on the grounds, and as he passed another ticket to Toby he took his bundle from him, saying, as he did so, "I'll pack up your bundle with my things, and then you'll be sure not to lose it. Don't you want some candy?"

Toby shook his head; he had just discovered that there was possibly some connection between his heart and his stomach, for his grief at leaving home had taken from him all desire for good things. It is also more than possible that Mr. Lord had had experience enough with boys to know that they might be homesick on the eve of starting to travel with a circus; and in order to make sure that Toby would keep to his engagement he was unusually kind.

That evening was the longest Toby ever knew. He wandered from one cage of animals to another; then to see the performance in the ring, and back again to the animals, in the vain hope of passing the time pleasantly. But it was of no use; that lump in his throat would remain there, and the thoughts of what he was about to do would trouble him severely. The performance failed to interest him, and the animals did not attract until he had visited the monkey-cage for the third or fourth time. Then he fancied that the same venerable monkey who had looked so knowing in the afternoon

was gazing at him with a sadness which could only have come from a thorough knowledge of all the grief and doubt that was in his heart.

There was no one around the cages, and Toby got just as near to the iron bars as possible. No sooner had he flattened his little pug-nose against the iron than the aged monkey came down from the ring in which he had been swinging, and, seating himself directly in front of Toby's face, looked at him most compassionately.

It would not have surprised the boy just then if the animal had spoken; but as he did not, Toby did the next best thing, and spoke to him.

"I s'pose you remember that you saw me this afternoon, an' somebody told you that I was goin' to join the circus, didn't they?"

The monkey made no reply, though Toby fancied that he winked an affirmative answer; and he looked so sympathetic that he continued, confidentially,

"Well, I'm the same feller, an' I don't mind telling you that I'm awfully sorry I promised that candy man I'd go with him. Do you know that I came near crying at the supper table to-night; an' Uncle Dan'l looked real good an' nice, though I never thought so before. I wish I wasn't goin', after all, 'cause it don't seem a bit like a good time now; but I s'pose I must, 'cause I promised to, an' 'cause the candy man has got all my things."

The big tears had begun to roll down Toby's cheeks, and as he ceased speaking the monkey reached out one little paw, which Toby took as earnestly as if it had been done purposely to console him.

"You're real good, you are," continued Toby; "an' I hope I shall see you real often, for it seems to me now, when there hain't any folks around, as if you was the only friend I've got in this great big world. It's awful when a feller feels the way I do, an' when he don't seem to want anything to eat. Now if you'll stick to me, I'll stick to you, an' then it won't be half so bad when we feel this way."

During this speech Toby had still clung to the little brown paw, which the monkey now withdrew, and continued to gaze into the boy's face.

"The fellers all say I don't amount to anything," sobbed Toby, "an' Uncle Dan'l says I don't, an' I s'pose they know; but I tell you I feel just as bad, now that I'm goin' away from them all, as if I was as good as any of them."

At this moment Toby saw Mr. Lord enter the tent, and he knew that the summons to start was about to be given.

"Good-bye," he said to the monkey, as he vainly tried to take him by the hand again; "remember what I've told you, an' don't forget that Toby Tyler is feelin' worse to-night than if he was twice as big an' twice as good."

Mr. Lord had come to summon him away, and he now told Toby that he would show him with which man he was to ride that night.

Toby looked another good-bye at the venerable monkey, who was watching him closely, and then followed his employer out of the tent, among the ropes and poles and general confusion attendant upon the removal of a circus from one place to another.

Chapter III. THE NIGHT RIDE

The wagon on which Mr. Lord was to send his new-found employé was, by the most singular chance, the one containing the monkeys, and Toby accepted this as a good omen. He would be near his venerable friend all night, and there was some consolation in that. The driver instructed the boy to watch his movements, and when he saw him leading his horses around, "to look lively, and be on hand, for he never waited for any one."

Toby not only promised to do as ordered, but he followed the driver around so closely that, had he desired, he could not have rid himself of his little companion.

The scene which presented itself to Toby's view was strange and weird in the extreme. Shortly after he had attached himself to the man with whom he was to ride, the performance was over, and the work of putting the show and its belongings into such a shape as could be conveyed from one town to another was soon in active operation. Toby forgot his grief, forgot that he was running away from the only home he had ever known – in fact, forgot everything concerning himself – so interested was he in that which was going on about him.

As soon as the audience had got out of the tent – and almost before – the work of taking down the canvas was begun.

Torches were stuck in the earth at regular intervals, the lights that had shone so brilliantly in and around the ring had been extinguished, the canvas sides had been taken off, and the boards that had formed the seats were being packed into one of the carts with a rattling sound that seemed as if a regular fusillade of musketry was being indulged in. Men were shouting; horses were being driven hither and thither, harnessed to the wagons, or drawing the huge carts away as soon as they were loaded; and everything seemed in the greatest state of confusion, while really the work was being done in the most systematic manner possible.

