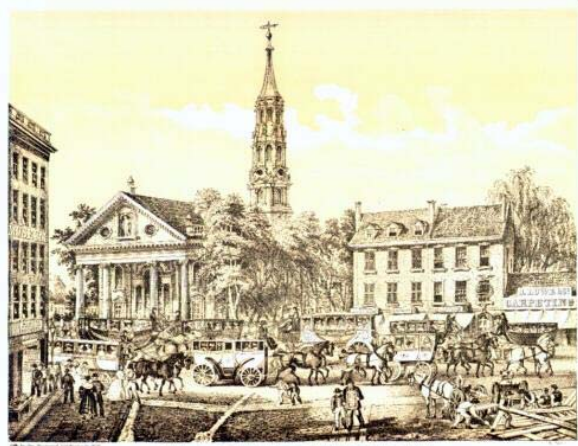


## Part II Chapter 21 Children's Hour

*St. Paul's Church on Broadway and Fulton where the omnibuses ran*

"I can follow the stages and omnibuses and carriages north up Broadway or Fourth and collect as I go, and by the time I'm out in the country, I've got a load that some farmer will pay me \$1.50 for."

Tom was describing for Bridget the new cartage business that he was in—manure. Regular cartage work was harder and harder to come by since the downturn in the economy; construction work had slowed or stopped. He had heard mutterings: "Natives should get the work first—Let aliens go to the end of the line."



Manure--a material freely available on the streets of New York, didn't depend on warehouse foremen who might be bribed to give all the work to "natives"; was in continual demand by farmers out in the country, and the streets were full of it.

"It's a gold mine." When Bridget made a face and held her nose, he added, "I can even collect 'night soil' from outhouses. Oh, there's a never ending supply."

She made sure after to save the warm water from bathing the children every evening, and insisted that he use it.

One Saturday in late August, Bridget asked Tom to clean the cart and remove the manure barrels. She wanted him to use it on Sunday for the christening of their new son, Daniel. "Children should always be surrounded by delightful sense impressions," she smiled at him.

Their son Daniel had arrived in March but his christening was delayed till the late summer, so that Bridget could make new clothes for the entire family to wear on a visit to Mrs. Daly. "She has a new baby daughter as well." They would use the cart. It would be their first outing in it.

The children had been told all summer what a special event this day was to be. Brother Daniel was being christened and they were about to visit the **Dalys**. They they would be wearing their new clothes, and would get to ride in the cart.

Helena could barely contain herself. Her mother had prompted her: "You remember Willie, don't you, Lena? He's your age, and you've met him before—"

you've even ridden in his carriage with him and his mother and nurse?" Lena nodded with a blank expression, not sure that she did remember.

Bridget planned to use the visit to begin instilling visiting manners in her children. She had drawn up a list of rules, based on what she remembered from her preparations to become a governess. She had gone over these with Helena and Will, hoping that Helena would keep Will in line.

1. Never talk back to older people, especially your father and mother.
2. Never whine or frown when spoken to by your elders.
3. Never argue with your elders for they know best.
4. Never do anything that is forbidden by your elders.
5. Do as you are told in a pleasant and willing way.
6. Never contradict anyone under any circumstances. It is very impolite.
7. Always greet members of your family when entering a room.
8. Always bid good bye to members of your family when you leave the room.
9. Always rise to a standing position when a visitor enters.

Tom had fitted the cart with two small seats behind the driver, facing backwards. Lena and Will were tucked in and told to stay in their seats and not lean against the sides of the cart. "They might be dirty," their mother warned.

The children had never ridden in the cart, to which only Dolly was harnessed, as the load was a light one. Tom didn't trust Jack on his own yet. As they jolted along on Broadway they shrieked with joy at the movement and speed.. By the time they had drawn up along Washington Square in their humble cart, they were exhilarated and their faces were glowing.

"We rode in the cart behind Dolly!" Lena announced as soon as she was presented to Mr. Ruggles and Cook. Bridget raised her eyebrows at her.



"Did you, indeed?" exclaimed Cook.

Tom remained in the basement with Mr. Ruggles and had a toast to the new baby with him. Bridget took her children up to the nursery where they were introduced to Marie (Molly) Daly, ensconced in a handsome baby basket, unlike anything Bridget had ever seen before. After saying truthfully how adorable she thought Molly was, she asked about the splendid affair. "It's a bassinet; Mother ordered it special from Hitchings Baby Store in London. Marie is named for her," Mrs. Daly explained. Bridget had made a bib for the baby with "Molly" embroidered on it.

"You remember Lena, who is just a few months younger than your Willie? And here's my own Will. Come here, Will darling. Remember your manners." Will was probing into the baskets. "And this is Daniel—named for Tom's father. I

think he looks like my family though.” She smiled at the infant in her arms who was awake and smiling back at her.

Bridget felt how humble her three children must appear beside Molly in her bassinet and William with his velvet clothes.



“Is this Master William?” Bridget asked. Willie knew he was the master, so he very politely asked his mother if he could show Helena his new rocking horse, and when she nodded, he led them along into the children’s play room, where Helena and Will were amazed at the number of toys. After Willie had a few rides on the horse, he let Lena ride as well. “We rode over with Dolly,” she informed him, as if that were as good as his wooden horse.

Bridget felt at home with the Daly’s and wished their children could play together. There was so much peace in their home, but only on these special occasions did she feel it appropriate to come here.

“Me ride,” piped up little William, who had found his voice at last. He reached up toward the horse, wanting to replace Lena.

