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Title: Happy Days for Boys and Girls

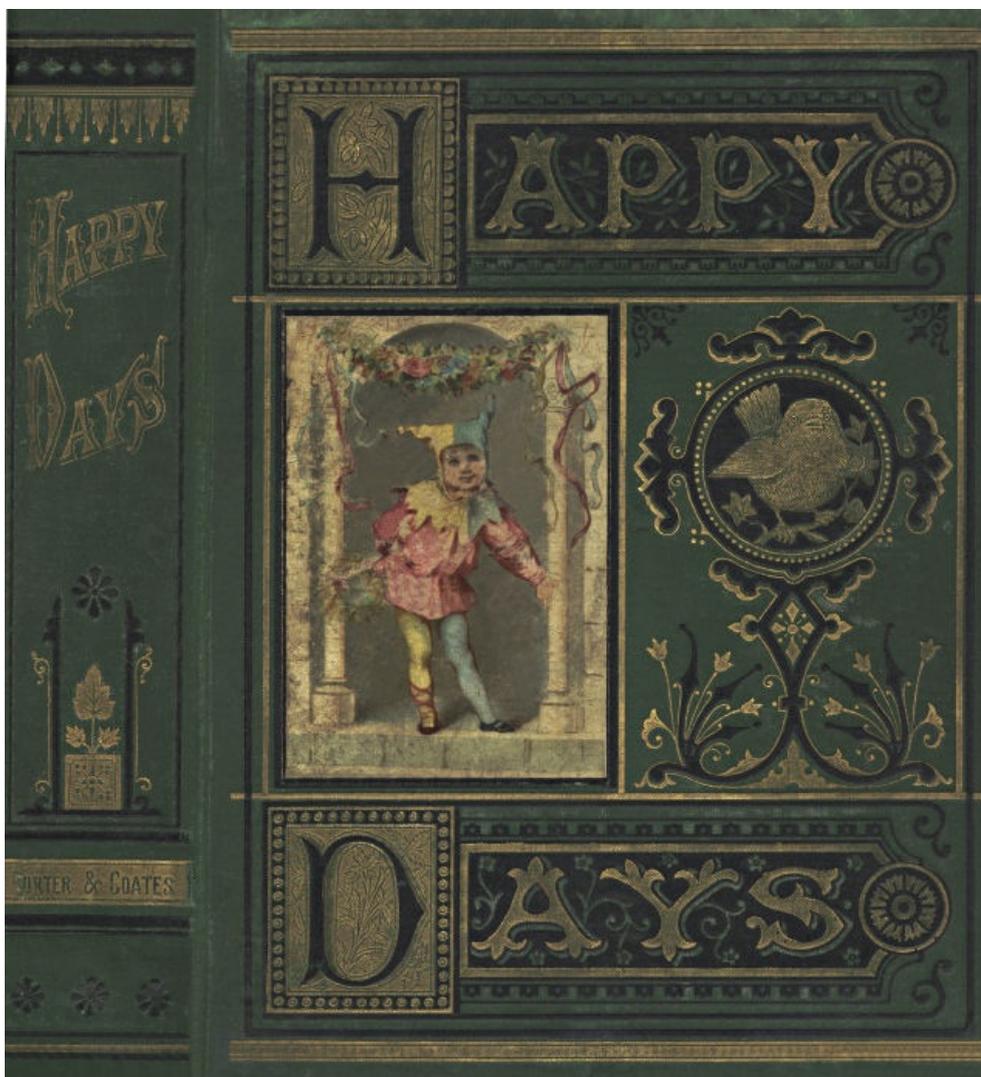
Author: Various

Release Date: December 20, 2009 [EBook #30720]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Juliet Sutherland, Sam W. and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

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HAPPY DAYS

FOR
BOYS AND GIRLS.



136 ILLUSTRATIONS

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PHILADELPHIA:
PORTER & COATES,
822 CHESTNUT STREET.

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PHILADELPHIA.



YOUNG FISHERS.

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HAPPY DAYS.



THE ORCHARD'S GRANDMOTHER.

I MUST ask you to go back more than two hundred years, and watch two people in a quiet old English garden.

One is an old lady reading. In her young days she was a famous beauty. That was very long ago, to be sure; but I think she is a beauty still—do not you?

She has such a lovely face, and her eyes are so sweet and bright! and better than that, they are the kind which see pleasant things in everybody, and something to like and be interested in. I hope with all my heart yours are that kind, too.

The other person is a little child. She was christened Mary Brenton, like her grandmother; but she was called Polly all her days, for short; and we will call her so.

She is sitting on the grass with a little cat in her arms, which she is trying to put to sleep. But the kitten is not so accommodating as a doll would be, and just as Polly does not dare to move for fear of waking her, she makes up her mind that a run after a leaf and a play with any chance caterpillar which may be so unlucky as to cross her path, will be very preferable, and tries to get away. [10]

It is one of the most delightful days that ever was. September, and almost too warm, if it were not for the breeze that brings cooler air from the sea. Once in a while some fruit falls from the heavily-laden trees, and the first dead leaves rustle a little on the ground. The bees are busy, making the most of the bright day; for they know of the stormy weather coming. The sky is very blue, and the flowers very bright. Two swallows are playing hide-and-seek through the orchard, and chasing each other in great races, now so close to the ground that it seems as if their feet might catch in the green grass, and now away up in the air over the high walls out towards the hills; and just as one loses sight of them, and turns away, here they are again. And in the kitchen the girls are clattering the dishes and laughing; and do you hear some one singing a doleful tune in a cheery, happy voice?

That is Dorothy, Polly's dear Dorothy, who waits upon grandmother, with whom she has been to France, and Holland, and Scotland, and who can tell almost as charming stories as grandmother herself.

The house is large and old, with queer-shaped windows, all sizes and all heights from the ground, and a great many of them hidden by the ivy. That is the outside; and if you were to go in, you would find large, low rooms, filled with furniture that you would think queer and uncomfortable. And there are portraits in some of them, one of Polly, probably painted not very long before, in which she is attired after the fashion of those days, and looks nearly as old as she would now if

she were living!

Now let us go back to the garden. The kitten has escaped, and Polly is wishing for something to do.

"Where's Dolly?" says grandmother. "Find her, and then gather some apples and plums, and have a tea drinking."

The doll had been very ill all day; it was strange in grandmother to forget it. She had fallen asleep just before dinner, and been put carefully in her bed; it would never do to wake her so soon. And besides, a tea party was not amusing when there was no one to sit at the other end of the table. This referred to Tom, Polly's dearest cousin, who had just left her after a long visit; and she missed him sadly.

"And," says Polly, "I do not think I should care for it if he were here, if I could have nothing but apples. I'm tired of them. I have eaten one of every kind in the garden to-day, even the great yellow ones by the lower gate. I think they're disagreeable; but I left them till the very last, and then I was afraid they would feel sorry to be left out. I think I will eat another, though; and I will not have a party—it's a trouble. Which kind would you take, grandmother?"

"One of the very smallest," says the old lady, laughing; "but stop a moment. I have one I'll give you;" and she took a beauty from her pocket, and threw it on the grass by Polly.

"That's the very prettiest apple I ever saw," says the child. "Where did you get it? Not off our trees. 'Father gave it to you?' and where did he find it?"

Grandmother did not know.



LITTLE POLLY.

After admiring her apple a little more, Polly eats it in a most deliberate manner, enjoying every bite as if it were the first she had eaten that day, and when she has finished it, gives a contented little sigh, and sits looking at the fine brown seeds which she holds in her hand. Presently she says, earnestly,—

"Grandmother!"

"What now, Polly?"

"I wish I had that dear little apple's two brothers and two sisters, and I would put them in the doll's chest until to-morrow; I wouldn't eat them to-day, you know."

"I will tell you what you can do," says grandmother. "Are those seeds in your hand? Go find Dorothy, and ask her to give you the empty flower-pot from the high shelf at my window; and

then you can fill it with dark earth from one of the flower-beds, and plant them; then by and by you will have a tree, and can have plenty of your apple's children."

That was a happy thought. And Polly puts the seeds carefully on a leaf, and runs to find Dorothy. Now she comes back with a queer little Dutch china flower-pot, and sits down on the grass again, and makes a hole in the soft brown earth with her finger, and drops the fine seeds in.

For days she watered them, and carried them to sunny places; but at last she grew very impatient, and one morning, when she was all alone in the garden, very much provoked that they had not made their appearance, took a twig and explored; and the first poke brought to light the little seeds, as shiny and brown as when they left the apple. It was a great disappointment, and Polly caught them up, and threw them as far away as she could, and with tears in her eyes ran in to tell grandmother.

"Ah," said the dear old lady, "it was not time! Thou hast not learned thy lesson of waiting; and no wonder, when there are few so hard, and thou art still so young."

Then she sent Polly back to the garden, and the pot was put in its place, again. And a week or two after, as grandmother was just going to make room in the earth for a new plant, she saw growing there a little green sprig, which was not a weed. She listened a moment, and heard the child's voice outside.

"Polly, my dear, are you sure you scattered all the seeds of your pretty apple the day you were so provoked at their not having begun to grow for you?"

The child reddened a little, and turned away.

"I don't know, grandmother. I think so; I wished to then."

How delighted she was when the old lady showed her the treasure, and how carefully it was watched and tended! For one little seed had been buried deeper than the rest, and now in the sunshine of grandmother's wide window it had come up. Every pleasant day it was placed somewhere in the sun, and at night it was always carried to Polly's own room. Her dolls and other old play-house friends, formerly much honored, and of great consequence, were quite neglected for "the apple tree," as she always called the tiny thing with its few bits of leaves.

And now we must leave the Brentons' old stone house and the garden. All this happened in the days of King Charles I., when there was a great war, and the country in a highly discordant state. Polly's father was on the king's side, and one day he did something which was considered particularly unpardonable by his enemies, and at night he came riding from Oxford in the greatest hurry he had ever been in; and riding after him were some of Cromwell's men. It was bright moonlight, and as he rode in the paved yard the great dogs in their kennels began to bark, and that waked Polly's mother, in a terrible fright at hearing her husband's voice, and sure something undesirable had happened.

Squire Brenton hurried in to tell her, in as few words as possible, what he had done, and that he was followed, and had just time to say good by, and take another horse, and rush on to the sea, where he hoped to find a fishing-boat, by means of which he could escape. [13]

"And you," said he, "had better take Polly and one of the men, and ride to your cousin Matthew's; for in their rage at my escape, they may mean to burn my house. I little thought a month ago,—when he offered you 'a safe home,' and I laughed in his face, and said, 'Give your good wife the same message; for she may not find your house so safe as mine by and by,'—that you would need to accept so soon."

"But I cannot go there now," said Mistress Brenton; "for cousin Matthew is away with the Roundhead army, and his wife and sister have gone to the north. I'll go with you. Listen: I heard one of the maids say to-day that a ship sails to-morrow at daybreak from the bay by Dunner's with a company of Puritans for Holland, on their way to one of the American colonies. We will go for a time to our friends in Amsterdam, and be quite safe."

Anything was better than staying where he was; and Squire Brenton, bidding her hurry, went to the stables with his tired horse, and waking one of his men whom he could trust, told him why he was there, and to say, when the men came, that he was in Oxford yesterday, when they had a letter, and that Mistress Brenton had gone north to some friends. He gave him some messages for his brother, and then, sending him out to a field with the horse he had been riding, which would certainly have betrayed him, he went back to the yard, trying to keep the two fresh horses still, while he listened, fearing every moment to hear his pursuers coming down the road.

Presently out came Mistress Brenton, carrying some bundles of clothing, and a few little things besides, and wrapped in a great riding cloak; and at her side walked Polly, very sleepy, and looking wonderingly in the faces of the others, and asking all manner of childish questions.

Suddenly she ran back to the house, just as her father was going to lift her on his horse; and when she came back, what do you think she had? Together in a little bag were her doll and kitten, and one arm held tightly her little apple tree, wrapped in some garment of her own which she had found lying near it.

And then they rode away. The poor child, after begging them to go to her uncle's, so she might say good by to grandmother, fell asleep, holding fast her treasures all the while.

There was a faint glimmer of light over the sea as they neared the shore, and they saw anchored at a little distance a small ship, and could see the men moving about her deck; for the wind had risen. Mr. Brenton found a man whom he knew, in whose charge he left the horses, and then a fisherman rowed them to the vessel.

The captain was nowhere to be seen, and the sailors paid no attention to them as they came on deck in the chilly morning twilight; and they went immediately below, and hid themselves in a dark corner, thinking they might have to go ashore if discovered, and that it was best to keep out of sight until it was too late to turn back. In the darkness they fell asleep. This may seem very strange; but remembering the long ride, and the fright they had been in, and that now they felt safe, we can hardly wonder. At any rate, it was the middle of the afternoon before Colonel Brenton—I think I have never given him his title before—made his appearance on deck, to the great astonishment of the captain and all the other people, who knew him more or less. He told the captain what had happened, saying at the end he would pay him double the usual passage money to Holland, where he meant to stay for a while; and at this the rough man really turned pale.

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“Holland, *Holland!*” said he; “do you not see we’re going down the Channel? We are bound direct for America.”

The story says that Colonel Brenton was almost beside himself, and offered large sums of money to be taken back, or to France; but the captain would not consent, saying that they had made good progress, and it was late in the year. The ship would come back in the spring, and he must content himself.

Those of the ship’s company who knew our friends had great wonderings at their having turned Puritans, until they knew the true state of affairs. Must not it have been dreadful news to Mistress Brenton, and was it not really a dreary prospect—a dreary journey in that frail ship, and at the end a cold, forlorn country? and all the stories of the Indians’ cruelties to the settlers came to her mind. They could not, in all probability, return for many months. No one whom she cared particularly for would be there to welcome them. Polly did not take it very much to heart, though she cried a little because she was not to go to Holland, which she had heard so much of from her grandmother and Dorothy. It was a great many days before they gave up their hope of falling in with some vessel to which they might be transferred; and the first two weeks were sunshiny and pleasant, with a good wind. But soon it grew bleaker and colder, and they suffered greatly. All through the pleasant days, Polly had been having a very enjoyable time. There were several children on board, and they had games around the deck and in the cabin.

It was delightful to have the kitten, who had a cord tied around her neck; and when she was not in Polly’s arms, she was generally anchored for safety in the cabin. Every day she had part of her little mistress’s dinner; and though she missed the garden, and the dead leaves that nestled about the walks, and made such nice playthings, and the sedate old family cat, her mother, and her mother’s numerous poor relations who lived in the stables, she was by no means unhappy. And the doll’s expression was as complacent as ever, though she had worn one gown an astonishing length of time. But if you could have seen the care the little tree received! It was carefully wrapped in the same little cloak Polly put round it the night they left home, and only on the warmest days it was taken on deck to have the sunshine; and every day it had part of Polly’s small allowance of water; and when the kitten had had its share, there would often be very little left.

The weary days went slowly by. The ship was slow at the best, and the winds were contrary. The provisions grew less and less, and the water was almost exhausted. Two people—a man, and a child Polly had grown very fond of—died, and were buried in the sea. The sky was cold and gray, and it snowed and rained, and every one looked sad and disheartened. It was terribly desolate. Polly could not often go on deck, for the frozen spray and rain made it very slippery and dangerous there; and her mother told story after story, and did her best to shorten the longest December days she had ever known. And soon there came a terrible bereavement. One night there was a great storm, and the dearly-beloved kitten, frightened to death by the things rolling about, and the pitching of the ship, broke the cord and rushed out in the darkness, and never was seen any more. I think a little cat has never been so mourned since the world began. That night, the Dutch flower-pot, with its leafless twig, went rolling about the cabin floor, and half the earth was scattered in the folds of its wrappings, and carefully replaced next morning.

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But at last the voyage was ended; they saw land, and finally came close to it and went ashore, Polly with her dear doll and something else rolled up in a little gray cloak. The ship was to stay until spring; and there seemed no hope of getting back to England until then. It was hard to decide what to do; but at last Colonel Brenton heard of some men whom he had known, who had been made prisoners in some of the battles in the north of England and sent to the Massachusetts colony by Cromwell, who had feared to imprison them. They had been sent to the settlement in York.

So the Brentons joined a party going there, or to places beyond. It was the last of January that they came to York, and were warmly welcomed at the great garrison, where they lived till spring. Polly found a very nice child to play with. There had been a good harvest, and the Indians were uncommonly peaceable. They had great log fires in the wide fireplace in the east room; and for a winter in those times, it was very comfortable. The flower-pot was deposited in a chink of the great chimney. Polly had insisted upon bringing it with her; and though “the tree” at that time was a slender little straight stick, she had firm faith that spring time would give it leaves again.

And strange to say, she was not disappointed; for all the exposure had not destroyed it. The first of June came, and they were still living in the garrison-house, looking every day for a messenger to tell them the ship was ready to go back. Some people on their way to one of the eastern settlements, early in April, had told them there were no signs of her sailing; and since then they had heard nothing. How dismayed they were, early in June, to find the ship had sailed nearly two months before! It seemed as if everything was against them; and they could live no longer in the garrison. So the Brentons had a little log house near by, and "the squire" worked every day in the great field down towards the river. It must have been such a strange life for them! and I suppose their thoughts often went back to the dear English home. When Mistress Brenton looked from the small window in her log house out over half-cleared fields, and saw the garrison-house, and her husband working among the hills of corn with his gun close by, every now and then looking anxiously about him, she would remember the wide window, with its cushioned seat, in her own room at home, and the sunny garden, with the flowers and bees, and the maids and men singing and chattering in the distance, and the dear voice of grandmother singing the old church hymns. It was a great change; but days much more forlorn than these were yet to come.

The Indians came around the settlement in large numbers, and no one dared to be out alone. At night the people waked in fear at the slightest noise; and in the daytime it was after the same fashion. News came of whole settlements having been murdered or made captives, and some of their own neighbors disappeared finally; and then the suspense was terrible. At last, one day Mrs. Brenton had gone up to the garrison to see one of the women, who was ill, and most of the men were in the field. Polly went with her mother; but the women were talking over something about the king and Parliament, which she found very uninteresting, and soon she unfastened the great outer door, and unwisely ran out with her doll in her arms, and went down to the field to see the men at work. But on her way, she bethought herself of a charming stump she had seen out at one side of the path, and went to visit it. None of the men happened to see her. She talked to the doll, and made a throne for her of the soft moss growing around her, and had been playing there some time, when suddenly she heard shouts, and thought they must be killing a snake, and looked up to see all the men running up the hill to the garrison, with a great many Indians chasing them; and she heard a gun fired, and saw one of the men who had petted and been very kind to her, and told her stories, fall to the ground. Ah, how frightened she was!

[16]

The doll was snatched from her throne, and the poor little girl ran towards the garrison, too, right towards the Indians. It was weary work running over the rough ground,—and the tall grass was not much better,—and then on, up the hill. By this time the men had succeeded in getting in; and the wicked-looking Indians, after a yell of disappointment, turned to go back to the one who lay dead on the hill-side, and to escape the bullets which would come in a moment from the loopholes. O, if she could only get by them!

Up the hill she hurried as fast as the poor tired little feet could carry her, hugging the doll, almost breathless, with the great tears falling very fast, and still crying, "Wait, father!"

I am glad I know one kind thing the Indians of those days did. As they turned, they saw her coming, and some hurried forward a little to seize her; and it would have been so easy. But one spoke, and they all stopped, and laughed, and shouted, and the child got safely in.

Then the Indians went to the Brentons' house, and some others, and burned them; but luckily the apple tree was at the play-house, by a large rock, at a little distance, and the wind was not in that direction; and after they disappeared, it was brought up to the fort, safe and sound.

It soon grew tall and strong, and in a little while was entirely too large for its pot; and finally Polly was forced to put it in the ground. It was hard to do it; for she had cared for it, and loved it so long, and this was giving it up, in a measure. And I think if she had understood that now it must be left behind, it would have been almost impossible to have persuaded her. Her father comforted her by telling her he could get quantities of the apples not very far from home, and she could plant more seeds as soon as she liked, or, far better than that, he would graft a tree.

In September, news came that a ship was going to the east coast of England; and they were all heartily glad, in spite of the long, dangerous voyage; and leaving the York friends, who had been so kind, and whom they would probably never see any more, Polly gave the little tree to a Masterson child, her great friend, who promised to wrap it in straw for winter, and to be very kind to it and fond of it. And I think she must have been faithful to her charge. Mistress Brenton laid some of the leaves in the little book she had had in her pocket that night, almost a year ago, when they left home. So they went to Boston, and sailed for the old country.

I know nothing more of them; but we will hope their voyage was a short and easy one, and that they reached home on a pleasant, sunny day, and grandmother was there, and Dorothy, and all the people, and Polly had stories to tell as wonderful as Dorothy's, and all true, and that they were all happy forever after.

A while ago I stood on the hill with an old farmer, eating one of a pocketful of apples he had given me, and said how very nice it was, and that I had never seen any like it.

"There are none of my apples sell half so well," said he. "I've forty young trees that have been bearing a few years; and over to the right you see some old ones. Mine were grafted from those and my father took his grafts from an old tree I'd like to show you;" and as we walked towards it, he said, "It looks, and I guess it is, as old as any around here. My father always said it was brought from England in a flower-pot by some of the first settlers. Perhaps you have heard the

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story. It's very shaky. The high winds last fall were pretty hard on it. It will never bear again, I am afraid. I set a good deal by the old thing. The very first thing I can remember is my father's lifting me up to one of the lower limbs, and I was frightened and cried. I believe I think more of that tree than of anything on my farm. My wife always laughs at me about it. Well, it has lasted my time. I'm old and shaky, too; and I suppose my sons won't miss this much, and will like the young orchard best."

"And you and I like your orchard's grandmother," said I.

S. O. J.

ROUGH.

HE was a donkey, and we called him Rough. He belonged to Gerald and me. We didn't keep him for his useful qualities, and we certainly didn't keep him for his moral qualities; and I don't know what we did keep him for, unless, for the best reason in the world, that we loved him.

He was always getting us into scrapes, the most renowned of which was one Rough's enemies were fond of alluding to.

We were bidden to a christening one fair spring morning; and we not only accepted the invitation, but promised to bring apple-blossoms, to fill the font and make the church look gay. We had an old apple orchard, that bore beautiful blossoms, but worthless fruit; and of these blossoms we had leave to pick as many as we chose.

So we filled the donkey-cart with them, and set forth for the christening, which was to be at a little church about a mile or more distant from our farm. Rough's enemies will tell how we arrived when the christening was all over, and our apple blossoms faded.

We were never so happy as when we had a whole leisure afternoon to go off with Rough in the donkey-cart, and our little sister Daisy by Gerald's side, on the board that served as seat, and I lying on my back on the bottom of the cart, with my heels dangling out of it. So I would lie for hours, whistling and looking up at the drifting clouds, or with my hat over my eyes to keep out the sun.

One afternoon, early in March, when the roads were almost knee deep in mud, and the last of the melting snow made a running stream on either side of the road, we were slowly travelling along after the manner I have described. We were going to take a longing look at the skating pond, two miles from our farm. We were forbidden to try the dangerous ice, but meant only to look upon the scene of our winter's delight.

"Some one's in the pond!" cried Daisy.

"How do ye know?" said I, not removing my hat from my face.

You see Daisy was only six years old, and I hadn't much faith in her observation.

"Cos I sees 'em with my own eyes."

I jumped up and looked. It was only a hat I saw. Gerald meanwhile said nothing, but had pulled up Rough (who not only stopped, but lay down in the mud), and looked. I watched him, to see what he thought, or proposed to do. [18]



People had a way of trusting to Gerald's judgment rather than their own, and were generally better off for it.

"It *is* some one in the pond," said Gerald; and then followed a short discussion as to whether we should leave Daisy alone to the mercies of Rough, which resulted in our leaving Rough, and taking Daisy along with us down to the pond.

We could see a boy, apparently about Gerald's age, swimming and striving to keep up, and catching at the ice, which broke as he clung to it. He swam feebly, as if benumbed and wearied.

"Keep a brave heart!" roared Gerald; "we'll save you!" and then began to take off his boots and coat. The boy sank—under the ice, this time. We could see it bobbing up and down as he swam beneath it.

"Stay here till I call you," said Gerald to me, as he stepped from the shore on to the ice, and walked out towards where the swimmer was hidden by the ice. I stood breathless, with my eye on Gerald.

The ice began to crack under him. He lay down on his stomach, and pulled himself forward with his hands. Up came the swimmer not far from him.

"Keep up! Gerald will save you!" cried Daisy.

The poor fellow cast one despairing look at Gerald, and sank again. Gerald had gone as far as was practicable on the ice. I could hear it cracking all over, and see the white cracks darting suddenly over ice that had looked safe.

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Up came the boy again.

"Keep up! keep up!" cried Daisy, in an excited treble. "Gerald will save you!"

But the boy could hear nothing. He had his eyes closed, and seemed to have fainted. Gerald reached out, and clutched him by the arm. How the ice cracked all about him! My heart was in my mouth; I thought he was in. I began to take my coat off.

"A scarf!" said Gerald, speaking for the first time.

I took off my own, and picked up Gerald's from the ground, and tied them firmly together. I saw that they were too short. Daisy offered hers. I took it, with an inward fear, if the child should catch cold; it seemed paltry to think of it at such a moment. I stepped out on the ice, and went a few steps, when Gerald cried,—

"Stop!"

I obeyed like a soldier.

"Throw it now!"

I threw the long string of scarfs. Gerald dexterously caught it, and upholding the poor boy with one hand, with the other passed the string under his arms, and tied the ends of it to his own arm. Then he paused a moment before attempting the hazardous work of coming ashore, and looked at me speculatively. I knew what he meant. There was a shadow of trouble in his face that had nothing to do with his own danger. He was weighing the possibility of his falling in, and my doing the same in trying to save him, and Daisy alone on the shore. I gave a cheering "Go ahead, old fellow!" and he began to push himself back again, dragging his senseless burden after him by the scarf tied to his arm.

Crack! crack! crack! went the ice all about him, and little tides of water flooded it. At last it seemed a little firmer. Gerald rose to his feet, and dragging the boy still in the water after him, began to walk slowly towards the shore, not seeming to notice how the sharp edges of the ice cut the face and forehead of the poor half-drowned boy.

Again the ice began to crack and undulate. Gerald stood still for a moment, and the piece on which he stood broke away from the rest, and began to float out. He jumped to the next, which broke, and so to the next, and the next, till he neared the shore. Then he paused a moment, and looked at me.

"Go ashore!" he roared like a sea captain.

Then I noticed that I stood on a detached piece of ice, but nearer land than Gerald. I found no difficulty in gaining the shore.

"Now stand firm and give a hand!" said Gerald.

I grasped his hand, and he jumped ashore, and together we lifted the boy out of the water. Daisy burst into tears, crying,—

"O, Gerald, Gerald, I thought you'd be drowned!"

Gerald very gently put her clinging arms away from him, saying, firmly,—

"Don't cry, Daisy. We have our hands full with this poor fellow."

I got the skates off the "poor fellow," and gave them to Daisy to hold. She, brave little woman, gulped down her tears, and only gave vent to her emotion, now and then, by a little suppressed sob. Gerald began beating the hands and breathing into the mouth and nostrils of the seeming lifeless form before us.

"Is he dead, Gery?" said I.

"No!" said Gerald, fiercely. It was evident that he wouldn't believe he had gone through so much trouble to bring a dead man ashore. "Look for his handkerchief, and see if there's a mark on it."

I fished a wet rag out of the wet trousers pocket, and found in one corner of it the name [20]
"Stevens."

"There's a farmer of that name two miles farther on. I don't know any one else of that name. Must be his son. We'll take him home;" and he began wrapping his coat about the poor boy; but I insisted on mine being used for the purpose, as Gerald was half wet, and his teeth were already chattering. "We must get him off this wet ground as soon as possible," said Gerald; and together we lifted him, and slowly and laboriously bore him to the donkey-cart in the road.

By this time Gerald had only strength enough to hold the reins, and we set out forthwith for the Stevens farm, I, with what help Daisy could give, trying to bring some show of life back to the stranger. Perhaps the jolting of the cart helped,—I don't know,—but by and by he began to revive, and at last we propped him up in one corner of the cart, with his head supported by Daisy's knee.

I shall not soon forget how long the road seemed, and how I got out and walked in deep mud, and how, when poor Rough seemed straining every muscle to make the little cart move at all, Gerald insisted on getting out, too, and leading Rough; how the sun set as we were wading through a long road, where willow trees grew thick on either side, and Daisy said, "See; all the little pussies are out!" how, at last, we reached the Stevens farm, and restored the half-drowned boy to his parents. I remember, too, how they were so utterly absorbed, very naturally, in the welfare of their boy, as to forget all about us, and offer us no quicker means of return home than our donkey-cart.

They came to call on us the next day, and to thank us, and specially Gerald, with tears of gratitude. And Gerald was a hero in the village from that day forth.

I remember well how dark it grew as we waded slowly and silently home, and how poor little Rough did his very best, and never stopped once.

I think he understood the importance of the occasion; but those who were not Rough's friends, believe it was a recollection, and expectation of supper, that made him acquit himself so honorably.

As we neared our home, we saw a tall figure looming up in the dark, and soon, by the voice, we knew it was Michael, one of the farm hands, sent to seek us.

"Bluder an nouns," he exclaimed, "it is you, Mister Gery! An' yer muther, poor leddy, destroyed wid the fright. An' kapin' the chilt out to this hair. Hadn't ye moor sense?"

We explained briefly; and Daisy begged to be carried, as the cart was all wet.

With many Irish expressions of sympathy, Michael took the child in his arms; and so we arrived at home, and found father and mother half distracted with anxiety, and the farm hands sent in all directions to look for us. We were at once, all three of us, put to bed, and made to drink hot lemonade, and have hot stones at our feet, and not till then tell all our experiences, which were listened to eagerly.

Daisy escaped unhurt, I with a slight cold, but Gerald and poor little Rough were the ones who suffered. Gerald had a severe attack of pneumonia, from which we had much ado to bring him back to health, and Rough was ill. They brought us the news from the stable on the next morning. We couldn't tell what was the matter; perhaps he had strained himself, perhaps had caught cold. We could not tell, nor could the veterinary surgeon we brought to see him. Poor Rough lay ill for weeks, and one bright spring morning he died.

They told us early in the morning, before we were out of bed, how, an hour ago, Rough had died.



THE MUSIC LESSON.

THE MUSIC LESSON.

[22]

TOUCH the keys *lightly*,
Nellie, my dear:
The noise makes Johnnie
Impatient, I fear.

He looks very cross,
I am sorry to see—
Not looking at all
As a brother should be.

Whatever you're doing,
Bear this always in mind:
In all *little things*
Be both *thoughtful* and *kind*.

THE FROST.

THE frost looked forth one still clear night,
And whispered, "Now I shall be out of sight;
So through the valley and over the height
In silence I'll take my way:
I will not go on like that blustering train,
The wind and the snow, the hail and the rain,
Who make so much bustle and noise in vain,
But I'll be as busy as they."

Then he flew to the mountain, and powdered its crest;
He lit on the trees, and their boughs he dressed
In diamond beads; and over the breast
Of the quivering lake he spread
A coat of mail, that it need not fear
The downward point of many a spear

That he hung on its margin, far and near,
Where a rock could rear its head.

He went to the windows of those who slept,
And over each pane like a fairy crept:
Wherever he breathed, wherever he stept,
By the light of the moon were seen
Most beautiful things: there were flowers and trees;
There were beves of birds and swarms of bees;
There were cities with temples and towers, and these
All pictured in silver sheen!

But he did one thing that was hardly fair:
He peeped in the cupboard, and finding there
That all had forgotten for him to prepare—
“Now, just to set them a-thinking,
I’ll bite this basket of fruit,” said he,
“This costly pitcher I’ll burst in three,
And the glass of water they’ve left for me
Shall ‘tchick!’ to tell them I’m drinking.”

[23]



MY PICTURE.

I HAVE a little picture;
Perchance you have one too.
Mine is not set in frame of gold;
’Tis first a bit of blue,
And then a background of dark hills—
A river just below,
Along whose broad, green meadow banks
The wreathing elm trees grow.

Upon an overhanging ridge
A little farm-house stands,
Whose owner, like the man of old,
Has builded “on the sands;”
And yet, defying storms and wind,
It stands there all alone,
And brightens up the landscape
With a beauty of its own.

Fairy-like my picture changes
As the seasons come and go.
Now it glows ’neath summer’s kisses;

Now it sleeps 'mid winter's snow.
I can see the breath of spring-time
In the river's deeper blue,
And autumn seems to crown it
With her very brightest hue.

Ah. I'd not exchange my picture
For the choicest gem of art;
Yet I must not claim it wholly;
It is only mine in part;
For 'tis one of nature's sketches—
A waif from that Great Hand
Which hath filled our earth with models
Of the beautiful and grand.

WHY?

[24]

WHY are the blossoms
Such different hues?
And the waves of the sea
Such a number of blues?
So many soft greens
Flit over the trees?
And little gray shadows
Fly out on the breeze?

Why are the insects
So wondrously fair;
Illuminating grasses
And painting the air?
You dear little shells,
O, why do you shine?
And feathery sea-weed
Grow fragile and fine?

Why are the meadows
Such gardens of grace,
With infinite beauty
In definite space?
Each separate grass
A world of delight?
O, food for the cattle,
Why are you so bright?

Why are our faces
Such lovable things,
With lips made for kisses,
And laughter that sings?
With eyes full of love,
That sparkle and gleam,
Through beautiful colors,
That change like a dream?

Think for a moment—
Look up to the sky;
Question your heart; it
Will answer the Why!
Bright is the glitter
Of beauty unfurled—
Boundless the love that
Has fashioned the world!

BIRDS.

[25]

THE wisdom of God is seen in every part of creation, and especially in the different kinds of birds. The beauty displayed in their graceful forms and varied colors strikes every beholder, while the adaptation of their organs for the purposes of flight, their peculiar habits and modes of living, are a constant source of admiration to the student of nature.