Toby had not long to wait before the driver informed him that the time for starting had arrived, and assisted him to climb up to the narrow seat whereon he was to ride that night.

The scene was so exciting, and his efforts to stick to the narrow seat so great, that he really had no time to attend to the homesick feeling that had crept over him during the first part of the evening.

The long procession of carts and wagons drove slowly out of the town, and when the last familiar house had been passed the driver spoke to Toby for the first time since they started.

"Pretty hard work to keep on – eh, sonny?"

"Yes," replied the boy, as the wagon jolted over a rock, bouncing him high in air, and he, by strenuous efforts, barely succeeded in alighting on the seat again, "it is pretty hard work; an' my name's Toby Tyler."

Toby heard a queer sound that seemed to come from the man's throat, and for a few moments he feared that his companion was choking. But he soon understood that this was simply an attempt to laugh, and he at once decided that it was a very poor style of laughing.

"So you object to being called sonny, do you?"

"Well, I'd rather be called Toby, for, you see, that's my name."

"All right, my boy; we'll call you Toby. I suppose you thought it was a mighty fine thing to run away an' jine a circus, didn't you?"

Toby started in affright, looked around cautiously, and then tried to peer down through the small square aperture, guarded by iron rods, that opened into the cage just back of the seat they were sitting on. Then he turned slowly around to the driver, and asked, in a voice sunk to a whisper, "How did you know that I was runnin' away? Did he tell you?" and Toby motioned with his thumb as if he were pointing out some one behind him.

It was the driver's turn now to look around in search of the "he" referred to by Toby.

"Who do you mean?" asked the man, impatiently.

"Why, the old feller; the one in the cart there. I think he knew I was runnin' away, though he didn't say anything about it; but he looked just as if he did."

The driver looked at Toby in perfect amazement for a moment, and then, as if suddenly understanding the boy, relapsed into one of those convulsive efforts that caused the blood to rush up into his face, and gave him every appearance of having a fit.

"You must mean one of the monkeys," said the driver, after he had recovered his breath, which had been almost shaken out of his body by the silent laughter. "So you thought a monkey had told me what any fool could have seen if he had watched you for five minutes."

"Well," said Toby, slowly, as if he feared he might provoke one of those terrible laughing spells again, "I saw him to-night, an' he looked as if he knew what I was doin'; so I up an' told him, an' I didn't know but he'd told you, though he didn't look to me like a feller that would be mean."

There was another internal shaking on the part of the driver, which Toby did not fear so much, since he was getting accustomed to it, and then the man said, "Well, you are the queerest little cove I ever saw."

"I s'pose I am," was the reply, accompanied by a long-drawn sigh. "I don't seem to amount to so much as the other fellers do, an' I guess it's because I'm always hungry; you see, I eat awful, Uncle Dan'l says."

The only reply which the driver made to this plaintive confession was to put his hand down into the deepest recesses of one of his deep pockets, and to draw therefrom a huge doughnut, which he handed to his companion.

Toby was so much at his ease by this time that the appetite which had failed him at supper had now returned in full force, and he devoured the doughnut in a most ravenous manner.

"You're too small to eat so fast," said the man, in a warning tone, as the last morsel of the greasy sweetness disappeared, and he fished up another for the boy. "Some time you'll get hold of one of the India-rubber doughnuts that they feed to circus people, an' choke yourself to death."

Toby shook his head, and devoured this second cake as quickly as he had the first, craning his neck, and uttering a funny little squeak as the last bit went down, just as a chicken does when he gets too large a mouthful of dough.

"I'll never choke," he said, confidently: "I'm used to it; and Uncle Dan'l says I could eat a pair of boots an' never wink at 'em; but I don't just believe that."

As the driver made no reply to this remark Toby curled himself up on one corner of the seat, and watched with no little interest all that was passing on around him. Each of the wagons had a lantern fastened to the hind axle, and these lights could be seen far ahead on the road, as if a party of fire-flies had started in single file on an excursion. The trees by the side of the road stood out weird and ghostly-looking in the darkness, and the rumble of the carts ahead and behind formed a musical accompaniment to the picture that sounded strangely doleful.

Mile after mile was passed over in perfect silence, save now and then when the driver would whistle a few bars of some very dismal tune that would fairly make Toby shiver with its mournfulness. Eighteen miles was the distance from Guilford to the town where the next performance of the circus was to be given, and as Toby thought of the ride before them it seemed as if the time would be almost interminable. He curled himself up on one corner of the seat, and tried very hard to go to sleep; but just as his eyes began to grow heavy the wagon would jolt over some rock or sink deep in some rut, till Toby, the breath very nearly shaken out of his body, and his neck almost dislocated, would sit bolt-upright, clinging to the seat with both hands, as if he expected each moment to be pitched out into the mud.