“No, Will, you’re too small. You’ll fall,” Bridget warned him.

He would not take no for an answer, however, and began to cry, to the embarrassment of Bridget. “Will, please. Show Mrs. Daly what a grown up you are.”

That only encouraged him. Bridget turned to Mrs. Daly and apologized. “We’d better be going. I don’t know what’s gotten into him.”

“Maybe he’d like something to eat? Isn’t it about tea time?” Mrs. Daly offered.

“Thank you, but I think we’d better go home,” Bridget declined, but the look of disappointment on Helena’s face, after all her preparations for this day, pierced her. Helena glared at Will.

When Will heard “go home” coming after the offer of “tea”—cookies and cakes!—he immediately stopped sobbing.

Helena turned her eyes from the dreadfully behaving Will back to her mother pleadingly, and Bridget gladly relented.

So the children had their tea, and Will didn’t order anyone about, except to demand another scone with lots of butter and jam.

That night Bridget was awakened by angry voices coming from the room above, which she knew was the Leary's bedroom. They were fighting again, or rather, Tim was shouting at Betty again. She had been awakened off and on over the hot summer nights by his shouts. Tom never woke up; he was usually too exhausted, but Bridget was a light sleeper and was alarmed for the sake of the children. She thought especially of Will, a light sleeper like herself. Might he be picking up this dissension? Might it be encouraging his temper? She had to do something about it.

The next morning was laundry day, and after she and Betty had washed and hung out the clothes in the back and had settled their younger children in the sun, she managed to get Betty alone to tell her of her concern. : "Dear Betty, I couldn't help but hear you and Tim last night. I'm worried for our children. Children should not hear fighting between adults. Aren't you afraid for Nell and Cathy?" She pulled *The Mother's Book* from the pocket of her apron. She had been consulting it more regularly now and read what Mrs. Child had written about anger. Betty was unable to read, but revered books and was proud of Nell's reading.

*The mind of a child is not like that of a grown person, too full and too busy to observe everything; it is a vessel empty and pure, always ready to receive and always receiving. Every look, every movement, every expression does something toward forming the character of the little heir to immortal life.*

*Do you regard it as too much trouble thus to keep watch over yourself? Surely the indulgence of evil is no privilege: the yoke of goodness is far lighter and easier to bear than the bondage of evil. Is not the restraint you impose upon yourself for the good of your child blessed, doubly blessed, to your own soul? Does not the little cherub in this way guide you to heaven marking the pathway by the flowers he scatters as he goes? The rule then for developing good affections in a child is that he never be allowed to see or feel the influence of bad passions, even in the most trifling things, and in order to effect this you must drive evil passions out of your own heart. Nothing can be real that has not its home within us. The only sure way as well as the easiest to appear good is to be good. It is not possible to indulge anger or any other wrong feeling and conceal it entirely. If not expressed in words, a child feels the baneful influence. Evil enters into his soul as the imperceptible atmosphere he breathes enters into his lungs and the beautiful little image of God is removed farther and farther from his home in heaven.*

"That is so beautifully expressed, Bridget." Betty was in tears, which was not what Bridget had intended. She had only hoped to find a way to stop the fighting for the sake of the children. "You are stronger than I am, Bridget, but wouldn't you fight back if Tom were taking out his frustrations on you? I tell Tim that it's

shameful that he takes his problems out on me, but he has no one else. I know that all this is not about me but about his business. What can I do to help him? I wish he were not so ambitious. He hates debt and failure; he has no one to fight except me. It upsets me so that he isn't stronger—I'm afraid, Bridget."

Bridget realized that Tim's problem was more than Betty could handle. The next time when they heard the fighting coming from above them, she asked, "Can't we pay him more rent, Tom, to help him?"

"Where can we get it? What good would a dollar or two a week do? He owes hundreds," he said.

Dear Ma and Da,

Who can tell from year to year the strange things that come into our lives. We had no idea it would be so different, and such a challenge. In just the few years that Tom and I have lived here, things have become easier in some ways, but more difficult in others. We know our way around now, and never get lost as we often did when we first came. We're smarter now, too, and don't get taken in by the tricksters that wait for simple folks just off the boat. Tom's been working steadily and has used his cart to haul just about every kind of material there is. He loves those two horses as much as he loves his own children, I swear.

Now for the big news. God has blessed us with another child—a son, Daniel, after Tom's da. Two sons already, imagine! And a dear little daughter, Helena, who's my best helper. She looks after Will. She has found a big sister in Nell here, who's already ten and in the parish school. Lena wants to go to school too, she says. Little Will is two and I admit I've spoiled him a wee bit. Ever since he began to talk, he loves to give orders. Tom says he must be born to command and calls him "the Chieftain." It's gotten to be a joke: Ask him "Who are you," and Will answers "Chieftain!" though it sounds more like "Teefdun."

We may be moving some time from this place where we've lived for the last few years. Mr. Leary is thinking he might want to move up north a bit, to get away from this neighborhood, which has grown up so much just since we've been here. If he does, we might have to move too, as he's our landlord. We've gotten to be so close to the Learys and their children, they've become like our own family, especially since Michael still hasn't settled down and still lives the bachelor life that Irish men seem to prefer.

We're glad to hear any news from home. So many Irish newcomers arrive here daily. I don't know where they're all going to find jobs, as we're all having hard times. Many people are out of work. It's very sad to see people coming looking for a better life only to be disappointed to find there are no jobs. Tell people the truth—America doesn't have work right now. Tom thinks things will get better soon. Tom—the eternal optimist.

Love to you all,  
Bridget and Tom