Almost everything about the shape of a bird fits it for moving rapidly in the air, and all parts of its

body are arranged so as to give it lightness along with strength. The soft and delicate plumage of birds protects them from cold or moisture; their wings, though so delicate, are furnished with muscles of such power as to strike the air with great force, whilst their tails act like the rudder of a ship, so that they can direct their course at pleasure with the utmost ease.

The internal structure of a bird also is such as to help it to sustain itself in, and to fly quickly through, the air. Its lungs are pierced with large holes, which allow air to pass into cavities in the breast, and even into the interior of the bones. It is thus not only rendered buoyant, but is enabled to breathe even while in rapid motion. Two sparrows, it is said, require as much air to maintain their breathing properly as a guinea pig.

In many other ways the skill and goodness of God are seen in the "fowl of the air." Their necks and beaks are long, and very movable, so that they may readily pick up food and other objects from the ground. The muscles of their toes are so arranged that the simple weight of the body closes them, and they are able, in consequence, to sit on a perch a long time without fatigue. Even in a violent wind a bird easily retains its hold of the branch or twig on which it is sitting. Their bills are of almost all forms: in some kinds they are straight; in others curved, sometimes upwards and sometimes downwards; in others they are flat; in some they are in the form of a cone, wedge-shaped, or hooked. The bill enables a bird to take hold of its food, to strip or divide it. It is useful also in carrying materials for its nest, or food to its young; and in the birds of prey, such as the owl, the hawk, the falcon, eagle, etc., the beak is a formidable weapon of attack.

The nostrils of birds are usually of an oval form, and are placed near the base of the beak. Their eyes are so constructed that they can see near and distant objects equally well, and their sight is very acute. The sparrow-hawk discerns the small birds which are its prey at an incredible distance. No tribe of birds possesses an outward ear, except those which seek their food by night; these have one in the form of a thin, leathery piece of flesh. The inside ear, however, is very large, and their hearing is very quick.



BIRD'S NEST.

Another admirable feature in the structure of birds consists in their feathers. These are well adapted for security, warmth, and freedom of motion. The larger feathers of the body are placed over each other like the slates on the roof of a house, so that water is permitted to run off, and cold is kept out. The down, which is placed under the feathers, is a further protection against the cold; and hence it is most abundant in those species that are found in northern climates. The feathery covering of birds forms their peculiar beauty: on this, in the warm climates, Nature bestows her most delicate and brightest colors.



Another point which sets forth the resources of Infinite Wisdom is the structure and uses of the wings of birds. The size of the wings is not always in proportion to the bulk of their bodies, but is accommodated to their habits of living. Accordingly, birds of prey, swallows, and such birds as are intended to hover long in the air, have much longer wings, in proportion to their size, than hens, ducks, quails, etc. In some, such as the ostrich, the cassiowary, and the penguin, the largest quill-feathers of the wing are entirely wanting.

Then, again, how varied is the flight of birds! The falcon soars above the clouds, and remains in the air for many hours without any sign of exertion. The swallow, the lark, and other species, sail long distances with little effort. Others, like the sparrow and the humming-bird, have a fluttering flight. Some, as the owl, fly without any noise; and some, like the partridge, with a loud whir.

"Around the head
Of wandering swain the white-winged plover wheels
Her sounding flight, and then directly on
In long excursion skims the level lawn,
To tempt him from her nest."

How graceful are the motions of the hawk, sweeping higher and higher in circles, as he surveys far and wide the expanse of fields and meadows below, in which he hopes to espy his prey. Our paper would be too long were we to say even a little about the roosting, the swimming, or running, the migration, the habits and instincts, the varied notes and pleasant songs, of the endless species of birds. [28]

All these subjects are well worthy of being carefully studied; for they all show the design of their Creator. The extraordinary creature represented in the engraving is the "Apteryx," or "wingless bird" of New Zealand. It was not known to European naturalists till of late years, and for a long time the accounts which the natives of New Zealand gave of it were discredited. A specimen of it, preserved in brine, was, however, brought to this country, and a full description of the bird given.

The kirvi-kirvi, as the New Zealanders call it, stands about two feet high. Its wings are so small that they can scarcely be called wings, and are not easy to find under the general plumage of the body. Its nostrils, strange to say, are at the tip of the beak. The toes are strong, and well adapted for digging, the hind one being a thick, horny spur. To add to the singularity of this creature, it has no tail whatever. The kirvi-kirvi conceals itself among the extensive beds of fern which abound in the middle island of New Zealand, and it makes a nest of fern for its eggs in deep holes, which it hollows out of the ground. It feeds on insects, and particularly worms, which it disturbs by stamping on the ground, and seizes the instant they make their appearance. Night is the season when it is most active; and the natives hunt it by torchlight. When pursued, it elevates its head, like an ostrich, and runs with great swiftness. It defends itself, when overtaken, with much spirit, inflicting dangerous blows with its strong spur-armed feet.

In this instance, as in all others, God has wisely adapted the very shape and limbs of the creature to the habits by which it was intended to be distinguished.

F. F. E.

KINDNESS REWARDED.

WHEN Agrippa was in a private station, he was accused, by one of his servants, of having spoken injuriously of Tiberius, and was condemned by that emperor to be exposed in chains before the palace gate. The weather was very hot, and Agrippa became excessively thirsty. Seeing Thaumastus, a servant of Caligula, pass by him with a pitcher of water, he called to him, and entreated leave to drink. The servant presented the pitcher with much courtesy; and Agrippa, having allayed his thirst, said to him,—

“Assure thyself, Thaumastus, that if I get out of this captivity, I will one day pay thee well for this draught of water.”

Tiberius dying, his successor, Caligula, soon after not only set Agrippa at liberty, but made him king of Judea. In this high situation Agrippa was not unmindful of the glass of water given to him when a captive.

He immediately sent for Thaumastus, and made him controller of his household.

[29]



A DREAM OF SUMMER.

WEST wind and sunshine
Braided together,
What is the one sign
But pleasant weather?

Birds in the cherry-trees,
Bees in the clover;
Who half so gay as these
All the world over?

Violets among the grass,
Roses regretting
How soon the summer 'll pass,—
Next year forgetting.

Buds sighing in their sleep,
“Summer, pray grant us
Youth, that its bloom will keep
Fragrance to haunt us!”

Rivulets that shine and sing,
Sunbeams abetting,—
No more remembering
Their frozen fretting.

Sweet music in the wind,
Sun in the showers;
All these we're sure to find
In summer hours.

MARY N. PRESCOTT.



SUMMER FLOWERS.

EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING.

[31]

PLEASE, Mr. Mate has *that* cloud a silver lining?"

The question was asked by little Kate Vale, the daughter of an emigrant, who, with her mother, was following her father, who had gone before to New York. Katie was a quiet, gentle little child, who gave trouble to no one. She had borne the suffering of seasickness at the beginning of the voyage so patiently, and now took the rough sea-fare so thankfully, that she had made a fast friend of Tom Bolton, the mate. Bolton had a warm, kindly heart, and one of the children whom he had left in England was just the age of Katie; this inclined him all the more to show her kindness. Katie often had a piece of Bolton's sea-biscuit; he told her tales which he called "long yarns," and sometimes in rough weather he would wrap his thick jacket around her, to keep the chill from her thinly-clad form. Katie was not at all afraid of Bolton, or "Mr. Mate," as she called him, and she took hold of his hard brown hand as she asked the question,—

"Has that cloud a silver lining?"

Bolton glanced up at a very black, lowering cloud, which seemed to blot the sun quite out of that part of the sky.

"Why do you ask me, Kate?" said the sailor.

"Because mother often says that every cloud has a silver lining, and that one looks as if it had none."

Tom Bolton gave a short laugh.

"None that we can see," he replied; "for the cloud is right atween us and the sun. If we could look at the upper part, where the bright beams fall, we should see yon black cloud like a great mass of silvery mother-o'-pearl, just like those that you yesterday called shining mountains of snow."

Katie turned round, and raising her eyes, watched for some minutes the gloomy cloud. It was slowly moving towards the west, and as it did so, the sun behind it began to edge all its dark outline with brightness.

"See, see!" exclaimed Katie; "it is turning out the edge of its silver lining. If I were up there in the sky, I suppose that all would look beautiful then. But I don't know why mother should take comfort from talking of the clouds and their linings."

The mother, Mrs. Vale, who was standing near, leaning against the bulwarks, heard the last words of her child, and made reply,—

"Because we have many clouds of sorrow here to darken our lives, and our hearts would often fail us but for the thought, 'There is a bright side to every trial sent to the humble believer.'"

And Mrs. Vale repeated the beautiful lines,—

"Yon clouds, a mass of sable shade
To mortals gazing from below,

By angels from above surveyed,
With universal brightness glow."

Katie did not quite understand the verse, but she knew how patiently and meekly her mother had borne sudden poverty, the sale of her goods, and the bitter parting from her beloved husband. Bolton also had been struck by the pious courage of one who had had a large share of earthly trials.

"Your clouds at least seem to be edged with silver," he observed, with a smile; and as he spoke, the glorious beams of the sun burst from behind the black mass of cloud, making widening streams of light up the sky, which, as Katie remarked, looked like paths up to heaven.

The vessel arrived at New York, after rather a rough voyage, and Mrs. Vale, to her great delight, found her husband ready at the port to receive her. He brought her good tidings also. A fortnight before her landing he had procured a good situation, and he was now able to take her and their child to a comfortable home. Past sorrows now seemed to be almost forgotten. [32]



Bolton, who, during a trying voyage, had shown much kindness to Mrs. Vale as well as to Katie, was invited during his stay at New York to make their house his home. He had much business to do as long as he remained in the great city, so saw little of the Vales except in the evenings, when he shared their cheerful supper, and then knelt down with them at family prayers. The mate learned much of the peace and happiness which piety brings while he dwelt under the emigrant's roof.

But ere long the day arrived when Bolton's vessel, the Albion, was to start for England. She was to weigh anchor at one o'clock, and at midday the mate bade good by to his emigrant friends.

"A pleasant journey to you, and a speedy return; we'll be glad to see you back here," said Henry Vale, as he shook the mate by the hand.

Bolton's journey was to be much shorter, and his return much more speedy than he wished, or his friends expected. He was hastening down to the pier to join his vessel, when he saw hanging up in a shop window a curious basket, made of some of the various nuts of the country prettily strung together.

"That's just the thing to take my Mary's fancy," said the mate to himself. "I've a present for every one at home but for her; it won't take two minutes to buy that basket."

Great events often hang upon very small hooks. If Bolton had not turned back to buy the basket, he would not have been passing a house on which masons were working at the very moment when a ladder, carelessly placed against it, happened to fall with a crash. The ladder struck Bolton, and he fell on the pavement so much stunned by the shock, that he had to be carried in a senseless state into the shop of an apothecary. [33]

Happily no bones were broken, but it was nearly an hour before the mate recovered the use of his senses. He then opened his eyes, raised his head, and stared wildly around him, as if wondering to find himself in a strange place, and trying to think how he came to be there. Bolton pressed his aching forehead, seeking to recall to his memory what had happened, for he felt like one in a dream. Soon his glance fell on the clock in the apothecary's shop, and at the same instant the clock struck *one!* Bolton started to his feet, as if the chime of the little bell had been the roar of a cannon.

"The Albion sails at one!" cried the mate; and without so much as stopping to look for his oilskin cap, with bandaged brow and bareheaded, Bolton rushed forth into the street, and, dizzy as he felt, staggered on towards the pier from which the vessel was to sail.

It was not to be expected that the sailor's course should be a very straight one, or that with all

his haste he should manage to make good speed. The streets of New York seemed to be more full of traffic than usual, and twice the mate narrowly escaped being knocked down again by some vehicle rapidly driven along the road. At last, breathless and faint, and scarcely able to keep his feet, poor Bolton arrived at the wharf to which his ship had been moored but an hour before. But the Albion was there no longer—the vessel had started without the mate—he could see her white sails in the distance; she was already on her way back to Old England, and she had left him behind!

This was a greater shock to poor Bolton than the blow from the falling ladder had been. He stood for several minutes gazing after the ship with a look of despair, then slowly the sailor returned to the house of the Vales.

"Nothing more unlucky could possibly have happened," muttered the mate to himself. "Here's a pretty scrape that I shall get into with my employers; the mate of their vessel absent just at the time when he ought to have been at his post! Then I've nothing with me—nothing, save the clothes that I stand in! All my luggage is now on the waves, and a precious long time it will be before I shall see it again. But I don't care so much for the luggage; what I can't bear to think of is my wife and my children looking out eagerly for the arrival of the good ship Albion, and then, when she reaches port, finding that no Tom Bolton is in her! I wish that that stupid basket had been at the bottom of the sea before ever I set eyes on it!"

Pale, haggard, and looking—as he was—greatly troubled, Bolton entered the house of the Vales, which he so lately had quitted. The family were just finishing their dinner; and not a little astonished were they to see one whom they had believed to be on the wide sea.

"Here I am again, like a bad half-penny," said the sailor; and sitting down wearily on a chair which Katie placed for him directly, Bolton gave a short account of what he called the most unlucky mischance that had ever happened to him in the course of his life.

The Vales felt much for his trouble, and begged him to remain with them until he could get a passage in some other vessel bound for England.



THE MAN AT THE WHEEL.

"And don't take your accident so much to heart," softly whispered little Katie; "you know mother's favorite proverb—'Every cloud has a silver lining.'" [35]

"Sometimes, even in this life, we can see the silver edge round the border," observed Mrs. Vale.

Bolton had too brave a heart and too sensible a mind to give way long to fretting, though he did not see how so black a cloud as that which hung over his sky could possibly have anything to brighten its gloom. He tried to make the best of that which he could not prevent, and retired to

rest that night with a tolerably cheerful face, though with a violent headache, and a heartache which troubled him more.

Bolton slept very little that night, nor indeed did any one else in the house; for with the close of day there came on a violent storm which raged fiercely until the morning. Katie trembled in her little cot to hear how the gale roared and shrieked in the chimneys, and rattled the window-frames, and threatened to burst open the doors. The child raised her head from the pillow, and thanked the Lord that her sailor friend was not tossing then on the waves.

But far more thankful was Katie when tidings reached New York of what the storm had done on that terrible night. Bolton was sitting at breakfast with his friends on the third day after the tempest, when Vale, who was reading the newspaper, turned to the part headed "Shipping Intelligence."

"Any news?" inquired Tom Bolton, struck by the expression on the face of his friend.

Instead of replying, Vale exclaimed, "How little we can tell in this life what is really for our evil or our good! You called that accident which prevented your sailing in the Albion an 'unlucky mischance.'"

"Of course I did. My wife and children are impatient to see me—"

"Had you sailed in that ship," interrupted Vale, "they would never have seen you again. The Albion went down in that storm!"

What was the regret of Tom Bolton on hearing of the disaster, and what was his thankfulness for his own preservation, I leave the reader to guess. Often in after days did the little American basket remind him in his own home of what others might have called the chance that led him to turn back on his way to the ship, and so caused the accident which vexed him so much at the time.

GOOD-HUMOR.

I AM a first-rate fairy—
"Good-Humor" is my name;
I use my wand where'er I go,
And make the rough ways plain;

And make the ugly faces shine,
The shrillest voices sweet,
The coarsest ore a golden mine,
The poorest lives complete.



BOOKS AND READING.

I REALLY am in doubt whether or not the young folks ought to be congratulated in consequence of the great number of juvenile books which are being placed before them about this time. An excellent book is certainly excellent company; but there is a limit to all things; and so we may have too many books, taking it for granted that all are good ones.

You all know, that, as a general rule, people in America read too much, and think too little. Reading is a benefit to us only when it leads to reflection. It is useless when it leaves no lasting impression on the mind; it is *worse* than useless if the lesson it conveys be not a really good one.

Suppose you sit down to a well-furnished table at a hotel to eat your dinner. The waiter hands you a bill of fare, upon which is printed a long list of good and wholesome dishes, and then quietly waits until you order what you wish. You are not expected to eat of every one, however attractive they may be, but rather to select what you like best,—enough to make a modest meal,—and let that suffice.

But the selection is not all. If you expect to gain health and strength by your dinner, you must eat it in a proper manner; that is, slowly. Otherwise nature's work will be imperfectly done, and your food become a source of bodily harm, instead of a benefit.

Now, it is precisely so with the food of the mind, which comes to you through books. You are not expected to read everything which comes within your reach. You should rather select the best, and, having done so, read them slowly and carefully. You may read too much as well as eat too much; and while the one will injure your body, the other will as certainly harm your mind.

One of the worst evils which too much reading leads to is a habit of *reading to forget*. You know what a bad habit is, how it clings to us, when once contracted, and how hard it is to be shaken off. Some boys and girls read a book entirely through in a single evening, and the next day are eagerly at work on another, to be as quickly mastered. No mind, however strong, can stand such a strain. You see at once that it would be absolutely impossible for them to remember what they read. And so they read for a momentary enjoyment, and gradually fall into the habit I have spoken of—reading to forget. I need not tell you that such a habit is fatal to any very high position in life. [37]

How often we hear parents boast that their children are “great readers,” just as if their intelligence should, in their opinion, be measured by the number of books and papers which they had read! Need I say, that, on the contrary, they are objects of pity?

But how much may we read with profit? That is a question not always easy to answer. Some can read a great deal more than others. Yet, if young people read slowly, and think a great deal about the subject, there is very little danger of their reading too much, provided they select only good books; because good books are very scarce—much more so in proportion to the number printed than they were twenty years ago; and there are very few young persons who have too great a supply of good works placed within their reach.

I have mentioned one evil which results from too much reading, and will only briefly allude to another equally important. Children who attend school have no time to devote to worthless books. Their studies consume many hours. If, aside from the time which should be devoted to play, to their meals, and the various duties of home, they will read a useless book every day or two, their health is sure to suffer. The evil consequences may not be at once apparent, but in later years the penalty will certainly have to be paid. This reflection alone, if there were no other reason, should induce the young to discard all useless books, and read only such as shall have a tendency to make them wiser and better.

THE CORAL-WORKERS.

THE little coral-workers,
By their slow but constant motion,
Have built those pretty islands
In the distant dark-blue ocean;
And the noblest undertakings
Man's wisdom hath conceived
By oft-repeated efforts
Have been patiently achieved.



LION THE FIRE DOG.

LION, who was a cross between a Great St. Bernard and a Newfoundland dog, came into the possession of the superintendent of the London fire brigade when he was but twelve months old. His first retreat was in the engine-house, where, on some old hose and sacking, he made himself as comfortable as he could, and coiled himself up, like the tubing on which he lay. Considering that he was thus placed in charge of the engine-house, he resented the first occasion on which a fire occurred at night. The fire bell rang, and the firemen crowded to the spot, prepared to draw forth the engine, when a decided opposition was made on the part of Lion, who showed a determination to fasten himself on the first fireman who dared to enter the house. In this way the faithful dog kept them all at bay until the arrival of his master, whom he instantly recognized and obeyed. As soon as the horses were harnessed, and the engine was in motion, Lion bounded along in company, and was present at his first fire. After that time, he attended no less than three hundred and thirty-two fires, and not only attended, but assisted at them, always useful, and sometimes doing work and saving life, which, but for him, would have been lost.

[39]

His chief friends, the firemen, say it would take a long while to tell all his acts of daring and sagacity; but we must, in justice to his memory, record some of the most notable.

Whenever the fire bell rang, Lion was immediately on the alert, barking loudly, as if to spread the dire alarm. Then, as soon as his master had taken his place on the engine, and before the horses were off, he led the way, clearing the road and warning every one of the approach of the engine, and spreading the news of the fire by his loud voice.

On one occasion, when the horses were tearing along the streets as fire engine horses alone can, a little child was seen just in front of the engine. To stop the horses in time was impossible, though the driver did his best. The brave hearts of the firemen sank within them as they felt they must drive over the little body. Bystanders raised their arms and shrieked as they witnessed an impending catastrophe which they could do nothing to avert. No human help could avail, and it must needs be that the engine of mercy, on its way to save life, must sacrifice the life of an innocent, helpless child!

But stay! Human eyes were not the only ones that took in that sad scene, and that saw the impending doom of the little one. Brave, sagacious, and fleet, Lion saw at a glance the danger that threatened the child, and springing forward, he knocked him down; then seizing him firmly in his jaws, he made for the pavement obliquely, and gently deposited his charge in the gutter just as the engine went tearing by.

But this was only an incident by the way; Lion's real work began when the scene of the fire was reached. As soon as the door was opened, or dashing through the window if there was a delay in opening the door, the noble animal would run all over the burning house, barking, so as to arouse the inmates if they were unaware of the danger; and never would he leave the fire until he had either aroused them or had drawn the attention of the firemen to them.

Once the firemen could not account for his conduct. Darting into the burning house,—the ceilings of which had given way,—and then out again to the firemen, he howled and yelled most loudly. It was believed that no one was in the house, but Lion's conduct made his master feel uneasy.

Still nothing could be done by way of entering the house, as the fire was raging fiercely, and the house would soon fall in. Finding that his entreaties were not regarded, and suffering from burns and injuries, the noble animal discontinued his efforts, but ran uneasily round the engine, howling in a piteous manner; nor would he leave the spot after the fire was put out until search was made, when beneath the still smouldering embers, the firemen discovered the charred body of an old man, whom he had done his utmost to save.

Lion's noble efforts, however, were often crowned with success; and many a one has to bless the wondrous qualities with which God had endowed him.

At one fire, after the inmates had made their escape, a cry was raised that "the baby had been left behind in the cradle up stairs," though no one seemed to be able to indicate the room. The fire had so far got hold of the dwelling, such dense volumes of flame and smoke were issuing from every opening, that it was impossible for any fireman to enter, and the crowd stood horror-stricken at the thought of the perishing babe.

The crisis was a terrible one; an effort was made, an entry was effected, and some of the men [40] ventured some distance within the burning pile, only to retrace their steps.

At this emergency, Lion dashed past the men, disappeared amid the flames, but returned in a minute into the street with the empty cradle in his powerful jaws. The consequence of this almost incredible feat—which was witnessed by many—may be better imagined than described.

The fact that Lion did not re-enter the house—which, though badly burned, he would doubtless have done had he left the child behind—was sufficient to convince the dullest intellect that the child was secure; and it was very soon ascertained that the object of search was safe in a neighboring house.

No wonder, then, that this noble animal endeared himself to all who knew him; and those who knew him best loved him the most. For fourteen years Lion continued his noble and useful career as public benefactor, as friend and companion to the firemen, and as mourner at their graves; for he attended the funerals of no less than eleven of them.

Death came to him at length; for last year he died from injuries received in the discharge of his self-imposed duties.

There are few of our readers who would not have liked to pat that brave old dog; there are fewer still who may not learn useful and valuable lessons from the speaking testimony of that dumb animal.

BENJAMIN CLARKE.

TO THE CARDINAL FLOWER.

O, MY princely flower, shall I never win
To your moated citadel within,
To your guarded thought?

The pansies are proud; but they show to me
Their purple velvets from over the sea,
With gold inwrought.

And they gently smile wherever we meet;
They seem to me like proud ladies sweet
From a foreign shore.

Wild primrose buds in my very hand
Their odorous evening stars expand,
And all their lore.

But your strange eyes gleam as they pass me by,
And seem to dream of a warmer sky,
Far over the sea.

M. R. W.



THE SONG OF THE ROSE.

I COME not when the earth is brown, and gray
The skies; I am no flower of a day,
No crocus I, to bloom and pass away;

No cowslip bright, or hyacinth that clings
Close to the earth, from whence it springs;
Nor tulip, gay as song birds' wings.

I am the royal rose, and all things fair
Grow fairer for my sake; the earth, the air,
Proclaim the coming of the flower most rare.

Green is the earth, and beautiful the sky,
And soft the breeze, that loves to linger nigh;
I am the rose, and who with me shall vie?

The earth is full of gladness, all in tune
With songs of birds; and now I come, O June,
To crown thee, month of beauty, with my bloom.

T. E. D.

RICH AND POOR.

[42]

MY dear little girl, with the flowers in your hair,
Stop singing a moment, and look over there;
While you are so safe in the sheltering fold,
With treasures of silver, and treasures of gold,
Just a few steps away, in a dark, narrow street,
With no pure, cooling drink, and no morsel to eat,
A poor girl is dying, no older than you;
Her lips were as red, and her eyes were as blue,
Her step was as light, and her song was as sweet,
And the heart in her bosom as merrily beat.

But now she is dying, so lonely and poor,
For famine and fever crept in at the door.
While you were so gay, in your beautiful dress,
With music and laughter, and friends to caress,
From the dawn to the end of the weariful day,
She was always at work, with no moment for play.
She saw you sometimes, but you seemed like a star
That gleamed in the distance, so dim and afar.
And often she wondered if God up above

Remembered the poor girl, in pity and love.

Ah, yes, *He remembered*, 'mid harpings and hymns,
And loud alleluias, and waving of wings,
He heard in *His* heaven the sound of her tears,
And called her away while the sun of her years
Was yet in the east; now, she never will need
From you any more a compassionate deed.
Nay, some time, perhaps, from her home in the skies,
She will look back to see you with tears in your eyes,
For sooner or later we quiver with pain,
And down on us all drops the sorrowful rain.

She never will need you; but many bereft,
Hungry, and heart-sore, and homeless are left.
You can, if you will, from the place where you stand,
Reach downward to help them; the touch of your hand,
The price of one jewel, the gift of a flower,
May waken within them, with magical power,
A hope that was dying. O, don't be afraid
The poor and the desolate spirit to aid.
The burdens are heavy that some one must bear,
You dear little girl with the flowers in your hair.

ELLEN M. H. GATES.

[43]



RICH AND POOR.

LACE-MAKING.

[44]

SEE, mamma what is the woman doing? She looks as if she was holding a pin-cushion in her lap and was sticking pins in it."

"So she is, my dear," Ellen's mother remarked. "But that is not all she is doing. There is a cluster of bobbins hanging down one side of the cushion which are wound with threads, and these threads she weaves around the pins in such a manner as to make lace."

"I never saw anybody make lace that way. I have seen Aunt Maria knit it with a crochet-hook."

"This is a different kind of lace altogether from the crocheted lace. They do not make it in the United States. The woman whom you see in the picture lives in Belgium in Europe. In that country, and in some parts of France and Germany, many of the poorer people earn a living at lace-making. The pattern which in making the lace it is intended to follow is pricked with a pin on a strip of paper. This paper is fastened on the cushion, and then pins are stuck in through all the pin-holes, and then the thread from these bobbins is woven around the lace."

"Can they work fast?"

"An accomplished lace-maker will make her hands fly as fast as though she were playing the piano, always using the right bobbin, no matter how many of them there may be. In making the pattern of a piece of nice lace from two hundred to eight hundred bobbins are sometimes used. In such a case it takes more than one person—sometimes as many as seven—at a single cushion."

"It must be hard to do."

"I dare say it would be for you or me. Yet in those countries little children work at lace-making. Little children, old women and the least skilful of the men make the plainer and coarser laces, while experienced women make the nicer sorts."

"What do they do with their lace when it is finished?"

"All the lace-makers in a neighborhood bring in their laces once a week to the 'mistress'—for women carry on the business of lace-making—then this 'mistress' packs them up and takes them to the nearest market-town, where they are peddled about from one trading-house to another until they are all sold."

"Do they get much for them?"

"The poor lace-makers get hardly enough to keep them from starvation for their fine and delicate work; but the laces, after they have passed through the hands of one trader after another, and are at last offered to the public, bring enormous prices. A nice library might be bought for the price of a set of laces, or a beautiful house built at the cost of a single flounce."

"I think I should rather have the house, mamma."

"So should I. But the people who buy these laces probably have houses already. There is over four million dollars' worth of lace sold every year in Belgium alone."

Ellen thought she should never see a piece of nice lace without thinking of these wonderful lace-makers, who produce such delicate work and yet are paid so little for it; and while she was thus thinking over the matter, mamma went quietly on with her sewing.



HELP YOURSELVES.

[46]

MANY boys and girls make a failure in life because they do not learn to help themselves. They depend on father and mother even to hang up their hats and to find their playthings. When they become men and women, they will depend on husbands and wives to do the same thing. "A nail to hang a hat on," said an old man of eighty years, "is worth everything to a boy." He had been "through the mill," as people say, so that he knew. His mother had a nail for him when he was a boy—"a nail to hang his hat on," and nothing else. It was "Henry's nail" from January to January, year in and out, and no other member of the family was allowed to appropriate it for any purpose whatever. If the broom by chance was hung thereon, or an apron or coat, it was soon removed, because that nail was "to hang Henry's hat on." And that nail did much for Henry; it helped make him what he was in manhood—a careful, systematic, orderly man, at home and abroad, on his farm and in his house. He never wanted another to do what he could do for himself.

Young folks are apt to think that certain things, good in themselves, are not honorable. To be a blacksmith or a bootmaker, to work on a farm or drive a team, is beneath their dignity, as compared with being a merchant, or practising medicine or law. This is PRIDE, an enemy to success and happiness. No *necessary* labor is discreditable. It is never dishonorable to be *useful*. It is beneath no one's dignity to earn bread by the sweat of the brow. When boys who have such false notions of dignity become men, they are ashamed to help themselves as they ought, and for want of this quality they live and die unhonored. Trying to save their dignity, they lose it.

Here is a fact we have from a very successful merchant. When he began business for himself, he carried his wares from shop to shop. At length his business increased to such an extent, that he hired a room at the Marlboro' Hotel, in Boston, during the business season, and thither the merchants, having been duly notified, would repair to make purchases. Among all his customers, there was only one man who would carry to his store the goods which he had purchased. The buyers asked to have their goods carried, and often this manufacturer would carry them himself. But there was one merchant, and the largest buyer of the whole number, who was not ashamed to be seen carrying a case of goods through the streets. Sometimes he would purchase four cases, and he would say, "Now, I will take two, and you take two, and we will carry them right over to the store." So the manufacturer and the merchant often went through the streets of Boston quite heavily loaded. This merchant, of all the number who went to the Marlboro' Hotel for their purchases, succeeded in business. He became a wealthy man when all the others failed. The manufacturer, who was not ashamed to help himself, is now living—one of the wealthy men of Massachusetts, ready to aid, by his generous gifts, every good object that comes along, and honored by all who know him.

You have often heard and read the maxim, "God helps those who help themselves." Is it not true?

WILLIAM M. THAYER.

THE STORY OF JOHNNY DAWDLE.

[47]

HERE, little folks, listen; I'll tell you a tale,
Though to shock and surprise you I fear it won't fail;
Of Master John Dawdle my story must be,
Who, I'm sorry to say, is related to me.

And yet, after all, he's a nice little fellow:
His eyes are dark brown and his hair is pale yellow;
And though not very clever or tall, it is true
He is better than many, if worse than a few.

But he dawdles at breakfast, he dawdles at tea—
He's the greatest small dawdle that ever could be;
And when in his bedroom, it is his delight
To dawdle in dressing at morning and night.

And oh! if you saw him sit over a sum,
You'd much wish to pinch him with finger and thumb;
And then, if you scold him, he looks up so meek;
Dear me! one would think that he hardly could speak.

Each morning the same he comes tumbling down,
And often enough is received with a frown,

And a terrible warning of something severe
Unless on the morrow he sooner appear.

But where does he live? That I'd rather not say,
Though, if truth must be told, I have met him to-day;
I meant just to pass him with merely a bow,
But he stopped and conversed for a minute or so.

"Well, where are you going?" politely said I;
To which he replied, with a groan and a sigh,
"I've been doing my Latin from breakfast till dinner,
And pretty hard work that is for a beginner."

"But now I suppose you are going to play
And have pleasure and fun for the rest of the day?"
"Indeed, but I'm not—there's that bothering sum;
And then there's a tiresome old copy to come."

[48]



JOHNNY DAWDLE.

"Dear me!" I replied, and I thought it quite sad
There should be such hard work for one poor little lad;
But just at that moment a lady passed by,
And her words soon made clear that mistaken was I:

[49]

"Now, then, Mr. Dawdle, get out of my way!
I suppose you intended to stop here all day;
The bell has done ringing, and yet, I declare,
Your hands are not washed, nor yet brushed is your hair."

"Ho, ho!" I exclaimed; "Mr. Dawdle, indeed!"
And I took myself off with all possible speed,
Quite distressed that I should for a moment be seen
With one who so lazy and careless had been.

So now, if you please, we will wish him good-bye;
And if you should meet him by chance, as did I,
Just bid him good-morning, and say that a friend
(Only don't mention names) hopes he soon may amend.

THE MOTHERLESS BOY.

ONE day, about a year ago, the door of my sitting-room was thrown suddenly open, and the confident voice of Harvey thus introduced a stranger:

"Here's Jim Peters, mother."

I looked up, not a little surprised at the sight of a ragged, barefoot child.

Before I had time to say anything, Harvey went on:

"He lives round in Blake's Court and hasn't any mother. I found him on a doorstep feeding birds."

My eyes rested on the child's face while my boy said this. It was a very sad little face, thin and colorless, not bold and vicious, but timid and having a look of patient suffering. Harvey held him firmly by the hand with the air of one who bravely protects the weak.

"No mother!" said I, in tones of pity.

"No, ma'am; he hasn't any mother. Have you, Jim?"

"No," answered the child.

"She's been dead ever so long; hasn't she, Jim?"

[50]

"Yes, ever since last winter," he said as he fixed his eyes, into which I saw the tears coming, upon my face. My heart moved toward him, repulsive as he was because of his rags and dirt.

"One of God's little lambs straying on the cold and barren hills of life," said a voice in my heart. And then I felt a tender compassion for the strange, unlovely child.

"Where do you live?" I asked.

"Round in Blake's Court," he replied.

"Who with?"

"Old Mrs. Flint; but she doesn't want me."

"Why not?"

"Oh, because I'm nothing to her, she says, and she doesn't want the trouble of me." He tried to say this in a brave, don't-care sort of way, but his voice faltered and he dropped his eyes to the floor. How pitiful he looked!