The driver watched him closely, and each time that he saw him shaken up and awakened so thoroughly he would indulge in one of his silent laughing spells, until Toby would wonder whether

he would ever recover from it. Several times had Toby been awakened, and each time he had seen the amusement his sufferings caused, until he finally resolved to put an end to the sport by keeping awake.

"What is your name?" he asked of the driver, thinking a conversation would be the best way to rouse himself into wakefulness.

"Waal," said the driver, as he gathered the reins carefully in one hand, and seemed to be debating in his mind how he should answer the question, "I don't know as I know myself, it's been so long since I've heard it."

Toby was wide enough awake now, as this rather singular problem was forced upon his mind. He revolved the matter silently for some moments, and at last he asked, "What do folks call you when they want to speak to you?"

"They always call me Old Ben, an' I've got so used to the name that I don't need any other."

Toby wanted very much to ask more questions, but he wisely concluded that it would not be agreeable to his companion.

"I'll ask the old man about it," said Toby to himself, referring to the aged monkey, whom he seemed to feel acquainted with; "he most likely knows, if he'll say anything." After this the conversation ceased, until Toby again ventured to suggest, "It's a pretty long drive, hain't it?"

"You want to wait till you've been in this business a year or two," said Ben, sagely, "an' then you won't think much of it. Why, I've known the show towns to be thirty miles apart, an' them was the times when we had lively work of it; riding all night and working all day kind of wears on a fellow."

"Yes, I s'pose so," said Toby, with a sigh, as he wondered whether he had got to work as hard as that; "but I s'pose you get all you want to eat, don't you?"

"Now you've struck it!" said Ben, with the air of one about to impart a world of wisdom, as he crossed one leg over the other, that his position might be as comfortable as possible while he was initiating his young companion into the mysteries of the life. "I've had all the boys ride with me since I've been with this show, an' I've tried to start them right; but they didn't seem to profit by it, an' always got sick of the show an' run away, just because they didn't look out for themselves as they ought to. Now listen to me, Toby, an' remember what I say. You see they put us all in a hotel together, an' some of these places where we go don't have any too much stuff on the table. Whenever we strike a new town you find out at the hotel what time they have the grub ready, an' you be on hand, so's to get in with the first. Eat all you can, an' fill your pockets."

"If that's all a feller has to do to travel with a circus," said Toby, "I'm just the one, 'cause I always used to do just that when I hadn't any idea of bein' a circus man."

"Then you'll get along all right," said Ben, as he checked the speed of his horses, and, looking carefully ahead, said, as he guided his team to one side of the road, "This is as far as we're going to-night."

Toby learned that they were within a couple of miles of the town, and that the entire procession would remain by the roadside until time to make the grand entrée into the village, when every wagon, horse, and man would be decked out in the most gorgeous array, as they had been when they entered Guilford.

Under Ben's direction he wrapped himself in an old horse-blanket, and lay down on the top of the wagon; and he was so tired from the excitement of the day and night, that he had hardly stretched out at full length before he was fast asleep.

Chapter IV.

THE FIRST DAY WITH THE CIRCUS

When Toby awakened and looked around he could hardly realize where he was or how he came there. As far ahead and behind on the road as he could see the carts were drawn up on one side; men were hurrying to and fro, orders were being shouted, and everything showed that the entry into the town was about to be made. Directly opposite the wagon on which he had been sleeping were the four elephants and two camels, and close behind, contentedly munching their breakfasts, were a number of tiny ponies. Troops of horses were being groomed and attended to; the road was littered with saddles, flags, and general decorations, until it seemed to Toby that there must have been a smash-up, and that he now beheld ruins rather than systematic disorder.

How different everything looked now, compared to the time when the cavalcade marched into Guilford, dazzling every one with the gorgeous display! Then the horses pranced gayly under their gaudy decorations, the wagons were bright with glass, gilt, and flags, the lumbering elephants and awkward camels were covered with fancifully embroidered velvets, and even the drivers of the wagons were resplendent in their uniforms of scarlet and gold. Now, in the gray light of the early morning, everything was changed. The horses were tired and muddy, and wore old and dirty harness; the gilded chariots were covered with mud-bespattered canvas, which caused them to look like the most ordinary of market wagons; the elephants and camels looked dingy, dirty, almost repulsive; and the drivers were only a sleepy-looking set of men, who, in their shirt-sleeves, were getting ready for the change which would dazzle the eyes of the inhabitants of the town.

Toby descended from his lofty bed, rubbed his eyes to thoroughly awaken himself, and under the guidance of Ben went to a little brook near by and washed his face. He had been with the circus not quite ten hours, but now he could not realize that it had ever seemed bright and beautiful. He missed his comfortable bed, the quiet and cleanliness, and the well-spread table; even although he had felt the lack of parents' care, Uncle Daniel's home seemed the very abode of love and friendly feeling compared to this condition, where no one appeared to care even enough for him to scold at him. He was thoroughly homesick, and heartily wished that he was back in his old native town.

While he was washing his face in the brook he saw some of the boys who had come out from the town to catch the first glimpse of the circus, and he saw at once that he was the object of their admiring gaze. He heard one of the boys say, when they first discovered him,

"There's one of them, an' he's only a little feller; so I'm going to talk to him."

The evident admiration which the boys had for Toby pleased him, and this pleasure was the only drop of comfort he had had since he started. He hoped they would come and talk with him; and, that they might have the opportunity, he was purposely slow in making his toilet.

The boys approached him shyly, as if they had their doubts whether he was made of the same material as themselves, and when they got quite near to him, and satisfied themselves that he was only washing his face in much the same way that any well-regulated boy would do, the one who had called attention to him said, half timidly, "Hello!"

"Hello!" responded Toby, in a tone that was meant to invite confidence.

"Do you belong to the circus?"

"Yes," said Toby, a little doubtfully.

Then the boys stared at him again as if he were one of the strange-looking animals, and the one who had been the spokesman drew a long breath of envy as he said, longingly, "My! what a nice time you must have!"

Toby remembered that only yesterday he himself had thought that boys must have a nice time with a circus, and he now felt what a mistake that thought was; but he concluded that he would not undeceive his new acquaintance.

"And do they give you frogs to eat, so's to make you limber?"

This was the first time that Toby had thought of breakfast, and the very mention of eating made him hungry. He was just at that moment so very hungry that he did not think he was replying to the question when he said, quickly, "Eat frogs! I could eat anything, if I only had the chance."

The boys took this as an answer to their question, and felt perfectly convinced that the agility of circus riders and tumblers depended upon the quantity of frogs eaten, and they looked upon Toby with no little degree of awe.

Toby might have undeceived them as to the kind of food he ate, but just at that moment the harsh voice of Mr. Job Lord was heard calling him, and he hurried away to commence his first day's work.

Toby's employer was not the same pleasant, kindly-spoken man that he had been during the time they were in Guilford, and before the boy was absolutely under his control. He looked cross, he acted cross, and it did not take the boy very long to find out that he was very cross.

He scolded Toby roundly, and launched more oaths at his defenceless head than Toby had ever heard in his life. He was angry that the boy had not been on hand to help him, and also that he had been obliged to hunt for him.

Toby tried to explain that he had no idea of what he was expected to do, and that he had been on the wagon to which he had been sent, only leaving it to wash his face; but the angry man grew still more furious.

"Went to wash your face, did yer? Want to set yourself up for a dandy, I suppose, and think that you must souse that speckled face of yours into every brook you come to? I'll soon break you of that; and the sooner you understand that I can't afford to have you wasting your time in washing, the better it will be for you."

Toby now grew angry, and not realizing how wholly he was in the man's power, he retorted, "If you think I'm going round with a dirty face, even if it is speckled, for a dollar a week, you're mistaken, that's all. How many folks would eat your candy if they knew you handled it over before you washed your hands?"

"Oho! I've picked up a preacher, have I? Now, I want you to understand, my bantam, that I do all the preaching as well as the practising myself, and this is about as quick a way as I know of to make you understand it."

As the man spoke he grasped the boy by the coat-collar with one hand, and with the other plied a thin rubber cane with no gentle force to every portion of Toby's body that he could reach.

Every blow caused the poor boy the most intense pain; but he determined that his tormentor should not have the satisfaction of forcing an outcry from him, and he closed his lips so tightly that not a single sound could escape from them.

This very silence enraged the man so much that he redoubled the force and rapidity of his blows, and it is impossible to say what might have been the consequences had not Ben come that way just then, and changed the aspect of affairs.

"Up to your old tricks of whipping the boys, are you, Job?" he said, as he wrested the cane from the man's hand and held him off at arm's-length, to prevent him from doing Toby more mischief.

Mr. Lord struggled to release himself, and insisted that, since the boy was in his employ, he should do with him just as he saw fit.

"Now look here, Mr. Lord," said Ben as gravely as if he was delivering some profound piece of wisdom, "I've never interfered with you before; but now I'm going to stop your game of thrashing your boy every morning before breakfast. You just tell this youngster what you want him to do,

and if he don't do it you can discharge him. If I hear of your flogging him, I shall attend to your case at once. You hear me?"

Ben shook the now terrified candy vender much as if he had been a child, and then released him, saying to Toby as he did so, "Now, my boy, you attend to your business as you ought to, and I'll settle his account if he tries the flogging game again."

"You see, I don't know what there is for me to do," sobbed Toby, for the kindly interference of Ben had made him show more feeling than Mr. Lord's blows had done.

"Tell him what he must do," said Ben, sternly.