"Poor child!" I could not help saying aloud.

Light flashed over his pale face. It was something new to him, this interest and compassion.

"One of God's little lambs." I heard the voice in my heart saying this again. Nobody to love him—nobody to care for him. Poor little boy! The hand of my own child, my son who is so very dear to me, had led him in through our door and claimed for him the love and care so long a stranger to his heart. Could I send him out and shut the door upon him, when I knew that he had no mother and no home? If I heeded not the cry of this little one precious in God's sight, might I not be thought unworthy to be the guardian of another lamb of his fold whom I loved as my own life?

"I've got heaps of clothes, mother—a great many more than I want. And my bed is wide. There's room enough in the house, and we've plenty to eat," said Harvey, pleading for the child. I could not withstand all these appeals. Rising, I told the little stranger to follow me. When we came back to the sitting-room half an hour afterward, Jim Peters would hardly have been known by his old acquaintances, if any of them had been there. A bath and clean clothes had made a wonderful change in him.

I watched the poor little boy, as he and Harvey played during the afternoon, with no little concern of mind. What was I to do with him? Clean and neatly dressed, there was a look of refinement about the child which had nearly all been hidden by rags and dirt. He played gently, and his voice had in it a sweetness of tone, as it fell every now and then upon my ears, that was really winning. Send him back to Mrs. Flint's in Blake's Court? The change I had wrought upon him made this impossible. No, he could not be sent back to Mrs. Flint's, who didn't want the trouble of him. What then?

[51]



THE MOTHERLESS BOY.

Do the kind hearts of my little readers repeat the question, "What then?" Do they want very much [52] to know what has become of little Jim Peters?

It is just a year since my boy led him in from the street, and Jim is still in our house. No one came for him. No one inquired about him. No one cared for him. I must take that last sentence back. God cared for him, and by the hand of my tender-hearted son brought him into my comfortable home and said to me, "Here is one of my lambs, astray, hungry and cold. He was born into the world that he might become an angel in heaven, but is in danger of being lost. I give him into your care. Let me find him when I call my sheep by their names."

As I finished writing the last sentence a voice close to my ear said "Mother!" I turned and received a loving kiss from the lips of Jim. He often does this. I think, in the midst of his happy plays, memory takes him back to the suffering past, and then his grateful heart runs over and he tries to reward me with a loving kiss. I did not tell him to call me "Mother." At first he said it in a timid, hesitating way, and with such a pleading, half-scared look that I was touched and softened.

"She isn't your real mother," said Harvey, who happened to be near, "but then she's good and loves you ever so much."

"And I love her," answered Jim, with a great throb in his throat, hiding his face in my lap and clasping and kissing my hand. Since then he always calls me "Mother;" and the God and Father of us all has sent into my heart a mother's love for him, and I pray that he may be mine when I come to make up my jewels in heaven.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

JESUS says that we must love him.
Helpless as the lambs are we;
But He very kindly tells us
That our Shepherd He will be.

Heavenly Shepherd, please to watch us,
Guard us both by night and day;
Pity show to little children,
Who like lambs too often stray.

We are always prone to wander:
Please to keep us from each snare;
Teach our infant hearts to praise Thee
For Thy kindness and Thy care.

THE ST. BERNARD DOG.

[53]

BY the pass of the Great St. Bernard travellers cross the Pennine Alps (Penn, a Celtic word, meaning *height*) along the mountain road which leads from Martigny, in Switzerland, to Aosta, in Piedmont. On the crest of the pass, eight thousand two hundred feet above the sea level, stands the Hospice, tenanted by about a dozen monks.

This is supposed to be the highest spot in Europe inhabited by human beings. The climate is necessarily rigorous, the thermometer in winter being often twenty-nine degrees below zero, whilst sixty-eight degrees Fahrenheit is about the highest range ever attained in summer. From the extreme difficulty of respiration, few of the monks ever survive the period of their vow, which is fifteen years, commencing at the age of eighteen.

This hospice is said to have been first founded in the year 962, by Bernard, a Piedmontese nobleman. It will be remembered that it was over this pass Napoleon, in May, 1800, led an army of thirty thousand men into Italy, having with them heavy artillery and cavalry.

For poor travellers and traders the hospice is really a place of refuge. During winter, crossing this pass is a very dangerous affair. The snow falls in small particles, and remains as dry as dust. Whirlwinds, called "tourmentes," catch up this light snow, and carrying it with blinding violence against the traveller, burying every landmark, at once put an end to knowledge of position. Avalanches, too, are of frequent occurrence.

After violent storms, or the fall of avalanches, or any other unusual severity of winter weather, the monks set out in search of travellers who may have been overwhelmed by the snow in their ascent of the pass. They are generally accompanied in their search by dogs of a peculiar breed, commonly known as the St. Bernard's Dog, on account of the celebrated monastery where these magnificent animals are taught to exercise their wondrous powers, which have gained for them and their teachers a world-wide fame. On their neck is a bell, to attract the attention of any belated wayfarer; and their deep and powerful bay quickly gives notice to the benevolent monks to hurry to the relief of any unfortunate traveller they may find.

Some of the dogs carry, attached to their collars, a flask of spirits or other restorative. Their wonderfully acute sense of smell enables them to detect the bodies of persons buried deeply beneath the surface of the snow, and thus direct the searchers where to dig for them. The animal's instinct seems to teach it, too, where hidden chasms or clefts, filled with loose snow, are; for it carefully avoids them, and thus is an all-important guide to the monks themselves.

We have stories without number as to what these dogs accomplish on their own account; how they dig out travellers, and bring them, sometimes unaided by man, to the hospice.



THE ST. BERNARD DOG.

A few years ago one of these faithful animals might be seen wearing a medal, and regarded with much affection by all. This noble dog had well deserved the distinction; for one stormy day he had saved twenty-two individuals buried in their snowy envelope. Unfortunately, he met, at a subsequent period, the very fate from which he had rescued so many persons. At the worst season an Italian courier was crossing the pass, attended by two monks, each escorted by a dog (one being the wearer of the medal), when suddenly a vast avalanche shot down upon them with lightning speed, and they were all lost.

[55]

Another of these dogs, named "Barry," had served the St. Bernard Convent during twelve years, and had saved the lives of fifteen persons during that time. Whenever the pass was obscured by fogs and wintry snow-storms, he would go forth in search of lost travellers. It was his practice to run barking till he lost his breath, and he would venture into the most dangerous places. If, as sometimes happened, he did not succeed in drawing out from the snow some traveller stiffened with cold or overcome with exhaustion, he would run back to the convent and fetch some of the monks.

One day this brave dog found a little child in a half-frozen state. He began directly to lick him, and having succeeded first in restoring animation, and next in the complete resuscitation of the boy, he induced the child, by his caresses, to tie himself on his back. When this was effected, he transported the poor child, as if in triumph, to the hospice. When overtaken by old age, the glorious dog was pensioned off by way of reward, and after his death his body was stuffed and placed in the museum at Berne.

It is said that dogs of this variety inherit the faculty of tracking footsteps in snow. A gentleman once obtained a pup which had been produced in London by a female of the St. Bernard breed. The young animal was brought to Scotland, where it was never observed to give any particular tokens of a power of tracking footsteps until winter. Then, when the ground was covered with snow, it showed the utmost inclination to follow footsteps; and such was its power of doing so, that though its master might attempt to confuse it by walking in the most irregular fashion, and by inducing other persons to cross his path in all directions, yet it always followed his course with great precision.

Sir Thomas Dick Lander, who for many years resided at Grange House, Edinburgh, had a fine dog of the St. Bernard breed presented to him. Its bark was so loud that it could be distinguished at the distance of a mile. Its bark once led to its recovery, when stolen by some carters. "Bass," as the dog was named, had been missing for some time, when it was brought back to Grange House by a letter-carrier, who said that in going along a certain street, he heard a barking inside a yard, and at once recognized the voice of Bass. "He knocked at the gate," writes Sir Thomas, "and immediately said to the owner of the premises,—

“You have got Sir Thomas Lander’s big dog.’

“The man denied it.

“‘But I know you have,’ continued the letter-carrier. ‘I am certain that I heard the bark of Sir Thomas’s big dog; for there is no other dog in or about all Edinburgh that has such a bark.’

“The man then admitted that he had a large dog, which he had bought for a trifle from a couple of coal carters; and at last, with great reluctance, he gave up the dog to the letter-carrier, who brought him home here.”

Sir Thomas, after describing many of Bass’s characteristics, then proceeds:—

“He took a particular fancy for one of the postmen who delivers letters here, though he was not the man whom I have already had occasion to mention. It was the duty of this postman I now allude to, besides delivering letters, to carry a letter-bag from one receiving house to another, and this big bag he used to give Bass to carry. Bass always followed that man through all the villas in the neighborhood where he had deliveries to make, and he invariably parted with him opposite to the gate of the Convent of St. Margaret’s, and returned home. [56]

“When our gate was shut, to prevent his following the postman, the dog always leaped a high wall to get after him. One day, when the postman was ill, or detained by some accidental circumstance, he sent a man in his place. Bass went up to the man, curiously scanning his face, whilst the man retired from the dog, by no means liking his appearance, and very anxious to decline all acquaintance with him. But as the man left the place, Bass followed him, showing strong symptoms that he was determined to have the post-bag. The man did all he could to keep the possession of it. But at length Bass, seeing that he had no chance of getting possession of the bag by civil entreaty, raised himself on his hind legs, and putting a great fore paw on each of the man’s shoulders, he laid him flat on his back in the road, and quietly picking up the bag, he proceeded peaceably on his wonted way. The man, much dismayed, arose and followed the dog, making, every now and then, an ineffectual attempt to coax him to give it up.

“At the first house he came to he told his fears and the dilemma he was in; but the people comforted him by telling him that the dog always carried the bag. Bass walked with the man to all the houses at which he delivered letters, and along the road till he came to the gate of St. Margaret’s, where he dropped the bag; and making his bow to the man, he returned home.”

THE FLIGHT OF THE BIRDS.

O WISE little birds! how do you know
The way to go
Southward and northward, to and fro?

Far up in the ether piped they:

“We but obey
One who calleth us far away.

“He calleth and calleth year by year
Now there, now here;
Ever He maketh the way appear.”

Dear little birds, He calleth me
Who calleth ye:
Would that I might as trusting be!



FEEDING THE BIRDS.

FOR THE CHILDREN.

[58]

COME stand by my knee, little children,
Too weary for laughter or song;
The sports of the daylight are over,
And evening is creeping along;
The snow-fields are white in the moonlight,
The winds of the winter are chill,
But under the sheltering roof-tree
The fire shineth ruddy and still.

You sit by the fire, little children,
Your cheeks are ruddy and warm;
But out in the cold of the winter
Is many a shivering form.
There are mothers that wander for shelter,
And babes that are pining for bread;
Oh, thank the dear Lord, little children,
From whose tender hand you are fed.

Come look in my eyes, little children,
And tell me, through all the long day,
Have you thought of the Father above us,
Who guarded from evil our way?
He heareth the cry of the sparrow,
And careth for great and for small;
In life and in death, little children,
His love is the truest of all.

Now come to your rest, little children,
And over your innocent sleep,
Unseen by your vision, the angels
Their watch through the darkness shall keep;
Then pray that the Shepherd who guideth

The lambs that He loveth so well
May lead you, in life's rosy morning,
Beside the still waters to dwell.

[59]



BED-TIME.

[60]



REASON AND INSTINCT.

ARE dogs endowed with reason? As you grow up, you will spend many happy hours in the contemplation of this interesting question. It does sometimes seem as if there could be no possible doubt that dogs, as well as horses, elephants, and some other of the higher animals, are gifted with the dawn of reason, so extraordinary are some of their acts.

It is but a few days since a dog in Vermont saved a house from burning, and possibly the inmates. The dog discovered the fire in the kitchen, flew to his master's apartment, leaped upon his bed, and so aroused the people to a sense of their danger. [61]

"As I was walking out one frosty morning with a large Newfoundland dog," says the Rev. J. C. Atkinson, "I observed the animal's repeated disappointment on putting his head down to drink at sundry ice-covered pools. After one of these disappointments, I broke the ice with my foot for my thirsty companion. The next time Tiger was thirsty, he did not wait for me to 'break the ice,' but with his foot, or, if too strong, by jumping upon it, he obtained water for himself."

Here seems to be the manifestation of a desire to *learn from observation*.

After the battle of Fredericksburg, it fell to my duty to search a given district for any dead or wounded soldiers there might be left, and to bring relief. Near an old brick dwelling I discovered a soldier in gray who seemed to be dead. Lying by his side was a noble dog, with his head flat upon his master's neck. As I approached, the dog raised his eyes to me good-naturedly, and began wagging his tail; but he did not change his position. The fact that the animal did not growl, that he did not move, but, more than all, the intelligent, joyful expression of his face, convinced me that the man was only wounded, which proved to be the case. A bullet had pierced his throat, and faint from the loss of blood, he had fallen down where he lay. His dog had *actually stopped the bleeding from the wound by laying his head across it*. Whether this was casual or not, I cannot say. But the shaggy coat of the faithful creature was completely matted with his master's blood.

Strange as these facts may appear, we should not confound INSTINCT with intelligence which comes from REASON. There is a wide difference between them. Before long I propose to discuss this matter to some extent, in an article which I have already begun.

TOUCH NOT.

TOUCH not the tempting cup, my boy,
Though urged by friend or foe;
Dare, when the tempter urges most,
Dare nobly say, No—no!
The joyous angel from on high
Shall tell your soul the reason why.

Touch not the tempting cup, my boy;
In righteousness be brave;
Take not the first, a single step,
Towards a drunkard's grave;
The widow's groan, the orphan's sigh,
Shall tell your soul the reason why.



CHILDREN.

WHAT could we without them,
Those flowers of life?
How bear all the sorrows
With which it is rife?
As long as they blossom,
Whilst brightly they bloom,
Our own griefs are nothing,
Forgotten our gloom.

[63]

We joy in the sunshine—
It sheds on them light;
We welcome the shower—
It makes them more bright;
On our pathway of thorns
They are thrown from above,
And they twine round about us,
And bless us with love.

Bright, beautiful flowers,
So fresh and so pure!
How could we without them
Life's troubles endure?
So guileless and holy,
Such soothers of strife,
What could we without them,
Sweet flowers of life?

THE WHITE BUTTERFLY.

A TALE FOR CHILDREN.

VERY slowly and wearily over road and hedge flew a white butterfly one calm May evening; its wings had been torn and battered in its flight from eager pursuers, who little cared that their pleasure was another's pain. On, on, went the fugitive, until it came to a little garden so sweet and quiet that it rested from its flight and said, "Here, at least, I shall find peace; these gentle flowers will give me shelter." Then, with eager swiftness, it flew to a stately peony. "Oh, give me shelter, thou beautiful flower!" it murmured as it rested for a second upon its crimson head—a second only, for, with a jerk and an exclamation of disgust, the peony cast the butterfly to the ground. With a low sigh it turned to the pansy near. Well, the pansy *wished* to be kind, but

the butterfly was really very tattered and dirty; and then velvet soils so easily that she must beg to be excused. The wall-flower, naturally frank and good-natured, had been so tormented all day by those troublesome bees that she solemnly vowed she would do nothing more for anybody.

The tulips were asleep; and the other flowers, trying to emulate fair Lady Rose, held their heads so very high that they, of course, did not hear the low, soft cry, "Oh, will no one give me shelter?" At last there came an answer, "I will, gladly," in a shy and trembling tone, as though fearing to be presumptuous, from a thick thorny bush which helped to protect the more dainty beauties from the rough blasts of a sometimes too boisterous wind; in consideration of which service the flowers considered the briar as a good, useful sort of thing, respectable enough in its common way, but not as an equal or associate, you understand. With gratitude the forlorn butterfly rested all night in the bosom of one of its simple white blossoms.

When night had gone and the bright sun came gliding up from the east, calling on Nature to awake, the flowers raised their heads in all the pride of renewed beauty and saluted one another. Where was the forlorn butterfly? Ah! where? They saw it no more; but over the white blossom where it had rested there hovered a tiny fairy in shining, changing sheen, her wand sparkling with dewdrops. She looked down on the flowers with gentle, reproachful eye, while they bent low in wonder and admiration.

"Who is it?" they asked. "How beautiful! how lovely!"

The fairy heard them with a smile, and said, "Fair flowers, I *was* a shabby butterfly; what I *am*, you see. I came to you poor and weary; and because I was poor and weary you shut me out from your hearts."

The pansy and the wall-flower bent their heads in sorrow, and Lady Rose blushed with shame.

"If I had only known!" muttered the peony; "but who would have thought it?"

"Who indeed?" laughed the fairy; "but learn, proud peony, that he who thinks always of self loses much of life's sweetness—far more than he ever suspects; for goodness is as the dew of the heart, and yieldeth refreshment and happiness, even if it win no other recompense. But it is meet that it should be rewarded. Behold, all of you!" and the fairy touched with her wand the white blossom on which she had rested, saying, "For thy sweetness be thou loved for ever!" At these words a thrill of happiness stirred the sap of the rough, neglected briar, and a soft, lovely blush suffused the petals of its flowers, and from its green leaves came forth an exquisite odor, perfuming the whole garden and eclipsing the other flowers in their pride.

Then the fairy rose in the air, and hovering over her resting-place for a moment ere she vanished said, "Such is the reward of goodness. Fare thee well, sweet briar!"



WORKING IS BETTER THAN WISHING.

NOW then, Tom, lad, what's up? in trouble again?" asked a good-natured sailor of his messmate, one snowy day on the wide Atlantic.

The boy was leaning moodily against the bulwarks of the vessel—a pleasant, ruddy young fellow of fourteen, but with a cloud on his face which looked very like discontent.

Snow was falling heavily, but he did not heed it; he looked up, however, at the approach of his friend, and answered,—

“I’m all right, Pearson; it isn’t that. I was only wishing and wondering why I can’t get what I want; it seems a shame, it does!” and Tom paused abruptly, half choked by a sob.

“What is it, Tom?” asked Pearson; “have the other lads been plaguing? Such a big, hearty fellow as you ought not to fret for that.”

“I don’t,” said Tom, sharply; “it’s not that; but they’ve found out that my little brother is in the workhouse at home, and they throw it at me. I’d do anything to get him out, too, for he oughtn’t to be there: we come of a better sort, Pearson,” he said, proudly; “but father and mother dying of that fever put us all wrong. Uncle got me to sea, and then, I suppose, he thought he’d done enough; so there was only the workhouse left for Willy. He’s the jolliest little chap, Pearson, you ever saw, and I’d work day and night to get him out, if I could; but where’s the use? A poor boy like me can do nothing; so I just get in a rage, or don’t care about anything, and fight the other lads; or I’m had up for neglect of duty, or something.”

[66]

“And so you lose all chance of getting on, and being able in time to help your little brother,” said Pearson, as if musing; “but what’s that you have in your hand, Tom—a picture?”

“It’s Willy,” said the boy; “yes, you may look, Pearson. Mother had it taken just before she fell ill; he’s only four, but he’s the prettiest little chap, with yellow hair all in curls. I dare say they’ve cut them off, though,” he added, bitterly. “There’s a bit of a sickly child on board, belonging to the tall lady in black, that reminds me a little of him, only he isn’t near as pretty as Willy.”

“Yes, he is a pretty little lad,” said Pearson, returning the photograph; “and now, Tom, mind my word: I am an old fellow compared to you, and I’ll give you a bit of advice. The little lad is safe, at any rate, in the workhouse; he’s got food and clothes, and you couldn’t give him that; so be content, and try to do your own duty. If you get a good character, instead of being always had up for sulking or fighting, that’s the best chance for you, and, after you, for Willy. As for the lads’ teasing, why, be a bit hard of hearing, and before many years, I warrant, you’ll be having Willy aboard ship as boy, when you’re an able-bodied seaman.”

Tom laughed. “Thank you, Pearson. Well, I’ll try; but I do get wishing and bothering of nights.”

“Ah, that wishing’s a poor trick,” said Pearson; “give it up, Tom, and work instead.”

People don’t often take advice, but this time it was followed. A great deal of rough weather came on; every one had as much as he could do, and Tom worked with the best of them, and to his great joy was noticed by the ship’s officers as a willing lad.

One bright morning brought all the passengers on deck,—the ship was bound for Rio,—and among them came the tall lady in black, with her little boy in her arms. Tom’s duties took him near her, and he could not but steal a glance at the little face like Willy’s; but, O, so pale and pinched now! The child had suffered dreadfully in the rough weather; it was doubtful whether he would see land again, he was so weakened. Tom felt sorry for the little fellow, but his work engrossed him, and he had nearly forgotten the white-faced child, when, to his great surprise, the captain called him. The lady in black was a relative of the captain, and it seemed that while Tom had been glancing at the sick child, the child had been watching him, and had taken a fancy to his clear round face, and active movements.

“Let me see what sort of a head-nurse you can make,” said the captain to Tom; “this little fellow will have you carry him, he says, and teach him to climb the rigging.”

Tom smiled, but instantly checked himself, as hardly respectful to the captain.

They dressed Carlo up in a suit of sailor clothes. To be sure they were rather large for him, but then it was such fun to be a real little sailor. Under Tom’s care his face soon grew round and fat, and his merry laugh rang out on the air. And now he would live to see his father and his birthplace again, for he was born in South America, and had only left his Portuguese father for a few months, to accompany his English mother on a visit to her relatives.

The day before they sighted land, Tom was sent for into the captain’s cabin, and there a wonderful proposal was made to him—that he should give up sea life, and go to Bella Sierra as little Carlo’s attendant. Carlo’s parents were rich people; little Carlo had taken a great fancy to him, and he would have good wages.



THE LITTLE SAILOR.

It sounded very pleasant; but little Willy! he should never see him—it would not do. Tom [68] hesitatingly explained this to Carlo's mother, drawing the little photograph out of his pocket the while.

Then came the last and best proposition,—that Willy should come out on the *Flying Star's* next voyage, and live, too, at Bella Sierra. Mrs. Costello—the lady in black—promised to pay all expenses, and put him in charge of the stewardess. Carlo, her only child, had grown so fond of Tom, that she would do anything to keep him.

"Such an active, willing boy," she explained to the captain. "I have often watched him at work, and admired the way in which he did it."

"Well, lad," said Pearson, when Tom came to tell him the news, "wasn't I right when I told you that the best way you could work for Willy was by doing your own duty? If you had gone on in that half-and-half, discontented way, no rich lady would have cared to have you about her house—would she?"

Tom looked thoughtful. "Yes, you were right, Pearson; you've done it all; and now I want you to do one thing more. Please look after Willy a bit when he comes out; he's such a daring little chap, he'll always be running away from the stewardess."

"Ah, you want me to be nurse now—do you?" said Pearson; "all right, lad, and as the song says, 'Don't forget me in the land you're going to.' And you can still stick to my old motto, that 'Working is better than Wishing.'"

KIND TO EVERYTHING.

SOFTLY, softly, little sister,
Touch those gayly-painted wings;
Butterflies and moths, remember,
Are such very tender things.

Softly, softly, little sister,
Twirl your limber hazel twig;
Little hands may harm a nestling
Thoughtlessly, as well as big.

Gently stroke the purring pussy,
Kindly pat the friendly dog;
Let your unmolested mercy
Even spare the toad or frog.

Wide is God's great world around you:
Let the harmless creatures live;
Do not mar their brief enjoyment,
Take not what you cannot give.

Let your heart be warm and tender—
For the mute and helpless plead;
Pitying leads to prompt relieving,
Kindly thought to kindly deed.

[69]



SOFTLY, SOFTLY, LITTLE SISTER.

[70]



THAT CALF!

TO the yard, by the barn, came the farmer one morn,
And, calling the cattle, he said,
While they trembled with fright, "Now, which of you, last
night,
Shut the barn door, while I was abed?"
Each one of them all shook his head.

Now the little calf Spot, she was down in the lot;
And the way the rest talked was a shame;
For no one, night before, saw her shut up the door;
But they said that she did,—all the same,—
For they always made her take the blame.

Said the horse (dapple gray), "I was not up that way
Last night, as I now recollect;"
And the bull, passing by, tossed his horns very high,
And said, "Let who may here object,
I say 'tis that calf I suspect!"

Then out spoke the cow, "It is terrible, now,
To accuse honest folks of such tricks."
Said the cock in the tree, "I'm sure 'twasn't me;"
And the sheep all cried, "Bah!" (There were six.)
"Now that calf's got herself in a fix!"

[71]

"Why, of course, we all knew 'twas the wrong thing to do."
Said the chickens. "Of course," said the cat;
"I suppose," cried the mule, "some folks think me a fool;
But I'm not quite so simple as that;
The poor calf never knows what she's at!"

Just that moment, the calf, who was always the laugh
And the jest of the yard, came in sight.
"Did you shut my barn door?" asked the farmer once
more.
"I did, sir; I closed it last night,"
Said the calf; "and I thought that was right."

Then each one shook his head. "She will catch it," they
said;
"Serve her right for her meddlesome way!"
Said the farmer, "Come here, little bossy, my dear!
You have done what I cannot repay,
And your fortune is made from to-day.

"For a wonder, last night, I forgot the door, quite;
And if you had not shut it so neat,

All my colts had slipped in, and gone right to the bin,
And got what they ought not to eat—
They'd have foundered themselves upon wheat."

Then each hoof of them all began loudly to bawl;
The very mule smiled; the cock crew;
"Little Spotty, my dear, you're a favorite here,"
They cried. "We all said it was you,
We were so glad to give you your due."
And the calf answered, knowingly, "Boo!"

PHOEBE CARY.



[72]



HELPING MOTHER.

LITTLE HELPERS.

[73]

PLANTING the corn and potatoes,
Helping to scatter the seeds,
Feeding the hens and the chickens,
Freeing the garden from weeds,
Driving the cows to the pasture,
Feeding the horse in the stall,—
We little children are busy;
Sure, there is work for us all.

Spreading the hay in the sunshine,
Raking it up when it's dry,
Picking the apples and peaches
Down in the orchard hard by,
Picking the grapes in the vineyard,
Gathering nuts in the fall,—
We little children are busy;
Yes, there is work for us all.

Sweeping, and washing the dishes,
Bringing the wood from the shed,
Ironing, sewing and knitting,
Helping to make up the beds,
Taking good care of the baby,
Watching her lest she should fall,—
We little children are busy;
Oh, there is work for us all.

Work makes us cheerful and happy,
Makes us both active and strong;
Play we enjoy all the better
When we have labored so long.
Gladly we help our kind parents,
Quickly we come to their call;
Children should love to be busy;
There is much work for us all.

[74]



THE PUZZLED PUPPIES.

THE ANIMAL IN ARMOR.

[75]

THIS picture of three curious little puppies looking at a tortoise reminds me of a story told of a countryman who saw some land-tortoises for the first time at a fair held in a market-place of his native village. Very much surprised at their queer look, he asked the man who was selling them how much they were.

"Eighteenpence a pair," was the answer.

"Eighteenpence!" said the man; "that is a great deal for a thing like a frog. What will you take for one *without the box?*"

Little folks would not make such a stupid mistake as this; they would know that this strange-looking animal between its two shells was a tortoise. There are different sorts—some that live on land, and some in water. Those that live in the sea are called turtles, and their shells are not so hard as that of the land-tortoise. It is easy to see why this is: a turtle would not be able to swim with so thick a shell; it would be much as if a man in armor were to try. Their shells are not all in one, but joined together by a sort of gristle, which enables them to move with greater ease and not so stiffly.

Directly any one hears the name of tortoise, he begins to think of tortoise-shell. This ought really to be called turtle-shell, as it is made from the shell of the hawk's-bill turtle. Tortoise-shell is made by soaking the plates of the shell in warm water until they are soft; then they are pressed into the shapes wanted in warm iron moulds, and taken out and polished.

Some of the sea-turtles are very fierce; and although they have no teeth, their jaws are so strong that they can bite a walking-stick in half. Land-tortoises are quite harmless; they only attack the insects they feed upon. They go to sleep, like the dormouse, in the winter, but they do not make a burrow; they cover themselves with earth by scraping it up and throwing it over their bodies. In doing this they would find their heads and tails very much in the way if it were not that they are able to draw them in between their shells. No one, of course, knows how they find their way out again in the spring; but it is supposed that they scratch the earth away and throw it underneath them, at the same time pushing their way up.

Tortoises live to a very great age. One was given to the Zoological Gardens in 1833 which had already lived seventy years in Port Louis, in the island of Mauritius. Its shell, from the head to the tail, measured four feet four inches and a half, and it weighed two hundred and eighty-five pounds.



THE IRON RING.

CHANG WANG was a Chinaman, and was reputed to be one of the shrewdest dealers in the Flowery Land. If making money fast be the test of cleverness, there was not a merchant in the province of Kwang Tung who had earned a better right to be called clever. Who owned so many fields of the tea-plant, who shipped so many bales of its leaves to the little island in the west, as did Chang Wang? It was whispered, indeed, that many of the bales contained green tea made by chopping up spoiled black tea leaves, and coloring them with copper—a process likely to turn them into a mild kind of poison; but if the unwholesome trash found purchasers, Chang Wang never troubled himself with the thought whether any one might suffer in health from

drinking his tea. So long as the dealer made money, he was content; and plenty of money he made.

But knowing how to make money is quite a different thing from knowing how to enjoy it. With all his ill-gotten gains, Chang Wang was a miserable man; for he had no heart to spend his silver pieces, even on his own comfort. The rich dealer lived in a hut which one of his own laborers might have despised; he dressed as a poor Tartar shepherd might have dressed when driving his flock. Chang Wang grudged himself even a hat to keep off the rays of the sun. Men laughed, and said that he would have cut off his own pigtail of plaited hair, if he could have sold it for the price of a dinner!

Chang Wang was, in fact, a miser, and was rather proud than ashamed of the hateful vice of avarice.

Chang Wang had to make a journey to Macao, down the great River Yang-se-kiang, for purposes of trade. The question with the Chinaman now was, in what way he should travel. [77]

"Shall I hire a palanquin?" thought Chang Wang, stroking his thin mustaches; "no, a palanquin would cost too much money. Shall I take my passage in a trading vessel?"

The rich trader shook his head, and the pigtail behind it—such a passage would have to be paid for.

"I know what I'll do," said the miser to himself; "I'll ask my uncle Fing Fang to take me in his fishing-boat down the great river. It is true that it will make my journey a long one; but then I shall make it for nothing. I'll go to the fisherman Fing Fang, and settle the matter at once."

The business was soon arranged, for Fing Fang would not refuse his rich nephew a seat in his boat. But he, like every one else, was disgusted at Chang Wang's meanness; and as soon as the dealer had left his hovel, thus spoke Fing Fang to his sons, Ko and Jung:—

"Here's a fellow who has scraped up money enough to build a second Porcelain Tower, and he comes here to beg a free passage in a fishing-boat from an uncle whom he has never so much as asked to share a dish of his birds'-nests soup!"

"Birds'-nests soup, indeed!" exclaimed Ko; "why, Chang Wang never indulges in luxuries such as that. If dogs' flesh were not so cheap, he'd grudge himself the paw of a roasted puppy!"

"And what will Chang Wang make of all his money at last?" said Fing Fang, more gravely; "he cannot carry it away with him when he dies."

"O, he's gathering it up for some one who will know how to spend it!" laughed Jung. "Chang Wang is merely fishing for others; what he gathers, they will enjoy."

It was a bright, pleasant day when Chang Wang stepped into the boat of his uncle, to drop slowly down the great Yang-se-kiang. Many a civil word he said to Fing Fang and his sons, for civil words cost nothing. Chang Wang sat in the boat, twisting the ends of his long mustaches, and thinking how much money each row of plants in his tea-fields might bring him. Presently, having finished his calculations, the miser turned to watch his relations, who were pursuing their fishing occupation in the way peculiar to China. Instead of rods, lines, or nets, the Fing Fang family was provided with trained cormorants, which are a kind of bird with a long neck, large appetite, and a particular fancy for fish.

It was curious to watch a bird diving down in the sunny water, and then suddenly come up again with a struggling fish in his bill. The fish was, however, always taken away from the cormorant, and thrown by one of the Fing Fangs into a well at the bottom of the boat.

"Cousin Ko," said the miser, leaning forward to speak, "how is it that your clever cormorants never devour the fish they catch?"

"Cousin Chang Wang," replied the young man, "dost thou not see that each bird has an iron ring round his neck, so that he cannot swallow? He only fishes for others."

"Methinks the cormorant has a hard life of it," observed the miser, smiling. "He must wish his iron ring at the bottom of the Yang-se-kiang."

Fing Fang, who had just let loose two young cormorants from the boat, turned round, and from his narrow slits of Chinese eyes looked keenly upon his nephew.

"Didst thou ever hear of a creature," said he, "that puts an iron ring around his own neck?"

"There is no such creature in all the land that the Great Wall borders," replied Chang Wang. [78]

Fing Fang solemnly shook the pigtail which hung down his back. Like many of the Chinese, he had read a great deal, and was a kind of philosopher in his way.

"Nephew Chang Wang," he observed, "I know of a creature (and he is not far off at this moment) who is always fishing for gain—constantly catching, but never enjoying. Avarice—the love of hoarding—is the iron ring round his neck; and so long as it stays there, he is much like one of our trained cormorants—he may be clever, active, successful, but he is only fishing for others."

I leave my readers to guess whether the sharp dealer understood his uncle's meaning, or whether Chang Wang resolved in future not only to catch, but to enjoy. Fing Fang's moral might be good

enough for a heathen, but it does not go nearly far enough for a Christian. If a miser is like a cormorant with an iron ring round his neck, the man or the child who lives for his own pleasure only, what is he but a greedy cormorant with the iron ring? Who would wish to resemble a cormorant at all? The bird knows the enjoyment of *getting*; let us prize the richer enjoyment of *giving*. Let me close with an English proverb, which I prefer to the Chinaman's parable—"Charity is the truest epicure, for she eats with many mouths."

A. L. O. E.

SUMMER.

I'M coming along with a bounding pace
To finish the work that Spring begun;
I've left them all with a brighter face,
The flowers in the vales through which I've run.

I have hung festoons from laburnum trees,
And clothed the lilac, the birch and broom;
I've wakened the sound of humming-bees,
And decked all nature in brighter bloom.

I've roused the laugh of the playful child,
And tired it out in the sunny noon;
All nature at my approach hath smiled,
And I've made fond lovers seek the moon.

For this is my life, my glorious reign,
And I'll queen it well in my leafy bower;
All shall be bright in my rich domain;
I'm queen of the leaf, the bud and the flower.

And I'll reign in triumph till autumn-time
Shall conquer my green and verdant pride;
Then I'll hie me to another clime
Till I'm called again as a sunny bride.

CHARLIE'S CHRISTMAS.

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OH how cold and miserable everything is! Hardly a thought to be uppermost on Christmas eve in the mind of a little school-boy; and yet it was that which filled the mind of Charlie Earle on the Christmas eve of which I am going to tell you. Only a few hours before, he had been as happy as any boy could be. Everybody was going home, and everybody was in the highest spirits and full of the most delightful hopes of what the holidays would bring them; and now everybody except Charlie has gone home, and he is left alone in the dreary school-room, knowing that at any rate Christmas day, and maybe many other days, are to be spent away from home, and from all the pleasant doings which he had pictured to himself and others only the very day before.

The coming of the post-bag had been scarcely noticed in the school-room that morning. So when old Bunce, the butler, looked in at the door and said, "Master Earle is wanted in the doctor's room," the boys all wondered, and Charlie's neighbor whispered to him, "Whatever can he want you for, Earle?" The doctor's tale was soon told, and it was one which sent Charlie back to the school-room with a very different face to the one with which he had left it. A letter had come to Doctor West from Charlie's father, and in it a note from his mother to Charlie himself, written the night before, and saying that a summons had come that very morning calling them to Charlie's grandmother, who was very ill, and that they were starting for Scotland that night and would be almost at their journey's end when Charlie got the news. The note said that Laura, Charlie's sister, would go with them, but that they could not wait for Charlie himself, so they had written to Mrs. Lamb, Charlie's old nurse, who lived about ten miles from Dr. West's, and had asked her to take charge of him for a day or two, till more was known of his grandmother's state and some better plan could be made for him. It was sad enough for Charlie to hear of the illness of his kind old grandmother—sad enough to see the merry start of the other boys, while he had to stay behind; but to have to think of Christmas day spent away from father and mother, away from Laura and home, was excuse enough for a few bitter tears. But unpleasant things come to an end as well as pleasant ones, and Charlie's lonely waiting in the school-room came to its end, and he found himself that afternoon snugly packed into the Blackridge coach, and forgetting his own troubles in listening to the cheery chatter of the other passengers, and in looking at what was to be seen as the coach rolled briskly along the snow-covered road. It was quite dark when they reached Blackridge, and Charlie looked out at the people gathered round the door of the "Packhorse Inn," and a sudden fear filled his mind lest there should be no one there to meet him;

but he soon saw by the light at the inn door Nurse Lamb herself, with her kind face looking so beaming that it seemed a little bit like *really* going home.

"Here, father," said Nurse Lamb to her jolly-looking husband; "here's Master Charlie, safe and sound! You bring the luggage in the barrow while I take him home quick, for I am sure he must be cold."

And so nurse bustled Charlie off down a lane and across a meadow, till they came to a wicket-gate, beyond which stood the back of a low, deep-thatched cottage half buried in snow. On getting round to the front the door was opened by a little girl, and nurse called out, "Here, Molly, here we are;" adding, "Molly is my step-daughter, Master Charlie—the one I used to tell you about before I was married, when we were down at Hastings."



WINTER.

When they got into the house, there was the kitchen with its rows of bright pewter plates, its wide hearth and roaring fire, its hams hanging to the beams, all just as they had been described in the days when nurse's new home at Blackridge Farm was a subject of never-ending interest to the two children in Mrs. Earle's nursery.

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After he had had a capital tea, Charlie was allowed to go round with the farmer to see that the horses were all right for the night, Charlie carrying the lantern and feeling himself quite a man as he followed the farmer into the stable. There was much coming and going at the farm that evening, for was it not Christmas eve? and nurse was busy sending off gifts to neighbors who were not so thriving as herself, and busy, too, in making preparations for the morrow. Charlie meanwhile sat in the settle and made friends with Molly, who was about his own age and knew much more, though she was only a girl, about dogs and rabbits and tadpoles than London-bred Charlie. By and by they helped to stir the great plum-pudding, and dressed the kitchen and parlor with evergreens, till nurse called them to come and hear the chimes.

And Charlie thought it very beautiful as he stood at the door and listened to the bells. And as they stood there the wind wafted to them also the voices of the choir as they went on their round through the village, singing their carols; and then Charlie went to bed with "Hark, the herald angels sing!" ringing in his ears.

Next morning Charlie, as he ran down stairs, could hardly believe this was really Christmas day, all was so unlike any Christmas he had known before; but in the kitchen he found one thing like the Christmas mornings at home, for he found quite a little pile of parcels beside his plate, containing the pretty gifts prepared by father and mother and Laura, and sent by them to nurse, so that at any rate the little lad should not be robbed of this part of his Christmas pleasures. There was a note, too, from mother, saying that she and father and Laura were safe in

Edinburgh, and that grandmother was better, and that she hoped to tell him in her next letter when they and he should meet at home in London. Such a bright beginning was enough to make all the rest of the day bright; and bright it was. Charlie found plenty to do till church-time, as Molly showed him all the nooks and corners about the farm.

The old church, with its high pews and country congregation made Charlie feel that he must be dreaming. Surely it could not be Christmas, but must be the autumn? and he and Laura and everybody had come away from London for the holidays?

No; it was no dream. It was really Christmas; for there, round the pillars, were the holly-wreaths with their red berries, and there, behind the chancel-screen, were the same Christmas texts as in their church in London. When service was over, Charlie and Molly hurried home to help Martha, the farm-girl, to have all in readiness for the Christmas dinner. But after dinner there was not much sitting still—at any rate for Charlie; for who could think of sitting still indoors, when outside there were a pond covered with ice and a farmyard full of horses and dogs?

Nor was the evening after tea without its pleasure. When the snow began to fall, and the doors and windows were tightly closed, then a huge log was piled on the fire; and while Farmer and Mrs. Lamb sat and talked before it in the parlor, Charlie and Molly had a fine game of romps in the big kitchen with Martha; and when they were tired of that, they sat on the hearth and roasted chestnuts, while nurse read a Christmas tale to them.

And here I must leave Charlie finishing his Christmas day, hoping that any who read this story of it may agree with Charlie in thinking, when he laid his head on the pillow that night, that, though it had been spent far from home, it had not been an unhappy day, after all.

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MARCELLIN.

MARCELLIN, a young shepherd boy, who tended his father's flock upon the mountains, having penetrated a deep gorge to search for one of his sheep which was missing, discovered in the thickest of the forest a man lying upon the ground overcome with fatigue, and faint from want of food.

"My poor lad," said the man, "I am dying from hunger and thirst. Two days ago I came upon this mountain to hunt. I lost my way, and I have passed two nights in the woods."

Marcellin drew some bread and cheese from his knapsack, and gave to the stranger.

"Eat," he said, "and then follow me. I will conduct you to an old oak tree, in the trunk of which we shall find some water."

The food satisfied his hunger; then he followed Marcellin, and drank of the water, which he found excellent. Afterwards the boy conducted him down the mountain, and pointed out the way to the city.

Then the hunter said to the shepherd boy, "My good lad, you have saved my life. If I had remained in the mountain another night, I should have died. I will show you my gratitude. Come with me to the city. I am rich; and I will treat you as if you were my own son."

"No, sir," said Marcellin, "I cannot go with you to the city. I have a father and a mother who are

poor, but whom I love with all my heart. Were you a king, I would not leave my parents."

"But," said the hunter, "you live here in a miserable cabin with an ugly thatched roof; I live in a palace built of marble, and surrounded with statues. I will give you drink in glasses like crystal, and food upon plates of silver." [83]

"Very likely," responded Marcellin; "but our house is not half as miserable as you suppose. If it is not surrounded with statues, it is among fruit trees and trellised vines. We drink water which we get from a neighboring fountain. It is very clear, though we do not drink from crystal cups. We gain by our labor a modest living, but good enough. And if we do not have silver ware in our house, we have plenty of flowers."

"Nonsense, my boy! Come with me," said the hunter; "we have trees and flowers in the city more beautiful than yours. I have magnificent grounds, with broad alleys, with a flower garden filled with the most precious plants. In the middle of it there is a beautiful fountain, the like of which you never saw. The water is thrown upward in small streams, and falls back sparkling into the great white marble basin. You would be quite happy to live there."

"But I am quite happy *here*," replied Marcellin. "The shade of our forests is at least as delicious as that of your superb alleys. Our fields are running over with flowers. You can hardly step without finding them under your feet. There are flowers around our cottage—roses, violets, lilies, pansies. Do you suppose that our fountains are less beautiful than your little jets of water? You should see the merry brooks bounding down over the rocks, and running away through the flowery meadow."

"You don't know what you refuse," rejoined the hunter. "If you go into the city, you will be put to school, where you can study all departments of art and science. There are theatres, where skilful musicians will enchant your ears by harmony. There are rich saloons, to which you will be admitted, to enjoy splendid fêtes. And since you so much love the country, you shall pass your summer vacation with me in a superb chateau which I possess."

"Well, I am greatly obliged to you," replied the shepherd boy; "but I think I had better stop with father and mother. I can learn everything useful in our village school. I am taught to fear God, to honor my parents, and to imitate their virtues. I don't wish to learn anything beyond that. Then your musicians, which you tell about, do they sing any better than the nightingale or the golden robin? Then we have our concerts and our fêtes. We are right down happy when we are all together on Sunday evening under the trees. My sister sings, while I accompany her upon my flute. Our chants can be heard a long way off, and echo repeats them. And in the evening, when we stay in the house, grandfather is with us. We love him so much because he is so good. No, I will not leave my parents. I will not renounce their home, if it is humble. I cannot go to the city with you."

The hunter saw that it was of no use to argue the point; so he said,—

"What shall I give you, then, to express my gratitude for your services? Take this purse, filled with gold."

"What need have I of it? We are poor, but we want nothing. Besides, if I accept your money, I should *sell* the little service I have been able to render. That would be wrong; my mother would blame me for such conduct. She tells me that we ought always to assist those who are in trouble and want without expecting pay for it."

"Generous boy! What shall I give you as a mark of my gratitude? You must accept something, or I shall be greatly disappointed."

"Is it so?" asked Marcellin, playfully. "Then give me the cup which is suspended at your side—that one on which is engraved a picture of some dogs pursuing a stag." [84]

The hunter joyfully gave the cup to the happy shepherd boy, who, having once more indicated the way which would lead to the city, bade him good day, and went back to his flock.

And the rich man returned to his splendid dwelling, having learned that it is the proper use of the means we have, rather than wishing for greater, which brings happiness and contentment.

AN ADVENTURE IN THE LIFE OF SALVATOR ROSA.



HERE is in the museum at Florence a celebrated painting, which calls to mind a thrilling adventure of Salvator Rosa when quite young.

The scene represents a solitude, very rugged and sublime—mountains upon every side, with their tops covered with snow, while through the dark clouds in the sky a few straggling sunbeams find their way to the valley. Upon the border of an immense cliff stands a group of men whose costume denotes them to be brigands of the Apennines. Upon the very edge of the precipice, erect and calm, is a young man, surrounded by the brigands, who are preparing to throw him into the depths below. The chief is a short distance away, and seemingly about to give the fatal signal. A few paces in



advance stands a female, of strange beauty, waving her hand menacingly towards the chief as if commanding that the young man's life be spared. Her manner, resolute and imperious, the countenance of the chief, the grateful calmness of the prisoner, all seem to indicate that the woman's order will be obeyed, and that the victim will be saved from the frightful death with which he has been menaced.

This picture, as will be readily guessed, is the work of SALVATOR ROSA. Born at Arenella, near Naples, in 1615, of poor parents, he was so admirably endowed by nature that, even in his boyhood, he became a spirited painter, a good musician, and an excellent poet. But his tastes led him to give his attention to painting.

Unfortunately, some severe satires which he published in Naples made him many enemies in that city, and he was obliged to fly to Rome, where he took a position at once as a painter. Leaving that city after a while, he went to Florence, and there found a generous encouragement and many friends, and there his talent was appreciated by the world of art.

The environs of Florence afforded him superior advantages in developing his genius. The Apennines, with their dark gorges, their picturesque landscapes, and their snow-clad peaks, pleased his wild imagination. In their vast recesses he found his best inspirations and his most original subjects. Often he wandered for days over the abrupt mountains, infested with bandits, to find work for his ambitious pencil. [85]

One day he had advanced farther than usual into the profound and dangerous solitudes. He sat down near a torrent, and began to sketch a wild landscape before him. All of a sudden he saw, at the summit of a rock near at hand, a man leaning upon his carbine, and apparently watching him with great curiosity. A large hat, with stained and torn brim, covered his sun-burnt visage; a leather belt bound his dark sack to his body, and gave support to a pistol and hunting-knife, invariably carried by the brigands of the mountains. His black beard, thick and untidy, concealed a portion of his face; but there could be no doubt that his dark glance was fixed upon the stranger who came to invade his domain.

For almost any other but our hero, the sudden apparition of that wild and menacing figure would have been good cause of terror. But Salvator was a painter, and a painter in love with his art; and he had in that strange costume, that forbidding look, something so much in harmony with the aspect of nature about him, that he at once made the man a subject of study.

"I mustn't lose him," he said; "he's an inhabitant of the country. He comes just in the nick of time to complete my landscape; and his position is quite fine."

And, drawing tranquilly his pencil, he began to transfer the outlines of the brigand to his album, when the stranger, coming a few paces nearer to him, said, in a rough voice,—

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?"

"Well, my good fellow, I come to take your portrait, if you'll hold still a bit," responded the painter.

"Ah, you jest with me! Have a care," said the other, coming still nearer.

"No," replied Salvator, seriously; "I am a painter; and I wander over these mountains with no other purpose but to admire these beautiful landscapes, and to sketch the most picturesque objects."

"To sketch!" cried the brigand, with evident anger, hardly knowing what the word meant. "Do you not know that these mountains belong to us? Why do you come here to spy us out?"

At these words he gave a shrill whistle, and three other men, clothed like himself, came towards the spot from different directions.

"Seize this man!" he said to his companions; "he comes to observe us."

All resistance was useless. And so, after having tried in vain to prove his innocence, the young man was surrounded and seized.

"March!" cried the man who had first met him. "You must talk with our chief."

The leader of these brigands was a man about forty years of age, named Pietratesta. His great physical strength, his courage, and, more than all the rest, his energy, had made him a favorite among his companions, and given him authority over them. Famous among the mountains for his audacious crimes, condemned many times to an outlaw's death, pursued in vain by the officers of the law, habituated for years to a life of adventure, pillage, and murder, he treated his prisoners without pity or mercy. All who were unable to purchase their liberty by paying whatever ransom he fixed, were put to death. He looked upon civilized people not as men, but as prizes.

As he saw the captive approach, he asked the usual question,—

"Who are you?"

"Salvator Rosa, a Neapolitan painter, now resident of Florence."

"O, a painter! A poor prize, generally. But you are famous, I hear; the prince is your friend. Your



"Ten thousand ducats, indeed! Where do you suppose I can get so much?"

"Well, as for that, if you haven't got the money, your friends must get it for you."

"But my friends are not rich."

"Ah, excuse me!" said the chief, smiling. "When one has a prince for a protector, he is always rich."

"It is true that the prince is my patron; but he owes me nothing."

"No matter if he don't. He would not be deprived of such an artist as you for a paltry ten thousand ducats."

"He pays me for my pictures; but he will not pay my ransom."

"He *must*," said the robber, emphatically; "so no more words. Ask your friends, if you prefer, or whoever you will; but bring me ten thousand ducats, and that within a month; otherwise you must die."

As the chief uttered these words, he walked away, leaving Salvator in the middle of the ground which formed the camp.

During the short conversation two children came from one of the tents, being attracted by the noise. Their little blond heads, curiously turned towards the captive, their faces, tanned by the sun, but animated by the crimson of health and youth, and their picturesque costume had attracted the attention of the painter. When the chief had gone away, he approached them, and smiled. The children drew away abashed; then, reassured by the air of goodness which the young man wore, they came nearer, and permitted him to embrace them.

"Are you going to live with us?" said the eldest, who was about eight years of age.

"I don't know, my little friend."

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"O, I wish you would! It is so nice to stop in these mountains. There are plenty of beautiful flowers, and birds' nests, too. I have three already; I will show them to you, and then we will go and find some more. But what is that you have got under your arm?"

"It is my sketch-book."

"A sketch-book? What is a sketch-book?"

"It is what I carry my pictures in."

"Pictures? O, do let me see them!"

"Yes, indeed; here they are."

"What pretty pictures! O, mother, come and see! Here are mountains, and men, and goats. Did you make them all?"

Attracted by the call of the child, a lady came out of the principal tent. She was yet young, tall, and covered with a medley of garments from various costumes. Her face sparkled with energy, and might have been called beautiful. She threw a sad glance at Salvator, and approached him haughtily, as if to give an order. But seeing the two children busily looking over the sketch-book,

and observing the familiar way with which both treated their new acquaintance, she appeared to change her manner somewhat, and began to look at the pictures herself, and to admire them. At the end of half an hour the mother and the children seemed like old friends of Salvator Rosa.

The woman was the wife of the chief. A daughter of an honorable family, she married a young man at Pisa, her native city, who proved to be captain of this band of robbers. She could not well leave the company into which she had been betrayed; and so, with a noble self-denial, she became resigned to her hard lot. An unwilling witness of the many crimes of her husband and his companions, she suffered cruelly in her resignation. Yet her fidelity, her virtue,—things rarely known, but sometimes respected among these mountain brigands,—had given her a moral power over the men as well as over her husband. More than once she had used this means to temper their ferocity, and obtain pardon for their unfortunate prisoners.

Just then one of the brigands came and brought to the prisoner the order from the chief that he should write to his friends to obtain money for his ransom. The man was going, under a disguise, to the city of Florence; and he offered to deliver any letters intrusted to his care. He indicated the place where the ten thousand ducats must be left, so that Salvator might inform his correspondent.

Our hero had many devoted friends; but nearly all were artists like himself, and without fortune. Nevertheless, he decided to write to one of them. He gave orders that all the pictures in his studio should be sold. He hoped that the money which they would bring, together with what his friends could advance to him, would amount to the sum demanded by the chief.

This done, Salvator easily persuaded himself that he should soon be set at liberty, and the artist recovered his unconcern, and almost his usual good spirits. The country around him was full of romantic studies for his pencil. He had, besides, found in the society of the children of Pietratesta two charming companions. He instructed them in the elements of his art; and his pupils, to both of whom the study was quite new, seemed never to grow tired of their task.

In a moment of good humor, he drew caricatures of each member of the band, which created a great deal of amusement. Then he drew, with great care, the portraits of the two children. This attention profoundly touched the heart of the mother, and her tender sympathy, almost wasting among these unfeeling men, found a secret pleasure in rendering the captivity of the young painter less unhappy and less hard. She conversed with him familiarly, and it gave her great pleasure to see the care which he took to instruct her children. [88]

So Salvator Rosa, to whom the band gave quite a considerable degree of liberty, never dreamed of taking improper advantage of it. Thanks to his fancy and his recklessness as an artist, he almost forgot that he was the prisoner of a cruel master, and that his life was in peril.

But the ransom, which he had sent for, came not. Whether the letters he had written failed to reach their destination, or whether his friends were deaf to his request for assistance, he received no answer. He wrote repeatedly, but always with the same result.

And so the months slipped by, and the chief began to grow impatient at the long delay. His wife had more than once calmed his anger, and prevented any catastrophe. At length several weeks went by, in which the expeditions of the band were unfruitful. The provisions were running low, and Pietratesta saw in his captive one unprofitable mouth. Sivora, his wife, felt her influence to be growing weaker and weaker under the increasing destitution and continued delay.

One day Pietratesta encountered his prisoner, and, addressing him in an irritated voice,—

“Well?” he said, as if his question needed no other explanation.

“Nothing yet,” responded Salvator Rosa, sadly.

“Ah, this is too much!” cried the brigand. “I begin to think you are playing with me. But do you know the price Pietratesta makes those pay who cross him?”

“Alas! I am far from trying to deceive you. You know that I have done all in my power to obtain my ransom. I have written to various persons; your own men have taken my letters. You see that it is not my fault.”

“It is always the fault of prisoners when their ransom is not paid.”

“Wait a little longer. I will write again to-day.”

“Wait! wait! A whole year, month after month, has gone by, and you repeat the same old story. A year—an age for me—I have waited. Do you think I have been making unmeaning threats? Do you expect to abuse my patience with impunity? It has given out at last—the more so as,” added he, now that he felt his anger increasing, “I ought to have settled this affair a long while ago. This is your last day, observe me.”

At a sign from their chief, four bandits seized the young man, and bound him. As Salvator was led away, he cast one sad look at the dwelling where he had passed many happy hours, and from which he was going to his death. For a moment he stopped to say farewell to the children, who were standing at the door crying and stretching out their little naked brown arms towards him.

A few moments later, Sivora, who had been gathering flowers in the mountains, returned home. Observing that her husband, as well as Salvator, was absent, and her children in tears, she

guessed the painful truth.

"Where is Salvator?" she asked of the eldest.

"They have bound him, and carried him away," responded the child, still crying.

"Which way?"

"Down yonder," was the reply of the child, pointing with its finger in the direction of a rocky cliff already too well known for its horrible scenes.

"Alas, wretched man!" exclaimed Sivora, almost frantically, as she comprehended the new crime her husband was about to commit. She sat down for a moment, covered her face with her hands—a prey to the most unspeakable anxiety. Then, rising suddenly, her eyes flashing with determination,—

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"Come!" she said, resolutely; "come, my children. Perhaps we may yet be in time."

And, taking the hands of her little ones, who followed her with difficulty, but yet eagerly, she darted away at a rapid pace in the direction taken by the brigands.

While the men were hurrying Salvator along, the chief maintained a profound silence. His band followed him as dumb as slaves who go to execute the will of their master, which they know is law. They soon arrived at the summit of a cliff, which overhung a yawning abyss beneath. After having taken one look over the precipice, and examined the neighborhood rapidly, Pietratesta cried, "Halt!" and the whole body came to a rest.

"There is just a quarter of an hour for you to live," he said, turning to his prisoner. "You have time to die like a Christian. Make your prayer."

The young man hesitated for a moment, threw his agitated eyes around, then, kneeling on the rock, he prayed earnestly. The men stood unmoved, as if they had been statues cut from stone.

Salvator rose, with a calm demeanor, and said, addressing the chief in a firm tone,—

"My life is in your hands, I know. You are going to kill me without any cause. I have prayed," he added, with a voice full of authority, "for the salvation of my soul, and repentance for thine. God will judge us both. I am ready."

Immediately the brigands seized the young man, and hurried him towards the precipice. Already they waited but the signal of their chief, already Pietratesta had given the fatal command, when a cry was heard not many paces distant, which suspended the preparations.

"Stop!" exclaimed a harsh voice.

The bandits, astonished at the interruption, turned to see whence it came. A woman ran towards them, her hair in disorder, her countenance pale and agitated, her dark eyes flashing with determination. She held by their hands two children, who, with weeping eyes, were hastening, with all the speed their young limbs could carry them, towards the precipice.

It was Sivora.

As she came forward the chief uttered an exclamation of disappointment and anger.

"Why do you come here?" he asked, in an irritated voice.

"You know well enough," responded Sivora, without any sign of intimidation. "What are you about to do? What is the crime of this young man? What is the wrong he has committed? You know he is innocent, and that it is not his fault that the price of his ransom has not been paid. Why commit a useless crime? You have too many on your soul already," she added, in a low, sad voice. "Since it is not too late, let the young man go. His ransom is not absolutely necessary. If it was, would his death bring it to you? Remember with what care and solicitude he has treated your children! with what patience he has instructed them in his art! See, they weep, as if their hearts would break, at the wrong you would do their friend! It is they—it is I—who ask clemency. You will not kill Salvator; you will pardon him for the love you bear your children."

As she said these words she pushed the two little blond heads into the arms of their father.

The brigands, hesitating, touched, without knowing why, struck with an involuntary respect for the woman, remained immovable, with their eyes fixed upon their chief, as if waiting to ascertain his wishes. He stood, brooding, nervous, his eyes bent upon the ground, hardly daring to look upon Sivora, at once his suppliant and accuser, a prey to violent emotions. The authority of that respected voice, and the irritation at being deprived of his revenge,—the invincible love he had for the woman, and the shame of giving way before his men,—all these warring considerations, the effects of which were plainly to be seen on his swarthy face, spoke of the severe contest going on within.

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At length his evil genius got the control.

"What do I care for his solicitude and his tenderness?" he said, in a coarse voice. "He would forget all as soon as he should get out of our hands; and he would, no doubt, send the police after us if we should let him go. I know what the promises of captives are worth. Besides, I command here, I alone, and I will be obeyed. Take away these children; and you, comrades, despatch your

your prisoner.”

“Ah! is it so?” exclaimed Sivora, in a piercing voice, throwing herself before the bandits, who were pushing their victim towards the chasm. “Then I will beg no more; I *command* now. Listen to me well, for these are my last words. You know with what devotion, with what resignation, I have supported this bitter life which you brought me to among these mountains. The isolation, the sorrow, the shame, I have endured for thee. I have never complained. I hoped, after such sacrifices, you would at length listen to my words, and renounce your bad life. But since you do not care for my devotion, since I am nothing to you, listen well to my words, Pietratesta. If you dare to commit this odious crime, look for a mother for your children, for, with your victim, you will slay your wife!”

So saying, she advanced close to the brink of the cliff, over which she could spring at the signal from her husband.

Salvator, motionless and rooted to the spot, in silence, full of anxiety, observed this strange scene. The robbers, hardened by crime, for the first time hesitated at the command of their chief, and fixed their eyes upon the beautiful woman to whom despair added a new charm. They quailed before her authority, and stood as motionless as statues.

Pietratesta, overwhelmed by the recollections which the woman’s words awakened, alarmed at her threats and her resolution, hung his head, like a guilty wretch before a just judge, while Sivora, with wild countenance, piercing voice, and imperial manner, her long black hair loosely falling upon her shoulders, with her arms extended towards the abyss, almost resembled an ancient goddess, who suddenly appears at the moment of crime, arrests the homicidal arm, and subjects the criminal to punishment. There was in her figure an imposing grandeur, before which the rude men, for an instant recalled to themselves, felt humiliated and condemned.

Astounded by that firmness and devotion, ashamed of his violence towards the woman who was living a life of outrage, the chief, after some moments of moody silence, said, in an altered voice, —

“You wish it! He is free!”

Salvator threw himself upon his knees before his preserver, covered her hand with kisses and tears, and pressed, with transport, the two children in his arms. Completely wild with happiness and gratitude, he abandoned himself to the buoyancy of his generous nature, when Sivora said to him, in a whisper, —

“Go! go quickly! The tiger is only sleeping!”

They put a bandage over the eyes of the young man, so that he might not see the path by which he descended from the mountains, and two of the brigands then conducted him to the highway which led to the city. [91]

Hardly had he entered Florence, yet sad from the recollection of the scene in which he came near being a victim, when the young painter hastily sketched the principal details; and, some time after, the picture of which we have spoken was composed, and hangs this day in the museum at Naples, admired and pointed out to all visitors.

L. D. L.

WE SHOULD HEAR THE ANGELS SINGING.

IF we only sought to brighten
Every pathway dark with care,
If we only tried to lighten
All the burdens others bear,
We should hear the angels singing
All around us, night and day;
We should feel that they were winging
At our side their upward way!

If we only strove to cherish
Every pure and holy thought,
Till within our hearts should perish
All that is with evil fraught,
We should hear the angels singing
All around us, night and day;
We should feel that they were winging
At our side their upward way!

If it were our aim to ponder
On the good that we might win,
Soon our feet would cease to wander
In forbidden paths of sin;

We should hear the angels singing
All around us, night and day;
We should feel that they were winging
At our side their upward way!

If we only did our duty,
Thinking not what it might cost,
Then the earth would wear new beauty
Fair as that in Eden lost;
We should hear the angels singing
All around us, night and day;
We should feel that they were winging
At our side their upward way!

KATE CAMERON.

MY LITTLE HERO.

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HOW we wish that we knew a hero!"
Say the children, pressing round;
"Will you tell us if such a wonder
In London streets can be found?"

I point from my study-window
At a lad who is passing by:
"My darlings, there goes a hero;
You will know his oft-heard cry."

"'Tis the chimney-sweep, dear father,
In his jacket so worn and old;
What can *he* do that is brave and true,
Wandering out in the cold?"

Says Maudie, "I thought that a hero
Was a man with a handsome face."
"And I pictured him all in velvet dressed,
With a sword," whispered little Grace.

"Mine is only a 'sweeper,' children,
His deeds all unnoticed, unknown;
Yet I think he is one of the heroes
God sees and will mark for his own.

"Out there he looks eager and cheerful,
No matter how poorly he fares;
No sign that his young heart is heavy
With the weight of unchildish cares.

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MY LITTLE HERO.

“Home means to him but a dingy room,
A father he shudders to see;
Alas for the worse than neglected sons
Who have such a father as he!

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“And a mother who lies on a ragged bed,
So sick and worn and sad;
No friend has she but this one pale boy—
This poor little sweeper-lad,

“So rough to others, and all unskilled,
Yet to her most tender and true,
Oft waking with patient cheerfulness
To soothe her the whole night through.

“He wastes no time on his own scant meals,
But goes forth with the morning sun;
Never a moment is wasted
Till his long day’s work is done.

“Then home to the dreary attic
Where his mother lies lonely all day,
Unheeding the boys who would tempt him
To linger with them and play.

“Because she is helpless and lonely,
He is doing a hero’s part;
For loving and self-denying
Are the tests of a noble heart.”

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ROBIN REDBREAST.

ROBIN, Robin Redbreast,
O, Robin, dear!
And what will this poor Robin do?
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the cricket,
The wheat-stack for the mouse,
When trembling night winds whistle,
And moan all round the house.
The frosty way like iron,
The branches plumed with snow—
Alas! in winter, dead and dark,
Where can poor Robin go?
Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O, Robin dear!
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer.

HOW SWEETIE'S "SHIP CAME IN."

[96]

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

IT will be a real honest story—of how Christmas came to a poor cold home, and made it bright, and warm, and glad. A *very* poor home it was, up three flights of worm-eaten, dirt-stained stairs, in the old gray house that stood far up a narrow, crooked alley, where the sun never shone except just a while in the middle of the day. He tried hard to brighten up the place a little, but the tall houses all about prevented him. Still he slanted a few golden beams even into that wretched home away up under the eaves; for though the few small panes of glass in the narrow windows had been mostly broken out, and their places filled with boards nailed tight to keep out the wintry winds, and rain, and snow, still there were some left through which a feeble ray did sometimes creep and make glad the hearts of the children. Five fatherless children lived with their mother in that old garret. Night and day the mother sewed, taking scarcely any rest, and yet found it hard to keep all the little toes and knees covered, and could get only the poorest food for the five hungry mouths. The thought that, work never so hard, she could not earn enough to give them one hearty, satisfying meal, made her heart ache.

Three boys and two girls, in one old naked room, with only their mother to care for them, and she so poor, that for years she had not had a new gown, or a new bonnet! Yet she liked pretty new clothes, as well as any one ever did, I know.

Of these five little folks, the oldest was Harry, the newsboy; then came Katie, and Willie, and Fred, and, last of all, wee Jennie.

Though Harry was the oldest, yet *he* was not very old. Just twelve—a thin, white little fellow, with eyes that always looked as if they wanted more. More what? Well, more sunshine; more warm

clothes, and bright, hot fires, and, O, very much more to eat! Sometimes he would make fifty cents in a day, selling newspapers, and then he would hurry joyfully home, thinking of the hungry little mouths it would help to fill. But some days he would hardly earn ten cents the whole long day. Then he would go slowly and sadly along, wishing all sorts of things—that he could take home as much meat as he could carry to the little ones who had not eaten meat for so long they had almost forgotten how it tasted; or that the gentlemen, who owned the clothing stores which he was passing, would say to him, "Come in, my little fellow, and help yourself to as many warm clothes as you want for yourself and your little brothers at home;" or that he could find a heap of money—and his mouth would water, thinking of the good things which he could buy and take home with some of it.

The other children always knew whether it had been a good or bad day with Harry, by the way he came up the stairs. If he came with a hop, skip, and a jump, they knew it meant a good day; and a good day for Harry was a good evening for them all.

Though Katie was really the name of the second child, she hardly ever was called so; for her mother, and the children, and all the neighbors, called her Sweetie, she was so good and so thoughtful for others, so sweet-tempered and kind. She did everything so gently that none of them could ever love her half as much as she deserved. Though only ten years old, and very small and pale, she did every bit of the housework, and kept the ugly old room and its faded furniture so neat, that it seemed almost home-like and pretty to them all. It was happiness enough for the little ones to get her first kiss when she came back from an errand, to sit by her at table, and, above all, to lie closest to her at night. Willie, and Fred, and Jennie, all slept with her on a straw bed in the corner; and they used to try to stretch her little arms over them all, so that even the one farthest off might feel the tips of her fingers, so dearly did they love her.

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They had once owned more than one bedstead, and many other comfortable things besides; but when their father was killed at the great factory where he worked, their mother was obliged to sell almost everything to get enough money to pay for his funeral, and to help support her little family; so that now she had only a narrow wooden settee for her bed, while Harry stretched himself on a couple of chairs, and the rest slept all together in the bed on the floor. Poor as they were, they were not very unhappy. Almost every night, when their mother took the one dim candle all to herself, so that she could see to sew neatly, Sweetie would amuse the other children by telling them beautiful stories about the little flower people, and the good fairies, and about Kriss Kringle—though how she knew about him I can't tell, for he never came down their chimney at Christmas.