"I want him to go to work and wash the tumblers, and fix up the things in that green box, so we can commence to sell as soon as we get into town," snarled Mr. Lord, as he motioned toward a large green chest that had been taken out of one of the carts, and which Toby saw was filled with dirty glasses, spoons, knives, and other utensils such as were necessary to carry on the business.

Toby got a pail of water from the brook, hunted around and found towels and soap, and devoted himself to his work with such industry that Mr. Lord could not repress a grunt of satisfaction as he passed him, however angry he felt because he could not administer the whipping which would have smoothed his ruffled temper.

By the time the procession was ready to start for the town Toby had as much of his work done as he could find that it was necessary to do, and his master, in his surly way, half acknowledged that this last boy of his was better than any he had had before.

Although Toby had done his work so well he was far from feeling happy; he was both angry and sad as he thought of the cruel blows that had been inflicted, and he had plenty of leisure to repent of the rash step he had taken, although he could not see very clearly how he was to get away from it. He thought that he could not go back to Guilford, for Uncle Daniel would not allow him to come to his house again; and the hot scalding tears ran down his cheeks as he realized that he was homeless and friendless in this great big world.

It was while he was in this frame of mind that the procession, all gaudy with flags, streamers, and banners, entered the town. Under different circumstances this would have been a most delightful day for him, for the entrance of a circus into Guilford had always been a source of one day's solid enjoyment; but now he was the most disconsolate and unhappy boy in all that crowd.

He did not ride throughout the entire route of the procession, for Mr. Lord was anxious to begin business, and the moment the tenting ground was reached the wagon containing Mr. Lord's goods was driven into the enclosure, and Toby's day's work began.

He was obliged to bring water, to cut up the lemons, fetch and carry fruit from the booth in the big tent to the booth on the outside, until he was ready to drop with fatigue, and having had no time for breakfast, was nearly famished.

It was quite noon before he was permitted to go to the hotel for something to eat, and then Ben's advice to be one of the first to get to the tables was not needed.

In the eating line that day he astonished the servants, the members of the company, and even himself, and by the time he arose from the table, with both pockets and his stomach full to bursting, the tables had been set and cleared away twice while he was making one meal.

"Well, I guess you didn't hurry yourself much," said Mr. Lord, when Toby returned to the circus ground.

"Oh yes, I did," was Toby's innocent reply: "I ate just as fast as I could;" and a satisfied smile stole over the boy's face as he thought of the amount of solid food he had consumed.

The answer was not one which was calculated to make Mr. Lord feel any more agreeably disposed toward his new clerk, and he showed his ill-temper very plainly as he said, "It must take a good deal to satisfy you."

"I s'pose it does," calmly replied Toby. "Sam Merrill used to say that I took after Aunt Olive and Uncle Dan'l, one ate a good while, an' the other ate awful fast."

Toby could not understand what it was that Mr. Lord said in reply, but he could understand that his employer was angry at somebody or something, and he tried unusually hard to please him. He talked to the boys who had gathered around, to induce them to buy, washed the glasses as fast as they were used, tried to keep off the flies, and in every way he could think of endeavored to please his master.

Chapter V. THE COUNTERFEIT TEN-CENT PIECE

When the doors of the big tent were opened, and the people began to crowd in, just as Toby had seen them do at Guilford, Mr. Lord announced to his young clerk that it was time for him to go into the tent to work. Then it was that Toby learned for the first time that he had two masters instead of one, and this knowledge caused him no little uneasiness. If the other one was anything like Mr. Lord, his lot would be just twice as bad, and he began to wonder whether he could even stand it one day longer.

As the boy passed through the tent on his way to the candy stand, where he was really to enter upon the duties for which he had run away from home, he wanted to stop for a moment and speak with the old monkey who he thought had taken such an interest in him. But when he reached the cage in which his friend was confined, there was such a crowd around it that it was impossible for him to get near enough to speak without being overheard.

This was such a disappointment to the little fellow that the big tears came into his eyes, and in another instant would have gone rolling down his cheeks if his aged friend had not chanced to look toward him. Toby fancied that the monkey looked at him in the most friendly way, and then he was certain that he winked one eye. Toby felt that there was no mistake about that wink, and it seemed as if it was intended to convey comfort to him in his troubles. He winked back at the monkey in the most emphatic and grave manner possible, and then went on his way, feeling wonderfully comforted.

The work inside the tent was far different and much harder than it was outside. He was obliged to carry around among the audience trays of candy, nuts, and lemonade for sale, and he was also expected to cry aloud the description of that which he offered. The partner of Mr. Lord, who had charge of the stand inside the tent, showed himself to be neither better nor worse than Mr. Lord himself. When Toby first presented himself for work he handed him a tray filled with glasses of lemonade, and told him to go among the audience, crying, "Here's your nice cold lemonade, only five cents a glass!"