"And, when my ship comes in," Sweetie used to say, "I'll have the tallest and handsomest Christmas tree, filled to the top with candies and toys, and lighted all over with different-colored candles, and we'll sing and dance round it. Let's begin now, and get our voices in tune." Then they would all pipe up as loud as they could, and were as happy as if they half believed Sweetie's ship was ready to land.

But there came a hard year for poor needle-women: it was the year I am writing about, and Sweetie's mother found it almost impossible to get even the necessaries of life. Her children's lips were bluer, their faces more pinched, and thin, threadbare clothes more patched than ever. Sweetie used to take the two boys, and hunt in the streets for bits of coal and wood; but often, the very coldest days, they would have no fire. It was very hard to bear, and especially for the poor mother, who still had to toil on, though she was so chilled, and her hands so numbed, she could hardly draw her needle through her work; and for Harry, who trudged through the streets from daylight until the street lamps were lighted.

The day before Christmas came. People were so busy cooking Christmas dainties that they did not stop to sift their cinders very carefully, and Sweetie and the boys had picked up quite a large bag full of half-burnt coal in the alleys, and were carrying it home as carefully as if it were a great treasure—as, indeed, it was to them. Being very tired, they sat down to rest on the curbstone in front of an elegant mansion. One of the long windows was open.

"Let's get close up under the window," said Sweetie. "I guess it's too warm inside, and may be we shall get some of the heat. O! O! don't it smell good?" she cried, as the savory odors of the Christmas cooking stole out upon the air.

"What is it, Sweetie?" whispered Willie.

"Coffee," said Sweetie, "and turkeys, and jelly, perhaps."

"I wish I had some," sighed Freddy, "I'm so cold and hungry!"

"Poor little man! he must come and sit in Sweetie's lap; that will make him warmer," said his sister, wrapping her shawl around him.

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"Yes; that's nice," said the little fellow, hugging her tight.

Mr. Rogers, the owner of this fine house, had lost his wife and two dear children within the year. He lived here alone, with his servants, and was very desolate. When the children stopped under his window, he was lying on a velvet sofa near it, and, lifting himself up, he peeped out from behind the curtains just as Fred crept into his sister's arms; and he heard all they said.

"When your ship comes in, Sweetie, will it have turkeys and jellies in it?" said Willie, leaning against her.

"Yes, indeed," said Sweetie. "There will be turkeys almost as big as Jennie, and a great deal fatter."

"But it's so long coming, Sweetie; you tell us every time it *will* come, and it never *comes* at all."

"O, no, Freddy. I don't ever say it *will* come, but it's nice to think what we would do if it should come—isn't it?"

"We'd buy a great white house, like this—wouldn't we, Sweetie?"

"No, Willie. I'd rather buy that nice little store over by the church, that's been shut up so long, and has FOR SALE on the door. I'd furnish it all nice, and fill the shelves with beautiful goods, and trimmings for ladies' dresses, and lovely toys. It shows so far that everybody would be sure to buy their Christmas things there. It's just the dearest little place, with two cosy rooms back of the shop, and three overhead; and I'd put flour and sugar, and tea and coffee, and all sorts of goodies, in the kitchen cupboard, and new clothes for all of us in the closets up stairs. Then I'd kindle a fire, and light the lamps, and lock the door, and go back to the dreary old garret once more—poor mother would be sitting there, sad and sober, as she always is now, and I would say to her, 'Come, mother, before you light the candle, Jennie and I want you to go with us, and look at the lovely Christmas gifts in the shop windows.' Then she'd say, sorrowfully, 'I don't want to see them, dear; I can't buy any of them for you, and I don't want to look at them.' But I'd tease her till I made her go; and I'd leave Harry, who would know all about it beforehand, to lock up the dismal old room, and bring all the rest of you over to the new house. You'd get there long before we did, and the light would be streaming out from the little shop windows—O, so bright! 'Mother,' I'd say, 'let's go in here, and buy the cotton you wanted;' and when I got her in, I'd shut the door quick, and dance up and down, and say, 'Dear mother. Sweetie's ship's come in, and brought you this new home, and everything comfortable; and Sweetie will tend the shop, and you needn't sew any more day and night, for it's going to be—' 'A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for us—every one!' Harry and all of you would shout, and our dear mother would cry for joy."

"Will it come to pass soon, Sweetie?" asked both the boys at once.

"Not very, I'm afraid," answered Sweetie, in a subdued tone; but, when she saw their look of disappointment, she brightened up in a moment, and added, "It'll be all the better, when it does come, for waiting so long—but look here! To-night is Christmas Eve, and we've got coal enough here to make a splendid fire. We won't light it till dark, and then it will last us all the evening. And I've got a great secret to tell you: Harry made a whole dollar yesterday, and mother is going to give us each three big slices of fried mush, and bread besides, for supper; and, after supper, I'll tell you the prettiest story you ever heard, and we'll sing every song we know, and I guess we'll have a merry Christmas if nobody else does."

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HOW SWEETIE'S SHIP CAME IN.

"I wish it was Christmas all the time," said Freddy, faintly.

"Christ was born that day," said Sweetie, softly, "and that makes it best of all."

"Yes," said Willie; "the dear Lord who came from Heaven and, for our sakes, became poor, and had not where to lay his head, not even a garret as good as ours—"

"I know," said Freddy; "he was born in a manger, and a beautiful star shined right over it. I can sing a hymn about it."

Then they picked up their bag, and started for home, gay as larks over the prospect of the treat they were to have that night—fried mush and a fire! that was all, you know.

Mr. Rogers, concealed by the heavy silk curtains, had heard every word they said, and his eyes were full of tears. He rang for his servant.

"Harris," said he, when the man came in, "follow those children, find out where they live, and what their neighbors say of the family."

When he was left alone again, he began to think,—

"Rich as I am, I have never yet done any great good to anybody. Who knows but God may have sent those children under my window to teach me that, instead of my own lost darlings, he means me to care for these and other suffering little ones who live in the lanes and alleys of this great city!"

Harris soon came back, and told his master what he had learned about the circumstances of the family; and he added,—

"Everybody calls the oldest girl Sweetie, and they do say she's as good as gold."

Mr. Rogers went out, and, before night, had bought the little corner store, for which Sweetie had longed. Then, calling his servants together, he related what he had overheard the children say, and told them how anxious he was to grant Sweetie's wish, and let her take her mother to her new home on Christmas Day.

"But I cannot do it," said Mr. Rogers, "unless you are willing to help me work on Christmas Eve, for there is a great deal to be done."

No one could refuse to aid in so good a cause; and besides, Mr. Rogers was always so considerate of his servants that they were glad to oblige him. They all went to work with a will, and soon the little house and store were put in perfect order.

There were ribbons, laces, buttons, needles, pins, tapes, and, indeed, all sorts of useful things in the store. In the cellar were coal and wood, two whole hams, a pair of chickens, and a turkey. The kitchen pantry was stocked with sugar and flour. There was one barrel of potatoes, and another of the reddest apples. Up stairs the closets and bureaus were bursting with nice things to wear, not quite made into garments, but ready to be made, as soon as Sweetie and her mother got time.

So rapidly and so completely was everything arranged, that it seemed as if one of those good fairies, of whom Sweetie had so often told the children, had been at work.

"The money this has cost me," thought Mr. Rogers, "will make a family of six happy, and do them good all the rest of their lives. I am glad the thought has come to my heart to celebrate Christ's birthday in so pleasant a way."

Late in the afternoon he picked his way through the dull, dirty alley to the old gray house where Sweetie lived. As he went up the worn and dusty stairway, he heard the children singing their Christmas songs.

"Poor little things!" said he; and the tears stood in his eyes. "Happy even in this miserable place, while I know so many surfeited with luxuries, and yet pining and discontented!" [101]

Harry jumped to open the door as he knocked; and Mr. Rogers, entering, apologized to the children's mother for his intrusion by saying he had come to ask a favor.

"It is but little we can do for any one, sir," replied Mrs. Lawson; "but anything in our power will be cheerfully done."

"Even if I propose to carry off this little girl of yours for a while?" he asked; but, seeing the troubled look in the other children's faces, he hastened to explain.

"The truth is," said he, "having no little folks of my own, I thought I'd try and make other people's happy to-day; so I set out to get up a Christmas tree; but I find I don't know how to go to work exactly, and I want Sweetie to help me."

He spoke so sadly when he said he had no children of his own, that Sweetie could not refuse to go.

"O, yes, sir," said she; "I'll go; that is, if I may come back this evening—for I couldn't disappoint Freddy and all of them, you know!"

"They shan't be disappointed, I promise you," said Mr. Rogers, as he took her down stairs.

"Why, I never was in a carriage in all my life," said Sweetie, as he lifted her into his beautiful clarence, and sat down beside her.

"I shouldn't wonder if you should ride in a carriage pretty often now," said Mr. Rogers, "for your ship's coming in."

Sweetie couldn't tell whether she was in a dream or not. Half crying, half laughing, her face flushed with surprise, she asked,—

"How did you know?"

"Know what?" said her friend, enjoying her bewilderment.

"Why," she answered, "about the way I keep up the children's spirits, and make them forget they are hungry and cold, while I tell them about my ship coming in?"

"A little bird told me," said he, and then was quiet.

Sweetie did not like to ask any more; so she sat quite still, leaning back in one corner of the carriage, among the soft, crimson cushions, and watched the people in the street, thinking how happy she was, and how strange it was that little Katie Lawson should be riding with a grand gentleman in a splendid carriage!

Suddenly, with a whirl and a turn, they stopped before a house. Mr. Rogers lifted her out, and led her up the broad steps; and she found he was taking her into the beautiful white house, under the windows of which she had sat with Willie and Fred the day before.

"Now," said Mr. Rogers, rolling a comfortable arm-chair for Sweetie in front of a glowing fire, "while you are getting warm, and eating your dinner, I am going to tell you about my Christmas tree, and how your ship came in."

A little table was brought in, and set between them, filled with so many delicacies, that Sweetie's head grew dizzy at the sight. She thought of her little hungry brothers and sister, and would rather not have eaten, but Mr. Rogers made her.

"My little girl," said he, finally, "never forget this: God always rewards a faithful heart. If he seems to be a long time without caring for his children, he never forgets or forsakes them."

Then he told her that he had overheard her conversation with her brothers under his window, and that God had suddenly put it into his heart to take care of some of the poor and fatherless in that great city. "And I am going to begin with Sweetie," said he, very tenderly; "and this is the way her ship shall come in. She shall have a new home to give to her mother for a Christmas present, and the boys shall sing their Christmas hymns to-night in the bright little parlor of the corner store, instead of the dingy old garret; and here are the deeds made out in Katie Lawson's own name, and nobody can take it away from her. But come, little woman," he added,—for Sweetie was sobbing for joy, and could not thank him,—"go and wash your face, for the horses are tired of standing in the cold, and we must go and fetch the boys, or I shall never get my Christmas tree set up."

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An old lady, with a face beaming with kindness,—it was Mr. Rogers's housekeeper,—then took Sweetie, and not only washed her tear-stained cheeks, but curled her soft brown hair, and put on her the loveliest blue dress, with boots to match. All the time she was dressing her, Sweetie, who could not believe her senses, kept murmuring,—

"It's only a dream; it's too good to be true; the boys won't believe it, I know; it's just like a fairy story, and, of course, it's only pretending."

"No, indeed," said the old lady; "it's really true, my dear, and I hope you'll be so grateful and kind to Mr. Rogers that he won't be so lonely as he has been without his own dear little children."

Sweetie could hardly realize her own good fortune; and, when she went down into the parlor, she burst into tears again, saying,—

"O, sir, I can't believe it. I am so happy!"

"So am I, Sweetie," said Mr. Rogers; and really it was hard to tell which was the happier—it is always so much more blessed to give than to receive. Together they rode to the new home, and laughed and cried together as they went all over it. After they had been up stairs, and down stairs, and in my lady's chamber, as Mr. Rogers said, he put her into the carriage again.

"James," said he to the coachman, "you are under this young lady's orders to-night, and must drive carefully."

Then, kissing Sweetie, he put the key of her new home into her hand, and, telling her he should want her help to-morrow about his Christmas tree, he bade her good night.

James drove Sweetie home, for the last time, to the dilapidated old house. She ran up stairs, Freddy said afterwards, "just as Harry always did when he'd had a good day." "Mother and children," said she, "Mr. Rogers, the kind gentleman who was here, has sent me back in his carriage to take you all to see something beautiful he has been showing me. Harry, you be the gentleman of the house, and hand mother and Jennie to the carriage, and I'll come right along."

She stopped long enough—this good child, who, even in her own good fortune, did not forget the misfortunes of others—to run into the next room, where an old woman lived, who was a cripple, and whose daughter supported her by sewing.

“Mrs. Jones,” said she, hurriedly, “a kind gentleman has given us a new home, and we are going to it to-night, never to come back here to live any more. Our old room, with the rent paid for a year, and all there is in it, I want you to take as a Christmas present from Sweetie; and I wish you a Happy, happy New Year, and please give this to Milly;” and, slipping a five-dollar bill, which Mr. Rogers had given her, into the old woman’s hand, she ran out, and jumped into the carriage. The street lamps blinked at them, like so many stars, as they rolled along, and the boys and Jennie screamed with delight; but Sweetie sat quite still.

James knew where to stop. Sweetie got out first, and ran and unlocked the door of the little corner store. When they were all inside, and before any one had time to ask a question, Sweetie threw her arms about her mother’s neck. [103]

“Mother,” she cried, “Sweetie’s ship’s come in; but it never would have come if it had not been for Mr. Rogers; and it’s brought you this pretty house and shop for your own, and, please God, we’ll all have—”

“A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!” shouted Willie, ending her sentence just as she had ended the story the day before.

“And all the better,” said Fred, who remembered too, “because Christ was born that day.”

Mrs. Lawson, overwhelmed with joy, fainted. She soon recovered, however, though Sweetie insisted on her lying on the soft lounge before the fire, while she set the table. How pretty it looked, with its six purple and white plates, and cups and everything to match! How they did eat! How happy they were!

“Now,” said Mrs. Lawson, when the dishes were washed, and they all sat round the fire, “my little Sweetie, whose patience, and courage, and cheerfulness have kept up the hearts of the rest of us, and proved the ship that has brought us this cargo of comforts, you must tell us your Christmas story before we go to bed.”

So Sweetie told them all Mr. Rogers had said and done for her. They were so excited they sat up very late, and happiness made them sleep so soundly, that they did not wake till the sun was shining brightly into the little shop. People began to come in very early, to make little purchases. One lady bought a whole dollar’s worth of toys, which made them feel as if they were full of business already.

Later in the forenoon, Mr. Rogers sent for Harry and Sweetie to come and help dress his Christmas tree; and Christmas night his parlor was filled with poor children, for each of whom some useful gift hung on the tree. Milly was there by Sweetie’s invitation, and Mr. Rogers sent her home in his carriage, with the easiest chair that money could buy for her old lame mother. The tears filled his eyes as Milly thanked him again and again for all his kindness; and, as he shut the door after the last one, he said,—

“Hereafter I will make it always a Merry Christmas for God’s needy ones.”

I am sure he did, for he had Sweetie always near him. He used to call her his “Christmas Sweeting;” and then she would laugh, and say he was her “Golden Sweeting.”

What is better than gold he gave the family: he found patrons for Mrs. Lawson, and customers for the shop, and placed Harry in a mercantile house, where he soon rose to be head clerk. The other children he put at school. Sweetie he never would let go very far out of his sight. He had her thoroughly and usefully educated, and no less than her mother, and brothers, and sister, did he bless the day when “Sweetie’s ship came in”—

A ship which brought for every day
A welcome hope, an added joy,
A something sweet to do or say,
And hosts of pleasures unalloyed,

Its cargo, made of pleasant cares,
Of daily duties to be done,
Of smiles and laughter, songs and prayers,
The glad, bright life of Happy Ones.

MARGARET FIELD.



NOTHING TO DO.

NOTHING TO DO.

[105]

I HAVE sailed my boat and spun my top,
And handled my last new ball;
I trundled my hoop till I had to stop,
And I swung till got a fall;
I tumbled my books all out of the shelves,
And hunted the pictures through;
I've flung them where they may sort themselves,
And now—I have nothing to do.

The tower of Babel I built of blocks
Came down with a crash to the floor;
My train of cars ran over the rocks—
I'll warrant they'll run no more;
I have raced with Grip till I'm out of breath;
My slate is broken in two,
So I can't draw monkeys. I'm tired to death
Because I have nothing to do.

I can see where the boys have gone to fish;
They bothered me, too, to go,
But for fun like that I hadn't a wish,
For I think it's mighty "slow"
To sit all day at the end of a rod
For the sake of a minnow or two,
Or to land, at the farthest, an eel on the sod:
I'd rather have nothing to do.

Maria has gone to the woods for flowers,
And Lucy and Rose are away
After berries. I'm sure they've been out for hours;
I wonder what makes them stay?
Ned wanted to saddle Brunette for me,
But riding is nothing new;
"I was thinking you'd relish a canter," said he,
"Because you have nothing to do."

I wish I was poor Jim Foster's son,
For he seems so happy and gay,
When his wood is chopped and his work all done,
With his little half hour of play;
He neither has books nor top nor ball,
Yet he's singing the whole day through;
But then he is never tired at all
Because he has nothing to do.

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TWO GENTLEMEN IN FURS.

TWO "GENTLEMEN IN FUR CLOAKS."

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THIS is the name given to the bears in Kamschatka by the Laplanders, who think they will be offended if they are called by their real name; and we may give the same name to the bears in the picture. They are Polar bears, who live in the seas round the North Pole, and fine white fur coats they have of their own. They are white on purpose, so that they may not be seen easily among all the snow and ice in which they live. The head of the Polar bear is very long and flat, the mouth and ears are small in comparison with other bears, the neck is long and thick, and the sole of the foot very large. Perhaps you will wonder how the bear manages to walk on the ice, as nobody is very likely to give him skates or snow-boots. To be sure, he has strong, thick claws, but they would not be of much use—they would only make him slip on the hard ice—but the sole of the foot is covered nearly all over with thick, woolly hair, so the bear walks as safely as old ladies do when they wrap list round their boots.

The Polar bear likes to eat fish, though he will eat roots and berries when he can get no better, and he is a very good swimmer; he can dive, too, and make long leaps in the water. If he wants a boat, he has only to get on a loose piece of ice, and then he can float about at his ease.

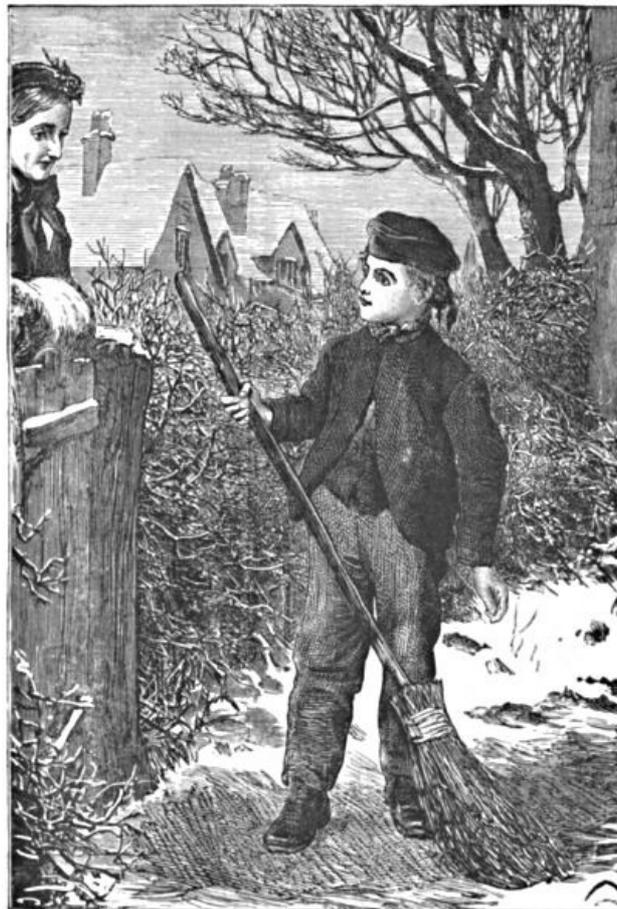
This is a full-grown bear, of course. Young bears cannot do all these things; they have to stay with their mothers on shore, where they eat seals and seaweed; the seaweed is their vegetable, I suppose. When the young bears travel and get tired, they get on their mother's back, and ride there quite safely, whether in the water or on land.

Bears are very fond of their young, and will do anything to defend them. There is a story told of a poor mother-bear and her two cubs which is almost too sad to tell, but it will make us think kindly of the bear, so I will tell it to you.

Years ago a ship which had gone to the North Pole to make discoveries got fixed tight in the ice; one morning, while the ship was still unable to get loose, a man at the lookout gave warning that three bears were coming across the ice toward the ship. The crew had killed a walrus a few days before, and no doubt the bears had smelled it. The flesh of the walrus was roasting in a fire on the ice, and two of the bears ran eagerly to it, dragged out the bits that were not burnt, and began to eat them; they were the cubs, but were almost as large as their mother.

The sailors threw some more of the flesh they had on board on to the ice. These the old bear fetched; and putting them before her cubs, she divided them, giving them each a large piece, and only keeping a small bit for herself. When she came to fetch the last piece the sailors shot at the cubs, killing them; they also wounded the mother, but not mortally; the poor mother never thought of herself, only of her cubs. They were not quite dead, only dying, and she crawled to where they lay, with the lump of meat she had fetched, and put it down before them, as she had done the first time. When she found they did not eat, she took hold first of one, then of the other, and tried to lift them up, moaning pitifully all the time, as if she thought it would be of no use. Then she went a little way off and looked back. But the cubs were dead now, and could not move, so she went back to them and began to lick their wounds. Once more she crawled away from them, and then again came back, and went round and round them, pawing them and moaning. At last she seems to have found out that they were dead; and turning to the ship, she raised her head and uttered a loud growl of anger and despair. The cruel sailors fired at her in reply, and she fell between her poor dead cubs, and died licking their wounds.

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THE FAITHFUL BOY.

CHARLIE'S ESCAPE.

[109]

I HAVE some boy-cousins living in the country of whom I think a great deal. They write me letters quite often. I can hardly tell whose letters give me the most pleasure, the "big boys," who write me about their school, their colts and calves, their good times on the holidays, or the little printed letters I get from the "small boys," telling me how many chickens they have and that they love me. I am sure I love them *all*, and hope they will grow to be good, true men.

Charlie is one of the "big boys." Not *very* big, either—just thirteen years old, and rather small and slight for his years. A few weeks ago a neighbor of his father's was going away, and got Charlie to do "the chores" for him during his absence—feed the young cattle, milk the cow and keep things in order about the barn. Charlie is an obliging boy, so he performed his task

faithfully. If I had time, boys, I would just like to stop here and give you a little lecture on faithfulness, with Charlie for a model, for he *is* a “faithful boy.” But I want to tell my story. For two or three days Charlie went each morning to his neighbor’s barn, and after milking the cow turned all the creatures to pasture, and every night drove them home again. One morning, as he stood by the bars waiting for them all to pass out, a frisky year-old calf—“a yearling” the farmers call them—instead of going orderly over the bars, as a well-disposed calf should, just gave a side jump and shook her horns at Charlie. “Over with you!” called Charlie, and waved his hand at her. Miss Yearling either fancied this an insult or an invitation to single combat, for she again lowered her head and ran at Charlie, who had no stick, and so thought best to run from the enemy. He started for the stable door, but in his hurry and fright he could not open it, and while fumbling at the latch the creature made another attack. Charlie dodged her again, and one of her horns pierced the door nearly an inch. Again she ran at him, and with her nose “bunted” him off his feet. Charlie was getting afraid now, and called out to the folks in the house, “Oh, come and help me!” and right then he bethought him of something he had read in his father’s “Agriculturist” about a boy in similar danger, who saved himself by grasping the cow’s horns that had attacked him. So just as the yearling was about to try again if she could push him over, he took fast hold of each horn. But his situation was getting *very unpleasant*, for he was penned up in a corner, with the barn behind him, a high fence on one side and the now angry heifer in front. He had regained his feet, but was pushed and staggered about, for he was fast losing his strength. No wonder his voice had a quiver in it as he again shouted as loud as he could, “Oh, do come quick!” The lady in the house was busy getting breakfast, and heard no sound. A lady-visitor in one of the chambers heard the first call, but thought it only boys at play. By and by the distressed shout again smote her ears, and this time she heard the words, “Help me!” She ran down stairs to the housekeeper, who opened the outside door and listened. Charlie’s voice was weak and faint now, and the fear came to the lady that he had fallen into the barn cellar. She ran quickly to the great door of the barn. “Where are you, Charlie?” “Come to the stable door,” answered back a faint, trembling voice. She quickly ran through the barn to that door, but she could not open it at first, for the heifer had pushed herself around till she stood broadside against the door. But the lady pushed hard and got the door open a little way, and seizing the big stable broom hit the naughty animal two or three heavy whacks that made her move around; and as soon as she opened the door wide, Charlie let go her horns, and she (the heifer), not liking the big broom-handle, turned and ran off as fast as her legs could go. The lady helped Charlie up and into the house, for he could hardly stand. He was bruised and lame, and the breath had almost left him. But after resting a while and taking some good warm drink, he tried to walk home; and though the lady helped him, he found it hard work, for he was so sore and bruised. Charlie’s mother was frightened enough to see her boy come home leaning on their neighbor’s arm and looking so pale. She helped him undress and lie down, and then she did just what your mother, little reader-boy, would do if you had such an escape as Charlie’s. She put her arms around her boy and said, “Let us thank the good Lord that you were not killed, my boy.” And do you think Charlie will ever forget his escape? I don’t. And I hope he will always thank “the good Lord” not only for the escape, but for his every blessing.

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I AM COMING!

I AM coming! I am coming! sings the robin on the wing;
Soon the gates of spring will open; where you loiter I
will sing;
Turn your thoughts to merriest music, send it ringing
down the vale,
Where the yellow-bird is waiting on the old brown
meadow-rail.

I am coming! I am coming! sings the summer from afar;
And her voice is like the shining of some silver-mantled
star;
In it breathes the breath of flowers, in it hides the dawn of
day,
In it wake the happy showers of the merry, merry May!

DAISY’S TEMPTATION.

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I DON’T think grandma would ever know it. I could just slip them into my pocket and put them on after I get there as e-a-sy! I’ll do it;” and Daisy Dorsey lifted her grandma’s gold beads from a box on her lap. She clasped them about her chubby neck and stood before the mirror, talking softly to herself. “How nice it will be!” she said, drawing up her little figure till only the tip of her nose was visible in the glass. “And Jimmy Martin will let me fly his kite instead of Hetty Lee. Hetty Lee, indeed! I don’t believe she ever had any grandmother—not such a grandmother as mine, anyway.”

Then the proud little Daisy fell to thinking of the verse her mother had read to her that morning, about the dear Father in heaven who sees us always, and the blessed angels who are so holy and so pure.

“And I promised mamma I would be so good and try so hard to do right always. No, no; I can’t do it. Lie there, little pretty gold beads. Daisy loves you, but she wants to be good too. So good-bye, dear little, bright gold beads,” laying them softly back in the drawer and turning away with her eyes like violets in the rain.

Now, it so happened that good Grandma Ellis had heard every word Daisy had said, had seen her take the beads from their box in the drawer, knew just how her darling was tempted and how she had conquered pride and evil desire in her little heart, for she was in her bath-room, adjoining her chamber; and the door being ajar, she could hear and see all that Daisy said and did.

How glad she was when she heard her say, “I can’t do it. Good-bye, pretty gold beads!” and she felt so sorry, too, for the great tears in the sweet blue eyes.

Daisy wore the coral beads to the picnic, and no child had a merrier day than she, for she had struggled with temptation, had overcome through the loving Father’s aid, and so was happy, as we all are when we do right.

That evening, when the harvest-moon lifted its bright face to the bosom of the east, Grandma Ellis sat in her old-fashioned high-backed chair thinking.

Such a pretty picture she made, too, with her light shawl draped gracefully over her shoulders, her kerchief and cap so snowy, and her sweet face so full of God’s love and his divinest peace!

In her hands she held the gold beads, and there was something very like tears in her gray eyes, for the necklace had a history that only grandma knew—she and one other, whose face that night was far away where they need no light of the moon, nor of the sun, for God is the light of the place.

“Come here, Daisy,” she said, presently. “Come to grandma.”

The little creature flew like a bird, for she loved the sound of that dear old voice; and besides, Daisy was a happy child that night, and in her heart the singing-birds of content and joy kept up a merry music of their own.

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DAISY’S TEMPTATION.

Grandma Ellis threw the little necklace over Daisy’s head as she came toward her, and lifting her to her knee and kissing her glad eyes said, speaking low and softly, [113]

"That is for my Daisy to keep always, for grandma's sake. It is not just the ornament for your little dear neck in these days, but keep it always, because grandma loved it and gave it to her darling that would not deceive her, even for the sake of flying Jimmy Martin's kite at the picnic."

Then Daisy was sure grandma knew all about her sad temptation, and how she had coveted the bright gold beads for just one little day. Now they were to be hers for ever, and half for shame, half for very joy, Daisy hid her curly head in grandma's bosom and sobbed aloud.

"Hush, darling!" grandma said; "we are all tempted to do wrong sometimes, and the dear Father in heaven suffers this to be that we may grow stronger through resistance. Now, if you had yielded to the voice of pride and desire this morning, do you think you could have been happy to-day, even with the necklace and flying Jimmy's kite?"

"No, no! Oh, grandma, forgive me!" sobbed the little voice from grandma's bosom.

"Yes, dear, as I am sure God does, who saw how you were sorely tried and surely conqueror. Kiss me good-night now; and when you have said your 'Now I lay me,' add, 'Dear Father, help grandma's Daisy to be good and happy always.'"

An hour later, with the gold beads still about her neck, Daisy in her little bed was dreaming of the beautiful fields and flowers that are for ever fadeless in the land we name eternal; and the blessed angels, guarding her slumber and seeing the smile upon her happy lips, were glad because of Daisy's temptation, for they knew that the dear child would be stronger and purer and better because she had overcome.

ANSWER TO A CHILD'S QUESTION.

DO you ask what the birds say? The sparrow, the dove,
The linnet and thrush say "I love and I love!"
In the winter they're silent, the wind is so strong;
What it says I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves and blossoms and sunny warm weather,
And singing and loving, all come back together.
But the lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings and he sings, and for ever sings he,
"I love my love, and my love loves me."



NELLY'S GARDEN.

WHAT NELLY GAVE AWAY.

[115]

NELLY RAY was a bright, brave-hearted little girl, whom no one could help loving.

Singing like a lark in the morning, wearing sweet smiles on her face all day, cheerful even when the shadows fell, it would have been strange indeed if her humble home had not seemed like a bit of paradise, and the ground under her feet had not blossomed like the rose.

It was a pleasant day in the early spring, when the grass was just lifting itself above the moist earth, when the soft south wind was blowing among the tender little leaves of the lilac bushes, when the birds were busy building their nests, when the merry little brook was beginning its song and the great round world looked glad and bright, that Nelly began to make her garden.

Her father had dug the ground and made it ready for her, and so she took her little red basket full of seeds of different kinds, each kind tied up by itself and labelled, and down in the little beds she dropped candy-tuft, and phlox, and lady-slippers.

How happy she was at her work! Her cheeks were the color of ripe peaches, her eyes were as sweet as twin violets, and her little mouth was like a fresh rosebud, but better and brighter far than the cheeks and lips was the light of kindness that shone in her eyes.

Her sister Jennie, who sat sewing by the window, watched her with loving interest.

"Mother," she said, at length, looking up from her work, "do you know what a generous little girl our Nelly would be if she was only a rich man's child?"

"Is she not generous now, Jennie?" asked her mother.

"Oh yes, surely she is. But I was thinking how much good she would do, and how much she would give away, if only we were not poor."

She saw that her mother was smiling softly to herself.

"She gives away more now, of course, than some rich children do. Just think how faithfully she works in that little garden, so as to have flowers to give away! I do not believe there is a house anywhere near us into which sickness or poverty comes where her simple flowers will not go."

"Did you ever think, dear Jennie, of the other garden which Nelly weeds and waters every day?"

"No, mother. What garden do you mean?"

"The garden of her heart, my dear child. You know that the rain which the clouds take from the lakes and rivers comes back to refresh and beautify our fields and gardens; and so it is with our little Nelly's good deeds and kind, loving words. She gives away more than a handful of violets, for with them goes a bright smile, which is like sunshine to the sick heart. She gives more than a bunch of roses, for with them always goes a kind word. And doing these little things, she gets a large reward. Her own heart grows richer."

A STRANGE COMBAT.

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WE are told that the old Romans greatly delighted in witnessing the combats of wild beasts, as well as gladiators, and that they used to ransack their whole broad empire for new and unheard-of animals—anything and everything that had fierceness and fight in it. Those vast amphitheatres, like the Coliseum, were built to gratify these rather sanguinary tastes in that direction.

But I doubt whether even the old Romans, with all their large experience, ever beheld so strange and grotesque a "set-to" (I'm pretty sure none of our American boys ever did) as the writer once stumbled upon, on the shores of one of our Northern Maine lakes—Lake Pennessewassee, if you can pronounce that; it trips up editors sometimes.

I had been spending the day in the neighboring forest, hunting for a black squirrel I had seen there the evening before, having with me a great, red-shirted lumberman, named Ben—Ben Murch. And not finding our squirrel, we were making our way, towards evening, down through the thick alders which skirted the lake, to the shore, in the hope of getting a shot at an otter, or a mink, when all at once a great sound, a sort of *quock, quock*, accompanied by a great splashing of the water, came to our ears.

"Hush!" ejaculated Ben, clapping his hand to his ear (as his custom was), to catch the sound. "Hear that? Some sort of a fracas."

And cautiously pushing through the dense copse, a very singular and comical spectacle met our eyes. For out some two or three rods from the muddy, grassy shore stood a tall, a very tall bird,—somewhere from four to five feet, I judged,—with long, thin, black legs, and an awkward body, slovenly clad in dull gray-blue plumage. The neck was as long as the legs, and the head small, and nearly bare, with a long, yellowish bill. Standing knee deep in the muddied water, it was, on the whole, about the most ungainly-looking fowl you can well imagine; while on a half-buried tree trunk, running out towards it into the water, crouched a wiry, black creature, of about average dog size, wriggling a long, restless tail, and apparently in the very act of springing at the long-legged biped in the water. Just now they were eying each other very intently; but from the splashed and bedraggled appearance of both, it was evident there had been recent hostilities, which, judging from the attitude of the combatants, were about to be renewed.

"Show!" exclaimed Ben, peering over my shoulder from behind. "An old *hairn*—ain't it? Regular old *pokey*. Thought I'd heered that *quock* before. And that creatur'? Let's see. Odd-looking chap. Wish he'd turn his head this way. Fisher—ain't it? Looks like one. Should judge that's a fisher-cat. What in the world got them at loggerheads, I wonder?"

By "hairn" Ben meant *heron*, the great blue heron of American waters—*Ardea Herodias* of the naturalists. And fisher, or fisher-cat, is the common name among hunters for Pennant's marten, or the *Mustela canadensis*, a very fierce carnivorous animal, of the weasel family, growing from three to four feet in length, called also "the black cat."

The fisher had doubtless been the assailant, though both had now that intent, tired-down air which marks a long fray. He had probably crept up from behind, while old long-shanks was quietly frogging along the shore.

But he had found his intended victim a game one. The heron had a character to sustain; and although he might easily have flown away, or even waded farther out, yet he seemed to scorn to do either.

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Not an inch would it budge, but stood with its long, javelin-like beak poised, ready to strike into the fisher's eye, uttering, from moment to moment, that menacing, guttural *quock*, which had first attracted our attention.

This sound, mingling with the eager snarling and fretting of the cat, made the most dismal and incongruous duet I had ever listened to. For some moments they stood thus threatening and defying each other; but at length, lashing itself up to the proper pitch of fury, the fisher jumped at his antagonist with distended jaws, to seize hold of the long, slender throat. One bite at the heron's slim neck would settle the whole affair. But this attempt was very adroitly balked by the plucky old wader's taking a long step aside, when the fisher fell into the water with a great splash, and while struggling back to the log, received a series of strokes, or, rather, stabs, from the long, pointed beak, dealt down with wonderful swiftness, and force, too; for we distinctly heard them *prod* into the cat's tough hide, as he scrambled upon the log, and ran spitting up the bank. This defeat, however, was but temporary, as any one acquainted with the singular persistence and perseverance of the whole weasel family will readily guess. The fisher had soon

worked his way down the log again, the heron retiring to his former position in the water.

Another succession of quocks and growlings, and another spring, with even less success, on the side of the cat. For this time the heron's bill wounded one of his eyes; and as he again retreated up the log, we could see the bloody tears trickling down over his shaggy jowl.

Thus far the battle seemed favorable to the heron; but the fisher again rallied, and, now thoroughly maddened, rushed down the log, and leaped blindly upon his foe. Again and again his attacks were parried. The snarling growls now rose to shrieks, and the croaking quocks to loud, dissonant cries.

"Faugh!" muttered Ben. "Smell his breath—fisher's breath—clean here. Always let that out somehow when they're mad."

Even at our distance, that strong, fetid odor, sometimes perceptible when a cat spits, could plainly be discerned.

"Old *hairn* seems to be having the best of it," continued Ben. "I bet on him. How cool he keeps! Fights like a machine. See that bill come down now! Look at the marks it makes, too!" For the blood, oozing out through the thick fur of the cat in more than a dozen spots, was attesting the prowess of the heron's powerful beak.

But at length, with a sudden bound upward, the fisher fell with his whole weight upon the back of his lathy antagonist. Old long-legs was upset, and down they both went in the water, where a prodigious scuffle ensued. Now one of the heron's big feet would be thrust up nearly a yard; then the cat would come to the top, sneezing and strangling; and anon the heron's long neck would loop up in sight, bending and doubling about in frantic attempts to peck at its foe, its cries now resembling those of a hen when seized in the night, save that they were louder and harsher. Over and over they floundered and rolled. The mud and water flew about. Long legs, shaggy paws, wet, wriggling tail, and squawking beak, fur and feathers—all turning and squirming in inextricable confusion. It was hard telling which was having the best of the *mêlée*, when, on a sudden, the struggle stopped, as if by magic.

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"One or t'other has given in," muttered Ben.

Looking more closely, we saw that the fisher had succeeded in getting the heron's neck into his mouth. One bite had been sufficient. The fray was over. And after holding on a while, the victor, up to his back in water, began moving towards the shore, dragging along with him, by the neck, the body of the heron, whose great feet came trailing after at an astonishing distance behind. To see him, wet as a drowned rat, tugging up the muddy bank with his ill-omened and unsightly prey, was indeed a singular spectacle. Whatever had brought on this queer contest, the fisher had won—fairly, too, for aught I could see; and I hadn't it in my heart to intercept his retreat. But Ben, to whom a "black cat" was particularly obnoxious, from its nefarious habit of robbing traps, had no such scruples, and, bringing up his rifle with the careless quickness of an old woodsman, fired before I could interpose a word. The fisher dropped, and after writhing and snapping a few moments, stretched out—dead.

Leaving Ben to take off its skin,—for the fur is worth a trifle,—I was strolling along the shore, when upon coming under a drooping cedar, some six or seven rods from the scene of the fight, another large heron sprang out of a clump of brambles, and stalked off with a croak of distrust. It at once occurred to me that there might be a nest here; and opening the brambles, lo, there it was, a broad, clumsy structure of coarse sticks, some two or three feet from the ground, and lined with moss and water grasses. In it, or, rather, on it, were two chicks, heron chicks, uncouth

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little things, with long, skinny legs and necks, and sparsely clad with tufts of gray down. And happening to glance under the nest, I perceived an egg, lodged down among the bramble-stalks. It had probably rolled out of the nest. It struck me, however, as being a very small egg from so large a bird; and having a rule in my pocket, I found it to be but two and a half inches in length by one and a half in width. It was of a dull, bluish-white color, without spots, though rather rough and uneven. I took it home as a curiosity.

On the edge of the nest I saw several small perch, a frog, and a meadow-mouse, all recently brought, though the place had a suspicious odor of carrion.

All this while the old heron had stood at a little distance away, uttering now and then an ominous croak. I could easily have shot it from where I stood, but thought the family had suffered enough for one day.

The presence of the nest accounted for the obstinacy with which the old male heron had contested the ground with the fisher.

Both old birds are said to sit by turns upon the eggs. But the nests are not always placed so near the ground as this one. Last summer, while fishing from the "Pappoose's Pond," I discovered one in the very top of a lofty Norway pine—a huge bunch of sticks and long grass, upon the edge of which one of the old herons was standing on one foot, perfectly motionless, with its neck drawn down, and seemingly asleep.

The artist who could have properly sketched that nest and bird would have made his fortune then and there.

C. A. STEPHENS.

LITTLE HOME-BODY.

LITTLE Home-body is mother's wee pet,
Fairest and sweetest of housekeepers yet;
Up when the roses in golden light peep,
Helping her mother to sew and to sweep.
Tidy and prim in her apron and gown,
Brightest of eyes, of the bonniest brown;
Tiniest fingers, and needle so fleet,
Pattern of womanhood, down at my feet!

Little Home-body is grave and demure,
Weeps when you speak of the wretched and poor,
Though she can laugh in the merriest way
While you are telling a tale that is gay.
Lily that blooms in some lone, leafy nook;
Sly little hide-away, moss-sided brook;
Fairies are fine, where the silver dew falls;
Home fairies—these are the best of them all!

GEORGE COOPER.



NEDDY AND HIS LAMB.

NEDDY'S HALF HOLIDAY.

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WE'VE had a good time, Tony, old fellow, haven't we?" said Neddy Harris, who was beginning to feel tired with his half day's ramble in the fields. As he said this he sat down on some boards in the barn.

Tony replied to his young master by rubbing his nose against his face, and by a soft "baa," which was as near as he could come to saying, "A first-rate time, Master Neddy."

"A grand good time," added the boy, putting his arms around the lamb's neck and laying his face on its soft wool.

"And now," he continued, "as father says we should always do, I'll just go back and think over what I've done this holiday afternoon; and if I forgot myself in anything and went wrong, it will be best for me to know it, so that I can do better next time.

"I'm sorry about that poor squirrel," said Neddy; "he never did me any harm. What a beautiful little creature he was, with his bright black eyes and shiny skin!"

And the boy's face grew sad, as well it might, for he had pelted this squirrel with stones from tree to tree, and at last knocked him to the ground.

"But it was so cruel in me! Now, if I live a hundred years, I'll never harm another squirrel. God made these frisky little fellows, and they've just as much right to live as I have."

Neddy felt better about the squirrel after this good resolution, which he meant to keep.

"That was curious about the spider," he went on, trying to push all thoughts of the dead squirrel from his mind. Let me tell you about this spider. In the corner of a fence Neddy saw a large circular spider's web, shaped like a funnel, down in the centre of which was a hole. As he stood looking at the delicate thing, finer than any woven silk, a fly struck against it and got his feet tangled, so that he could not escape. Instantly a great black spider ran out of the hole at the bottom of the web, and seizing the poor fly dragged him out of sight and made his dinner off of him.

Neddy dropped a piece of dry bark about the size of his thumb nail into the web, and it slipped down and covered the hole through which the spider had to come for his prey. Instantly the piece of bark was pushed up by the spider, who came out of his den and ran around on the slender cords of his web in a troubled kind of way. Then he tried to get back into his hidden chamber, but

the piece of bark covered the entrance like a shut door. And now Mr. Spider was in a terrible flurry. He ran wildly up one side of his web and down another; then he tugged at the piece of bark, trying to drag it out, but its rough edges took hold of the fine silken threads and tore them.

"You'll catch no more flies in that web, old chap," said Neddy as he stood watching the spider. [122]

But Neddy was mistaken. Spider did not belong to the give-up class. If the thing could not be done in one way, it might in another. He did not reason about things like human beings, but then he had instinct, as it is called, and that teaches animals how to get their food, how to build their houses or make their nests, and how to meet the dangers and difficulties that overtake them in life. After sitting still for a little while, spider went to work again, and this time in a surprising way. He cut a circle close around the piece of bark as neatly as you could have done with a pair of sharp scissors, and lo! it dropped to the ground, leaving a hole in the web about the size of a ten-cent piece.

"Rather hard on the web, Mr. Landpirate," said Neddy, laughing. "Flies can go through there as well as chips."

When he called the spider a land-pirate, Neddy was wrong. He was no more a pirate—that is, one who robs and murders—than is the woodpecker or swallow, for they feed on worms and insects. The spider was just as blameless in his work of catching and eating flies as was Neddy's white bantam when she went off into the fields after grasshoppers.

But Neddy's laugh at the spider was soon cut short. The most difficult part of his work was done when he got rid of the piece of bark. As soon as that was out of his way he began moving backward and forward over the hole he had cut in the web, just as if he were a weaver's shuttle, and in about ten minutes it was all covered with gauzy lacework finer than ever was worn by a queen.

"I'll give it up, old fellow," exclaimed Neddy, taking a long breath as he saw the work completed. "This just beats me out." Spider crept down into his den again to wait for another fly, and Neddy, leading Tony, went on his way pleased and wondering.

THE SPARROW.

THOU humblest bird that wings the air, the Master
cares for thee;
And if he cares for one so small, will he not care for
me?

His eye looks on thee from above, he notices thy fall;
And if he cares for such as thee, does he not care for all?

He feeds thee in the sweet spring-time, when skies are
bright and blue;
He feeds thee in the autumn-time, and in the winter too.

He leads thee through the pathless air, he guides thee in
thy flight;
He sees thee in the brightest day, and in the darkest
night.

Oh, if his loving care attends a bird so mean and small,
Will he not listen to my voice when unto him I call?



MRS. PIKE'S PRISONERS.

A TRUE STORY.

EARLY on a cloudy April afternoon, many years ago, several little girls were playing in a village door-yard, not far from the fence which separated it from a neighbor's. They were building a play-house of boards, and were so busily occupied, that none of them had noticed a lady standing at a little four-paned window in the house the other side of the fence, who had been intently regarding them for some time. The window was so constructed as to swing back like a door, and being now open, the lady's face was framed against the dark background of the room, producing the effect of a picture. 'Twas a strange face, sallow and curiously wrinkled, with a nose like the beak of a hawk, and large black eyes, which seemed to be endowed with the power of perpetual motion. These roved from one to another of the busy builders, till suddenly one of them seemed to be aware that some one was looking at her, and turned towards the little window.

"Ah, I know you, Wealthy Robbins! Come here a minute, my little dear," spoke the lady, in a shrill, quavering voice. And she beckoned to her with a hooked finger like a claw. But Wealthy shrank back, murmuring, "I don't want to," almost under her breath, and nudging with her elbow the nearest girl; "Hannah, Mrs. Pike wants something. See!"

"Is that you, Hannah Green? Come over here, and I'll give you a piece of my Passover candy." And the lady waved in the air a long candle-rod entwined with a strip of scarlet flannel, which made it look like a mammoth stick of peppermint candy.

This attracted the attention of all the girls, and going close to the fence, they peered through, while she besought them, with enticing promises and imploring eyes, to come around under the window, for she had something to tell them. [124]

"Don't let's go," whispered Mary Green, the oldest of the group. "Mother told me never to go near her window when she's standing there, for she's a crazy woman. That stick isn't candy no more than I am."

"Come, Sarah; I always knew you were a kind little girl," said Mrs. Pike, in a coaxing tone, to the youngest and smallest of the group; "*do* come here just a minute."

At last, Sarah Holmes and her sister Jane went around, and stood under the little window. Jane said it could do no harm just to go and see what Mrs. Pike wanted, and if *she* was shut up in jail, she guessed she'd want a good many things.

"Now, you dear little lambs, you see I'm all alone in the house; and they've gone away, and forgotten to give me my dinner; and I'm *very* hungry. All I want is a little unleavened bread, for this is Passover Day, you know. Well, you just climb in through the dining-room window, little Sarah,—Jane can help you,—and unlock my door, so I can go to the buttery and get some bread. Then I'll bring you out a nice saucer mince pie, and come back here, and you can lock me in. They'll never know; and I shall starve if you don't take pity on me."

After some whispering together, the little girls did as they were bidden, notwithstanding the warnings of their mates the other side of the fence. When they had disappeared from view, Mary Green turned away, and began to hammer, as though she was driving a nail into Mrs. Pike's head, or Jane Holmes's, or somebody's, ejaculating, "I guess they'll rue this day."

Which prophetic words came very near being verified at the moment they were spoken. For no sooner had Jane unlocked the door of Mrs. Pike's room, than out sprang that lady, and clutched one of the little girls with either hand, almost shrieking, "Ah, I know you! you belong to that wicked and rebellious tribe of Korah. Why didn't you come over to the help of the mighty immediately? Now, you shall see how *you* like dwelling in the Cave of Machpelah for a day and a night, and a month and a year, until He shall come whose right it is to reign."

And she thrust the trembling, awe-struck children into the room that had been her prison, and turned the key upon them. Then away she strode out of the house and up the street, a noticeable figure, truly, in her short yellow nankeen dress, with pantalets of the same, and neat white Quaker cap, with long white ribbons crossed under her chin, and carrying an immense umbrella over her head. It was strange that none of the nearest neighbors should see her pass. The front door was on the opposite side of the house from where the little girls were playing; so they did not observe her exit; and thus it happened that the crazy lady, who had been confined in the house for weeks, escaped without any check upon her triumphant progress. Busy women, seeing her from their windows, thought Mrs. Pike must be better again, to be out, and did wish her friends wouldn't let her walk the streets looking like a Dutch woman. Boys paused in their games almost respectfully, as she passed by; for notwithstanding her strange appearance and rapid movements, there was an air of mysterious command about the woman which checked any rudeness.

"There goes Madam Pike," exclaimed one ragged-kneed boy, when she had passed out of hearing. "Got on her ascension-robe—hasn't she? Wonder if that umberil will help her any? I say, boys, do you suppose all the saints that walk the streets of the new Jerusalem look like her?" [125]

While Mrs. Pike walked rapidly on, with a keen appreciation of the fresh air and occasional gleams of sunshine, the little prisoners drooped like two April violets plucked and thrown upon the ground. They were so frightened and awe-struck, that the idea of calling for help from the open window did not occur to them; and they crouched upon the floor, melancholy and mute. After a while, some odd-looking garments, hanging in a row on one side of the room, attracted their attention; but they did not dare to go near them at first. Mrs. Pike was what was called a Second Adventist, and had read the Bible and Apocrypha with a fiery zeal, and an earnest determination to find therein proof of what she believed, and had attended Second Advent meetings, and exhorted wherever she could get a hearing, until her poor brain was crazed. But lately her husband and friends had kept her in doors as much as possible; and she spent most of the time knitting ascension-ropes for the saints of the twelve tribes of the house of Judah. These were long garments, coming nearly to the feet, each of a single color, royal purple and blue being her favorites. She said that she must improve every moment, lest the great and dreadful day of the Lord should come, and she should not be ready, i. e., would not have a robe prepared for each of the saints to ascend in. When her son, a boy of twelve, died, she had him buried by the front doorstep, so, when the procession of saints should pass out at the door, Erastus could join them immediately, and not have to come from the burying-ground, a mile away.

It was after sunset when Mr. Pike passed along the village street, on his way home, and was informed by a good woman, standing at her gate, that his wife had gone by about one o'clock, and that, not long after, Jane and Sarah Holmes were missed. Some little girls they had been playing with had seen them get into Mr. Pike's house through the dining-room window, and that was the last that had been seen or heard of them. Mrs. Holmes was going on dreadfully; for she thought that, as likely as not, Madam Pike had thrown them down in the well, or hid them where they would never be found, and then run away. The bewildered man hurried home to harness his horse, and go in search of his wife; for, with a trust in her better nature, worthy of a woman, he believed that she would tell him where the children were, if she knew. Fortunately, he found her in a tavern about a mile from home, preaching, as the children would say. As usual, she was exhorting her hearers to prepare for the great and terrible day of the Lord, etc., etc.; but when her husband appeared in the doorway, the thread of her discourse was suddenly broken, and she turned and accosted him with, "Ah, Mr. Pike, have you seen my prisoners in the Cave of Machpelah? They belong to that wicked and rebellious tribe of Korah, you know."

"Well, Mary, let's go home, and see how they are getting along," said he, in a confident tone; for he instantly divined who her prisoners were, and that the Cave of Machpelah could not be far away.

Mrs. Pike was quite willing to go with him, and worried all the way home; for she said prisoners were always in mischief, and there were the robes hanging in the cave, which she had forgotten to put out of their reach. So when they arrived, her first act was to unlock the door of the children's prison. And her next was to pounce upon them with even more vigor than when she emerged from it in the afternoon. For there they lay asleep on the carpet, Jane in a purple robe, and Sarah in a green, their hands and feet invisible by reason of the great length of their garments. [126]

"Don't hurt them, Mary," said Mr. Pike. For she was hustling off the precious robes before the little girls were fairly awake; and they might have fared hardly, had not the kind man been present to see that justice was done; to wit, that they were compensated for their imprisonment by pockets full of cakes and fruit, and sent home to their mother without delay. That happy woman did not send them supperless to bed, nor say a word about punishing them, either then or afterwards. Perhaps she guessed that their punishment had already been sufficiently severe.

"O, mother," said Jane, "at first we didn't dare to stir or speak, for fear the crazy lady was

listening; and she seemed angry enough to kill us. I felt as if my hair was turning gray, and Sarah looked as white as the wall. Well, after a great many hours, we began to look about the room, and we saw those queer gowns she knits, hanging in a row; and we got up and looked at them. By and by we got so tired doing nothing, that we took them down and tried them on, and played we were the saints. We tried to fly, but the old things were so heavy and long, that we couldn't even jump. And after a while we were so tired that we lay down and went to sleep, and never woke till Mrs. Pike came home. O, but 'twas the lonesomest, longest, dreariest afternoon we ever, ever knew—wasn't it, Sarah?"

This was the story, with variations, which the Holmes girls had to tell to their mates the next day, and the next, and so on, until it ceased to be a novelty.

But Mrs. Pike's prisoners were heroines, in the estimation of the village girls and boys, for more than one year, and doubtless still remember and tell to their children the story of their afternoon in the Cave of Machpelah.

M. R. W.

WAR AND PEACE.

WAR.

THE warrior waves his standard high,
His falchion flashes in the fray;
He madly shouts his battle-cry,
And glories in a well-fought day.
But Famine's at the city gate,
And Rapine prowls without the walls;
The city round lies desolate,
While Havoc's blighting footstep falls.
By ruined hearths, by homes defiled,
In scenes that nature's visage mar,
We feel the storm of passions wild,
And pluck the bitter fruit of war.

PEACE.

The cobweb hangs on Sword and belt,
The charger draws the gliding plow;
The cannons in the furnace melt,
And change to gentle purpose now;
The threshers swing their ponderous flails,
The craftsmen toil with cheerful might;
The ocean swarms with merchant sails,
And busy mills look gay by night;
The happy land becomes renowned,
As knowledge, arts, and wealth increase,
And thus, with plenty smiling round,
We cull the blessed fruits of peace.



WAR.

CHERRY-TIME.

[128]

OH, cherry-time is a merry time!"
We children used to say—
"The merriest throughout the year,
For all is bright and gay."

"Oh, cherry-time is a merry time!"
The air is fresh and sweet,
And fair flowers in the garden bloom,
And daisies 'neath our feet.

"Oh, cherry-time is a merry time!"
For hanging on the tree,
All round and glistening in the sun,
The pretty fruit we see.

"Oh, cherry-time is a merry time!"
Up in the tree so high
We children climbed, and, laughing, said,
"Almost into the sky."

"Oh, cherry-time is a merry time!"
The robins thought so too,
And helped themselves to "cherries ripe"
While wet with morning dew.

"Oh, cherry-time is a merry time!"
The sunshine and the showers
Of God's rich mercy fall on us
In happy childhood's hours.

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CHERRY-TIME.

[130]



THE DAVY BOYS' FISHING-POND.

BOYS," said Mr. Davy, "how would you like to have a fishing-pond?"
The five boys looked at him eagerly, to see if he were in earnest.

"O, splendid, papa!" say they in chorus; "but how *can* we have a fishing-pond?"

"You know that hollow down in the pasture," continued Mr. Davy, "and what a blemish it is upon

the farm. I have wondered if we could not make it useful in some way, and at the same time improve the looks of things. I think we might build an embankment upon the open side, make the slope steeper all round, bring the water into it from the creek, and so have a fishing-pond. We should have to make a race-way from the creek to the pond, and cut a channel through the meadow, in which the water could flow back to the creek again below the fall. I think it could be done," said Mr. Davy, after a pause, "only there would be a great deal of work necessary, and we could hardly afford to hire it done."

"O, father, we can do the digging," shouted five voices in chorus; "we can do it with our spades and wheelbarrows. School doesn't begin for a month yet, and we can get it all done in that time." [131]

"Hurrah for a fish-pond!" cried Percy, and in imagination he fairly felt the bites of the three-pound trout he was to catch before summer was over.

Mr. Davy is a practical farmer. By that I mean that he cultivates the land with his own hands. He, with his men, and those of the boys who are old enough, are in the fields every morning in summer by five o'clock, ploughing, planting, sowing, or milking the cows, and, later in the season, haying, harvesting, or threshing. Tommy, the eldest of his sons, is thirteen years old; Clarence, the youngest, is five.

Mr. Davy had been thinking of the fishing-pond for some time, and had matured the plan in his mind before speaking of it to the boys. The morning after the conversation of which I have told you, I saw the five boys standing in thoughtful silence upon the bank above the hollow in the pasture. I do not believe the engineer who is planning the bridge across the British Channel, to connect England and France, feels anymore responsibility than did the Davy boys that morning.

"May we begin to-day, father?" said they, eagerly, at breakfast-time.

"Yes; and Patrick can help you," was the reply.

The horses were harnessed to the plough, and driven to the hollow. Patrick was instructed how to proceed. He put the reins round his neck, and took firm hold of the handles. "Go on wid ye, now!" he cried to the horses. A furrow was soon turned, and the fish-pond fairly begun.

"Your work," said Mr. Davy to the boys, "will be to wheel away the earth which Patrick ploughs out. The first thing is to lay a plank for your wheelbarrows to run upon."

Tommy and George soon brought the planks from the tool-house. Blocks were laid the proper distance apart to sustain them, and, after two or three hours' work, a line of plank, which looked to the boys as grand as the new Pacific Railway, stretched across the hollow. The little laborers went in to dinner flushed with excitement and hard work, but as happy, I dare say, as if they had been to Barnum's Museum, and seen the wax figures and wild animals.

Patrick had, during the forenoon, ploughed a good many furrows, and now the boys were busy enough carrying away the earth. Each had a wheelbarrow of his own—Clarence's a toy, which, with a tiny spade, his father had brought from the city with a view to the work now in progress. It required a steady hand to keep the wheelbarrows upon the plank. They *would* run off once in a while, and then all hands halted, and lifted them upon the track again. The earth was to be deposited—"dumped," the boys said—upon the site of the new embankment. As the first loads were overturned, Mr. Davy made his appearance.

"This fish-pond must have an outlet, you know," said he, "at the point where the bottom is lowest. I will measure it off for you, and drive three stakes on either side. Here we will have a gate; for our pond will need emptying and cleaning occasionally. Fish will not live in impure water."

The boys were delighted. All this excavating, laying out of earthworks, and planning of gate-way, seemed like real engineering. They were reënforced, after a while, by Patrick and the horses; and then how suddenly they became tired, his shovelfuls were so large in comparison with theirs—his wagon carried away so much more at a load!

Pretty early that evening little Clarence crept into his mother's lap, and told her a marvellous story of the amount of earth he had wheeled away; but his tired little eyes acted as though some of it had blown between their lids; and soon mamma tucked him away for twelve hours' sleep. [132]

The hollow in the pasture, I forgot to say, was half an acre in extent, and appeared as though Nature had scooped it out on purpose to make a place for the Davy boys' fishing-pond. The creek, too, running nearly alongside, was there to supply it with water.

"What shall we ever do with that hill?" said Percy, pointing to a rise of ground on one side the hollow, as he and his brothers were surveying their work; "we never can cart all that away, nor dig up those trees, either."

"Let's leave it for an island," said Frank—"a *real* island—land with water all round it" (he had just begun studying geography); "and the trees will make a splendid grove, where we can have picnics."

"The island will afford a harbor for the boat, too," said Mr. Davy, who had just joined the children. "I suppose you will want a boat on your pond—will you not?"

The boys could scarcely believe their ears. A boat of their own, on their own pond! They had never dreamed of anything half so nice.

"Time to be at work!" said Mr. Davy.

All the forenoon, as I watched them from my window, I saw the embankment growing slowly, but steadily, while the sloping sides of the hollow became steeper and steeper. At night a visible step had been taken towards a fishing-pond.

I cannot tell you about every one of the days during which the Davy boys worked so industriously. At last, however, the excavation was completed, the embankment raised to the desired height. The frame for the gate-way stood firm between its crowding sides. Gates were in progress at the carpenter's, made of solid plank, a door sliding up and down over an open space near the bottom. This was easily worked by means of a handle at the top.

"And now," said Mr. Davy, "to get the water into the pond. Patrick and Michael must build a dam a little way up the creek and the race-way from a point just above. We shall need a gate similar to the one at the outlet."

The boys were glad to give way to Patrick and Michael, when it came to building dams and race-ways. In the mean time they assisted the mason who was lining the embankment on either side the gate with stone, to protect it against the action of the water. The stone-boat, a little, flat vehicle which slides over the ground without wheels, was brought out, for piles of stone were to be drawn from a distant part of the farm.

"But I shall want one of you to carry the hod for me," said the mason.

It was arranged that they should take turns at this; so one would stay and fill with mortar the queer little box which hod-carriers use, and bear it on his shoulders to the mason, who was fast laying the curved wall.

"Why do you have the wall laid in this rounding shape, papa?" asked George. "Why not have it straight?"

"Because the curve makes it stronger to resist the force of the water. You notice that the mason chooses stones which are larger at one end than at the other. He lays them so that the larger ends form the outer side of the curve—the smaller form the inner or shorter side, as you see by looking at this wall. The stones, thus wedged against each other, could not be as easily forced out of place as if they were square in shape, and laid in a straight line. Imagine the water pressing upon the inner side of the curve. How readily the wall would give way, and the water come pouring through! Have you never observed, children," continued Mr. Davy, "that in bridges, culverts, or any structure which is to sustain a heavy weight, the foundations are always laid in the form of an arch?"

[133]

"Yes, papa," answered George; "but I never knew why it was. I see now that it is to make them strong."

The boys had quite enough of hod-carrying and stone-quarrying before the wall was done. In fact, Patrick was pressed into the service repeatedly. The hod became too uneasy a burden for the boys' shoulders, even though it was padded with sheep-skin.

A channel to convey the water from the pond was now the only thing wanting. This was speedily begun, and the little workmen found themselves down in a trench behind a low rampart of earth.

"Let's play we are soldiers," said George. "We'll have Patrick and Michael for captain and lieutenant (only they must work, if they *are* officers), and papa for general and engineer."

Each little soldier did his best. The officers worked faithfully. The engineer came round often, and the dark thread across the bright, green meadow spun out rapidly.

"Let's elect Frank quartermaster," said Tommy; "then he'll go to headquarters, and make requisition for rations. *I* think it's time for dinner."

"Tell mother to send a big basketful, Frank. Soldiers get awful hungry," said Percy.

"Tell mother we want to make coffee in the field, too," said George. "Real soldiers do."

I fear that Patrick and Michael did most of the work after this, for the department of the commissary seemed to require the attention of all the boys.

Mamma was willing to issue rations in the field. "But," said she, "soldiers often have only hard tack and coffee. I suppose you will want nothing more."

This was a view of the case for which the boys were not prepared. They did not wish to seem unsoldierly, but they were very hungry.

"You know, mother," said Percy, "soldiers had bacon sometimes with their hard tack."

"And we are only *playing* soldiers. We ain't *real* soldiers," said matter-of-fact Clarence.

His brothers were quite ashamed that he should give this as a reason for wanting a good dinner, yet when they saw the pies and cakes going into the basket, they made no remarks.

While the quartermaster was at the house, Tommy and George had built a fire, to boil the coffee. Two crotched stakes were driven firmly in the ground. A stout rod lay across them, and on this hung the kettle. A lively fire was burning underneath, the water boiling. In a few moments the

coffee was made.

After washing carefully in the creek,—for everything must be done as soldiers do,—all sat down in a circle on the ground. The coffee was served in tin cups; but shall I confess that our soldiers were so unsoldierlike as to drink it with cream and sugar?

Patrick and Michael partook; but as they were absent directly afterwards, under pretence of smoking a noon pipe, I fancy they ate still further rations in the farm-house kitchen. The boys, however, said it was the best dinner they ever ate in their lives.

They were now ready for a visit from the general. "We will have these breastworks," said he, "smoothed down in regular shape, and sow grass-seed upon them, so that in a few weeks there will be a green slope in place of these unsightly clods."

I assure you that as I look from my window while writing this story, those slopes appear very pretty, with the merry, sparkling stream flowing between. [134]

But I must hasten; for you will be anxious to know that the pond, gates, outlet, and all were done at last. Then came the day upon which the water was to be let in. A great day it was for the whole neighborhood. All the boys for a mile round were there to see.

When everything was ready, Mr. Davy, who was up at the dam, hoisted the gate; the water came rushing through; in a few moments it had reached the end of its course, and poured over into the pond.

Such a shout as rose from the throats of the forty or fifty boys! It must have surprised those placid meadows and the great solemn rocks around. And you would have thought the sleepy old hills had actually been startled into life, such sounding echoes they sent back in answer.

The water spread itself thinly at first over the bottom of the pond. Slowly it rose; the little hollows were filled up, the slight elevations hidden from sight. Gradually it closed round the tiny green island which stood out above its surface like an emerald set in shining silver. By night the pond was full. The water began running over the top of the gate, making the prettiest little waterfall, and over it a light spray rose softly towards the evening sky.

Bright and early the next morning there was commotion at the Davys'. The boys were going to Maxwell's Creek, ten miles away, fishing. Mrs. Davy was stirring round, preparing their lunch. George and Percy hurried to the stable.

"Come, Brown Billy," said Percy to the favorite pony; "time to get up and have your breakfast. We are all going fishing to-day;" and he laid his hand smartly upon the pony's back.

Brown Billy raised his head, opened his eyes in astonishment to see the boys so early in his stall; but hearing their merry voices, he seemed to understand the situation at once, and to be in full sympathy with them. An extra allowance of oats was put in the manger, and while the boys were eating their breakfast in the house, Brown Billy leisurely munched his in the stable. Then, after a draught from the pump, he was put into the traces. Two casks and a large basket were lifted in, the luncheon deposited, and soon they were on their way. The sun was just peeping above the horizon, spreading a crimson glory over every hill, and tree, and shrub; but this was so familiar a sight to the Davy boys, that it caused no remark, though they were not insensible to its beauty.

The scene of their day's sport was a beautiful glen among the hills, through which the stream, a genuine, untaught child of the woods, jumped and tumbled at its own wild will, now leaping from precipices in the loveliest cataracts, then fretting noisily over its stony bed, and, a little farther on, flowing as smoothly as if it never thought of foaming or fretting in all its course.