Toby started to do as he was bidden; but when he tried to repeat the words in anything like a loud tone of voice they stuck in his throat, and he found it next to impossible to utter a sound above a whisper. It seemed to him that every one in the audience was looking only at him, and the very sound of his own voice made him afraid.

He went entirely around the tent once without making a sale, and when he returned to the stand he was at once convinced that one of his masters was quite as bad as the other. This one – and he knew that his name was Jacobs, for he heard some one call him so – very kindly told him that he would break every bone in his body if he didn't sell something, and Toby confidently believed that he would carry out his threat.

It was with a very heavy heart that he started around again in obedience to Mr. Jacobs's angry command; but this time he did manage to cry out, in a very thin and very squeaky voice, the words which he had been told to repeat.

This time – perhaps owing to his pitiful and imploring look, certainly not because of the noise he made – he met with very good luck, and sold every glass of the mixture which Messrs. Lord and Jacobs called lemonade, and went back to the stand for more.

He certainly thought he had earned a word of praise, and fully expected it as he put the empty glasses and money on the stand in front of Mr. Jacobs. But, instead of the kind words, he was greeted with a volley of curses; and the reason for it was that he had taken in payment for two of the glasses a lead ten-cent piece. Mr. Jacobs, after scolding poor little Toby to his heart's content,

vowed that the amount should be kept from his first week's wages, and then handed back the coin, with orders to give it to the first man who gave him money to change, under the penalty of a severe flogging if he failed to do so.

Poor Toby tried to explain matters by saying, "You see, I don't know anything about money; I never had more'n a cent at a time, an' you mustn't expect me to get posted all at once."

"I'll post you with a stick if you do it again; an' it won't be well for you if you bring that ten-cent piece back here!"

Now, Toby was very well aware that to pass the coin, knowing it to be bad, would be a crime, and he resolved to take the consequences of which Mr. Jacobs had intimated, if he could not find the one who had given him the counterfeit, and persuade him to give him good money in its stead. He remembered very plainly where he had sold each glass of lemonade, and he retraced his steps, glancing at each face carefully as he passed. At last he was confident that he saw the man who had gotten him into such trouble, and he climbed up the board seats, saying, as he stood in front of him and held out the coin, "Mister, this money that you gave me is bad. Won't you give me an other one for it?"

The man was a rough-looking party who had taken his girl to the circus, and who did not seem at all disposed to pay any heed to Toby's request. Therefore he repeated it, and this time more loudly.

"Get out the way!" said the man, angrily. "How can you expect me to see the show if you stand right in front of me?"

"You'll like it better," said Toby, earnestly, "if you give me another ten-cent piece."

"Get out, an' don't bother me!" was the angry rejoinder; and the little fellow began to think that perhaps he would be obliged to "get out" without getting his money.

It was becoming a desperate case, for the man was growing angry very fast, and if Toby did not succeed in getting good money for the bad, he would have to take the consequences of which Mr. Jacobs had spoken.

"Please, mister," he said, imploringly – for his heart began to grow very heavy, and he was fearing that he should not succeed – "won't you please give me the money back? You know you gave it to me, an' I'll have to pay it if you don't."

The boy's lip was quivering, and those around began to be interested in the affair, while several in the immediate vicinity gave vent to their indignation that a man should try to cheat a boy out of ten cents by giving him counterfeit money.

The man whom Toby was speaking to was about to dismiss him with an angry reply, when he saw that those about him were not only interested in the matter, but were evidently taking sides with the boy against him; and knowing well that he had given the counterfeit money, he took another coin from his pocket, and handing it to Toby, said, "I didn't give you the lead piece; but you're making such a fuss about it that here's ten cents to make you keep quiet."

"I'm sure you did give me the money," said Toby, as he took the extended coin, "an' I'm much obliged to you for takin' it back. I didn't want to tell you before, 'cause you'd thought I was beggin'; but if you hadn't given me this, I 'xpect I'd have got an awful whippin', for Mr. Jacobs said he'd fix me if I didn't get the money for it."

The man looked sheepish enough as he put the bad money in his pocket, and Toby's innocently told story caused such a feeling in his behalf among those who sat near that he not only disposed of his entire stock then and there, but received from one gentleman twenty-five cents for himself. He was both proud and happy as he returned to Mr. Jacobs with empty glasses, and with the money to refund the amount of loss which would have been caused by the counterfeit.

But the worthy partner of Mr. Lord's candy business had no words of encouragement for the boy who was trying so hard to please.

"Let that make you keep your eyes open," he growled out, sulkily; "an' if you get caught in that trap again, you won't be let off so easy."

Poor little Toby! his heart seemed ready to break; but his few hours' previous experience had taught him that there was but one thing to do, and that was to work just as hard as possible, trusting to some good fortune to enable him to get out of the very disagreeable position in which he had voluntarily placed himself.