Tommy tied Brown Billy to a tree, giving him a long tether, that he might pick at the fresh grass.

Trout are the most delicate of fishes, and require careful treatment. Indeed, they are quite the aristocracy of the finny tribe. Mr. Davy had given Patrick directions not to allow them to be caught with a hook, as it could not be taken from their mouths without causing much pain, and perhaps death.

Patrick chose a place in the stream where the channel was narrow, but deep, and waded in.

"Now, boys," said he, "yes all go above a little way, wade out into the sthrame, and bate the wather with yer fish-poles. This will drive thim down, and I'll see what I can do wid the basket." [135]

The boys pulled off shoes and stockings, and rolled their trousers above the knees. Clarence sat on the bank, paddling with his bare feet in the stream. Stepping out into the creek, they hopped from one mossy stone to another, the water pleasantly laving their feet. Standing in a row across the stream, they began beating rather gently, at the same time walking slowly forward, hoping to drive the fish before them. Presently Patrick brought up the basket, the water streaming from it as it did from Simple Simon's sieve, and in the bottom, wriggling and squirming, lay four fine trout. Tommy seized the basket, and in an instant the fish were within the cask, in their native element again, though in rather close quarters. The boys hung over the barrel, gazing at the pretty creatures with intense delight. The sun shone down into the water, making the bright spots on their sides look like gold.

"Never mind, little trout," said Franky; "you are not going to be hurt—only moved to our fish-pond."

Do you not think they enjoyed that day far more because there was no cruelty in their sport?

Their amusement was varied by a delicious lunch, and an occasional ramble through the woods. Towards evening they drove home, elated with their success. The cask contained nearly as many fish as could swim. The second cask was filled with fresh water, to replace that in the first when it should no longer be fit for the use of the fish. These delicate little trout are so sensitive to any impurity, that they could not have remained in the same water during the drive home without suffering. Indeed, they might have died before reaching the pond.

My young readers may not know that fish breathe an element of the water which is a part of air also. In fact, the same element which sustains us sustains them also, viz., oxygen. Only one ninth part of water, however, is oxygen, while of air it is one fifth. I dare say you have all seen goldfishes, shut up in crystal prisons, swimming their endless round in a quart or two of water. Perhaps you have observed them lifting their heads above the surface, mouths wide open, gasping for breath. The oxygen is exhausted from the water, and unless it be speedily changed their mistress will lose her beautiful pets.

The trout were put into the pond—a small beginning, to be sure; but it *was* a beginning. How lonely they must have been at first! What a boundless ocean it must have seemed to them!

We will hope they found some cosy harbor in the grassy-lined sides of the island, where they could meet together and talk over their strange experience of moving. Plenty of company came soon, however; for all the boys in the neighborhood were interested in stocking the pond.

A boat was in progress in Mr. Davy's tool-house. The boys watched every inch of its growth, from the shaping of the skeleton frame to the last dash of the paint-brush. When it was done, the seats put across from side to side, the coatings of white paint laid on, and elevated upon four stakes to dry its glistening sides, the boys thought nothing was ever half so beautiful; but when they saw it upon the pond, gently rocking from side to side, the oars hanging in the locks, and lazily swaying to the motion of the water, it seemed to them more beautiful still.

This is not all a fancy sketch, dear boys and girls. Perhaps some of the farmer children who read it may persuade their papas to make a fishing-pond of some unsightly "hollow in the pasture" upon their own farms.

L. M. D.

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THE LITTLE SAVOYARD AND HIS DOG.

A NEWFOUNDLAND dog belonging to a gentleman in Edinburgh was in the habit of receiving a penny each day from his master, which he always took to a baker's shop and bought a loaf of bread for himself. One day a bad penny was given him by a gentleman by way of frolic. Dandie ran off with it to the baker's, as usual, but was refused a loaf. The poor dog waited a moment, as if considering what to do; he then returned to the house of the gentleman who had given him the bad coin; and when the servant opened the door, he laid it at her feet and walked away with an air of contempt.

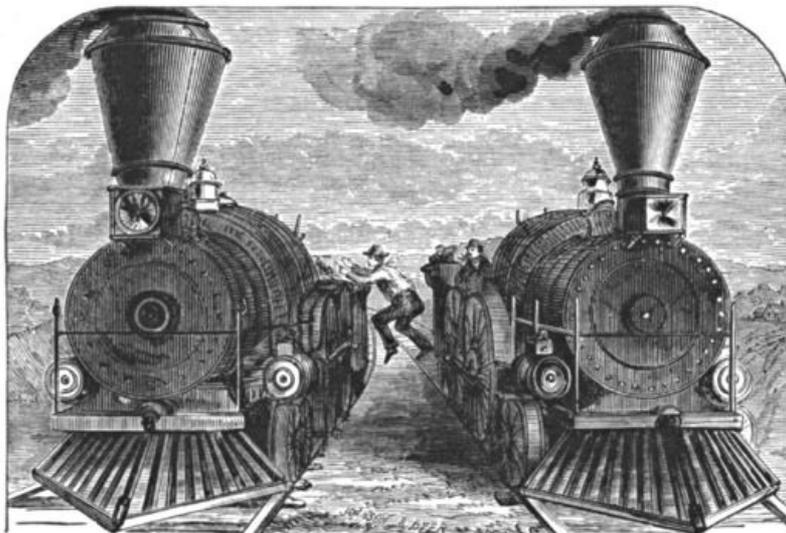
Some dogs are fond of music, while others seem not to be affected by it in the slightest degree. These two anecdotes are related by the author of a recent volume. He is speaking of a friend: "As soon as the lamp is lighted and placed on the sitting-room table, a large dog of the water-spaniel breed usually jumps up and curls himself around the lamp. He never upsets it, but remains perfectly still. Now, my friend is very musical, but during the time the piano is being played the dog remains perfectly unmoved, until a particular piece is played. He will not take the slightest notice of loud or soft pieces, neither sentimental nor comic, but instantly the old tune entitled 'Drops of Brandy' is played, he invariably raises his head and begins to howl most piteously, relapsing into his usual state of lethargy as soon as this tune is stopped. My friend cannot account for this action of the dog in any way, nor can we learn from any source the reason of its dislike.

"Again, the wife of a hotel-keeper, lately deceased, possessed a pet lap-dog which delighted in listening to its mistress playing on the piano; if the usual hour for her daily practice passed by, the dog would grow impatient, snap and bark, and be perfectly uneasy until the lady consented to gratify its wishes by sitting down to the instrument and playing a few tunes. During this operation the dog would sit motionless on a chair by her side; and when the music was ended, he would jump down, quite satisfied for that day."

A CHILD'S PRAYER.

JESUS, tender Shepherd, hear me;
 Bless thy little lamb to-night;
 Through the darkness be thou near me,
 Keep me safe till morning light.

Through the day thy hand hath led me,
 And I thank thee for thy care;
 Thou hast warmed and fed and clothed me,
 Listen to my evening prayer.



JOHN STOCKS AND "THE BISON."

ONE winter afternoon, as Archy Douglas sat studying his lessons, Mrs. Falkoner, the housekeeper, came to invite him to have tea in her room. While they were at the table, they heard the kitchen bell ring, at which Mrs. Falkoner seemed surprised, for she said the

weather would incline few people to leave their own firesides.

It turned out, however, to be a visitor for Mrs. Falkoner herself, for in a few minutes one of the servants came to say a person who called himself John Stocks wanted to see her, and John presented himself in the doorway without further delay.

An active man, with the look, at first sight, of the mate of a ship, he stood gently stamping the snow off his boots on the door mat, laughing in a low tone, as if he was very much pleased to see the worthy Mrs. Falkoner, and was enjoying her stare of astonishment to the full.

"Dear bless me, John, is it really you?" said Mrs. Falkoner, almost running to meet him. "Whatever wind has blown you here?"

"No wind at all, Mary; nought but the snow," he said, laughing: but correcting himself, he added, "Ah, well, there was a wind, after all, for we're fairly drifted up a few miles t'other side of the Junction; and so I got leave to run over and see you: not often I get the chance—is it, now?"

All this time he had been taking off his outer coat; and when he was fairly in the room, Archy found he was a young man, certainly not more than thirty. He had crisp black hair, a bold, manly face, very red with exposure to the weather, and at the same time expressive of great determination of character. But one peculiarity about his face was, that though so young, his forehead was not only scarred and lined, but round his eyes and about his mouth it was puckered and wrinkled to a most extraordinary degree. Archy felt a great curiosity about him, but was not long left in doubt, for Mrs. Falkoner took care to make her visitor known to the young gentleman as her youngest half brother and an engine-driver on the main line. [139]

A remarkably quiet man did John Stocks seem in regard to general conversation; he said very little about the weather, and less about things going on in the great world, and anything he did say on these topics had almost to be coaxed out of him. However, he evidently took great delight in giving all the family news, even to the most minute particular.

"Of course you've heard," he said, warming one hand at the fire, "that Bob's come home from America. Then that old Thompson has given up the shop."

"Yes; so I heard," said Mrs. Falkoner, pouring out another cup of tea, not appearing to take very great interest in them. "No accidents on your line lately, I hope."

"Not much," was the answer, and he again went back to the family news. "Jenny's got a baby," he said, suddenly, with great glee, as if this piece of news was far before any other.

This intelligence at least was news to Mrs. Falkoner, and she listened to all he had to say about it with great interest.

But when Mrs. Falkoner was called away for a few minutes, it became necessary for Archy to entertain the visitor till her return.

Of course Archy had many questions to put about the railway and the engines, and dangers and catastrophes. John was excessively civil, and on this subject was full of intelligence; but when he was asked if his own engine had broken down in the snow, he became quite horrified, if not indignant.

"What, master, broke down?" he said. "Not a bit o't. I'd back the old Bison against a drift twice as heavy. But, d'ye see, when you comes and finds an engine and seven wagons o' minerals, and another engine, and wagons besides that all ahead o' ye, and stuck fast, why, I says, ye must give in. There ain't no use expecting yer engine to drive *through* 'em, so must lie by till all's cleared, which won't be for five hours at least."

"How is it that the line's blocked up now?" asked Archy. "There has been no more snow all day."

"Ay, that's true, master," said the engine-driver. "But d'ye see, a mile from the Junction there's a bit of heavy cutting, with a steep sloping bank on either side. Now, this afternoon there was a slip; most all the snow drifted there, and part of the bank itself fell in, and so there is a block-up. As I said afore, the mineral train, she comes up first, and she sticks fast, and then we has to follow, as a matter in course. But had my old Bison been afront, he'd have done differently, I make no doubt."

"Is your engine a much stronger one?" said Archy, greatly amused to hear how funny it was to call a train she, while he called the engine he, and by an animal's name, too.

"It's not that he's stronger, sir, but he's got more go in him, has the Bison. He's an extraordinary plucky engine. I've seen him do wonderful things when Mat Whitelaw was driver, and me stoker to 'em. I'll just tell you one on 'em, and then ye can judge what sort o' stuff the Bison's made o'. It was one day in summer, some two years ago; we had just taken in water at the junction, and were about to run back to couple on the coaches, when an engine passed us tearing along at a tremendous speed on the other line o' rail, but, mark me, without a driver or stoker, or aught else on it. I thought my mate was mad, when he got up steam, and off in the same direction; but in a moment I saw what he was up to. The Bison was going in the chase. 'See to the brake, John,' was all Mat said, when off we were after the runaway at full speed. It seemed to me nought but a wild-goose chase; for, d'ye see, master, we were on another line o' rails altogether. But Mat knew what he was about, and it was my place to do his bidding. I was always proud o' the old Bison before that morning, but I never knew till then what a good engine was, and what was depending [140]

on it.

"You would have thought he fairly snorted to his work, going at the rate o' forty miles an hour we were, and at last we got abreast o' the runaway engine, and could have passed him, but that would have been useless. There wasn't another driver on the whole line would have thought of the thing so quickly as Mat did, nor could have regulated the speed so nicely to a moment. The two different engines were running just opposite each other on the two different lines, the runaway being a good deal worn out now, and going much slower than at first, when Mat he says to me, hoarsely, 'Jump across. It'll be safer if I stick here to hold the regulator; but I'll go, if you'd rather stay.' I had such confidence in Mat Whitelaw, that I could trust my life with him before any mortal man; and the instant he gave the word, I jumped, and did it safe. We each put on our brakes, and took breath, and desperately hot we both were, I can assure you."

"Were you not terribly afraid?" said Archy, who had been almost breathless during the recital.

"I can't say that we were," said John, coolly; "but I'll tell you I was frightened enough the next moment, when Mat looked at his watch, and sees that the down express was due in a few minutes on his line. I believe that Mat thought more o' the passengers that might be smashed, and the risk for the Bison, than o' his own safety. He said it would never do to reverse the engines now; but if we kept on, he thought there might yet be time to run into the siding at the nearest station. So on we went once more at increased speed, straight on ahead, though it was like running into the very face of the danger. The telegraph had been hard at work, and the station people had been laying their heads together, and they were at the points. So, when they heard the whistle, and saw Mat putting on the brake, they at once opened the points,—not a moment too soon, I can tell you,—and in he ran into the siding. Now, what Mat did, sir, was what I call about equal to most generals in war, and as great a benefit to society."

"He must be a brave fellow," said Archy; "and I hope you were both rewarded for it."

"The company behaved very handsome," was the answer. "Mat got on to the Great Western line at once; but the worst of it is, he and I are parted, and the old Bison; he felt his loss as much, if not more than me."

Mrs. Falkoner, who had come in during the latter part of the story, now said,—

"But tell the young gentleman what you did your own self, and what the company thought of your conduct."

"Tuts, Mary," he answered; "I did nought extraordinary; there ain't a man in the service but could have done the same, had they known old Bison as well as I did."

"I should like to hear it, John," said Archy, who was standing ready to leave the brother and sister alone.

"Well, 'cept it be to tell you how I got to be driver of the Bison myself, it's not worth the listening to. When Mat left, Bill Jones got to be my mate—the worst driver on the line; at least he couldn't manage the Bison. He did not understand that engine one bit, and was constantly getting into trouble, till I was driven almost wild. Bill would say, 'Bison, indeed! he ought to be called Donkey; it would suit his kicking ways better.' It was quite true he kicked, but he never did it with Mat on him, and went along the rails as smooth as oil. Well, at one part o' the line, there is a gradual long incline, and one day we were just putting on more steam to run up, when we sees at the top two or three coaches coming tearing down straight upon us. We knew there was a heavy excursion train on ahead, and we had been going rather slow on that account, and this was some of the coaches that had got uncoupled from the rest. Well, Bill, my mate, no sooner saw it coming, than says he, 'Jump for your life!' and out he went. But I knew what a quick engine the Bison was, and, moreover, I saw our guard had noticed the danger, too, and would work with me; so I reversed the engine, and ran back, until the coaches came up to us, but did no further damage save giving us a bit of a shake as they struck on the old Bison; and so we drove them afore us right up to the station. Bill was killed, as might have been expected, for he had no faith in the Bison whatever; and so the company, they came to see I understood that engine, and they made me driver o' him from that time."

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Archy now bade the worthy engine-driver good night, saying that he should always take a greater interest in engines than ever before, and that he should have liked very much to have seen such a famous one as the Bison.

John Stocks evidently took this speech as a personal compliment, and, in consequence, bade Archy a friendly good by, saying, as he did so, "that people nowadays talked of nothing but ships and extraordinary guns, and what not, but to his mind a good engine was before them all."

MRS. GEORGE CUPPLES.

MERRILY sang the children, as their mother softly
played;
With eager, outstretched faces a pretty group they
made;
Their clear and bird-like voices ran loudly through the air,
Till "Baby" heard the music, and crept from stair to stair,
That she might join the singers, and in their gladness
share.

Dear, merry little warblers! I love to hear you, too;
Your fresh, unworldly feelings, your hearts so fond and
true,
Give to your songs a sweetness that no other strains
possess;
They soothe the harassed spirit when troubles thickly
press,
And evoke the warm petition, "O GOD, OUR CHILDREN BLESS!"

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PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS.

PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS.

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HOW earnest Kate and Constance and Brother Willy
look,
Counting up varied treasures, ship, bat and doll and
book!

The three are very busy, and very happy too,
Trying to mend up old things to look almost like new.

The book was rather shabby, but Kate with paste and
thread
Has made it firm and tidy, and rubbed it clean with bread.

And now, ere she resigns it, she lingers, glancing o'er
The pretty picture pages and well-known lines once more.

Constance has dressed the dolly—you see how nice it
looks—
And all its things are fastened with little strings or hooks.
The ship with clean new rigging—Will's work—they eye
with pride,
And they have quite a drawerful of other things beside—
Boxes of beads and sweeties, and many a top and ball,
Saved for the coming Christmas; and who's to have them
all?
Not their own merry playmates, bright girl and happy lad,
Who'll meet for winter pastime like them well fed and
clad.
No; children in close alleys, or the large workhouse near,
Our little friends—obeying Christ's words—will please and
cheer.
And their own Christmas pleasures will seem more glad
and sweet
For knowing such poor neighbors enjoy for once a treat.

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QUE.

HE was a wee bit of a boy to carry the United States mail on his back, seven miles, every day. He was only eleven years old, and as long, to an inch, as the mail bag, which was just three feet and eleven inches long. When he went along the road, you would sometimes see him, and sometimes the bag; that was as you happened to be on this or the other side of him. Many persons' hard hearts have been made to open a crevice, at sight of the little fellow, to let a little jet of pity spirt out for him. But "The Point" ran out three miles and a half to the south of the county road and the stage coach, and the nearest coach post-office; and because it was only a small point, and sparsely settled, it couldn't afford a horse for the short distance; and because it was a short distance, no man, or boy, who was able to do a full day's work, would break into it to walk the seven miles; and because it was seven miles, no one who was not well could walk so far every day, and the year round. So it happened that the job was up for bids one spring, and the person who would carry the mail from Gingoo to the Point for the smallest amount of money, was to have it for a year.

One woman offered to carry it for eighty dollars; another for seventy; one big boy offered for sixty-five; he'd make the girls at home do the work, he said,—they hadn't anything else to do,—and he would give them each a new ribbon to pay for it: and between you and me, I am very glad that that boy didn't get the job.

Without saying a word to his family about it, Que made up his mind that he would carry the mail himself. When the others sent in their bids he sent in his, for fifty dollars. So it happened that

Que was mail-carrier. He was so little and bow-legged, that there were not many things that he could do; for instance, he couldn't run. His head and feet were very large, and his arms and intermediate body very small; therefore he could dream and wonder what he should do when he grew up, and walk (with care) as much as he pleased, but was not a favorite among the boys in playing games. [145]

Of course he was not baptized into the name Que, but was called, by his parents and the christening minister, John Quincy Adams Pond, Jr.; named for his father, you see. They began to call him Que before he was out of his babyhood; for they had one boy named John Lee, but as they always called him Lee, they entirely forgot that fact till after the ceremony of Que's christening. And they really weren't much to blame, for they had nine other boys, and poor memories; and though both are misfortunes, they can't be helped. To avoid mixing their two Johns, they called one Lee and the other Que.

Que looked upon seven miles a day as no walk at all, and upon fifty dollars a year as a fortune, and upon "United States mail-carrier" as a title little below "Hon." or "Esq." He had hoped, all his life, that he should, some fine day, have a right to one or the other of these titles. Probably the fact that his name already ended with a "Jr." excited his ambition in that particular direction. Money and dignity seemed to Que the two things most to be desired in life, unless I might add a small family.

Now, we will leave Que's antecedents behind, and go on to his life while he carried the mail; and a very queer little life it was, as you will say when you get to the end of it, though I don't know when that will be, for Que isn't there himself yet. The mail contract was from July 1, 1860, to July 1, 1861, and if your mathematics are in good running order, you will see that that was just a year.

July 1, 1860, was as fine a day in Gingoo as any day in the year; and Que was in as high spirits as on any day in the course of his life. Unfortunately the mail coach reached Gingoo exactly at forty minutes past eleven, unless the driver got drunk or fell asleep, which happened about two hundred and forty days in the year. But whether sober, drunk, or asleep, the four coach horses always stood before Gingoo office door by twelve o'clock at latest.

It makes no difference to you or to me when the coach stood there; but it made a great deal of difference to Que, for twelve o'clock on the finest day in the year, and that day the first of July, is apt to be rather warm; and in the year 1860 it was *very* warm. Nevertheless, at quarter past twelve, Que started with the bag. I, happening to be at the right side of him, saw only the bag start with Que.

Perhaps you don't see why Que should have started right in the heat of the day; but if you had been Que, and could have heard all the Pointers clamoring for their mail, you would have started just when Que did. The mail-bag was made of very dark leather, and drew the sun tremendously. Now, as Que had on a pair of light linen pants and a little gray lined coat, of course he ought to have walked between the bag and the sun; but not being a scientific boy, he didn't think of that, and slung the bag over his sunny shoulder, and from that height it trailed to the ground.

Que walked on as fast as he could, trying not to think too much of the heat and the weight; but the peculiar odor that the sun brought from the leather bag was blown up his nose, and down his throat, and into his ears, by a strong south wind that blew, and before Que had time to think whether he had better or better not, he was lying fast asleep by the side of the road, on the grass; rather he was lying on the mail-bag, and that was lying on the grass. Why didn't he fall on the other side? For two reasons; first, he was attracted mail-bag way by the sleepy odor before spoken of; and secondly, the weight was all that way, and as he began to sleep before he began to drop, of course the bag was his natural bed when he did drop. [146]

The Point road was lonesome, and it must have been quite an hour before any one came that way. Then a man and two horses, and a cart loaded high with laths, were seen coming over the hill; that is, they would have been seen, if Que hadn't been asleep just then.

"Hollo! what's all this?" said the driver when he got opposite the bag and Que.

"All this" neither stirred nor spoke.

"Whoa! whoa, there!" called the driver to his horses.

Now, if Que had been taking only a light, after-dinner nap, he would have been wide awake as soon as the cart stopped; for the hill was a long one, and the rumbling had been as long, and merely from lack of that lullaby, a well-conditioned boy should have wakened at once. But Que didn't.

"I declare," said the driver, "if it ain't that bran new mail-boy!" Thereupon he went up and looked at him; but not being of a magnetic temperament, he didn't wake Que that way.

"Bless the chick, if he isn't dead asleep," continued the driver, talking to himself. This driver had a habit of talking to himself, for he said, "then he was always sure of having somebody worth talking to."

"Now, won't those Pointers growl for their mail, when it is a couple of hours late? The first day, too! Que'll catch it." Then he gave Que a little roll, so that he rolled from the bag over into the grass.

"Well, I always *was* a good-natured fellow. Guess I'll take his bag along for him, and save him the scolding."

So the driver threw the bag on top of the load of laths, and left the bag-boy to sleep it out.

When Que had slept half an hour longer, he started up, staring wide awake.

"I've been asleep," said Que; and so he had.

"My bag's been and gone," continued Que; and so it had.

But he was a bright boy, and all the brighter, perhaps, for having just been asleep; so he looked round, which is a very good thing to do when you get into trouble, and the very thing that half the people in the world never think to do.

"There are tracks in the grass; and there is a cart-track in the dust, and it had two horses, and these foot-tracks went back to it. Why, the lath man must have taken it;" and so he had.

Que started towards the Point as fast as he could go, and consequently, when he got there, which was just fifty minutes after the bag got there, he had no breath left to ask any questions about it. Still he panted on to the post-office.

"Who are you?" asked the postmaster.

"I'm—a—bag," gasped Que.

"Bag of wind!" said the postmaster, emphatically.

"A—mail—bag!" said Que.

"Humph! So you're the new mail boy—are you? Send your bag down by express, and come yourself by accommodation—didn't you?"

"The lath man's got it; where is he?" Que had recovered his breath a little by this time.

"I don't know anything about the lath man," growled the postmaster.

But when Que began to cry, which he did at once, the postmaster couldn't stand that, for he had no children of his own, and his feelings, consequently, weren't hardened; so he dragged the bag from a corner, and threw it on Que's back. [147]

"There, take your bag, and go home, and don't be two hours late the first day, next time." He didn't stop to think that there cannot be two first days to the same thing. Que didn't stop to think of it, either, but started homewards as fast as his bow-legs would let him. I think he approximated more nearly to running, that day, than he ever had done in his life before.

Que's nine brothers treated him with great respect, when he got home. The family had been to tea, but each one had saved some part of his supper for Que; so, though he had an indigestible mixture, there was plenty of it,—while it lasted.

"Did you have a good time, Que?"

"Was it fun?"

"Did you get anything for it?"

"Did you get tired?"

"Going to keep it up?"

"Can't I go next time?"

"Do you like it?"

"Did you see any boys?"

"Anybody give you a lift?"

How all together the questions did come! But the confusion of them saved Que from the trouble of answering the nine boys, and as soon as there was a lull, his father said,—

"You were gone some time, sir; I hope you didn't stop to play on the road?"

"O, no, sir," said Que. "I haven't played at all;" which was very true, you know.

"Did there seem to be many letters?" asked his mother; and be it understood, that she asked quite as much because Que looked as if the bag had been heavy, as from feminine curiosity.

"Didn't notice, ma'am; the bag wasn't very heavy;" and it wasn't, except on his conscience, and he knew his mother didn't mean that, at all.

For several weeks after that everything went on smoothly enough. Que had a pretty good time, and found it some fun, and felt that he was getting something for it, and didn't get very tired, and kept it up, and never took any of his brothers with him, and liked the business, and saw a good many boys, and got a large number of "lifts" from hay-carts and wagons, and particularly from the lath man. So, in course of time, all the brothers' questions were satisfactorily answered.

It is a way that the world has, to let you trip once, and then run on smooth ground some time, before it puts another snag in your way; and it made no exception in Que's favor. His drab clothes kept clean a long time, in spite of the leather bag, and washed well when they were not clean. The Gingo postmaster took a fancy to him, and the Point post master refrained from tormenting him. The mails were not unbearably heavy nor the month of July remarkably hot after the first. Que had a good appetite for his supper, and plenty of supper to show it on, and slept long and heavily every night and a part of every morning, and thought that the world was a pretty good kind of place, after all. But that was only because he hadn't come to the second snag yet.

One day, in the first end of August, a wind sprang up. It wasn't a very uncommonly high wind, only no one was expecting it, because the days had been muggy, and that made every one say, "Why, what a high wind there is to-day!"

You and I can't tell why the wind should have gone on rising through the forenoon; but we can guess, which will answer our purpose just as well; for you know it is but little more than that that your father and his friends, and father's father and his friends, do, when they meet together and "express opinions."

I guess that the wind rose higher through the forenoon because, as soon as it began to play about in the morning, it caught the whisper of people's surprise, and thought it would take the hint, and blow them up a little. [148]

"What a dickens of a wind!" said Que, when he stood, or tried to stand, on top of the hill with his bag.

Que had learned all the easy ways of carrying that bag long ago; of strapping it in a little roll over his shoulders when it wasn't very full; of carrying it on his head when it had enough inside to balance just right, and of strapping it round his body when it had nothing in it. But, as the days had been all stormless alike, he had been obliged to adapt himself only to the conditions of the bag, and not at all to the state of the weather.

As the masculine mind is capable of taking in only one idea at a time, as soon as Que put his mind to the state of the weather, it drew itself away from the manner of carrying the bag.

"Wish I had something between me and the wind," sighed he.

Just then the wind blew off his hat, to teach him the polite order of mentioning two persons, of whom himself was one.

Que followed after it as fast as he could, and let the bag drop beside him, and by chance it hung from his neck to the windward side.

The wind blew very strong.

"I do declare," said he, "I shouldn't wonder a bit if the wind blew me away."

Que was a truthful boy; but he did wonder very much when he found, two seconds afterwards, that the wind *was* blowing him away. But he didn't wonder at all, when he lay, a minute later, against a huge apple tree; partly because people generally get through wondering when they are at the end of anything, but mostly because the blow stunned Que, so that he didn't know anything for an hour.

When he gradually came to himself, he didn't know where he was. Then a little wind shook a green apple down on his nose, and he concluded that he was under an apple tree; which was quite correct.

Then he looked about to see whether he was in the United States or not; he saw the five juniper trees that had been standing in a row, half a mile from his father's house, ever since he could remember, and concluded that he must be; wherein he was again quite correct.

Then he wondered if any one would come for him, for he felt so stiff and sore that he thought he never could go home alone.

"They'll come for me, *I* know; for if I've had a gale they must have had one; and if they have had one they'll know that I've had one. Of course they'll come."

Que felt round for his mail-bag, and got his head on it, and waited. While he was lying there it occurred to him that the people down in the village wouldn't have been walking about with bags broader than themselves to windward of them, and mightn't have felt the breeze as he did; so his last reasoning wasn't correct at all.

"I'll bet they didn't feel it a bit!" thought Que; and by this time he was so fully in possession of his original faculties, that his reasoning was quite correct again. No one else had felt the gale.

Que put his head on the bag and thought that his end had come, and so cried himself to sleep.

His family had not felt the gale very heavily; but when tea-time came, and Que didn't, they felt that; and when darkness came, and Que didn't, they felt that; and when a report came, with a growl, from the Point that they wanted their mail, Que's father started out with a lantern to find it. [149]

Que, having finished his nap, felt better, and tried to get up; but his ankle didn't want to move;

and when he tried again it actually wouldn't move; so he lay down again to wait and watch. When he saw the lantern go by, he called, and his father came.

"What are you doing here, sir?"

"Nothing," said Que.

"Get up, then."

"I can't," said Que.

"You've been asleep, sir."

"Yes, sir," said Que.

"What have you done with the mail-bag?"

"It is the mail-bag that's done with me," said Que.

Then his father took him by the collar, and stood him up, and saw at once what was the matter. Que had sprained his ankle.

It seemed to Que, during the next four weeks, as if that ankle never would heal; but it did at last, and John Lee, who had carried the mail in the mean time, was loath to give the job to Que again. He felt for Que through his pain, but charged him one twelfth of fifty dollars for doing his work a month, and would like to do it a while longer.

There isn't much more to tell of Que as a mail-boy. The end of the year found him the possessor of forty-five dollars and five shillings.

The next year the Point afforded a horse, and Que took the mail on the horse's back; the year following they had a horse and wagon, and Que drove that; when they have a railway I have no doubt Que will be a conductor; and when the mail is blown through a tunnel, Que, of course, will blow it.

Even the second snag, you see, needn't lay you a dead weight on the earth.

MARY B. HARRIS.

WHAT THE CLOCK SAYS.

THE clock's loud tick
Says, "Time flies quick."
"Listen," says the chime;
"Make the most of time,
For remember, young and old,
Minutes are like grains of gold;
Spend them wisely, spend them well,
For their worth can no man tell."



THE SNOW-FALL.

THE SNOW-FALL.

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OLD Winter comes forth in his robe of white,
He sends the sweet flowers far out of sight,
He robs the trees of their green leaves quite,
And freezes the pond and the river;
He has spoiled the butterfly's pretty nest,
And ordered the birds not to build their nest,
And banished the frog to a four months' rest,
And makes all the children shiver.

Yet he does some good with his icy tread,
For he keeps the corn-seeds warm in their bed,
He dries up the damp which the rain had spread,
And renders the air more healthy;
He taught the boys to slide, and he flung
Rich Christmas gifts o'er the old and young,
And when cries for food from the poor were wrung,
He opened the purse of the wealthy.

We like the Spring with its fine fresh air;
We like the Summer with flowers so fair;
We like the fruits we in Autumn share,
And we like, too, old Winter's greeting:
His touch is cold, but his heart is warm;
So, though he brings to us snow and storm,
We look with a smile on his well-known form,
And ours is a gladsome meeting.



WILL had had the croup. Then the measles took possession of him, and lastly, the whooping-cough, finding him well swept and garnished, entered in, and shook and throttled him in a manner quite deplorable.

His convalescence, however, was relieved of its monotony by a headlong fall from a step ladder in the library, whereby he sprained his wrist, to say nothing of the mischief that he made, in his descent, amid the ink, books, and papers.

Treading on a pin in the sewing-room was another diversion in his favor, giving him, for a while, a daily looking forward to bandages and poultices, and an opportunity to weigh the advantages of obedience in case he should ever again wish, and be forbidden, to jump out of bed and run barefoot amid the dressmaker's shreds in search of his top.

Now, all this is no uncommon experience for a small boy. I simply mention it by way of apology for introducing Will in an unamiable mood. One regrets to have one's friends make an unfavorable first impression.

This was Will's first morning at school since his recovery. He found that the boys had gone on in their Latin, had gone on in their French, leaving him far behind; they had got into decimals, and he way back pages; they had a new writing-master, and wrote with their faces turned a new way, to the great disgust of Will. They had had a botany excursion to Blue Hills, which he had lost. He was down at the foot of the class, and at the end of the morning he had made up his desperate mind to remain there forever. It was no use for a fellow to try to put through such a pile of back lessons.

He came stamping up stairs, kicked at the nursery door, slung in his bag of books, and stood on the threshold, pouting and glaring angrily at his sister Emily.

Emily sat in the window opposite, the sunlight sifting through the flickering ivy leaves on to her golden hair and fair sweet face. She was singing over her sewing as Will made his noisy entrance. She looked up at the scowling boy in the doorway, her pale cheeks flushing with surprise and then with pity.

"What's the matter?" she asked, gently.

"Matter?" roared Will; "I guess you'd ask, if you knew how old 'Crit' had been cramming the fellows, and me nowhere. I'll—run away to sea, or somewheres. I'm not going to *stand* it."

Will bounced his hand down so hard on a tea-poy, two little terra cotta shepherdesses bounded up from it, knocked their heads together, and fell clattering to the floor.

"O, Will," cried Emily, rising up with a scared face, and dropping her pretty work-basket, "don't talk so. You are tired now, and everything troubles you, because you have been sick so long. By and by, when you are a little stronger, you will feel differently. Don't think about the back lessons. Just try to be glad you are well enough to go to school again, and be with the boys."

"O, don't preach!" persisted Will, gruffly.