He took the basket of candy that Mr. Jacobs handed him, and trudged around the circle of seats, selling far more because of the pitifulness of his face than because of the excellence of his goods; and even this worked to his disadvantage. Mr. Jacobs was keen enough to see why his little clerk sold so many goods, and each time that he returned to the stand he said something to him in an angry tone, which had the effect of deepening the shadow on the boy's face and at the same time increasing trade.

By the time the performance was over Toby had in his pocket a dollar and twenty-five cents which had been given him for himself by some of the kind-hearted in the audience, and he kept his hand almost constantly upon it, for the money seemed to him like some kind friend who would help him out of his present difficulties.

After the audience had dispersed, Mr. Jacobs set Toby at work washing the glasses and clearing up generally, and then, the boy started toward the other portion of the store – that watched over by Mr. Lord. Not a person save the watchmen was in the tent, and as Toby went toward the door he saw his friend the monkey sitting in one corner of the cage, and apparently watching his every movement.

It was as if he had suddenly seen one of the boys from home, and Toby, uttering an exclamation of delight, ran up to the cage and put his hand through the wires.

The monkey, in the gravest possible manner, took one of the fingers in his paw, and Toby shook hands with him very earnestly,

"I was sorry that I couldn't speak to you when I went in this noon," said Toby, as if making an apology; "but, you see, there were so many around here to see you that I couldn't get the chance. Did you see me wink at you?"

The monkey made no reply, but he twisted his face into such a funny little grimace that Toby was quite as well satisfied as if he had spoken.

"I wonder if you hain't some relation to Steve Stubbs?" Toby continued, earnestly, "for you look just like him, only he don't have quite so many whiskers. What I wanted to say was, that I'm awful sorry I run away. I used to think that Uncle Dan'l was bad enough; but he was just a perfect good Samarathon to what Mr. Lord an' Mr. Jacobs are; an' when Mr. Lord looks at me with that crooked eye of his, I feel it 'way down in my boots. Do you know" – and here Toby put his mouth nearer to the monkey's head and whispered – "I'd run away from this circus if I could get the chance; wouldn't you?"

Just at this point, as if in answer to the question, the monkey stood up on his hind-feet, and reached out his paw to the boy, who seemed to think this was his way of being more emphatic in saying "Yes."

Toby took the paw in his hand, shook it again earnestly, and said, as he released it, "I was pretty sure you felt just about the same way I did, Mr. Stubbs, when I passed you this noon. Look here" – and Toby took the money from his pocket which had been given him – "I got all that this afternoon, an' I'll try an' stick it out somehow till I get as much as ten dollars, an' then we'll run away some night, an' go 'way off as far as – as – as out West; an' we'll stay there too."

The monkey, probably tired with remaining in one position so long, started toward the top of the cage, chattering and screaming, joining the other monkeys, who had gathered in a little group in one of the swings.

"Now see here, Mr. Stubbs," said Toby, in alarm, "you mustn't go to telling everybody about it, or Mr. Lord will know, an' then we'll be dished, sure."

The monkey sat quietly in the swing, as if he felt reproved by what the boy had said; and Toby, considerably relieved by his silence, said, as he started toward the door, "That's right – mum's the word; you keep quiet, an' so will I, an' pretty soon we'll get away from the whole crowd."

All the monkeys chattered; and Toby, believing that everything which he had said had been understood by the animals, went out of the door to meet his other taskmaster.

Chapter VI.

A TENDER-HEARTED SKELETON

"Now, then, lazy-bones," was Mr. Lord's warning cry as Toby came out of the tent, "if you've fooled away enough of your time, you can come here an' tend shop for me while I go to supper. You crammed yourself this noon, an' it'll teach you a good lesson to make you go without anything to eat to-night; it'll make you move round more lively in future."

Instead of becoming accustomed to such treatment as he was receiving from his employers, Toby's heart grew more tender with each brutal word, and this last punishment – that of losing his supper – caused the poor boy more sorrow than blows would. Mr. Lord started for the hotel as he concluded his cruel speech; and poor little Toby, going behind the counter, leaned his head upon the rough boards and cried as if his heart would break.

All the fancied brightness and pleasure of a circus life had vanished, and in its place was the bitterness of remorse that he had repaid Uncle Daniel's kindness by the ingratitude of running away. Toby thought that if he could only nestle his little red head on the pillows of his little bed in that rough room at Uncle Daniel's, he would be the happiest and best boy, in the future, in all the great wide world.

While he was still sobbing away at a most furious rate he heard a voice close at his elbow, and, looking up, saw the thinnest man he had ever seen in all his life. The man had flesh-colored tights on, and a spangled red velvet garment – that was neither pants, because there were no legs to it, nor a coat, because it did not come above his waist – made up the remainder of his costume. Because he was so wonderfully thin, because of the costume which he wore, and because of a highly colored painting which was hanging in front of one of the small tents, Toby knew that the Living Skeleton was before him, and his big brown eyes opened all the wider as he gazed at him.

"What is the matter, little fellow?" asked the man, in a kindly tone. "What makes you cry so? Has Job been up to his old tricks again?"

"I don't know what his old tricks are" – and Toby sobbed, the tears coming again because of the sympathy which this man's voice expressed for him – "but I know that he's a mean, ugly thing – that's what I know; an' if I could only get back to Uncle Dan'l, there hain't elephants enough in all the circuses in the world to pull me away again."

"Oh, you run away from home, did you?"

"Yes, I did," sobbed Toby, "an' there hain't any boy in any Sunday-school book that ever I read that was half so sorry he'd been bad as I am. It's awful; an' now I can't have any supper, 'cause I stopped to talk with Mr. Stubbs."

"Is Mr. Stubbs one of your friends?" asked the skeleton as he seated himself in Mr. Lord's own private chair.

"Yes, he is, an' he's the only one in this whole circus who 'pears to be sorry for me. You'd better not let Mr. Lord see you sittin' in that chair, or he'll raise a row."

"Job won't raise any row with me," said the skeleton. "But who is this Mr. Stubbs? I don't seem to know anybody by that name."

"I don't think that is his name. I only call him so, 'cause he looks so much like a feller I know who is named Stubbs."

This satisfied the skeleton that this Mr. Stubbs must be some one attached to the show, and he asked,

"Has Job been whipping you?"

"No; Ben, the driver on the wagon where I ride, told him not to do that again; but he hain't going to let me have any supper, 'cause I was so slow about my work – though I wasn't slow; I only talked to Mr. Stubbs when there wasn't anybody round his cage."

"Sam! Sam! Sam-u-el!"

This name, which was shouted twice in a quick, loud voice, and the third time in a slow manner, ending almost in a screech, did not come from either Toby or the skeleton, but from an enormously large woman, dressed in a gaudy red-and-black dress, cut very short, and with low neck and an apology for sleeves, who had just come out from the tent whereon the picture of the Living Skeleton hung.

"Samuel," she screamed again, "come inside this minute, or you'll catch your death o' cold, an' I shall have you wheezin' around with the phthisic all night. Come in, Sam-u-el."

"That's her," said the skeleton to Toby, as he pointed his thumb in the direction of the fat woman, but paying no attention to the outcry she was making – "that's my wife Lilly, an' she's the Fat Woman of the show. She's always yellin' after me that way the minute I get out for a little fresh air, an' she's always sayin' just the same thing. Bless you, I never have the phthisic, but she does awful; an' I s'pose 'cause she's so large she can't feel all over her, an' thinks it's me that has it."

"Is – is all that – is that your wife?" stammered Toby, in astonishment, as he looked at the enormously fat woman who stood in the tent door, and then at the wonderfully thin man who sat beside him.

"Yes, that's her," said the skeleton. "She weighs pretty nigh four hundred, though of course the show cards says it's over six hundred, an' she earns almost as much money as I do. Of course she can't get so much, for skeletons is much scarcer than fat folks; but we make a pretty good thing travellin' together."

"Sam-u-el!" again came the cry from the fat woman, "are you never coming in?"

"Not yet, my angel," said the skeleton, placidly, as he crossed one thin leg over the other and looked calmly at her. "Come here an' see Job's new boy."

"Your imprudence is wearin' me away so that I sha'n't be worth five dollars a week to any circus," she said, impatiently, at the same time coming toward the candy stand quite as rapidly as her very great size would admit.

"This is my wife Lilly – Mrs. Treat," said the skeleton, with a proud wave of his hand, as he rose from his seat and gazed admiringly at her. "This is my flower – my queen, Mr. – Mr. –"

"Tyler," said Toby, supplying the name which the skeleton – or Mr. Treat, as Toby now learned his name was – did not know; "Tyler is my name – Toby Tyler."

"Why, what a little chap you are!" said Mrs. Treat, paying no attention to the awkward little bend of the head which Toby intended for a bow. "How small he is, Samuel!"

"Yes," said the skeleton, reflectively, as he looked Toby over from head to foot, as if he were mentally trying to calculate exactly how many inches high he was, "he is small; but he's got all the world before him to grow in, an' if he only eats enough – There, that reminds me. Job isn't going to give him any supper, because he didn't work hard enough."

"He won't, won't he?" exclaimed the large lady, savagely. "Oh, he's a precious one, he is; an' some day I shall just give him a good shakin'-up, that's what I'll do. I get all out of patience with that man's ugliness."

"An' she'll do just what she says," said the skeleton to Toby, with an admiring shake of the head. "That woman hain't afraid of anybody, an' I wouldn't be a bit surprised if she did give Job a pretty rough time."

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