With the cloud still hanging over his handsome face, he shook himself away from the caressing hand which was laid upon his shoulder, as if to hold him back from running away to the great, pitiless sea.

"Asy! asy, now!"

This was Kathleen, the nurse, calling out in cautioning tones to Will, who had jerked against the tray she was carrying causing the two saucers of strawberries to click together sharply, and the buttered rolls to slip over the edge of the plate.

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"You're tired with the school, poor craythur, an' no wonder at that same. Larnin's murtherin', bad luck to it! I tried it mysel oncet, a moonth or so, avenin's. It's myself was watchin' for ye, Master Will, and when ye came round the corner I had this bit sup arl ready for ye. 'The crame—quick—Bridget!' says I, and then I ran away up the two flights with it; and barrin' the joggle you give it, it's in foine, tip-top orther an' priservation arl togither, bless your little sowl!"

Kathleen set out the crisp little rolls and the great crimson berries in the most tempting way she could devise, and went off, bobbing her head with satisfaction to see the children place themselves at table, and partake of her well-timed lunch.

Will, as an atonement for the ungentle way in which he had come in upon his sister after school, offered her the nicest plate of berries, and insisted that she should take the crispiest roll. He suddenly remembered that Emily, too, had had whooping-cough and measles at the same time, and quite as badly as himself. But, then, she had not sprained her wrist or lamed her foot; so it was no wonder her temper had not suffered. Besides, it was expected of girls not to make a fuss.

In view of these last circumstances, he suppressed the apology he was about to make for his late unpleasant remarks.

"It never will do to give up too much to girls," he reasoned, draining the last drop of cream from the pitcher.

"Your grandmamma is coming over from Brookline this afternoon in the carriage, to take the two of you home with her to spend the night."

This was Kathleen back again at the nursery door, and wiping her face with her apron as she unburdened herself of this forgotten bit of news.

"You won't run away to sea now," besought Emily, with imploring eyes.

"Maybe I mightn't," shouted Will, tossing up his cap in glee at this unexpected prospect of fun.

It was now only the middle of the long summer day. Such a tiresome journey as the sun had to go before it rolled quite away in the west! Will longed to give it a push, and to hurry up the clock to strike five, the hour when they should be on their way to beautiful Brookline.

Impatient little Will! Emily kindly helped him to get through with the lagging time. At her suggestion, he played ball a while on the lawn, while from time to time she nodded encouragingly to him through the open window. By and by the ball bounded up into a spout, cuddling down among some soft old maple leaves, where Will could not see it. Thereupon Will came into the house in a great pet, storming about till he was persuaded to sit on the floor and paste pictures in his scrap-book.

This quiet occupation did not amuse him long. His fingers, his chin, his cheeks, his curls even soon became stiff with mucilage. Mucilage on his trouser knees, mucilage on his jacket elbows—in fact, mucilage everywhere on and around him.

Emily, after having, with great painstaking, washed her brother and all the surrounding furniture, proposed that he should study a Latin lesson. The book soon went down with a bang. "Because," as Will sulkily explained to his sighing sister, "it made his head buzz."

Emily gently suggested a French lesson as a corrective of this unpleasant "buzz." The remedy soon proved to be a failure. The French book came down more noisily than the Latin book.

Emily laid aside her drawing in despair. It was such a relief to hear Kathleen's heavy step in the entry, and to remember it was time now for Will to be dressed for dinner!

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Poor Kathleen had a thankless task before her. Master Will required a great deal of preparation. His curls were gummed and tangled; his fingers were inky, and suspiciously pitchy.

"You've been climbin' unknownst up that pine tree again, an' you a told not to?" questioned Kathleen, examining the fingers keenly.

"Hush up, and go ahead!" was Will's rude answer.

"How *can* you speak so?" reproved Emily, turning round upon Will, while she tied back her hair with a band of blue ribbon.

"Fie, fie, sir!" cried displeased Kathleen, "going ahead" with great energy, her mouth pursed up in disapproval of Master Will's manners, while she washed, and combed, and curled, and took off and put on his apparel.

"Where's your stockings, Master Will,—the blue stripes?"

"Dunno."

Will sat in a low chair, his stubby bare feet stuck out before him, and his two hands actively employed as fly-catchers. Suddenly he remembered having amused himself the day before in oiling his sled runners, using the striped stockings for wipers; but he did not trouble Kathleen just then with the tidings. The blue-striped stockings were not found. Then came a difficulty with his new boots.

"Aow! they pinch!"

"Where, sir?"

Master Will, not being able to say exactly where, was left to get used to the new boots as well as he could.

"Now see, here's your new suit; an' be careful with it, mind—careful as iver was. It's me afternoon out; and if ye go tearin' the cloos on ye, ye'll jist mind thim yersel, or else go in tatters wid yer grandmamma."

This speech had no more wholesome effect on Will than to cause him to stick out his tongue at Emily, while Kathleen, standing behind him, arranged his buttons and his drapery generally.

"Now, if you could only be as good as you're purty," exclaimed Kathleen, wheeling Will suddenly round before his tongue was quite in place again, "you'd do well enough."

With a few finishing touches to Emily's sash ribbon, Kathleen went off to make her own gorgeous toilet for her afternoon out.

The dinner was next to be gotten through with. But that was not an unpleasant hour to Will. After dinner the children were permitted by their mother to amuse themselves under the shadow of the great elm behind the house. She knew that with Emily this permission simply meant liberty to sit quietly beneath the overhanging branches, gazing dreamily over the soft summer landscape, or

listening to the sweet sounds that stirred the air around and above her. But with Will it might be more broadly interpreted into leave for frequent raids over fences and through bars for butterflies and beetles, or any luckless rover that strayed along. So she explained to her son in this wise:—

“Will, dear, remember that your grandmamma is coming for you, and you must not soil or tear your clothes by running about. Play quietly in the shade. The time will not be long now.”

“Yes, mum.”

Such implicit obedience as this “Yes, mum” implied! In fact, there was the promise in it of every one of the cardinal virtues.

The two children then went away through the long hall, whose doors stood wide open in the warm summer afternoon, and Will, dragging along the slower-footed Emily, hurried on to the elm tree.

“Don’t pull so, Will; I shall drop my basket, and my spool and thimble will roll away.”

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“What do you want to bother with work for this beautiful afternoon?” inquired Will, slackening his pace.

“I promised mamma I would try and finish it this week,” said Emily, “and I like to keep my word.”

“I thought the machine sewed.”

“So it does; but mamma says I must learn just the same as if there were no machines.”

“Well, I’m glad I’m not a girl, to sit pricking my fingers, and jabbing needles in and out all day.”

Patience was not one of Will’s virtues.

How lovely it was out under the elm! The sweet-scented grass was warm with the afternoon sun, and musical with the chirp and hum of its insect homes. The bees fluttered in and out over mamma’s rose garden, and all the air was filled with the delicate fragrance of the roses.

Emily, seated on the great gnarled elm roots, drank in all the sweet scents and sounds, her forgotten work-basket lying overturned in the grass before her. Will spread himself out at full length on the ground, and kept his eyes open for chippers and spiders, and all the busy little things that crept, or leaped, or flitted around him. Now and then the afternoon hush was broken by the faintly tinkling bells of a horse-car turning some distant corner, the rumbling of a heavy team going over the dusty turnpike, or the voices of the belfry clocks calling the hour to each other from the steeples of the neighboring city.

Master Will, however, soon became tired of this quiet. He scrambled up, and wandering away into the rose garden, lifted caressingly to his cheek the beautiful pink blossoms which leaned towards him from amid the green leaves. He was looking for a choice little bud to fasten in Emily’s hair; and when he found it, he came whistling out into the clear grassy spaces again, a little bird in a bough overhead tilting, and twittering, and eying him askance.

Will rushed up to Emily, and hung the bud in her ear; he rearranged it in the blue ribbon of her hair, so that it nodded sleepily over her nose; he dropped it, as if it were a tiny pink egg, in the soft golden moss of curls which he upturned on his sister’s head. Then he threw it away, and stamped on it; for Emily had drawn a book from her pocket, and deep in some fairy under-world story, was unmindful of his roses and his pains.

He ran recklessly away into the rose garden; he caught a bumblebee; he pursued a daddy long-leg with the watering-pot, going deeper and deeper all the time among the briery branches. The crashing of the stems caused Emily to come up from fairy-land a moment.

“Have a care, Will, dear. The roses have thorns. You may tear your nice jacket.”

Crash, crash! rip, rip! The rose trees are dragging at Will with their prickly fingers. With great effort he burst away from them, and rushed out, with no worse mischance than a rent in his trousers.

“Aw! aw! aw!”

All the little knolls seemed to take up Will’s sorrowful cry, and repeat it.

“You must not tear or soil your clothes.”

Every cricket in the grass seemed to be screaming these words of his mother, and here was her luckless son with two green spots on his stockings, and a grievous rent in his new pantaloons.

It was Kathleen’s afternoon out; she had warned him, and there was no help in that direction. He looked mournfully over his shoulder at the damages with a vague idea that he had perhaps some undeveloped capacity for mending.

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"YOU'LL SEE HOW NICELY I'LL SEW IT."

"Couldn't you pin it up nicely?" he inquired, in most insinuating tones, of Emily, whose eye just then met his. [157]

Emily burst into a merry laugh.

Will was mute with indignation, and tingling to his finger's ends, with this untimely mirth. His flashing eyes asked if this were a time for jesting.

"Come here, Willy, boy, and you'll see how nicely I'll sew it, not pin it. Never fret about it, dear; I will explain to mamma that you were really not so much in fault. It was only rather a mistake to get in so far among the bushes. If you had been chasing the cat, or turning somersets, she might, perhaps, be vexed; but poh! she will excuse this."

Will, unseen by Emily, wiped away with his thumb one big tear after another out of the corner of his eye.

"She is a good sister, anyhow, and I am a mean fellow ever to get mad with her, and say rude things to her," he said to himself, as Emily darned, and chatted, and bade him be of good cheer.

"My stockings, too, sister. There's a great green grass stain on both of them, and grandmamma expects us to be *so* nice."

Will coughed to choke down a sob.

"Perhaps you may have time to change them, Will. I will help you. But we must get the pantaloons all nicely done first."

So this kind sister stitched, and taught unconsciously as she stitched, lessons of love and patience, lessons of cheerful helpfulness and sweet unselfishness, which Will never forgot.

More than once, in after life, when, in heedless pursuit of life's roses, he had been wounded by its thorns, he remembered that sweet face of consolation, those dear hands held out to aid him, and all the sunshine and the song of that sweet summer afternoon, and fresh peace and hope came to him with the remembrance.

"It's all finished now, the very last stitch; and now for the stockings. Let me see the spots."

Will put his two heels firmly together, turned out his toes, pulled up his puffy pantaloons, and stooped his head and strained his eyes to look for them.

They were but little ones, after all, and a brisk rubbing with the handkerchief, and a judicious pulling down of the trouser bindings, almost concealed them. They were just in time with their

OUR DAILY BREAD.

A LITTLE girl knelt down to pray
One morn. The mother said,
"My love, why do we ever say,
Give us our daily bread?
Why not ask for a week or more?"
The baby bent her head
In thoughtful mood towards the floor:
"We want it fresh," she said.

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LITTLE WILLIE.

WILLIE'S PRAYER.

O NE sweet morning little Willie,
Springing from his trundle-bed,
Bounded to the vine-wreathed window
And put out his sunny head.

It was in the joyous spring-time,
When the sky was soft and fair,
And the blue-bird and the robin
Warbled sweetly everywhere.

In the field the lambs were playing,
Where the babbling brook ran clear;
To and fro, in leafy tree-tops,
Squirrels frisked without a fear.

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In his ear his baby-brother
Baby-wonders tried to speak,
And the kiss of a fond mother
Rested on his dimpled cheek.

Zephyrs from the fragrant lilacs
Fanned his little rosy face,
And the heart's-ease, gemmed with dewdrops,
Smiled at him with gentle grace.

Gliding back with fairy footsteps,
Willie, dropping on his knees,
Softly prayed, "Dear God, I love you!
Make it always happy, please!"

SQUIRRELS.

[160]

HOW pretty little squirrels look perched in the branches of a tree! I like to watch them as they nimbly run up the trunk or spring from bough to bough. One or two are generally to be seen in a clump of great old beeches near a house in the country where I usually spend some happy weeks in summer; and I will tell you a story of a little squirrel whose acquaintance I made there last summer.

I happened to be up very early one morning, long before breakfast was ready or any of the family were down, and I went out into the garden to enjoy the fresh, sweet smell of the early day. The cows were grazing in the field beyond, and now and then lowing a friendly "good-morning" to each other. Some ducks were waddling in procession down to the pond, quacking out their wise remarks as they went. The little birds were singing lustily their welcome to the new-born day. Even the old watch-dog came yawning, stretching, blinking and wagging his tail in kindly dog-fashion to bid me "good-day" in the summer sunshine.

As I stood under the great beech trees, taking in with greedy eye and ear the sights and sounds of country-life so refreshing to a Londoner, I heard something fall from one of the trees, then a scuffle, and immediately afterward a white Persian cat belonging to the house bounded toward me in hot pursuit of a dear little squirrel. I was just in time to save the poor little animal by stepping between it and the cat. The squirrel passed under the edge of my dress and made off again up another tree; so pussy lost her prey.

Soon afterward, when we were at breakfast, the butler told us that one of the little boys of the village, who had lost a pet squirrel, had asked if he might look for it in the garden of the house. It had first escaped into some trees in the park, and he had traced it from them into the garden. It at once occurred to me that this must be the little creature I had saved from the cat. I remembered how it made straight toward me, as if asking me for protection from its enemy, which only a tame squirrel would do; and I proposed, when breakfast was over, that we should go out and help in the search.

Little Jack Tompkins stood under the beech trees, looking with tear-stained face up into the branches. Suddenly I saw his face brighten, and he called out, "I see un, ma'am; I see un! If so be no one warn't by, I be sure he'd come to I."

I need not say we retreated to a distance; then Jack called up the tree in a loud whisper, "Billee, Billee!" and in a minute down came the little creature on to his shoulder. I can tell you Jack was a happier child than he had been when he came into the garden. And when I told him what a narrow escape "Billee" had had from the cat, he said, "It would be hard if a cat eat he, for our old puss brought he up with her own kits." Then he told us how the squirrel, when a tiny thing, had dropped out of its nest and been found by him lying almost dead at the foot of a tree, and how he had carried it home and tried whether pussy would adopt it as one of her own kittens. The cat was kind; the squirrel thrived under her motherly care, and became Jack's pet and companion.

Now, children, in this instance it was all very well to keep a tame squirrel. "Billee" seemed happy leading the life he was accustomed to; he had been fed and cared for by human beings from his infancy, and might be as incapable of finding food and managing for himself in a wild state as a poor canary would be if let loose from its cage. But generally it is cruel to imprison little wild birds and animals who have known the enjoyment of liberty.

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THE SQUIRREL.

PUPPET.

[162]

PUPPET had two occupations. She had also a guitar and a half-bushel basket. These things were her capital—her stock in trade.

The guitar belonged to one of her occupations, the half-bushel basket to the other.

In consideration of her first employment, she might have been called a street guitarist. In consideration of her second, she might have been called a beggar—a broken-bits beggar.

Puppet would have been considered, among lawyers, “shrewd;” or, at a mothers’ meeting, “cunning;” or, among business men, “sharp.” That is to say, she knew a thing or two. She knew that being able to sing no songs was a disadvantage to her first occupation, as a large hole, half way up her basket, was an advantage to her second.

It seems odd that a hole in one’s begging basket should be an advantage.

But because of the hole, she had always behind her a crowd of dogs, that seemed to have been just dropped from the basket, the last one never having fairly got his nose out; and because of the dogs she was known as “Puppet” all over the city.

To be known by a characteristic name is of great advantage to a beggar.

If Bidly, looking from the basement door, says to cook, “Och, an’ there comes up the street our little Puppet, with her dogs all behind her, carrying her basket,” cook is much more likely to see the broken bits “botherin’ roun’ on the schalves o’ the cubbid,” than she would be if Bidly should say, “Shure, an’ thir cams to us a dirty beggar, it is.”

But it is with Puppet’s first occupation, and not her second, that we have to do. If you had not read more descriptions of faces within the last year than you can possibly remember in all the years of your life put together, I would tell you what sort of face Puppet’s was; that it was a bright face, with blue eyes, just the color of the blue ribbon that went first round the guitar’s neck, and then round Puppet’s; that Puppet’s teeth were as white as the mother-of-pearl pegs that held her guitar strings at the bottom; that her cheeks were as white as the ivory keys; that her hair was long, and yellow—just the shade of the guitar’s yellow face.

But that would be very much like a dozen other faces that you have seen; so I will only say that it was a smiling little face.

It smiled as it bent over the guitar, while the little fingers picked their ways in and out among the strings; and it smiled yet more sweetly as she looked up to catch the coppers thrown from the fourth and fifth story, and sky-parlor windows.

Puppet once lived with a man who said that he was her uncle; and she believed him so thoroughly, that she let him box her ears whenever he felt like it, till he died. Since then Puppet

had lived almost friendless and alone.

One hot July day Puppet was wandering through the streets of the great city, with her little guitar under her little arm. The city did not seem so great to Puppet as it does to some of the rest of us, because she was born and brought up there.

"O, dear," sighed Puppet, "*what* a mean place you are!"

No one had given her a copper since the cool of the morning. People seemed to have a fancy for spending their coppers on soda-water and ice-cream. [163]

"What shall I do?" moaned Puppet. Whatever should she do? Puppet must have coppers, or she could not live.

She sat in a cool, shaded court, close to the busy street; but she couldn't get away from the heat, and the noise, and the people sighing, like herself, "O dear, O dear!"

"I'll try once more," said Puppet, tuning her guitar.

She played "Home, Sweet Home," with variations. But all the people who heard her were suffering, because their homes in the city were rather hot than sweet. "Home, Sweet Home" could win no pennies from "city folks" in July.

Then Puppet whistled to her guitar accompaniment a little "Bird Waltz," and whirled on the pavement in time, till I doubt if she herself knew whether the guitar had gone mad, and were waltzing about her, or she were waltzing about the guitar.

A boy came dancing into the court, singing,—

"O, whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad!
O, whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad!"

But he danced out again, without leaving a penny behind him; so it would have been just as well if he had never come in. Still, he amused himself for a few minutes, which not many people were able to do in that hot July midday.

Puppet went from the little court, and wandered on and on. At last she left the city far away behind her.

And out and away from the city there were green fields.

Puppet had heard of green fields, but she had never seen any face to face before. As she looked at them, she had a dim remembrance that she had heard that they were covered with long, waving grass. But all these fields were close shaven, like the beautiful mouse-colored horses in the city.

It was pleasant, but not very exciting to a city girl. The city girl presently grew tired of it.

"There seem to be houses farther along," she said; "I'll go and play there."

Puppet slung the little guitar about her little neck, and started off again.

Presently she came to a cottage with a little green yard in front of it, and in the middle of the little green yard was a great green tree.

Puppet sat down on the grass, leaned against the tree, and felt very hungry.

A lady was sitting by an open window, sewing. She was sitting so that Puppet could see only a bit of her left cheek, and her dark hair, just beginning to turn gray, and her right hand as she brought the needle up from her work. From what she did see, Puppet thought that she would give her something to eat, if she could but get her attention. Surely, she must be often hungry herself, or why should she have so many gray hairs?

Puppet, leaning against the tree, ran her fingers over the guitar frets in light harmonies; but the lady did not look.

Her thoughts must be far away, in a quiet and happy place, that Puppet's harmonies should seem a part of that place.

The guitar broke into a low, mournful minor. Still the lady gave no heed to Puppet.

Puppet was feeling very hungry. She would play the Fandango. That *must* rouse any one. She began at the most rattling part.

The gray-haired lady looked round quickly. "Bless me, bless me! what's this?" Seeing a little girl out by the tree, she put her sewing on the table, and came to the door and into the yard.

"Dear me! a little girl with yellow hair, and I just to have been dreaming of a little girl with yellow hair!" [164]

"Is anything the matter with my hair, mum?" Puppet stopped playing, and ran her hands through the yellow mass of uncombed locks.

"Ah, no, little girl! there is nothing the matter with your hair. Only—" The lady was thinking how

soft, and fine, and curly was the yellow hair of which she had been dreaming.

"What do you want?" asked the lady.

"I'm very hungry," said Puppet, "because of the walk, and—and—and all," concluded Puppet, remembering that the lady could not understand.

"Come in, then."

Puppet went in. Up in one corner of the sitting-room were a little tip-cart and a doll. Puppet ate her bread and meat, looking hard at the tip-cart.

"Where is it, mum?"

"Where is what, child?"

"The child, mum." Puppet pointed to the tip-cart.

"Gone, my dear," said the lady, softly.

"Dead?" Puppet remembered that that was what they said about her uncle when he went away. It was the only going away that she had ever known.

"Yes, I suppose so," said the lady, with a little shiver.

"That's bad, mum."

"No, not bad," said the lady, sorrowfully. "It is just right that it should be so."

"But it must be lonesome like, unless there were kicks and things." Puppet was still thinking of her uncle.

The lady wondered what the child could mean, and not knowing, said,—

"What's your name? How could I have forgotten to ask your name?"

"Puppet."

"That's a funny name. And where do you live?"

"Two or three miles away from here."

"Have you walked here to-day?"

"Yes, mum."

"What should make the child walk so far, I wonder?"

"Money, mum, and things to eat."

"Have you eaten enough?"

"Yes. I must go home now, or I shall be late."

"Are you sure you know the way?" asked the lady, a little anxiously. "You're such a little thing!"

"O, yes, mum! Go as I came."

"Well, good by."

"Good by, mum."

But was Puppet *sure* that she knew the way?

The next morning, a man walking on a road that ran by the edge of a meadow, was going to his work.

Hark! What did he hear? Was it a cry! was it a child's cry? And what was that? It sounded like a fiddle. He stopped to look around.

"I declare, we've had a high tide in the night!" said he, and trudged on.

But what was that? *That* was certainly a child's cry.

The man looked sharply about.

"It can't be she," he said. "Folks from heaven wouldn't cry, even if they were let to come—at least, if they were little children."

And so he still looked sharply about. And looking, what did he see?

He saw great haystacks of meadow hay out in the meadow, with the tide-water all about them. Then his eyes were fixed on one particular haystack. On its top, with her yellow hair and smiling face in sight, was—it could not be, though—but it was—a little girl, and dangling by the side of the stack was a guitar with a yellow face. The man waded through the water that lay between the dry land and the stack.



"How came you there?"

"I went everywhere to try to get home, and it was dark, all but the moon; and I saw the stack, and a board went from the ground to the top of it."

"Sure enough, the prop."

"And I was so tired!"

"Poor child!"

"And I never saw the water come before, and it was only wet enough to wet my feet when I got up."

"Well, well! We'll go home and get something to eat."

The man walked into his kitchen with the little girl and the guitar on his shoulders.

"Why, John, are you back? Dear me, if there isn't that same child—Puppet!"

John went off to his work again. Puppet ate her breakfast, and told her story, and then said,—

"Please, mum, may I play with the cart?"

And because of her yellow hair, she might play with the cart.

"But aren't you sick, and oughtn't you to take some medicine, and go to bed?" asked the lady, whose hair had grown gray over sickness and medicine.

Puppet meditated. She felt very well. She thought that she had rather play with the tip-cart than to take medicine. So she played all day, and went to bed at night.

At night John come home from his work, and, as usual, heard of all that had happened through the day.

"I wish we could keep the little thing, John, dear. She has yellow hair, just like—"

"Yes," said John, "I saw."

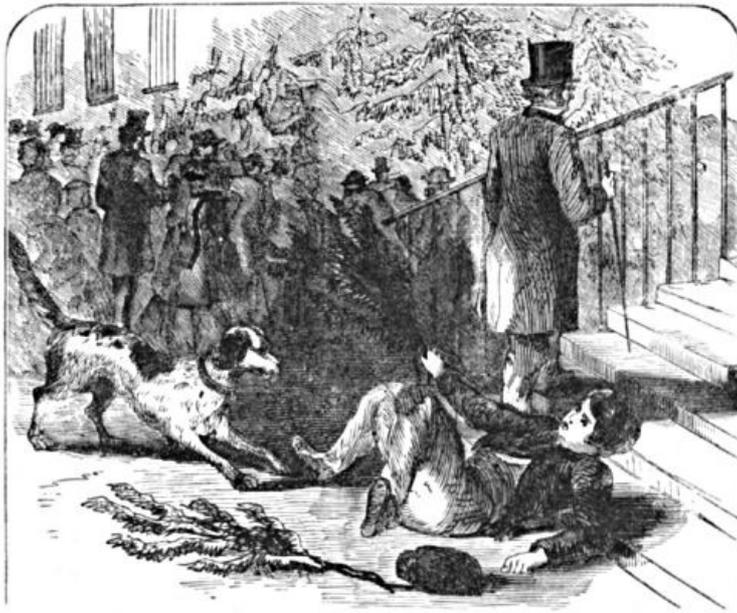
"And she'd be *such* a comfort!"

"If she didn't die by and by," said John.

"But, John, dear, just think of a little thing like her spending the night in the middle of a meadow, [166]
with the water all about her."

John thought. And he thought that if she could stand that without being sick, she could stand their love without dying.

So Puppet and the guitar live with John and the gray-haired lady.



“MIKE ROLLED OVER AND OVER TO THE FOOT OF THE STEPS.” See p. 169.

MERRY CHRISTMAS.

ALL the hill-side was green with maples, and birches, and pines. The meadows at its foot were green, too, with the tufted salt grass, and glittering with the silver threads of tide braided among its winding creeks. Beyond was the city, misty and gray, stretching its wan arms to the phantom ships flitting along the horizon.

From the green hill-side you could hear the city's muffled hum and roar, and sometimes the far-off clanging of the bells from its hundred belfries. But the maples and birches seemed to hear and see nothing beyond the sunshine over their heads and the winds which went frolicking by. Life was one long dance with them, through the budding spring and the leafy summer, and on through the grand gala days of autumn, till the frost came down on the hills, and whispered,—

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“Your dancing days are all over.”

But the pines were quite different. They, the stately ones, stood quite aloof, the older and taller ones looking stiffly over the heads of the rollicking maples, and making solemn reverences to the great gray clouds that swept inland from the ocean. The straight little saplings at their feet copied the manners of their elders, and folding their fingers primly, and rustling their stiff little green petticoats decorously, sat up so silent and proper.

So unlike the small birches and maples that chattered incessantly, wagging their giddy heads, and playing tag with the butterflies in the sunshine all the day long!

“How tiresome those stupid old pines are! No expression, no animation. So lofty and so exclusive, and forever grumbling to each other in their hoarse old Scandinavian, which it gives one the croup even to listen to! Of what possible use *can* they be?”

This was what the maple said to the birch one day when the Summer and her patience with her sombre neighbor were on the wane—one day when there was a gleam of golden pumpkins in the tawny corn stubble beyond the wood, and the purpling grapes hung ripening over the old stone wall that lay between, and the maple had brightened its summer dress with a gay little leaf set here and there in its shining folds.

The birch agreed with the maple about the pines, and the maple went glibly on.

“I've ordered my autumn dresses—a different one for each day in the week. Just think of those horrid pines never altering the fashion of their stiff old plaiting.”

“We shall not be obliged to remain in this dull place much longer,” said the tall pines loftily to each other, looking quite over the heads of the maple and the birch. “We shall soon be crossing the ocean, and then our lives will have just begun. We simply vegetate here.”

“Ho, ho!” laughed the maple and the birch behind their fluttering green fans, pretending to be greatly amused at what the west wind was saying to them.

Now, though the trees spoke a different language, yet each understood perfectly well what the other said; so their rudeness was quite inexcusable.

When the summer was ended, the maple began to put on her gorgeous autumn dresses; but the pines looked much at the sky, and paid little heed to the maple. The other trees on the hill-side,

quite faded with their summer gayeties, looked on languidly in the still autumn days at the maple's brilliant toilets.

Soon the cold rains swept in from the sea, blurring the wood vistas; and when they were gone, the frost came in the midnight, with its unwelcome message, and later the snow lay white above all the faded and fallen crimson and gold of the maple and the tarnished silver of the birch.

All the trees, brown and bare now, moaned in the wintry wind—all but the tall pines, and they were crossing the ocean; their lives had begun. The little saplings remained behind, but with their heads perked stiffly up above the snow; they had the air of expecting somebody.

They were not disappointed. One sunny morning, a boy and a girl came singing through the wood paths, each in a pair of high-topped boots, and each in a faded and closely-buttoned coat, the girl with a blue hood pulled over her rosy face, and the boy with a fur cap closely tied about his ears by a red comforter. The two drew a hand-sled, and peered about under the tall trunks as they went stamping through the deep snow. How they shouted as they spied the little pine trees perking up their heads! How they tossed aside the snow, and worked away with their jackknives, hacking at the little pine trees till they had cut them all down, all ready to be piled up on their hand-sled.

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"Where are you going?" asked the giddy little birch of the pines, peeping out from a small window in her snow-house. Her nose was purple, and her fingers stiff with cold; but down under the earth her feet were warm, and that was pleasant, at any rate.

"It is of no consequence where," said the pines, in their grimmest Scandinavian.

The birch simply said, "O!" and drew in her little purple nose, hoping heartily they were all going to be burned, as that would be a good end and riddance of them.

But the little pines were not going to be burned; they were going away to the city that lay misty and still beyond the frozen meadows. Stretched out stiffly on the hand-sled, they were jostled along out through the wood, over the frozen turnpike, and across the mill-dam to Boston.

They alighted at the Boylston Market, and were ranged in a row against the dark brick wall.

"How much happens in a very short time!" they said to each other; "all those gaudy, chattering trees left without a leaf to cover them, our own friends all gone on their travels, and we here in the city, wrapped in our warm winter furs."

It was the Christmas week. The shop windows were gay with toys and gorgeous Christmas offerings; the shop doors were opening and shutting on the crowd that came and went through them. A bustling throng of people passed incessantly up and down the narrow sidewalks, and carriages of all descriptions blocked the crossings, or drove recklessly over the frozen pavement.

The old woman in the quilted black hood and shaggy cape, who had charge of the little pine trees, drove a brisk trade that day in her wreaths and holly; but though many people stopped to admire the little pines, and even to ask their price, no purchaser had yet appeared for them.

The old dame was rubbing her mittened hands briskly together, and mumbling in a displeased way at the pine trees, when a carriage drew suddenly up at the curbstone, and out sprang a little girl.

"See, papa, how lovely! So green, and fresh, and thick!" she said, pointing to the row of pines.

A bargain was concluded in a trice. The money was dropped into the eager, outstretched mitten of the old woman, and a little Christmas tree dragged over the sidewalk, and set up in the buggy.

"We must have some of these lower branches cut off; they are in the way," said papa.

"Hev a knife, sir?" shouted a ragged little fellow, whipping a rusty old knife out of his pocket.

"Please, sir, lemme cut it for you. Say, where?" he cried, laying hold of the pine, as the gentleman in the buggy pointed to him where to cut.

The lower branches being trimmed to the gentleman's satisfaction, the Christmas tree, leaning comfortably against the crimson afghan, was soon on its way to Meadow Home, while its lower branches and some jingling small coin remained in the hands of the gaping urchin on the curbstone.

"This here's luck—fust-rate luck," remarked the small boy, stamping his feet, and staring stupidly after the retreating buggy wheels.

"Out of the way there!" growled a man in a farmer's frock, lifting a pile of frozen turkeys from a wagon.

The boy ducked aside, his ragged little trousers fluttering in the wind. Then he sat down on the market steps to count his coin.

"Hi! twenty-five cents. There's a mutton stew and onions for you and your folks a Christmas, Mike Slattery, and all this jolly green stuff thrown in free gratis. That chap was a gen'leman, and no mistake. Won't Winnie hop when she sees me a-h'isting of these here over our stairs, and she a-blowin' at me for a week to bring her some sich, and me niver seein' nary a chance at 'em 'cept stealin's, which is wot this here feller ain't up to no ways whatsoever. No, *sir*. Hi!"

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Mike waved his Christmas boughs aloft in great glee.

An old gentleman with gold-headed cane and spectacles was going up the steps of the market, followed by a beautiful black-and-white setter. The playful dog sprang at the green branches. Mike held on to them stoutly. The dog suddenly let go of them, and bounded away, while Mike rolled over and over to the foot of the steps, clutching tightly the pine boughs.

"You'll ketch it," he muttered, setting his teeth hard together behind his white lips, and trying in vain to scramble up.

"Yer hurt, bub?" asked a wrinkled old apple woman, turning round on her three-legged stool, and thrusting her nose inquiringly out of the folds of the old brown shawl, which was wrapped around her head.

"You bet I be!" whimpered Mike, pointing forlornly with his one unoccupied finger to his bruised ankle.

"Been playin' pitch-pennies, yer mis'ble young 'un!" grinned a tall boy, strolling by with his hands in his pockets, and his ferret eyes on the sharp lookout for mischief.

In a twinkling he swooped up Mike's small coin, which had rattled to the pavement, and vanished with them in a struggling tangle of horse cars and omnibuses before Mike finished his desperate yell of, "Gim me 'um."

By this time a crowd had gathered about the prostrate Mike, who, faint with pain, was at last lifted into the chaise of a kind-hearted doctor, who was passing, and carried to his house in Bone Court.

There we will leave Mike for a while, and look after the little pine tree on its way to Meadow Home.

Such a group of round, rosy faces as were on the watch for it in the great bay window of Meadow Home, peering out in the red sunset, straining their eyes in the dim twilight, and peering still more persistently as the stars came out through the gathering darkness!

The fire danced in the grate, and the shadows danced on the wall, and the four little heads danced more and more impatiently in the window pane, as the cold winter night settled down on the world outside of Meadow Home.

"They're run away with and threw out. What will you bet, Mab?" shouted Will, turning away from the window in disgust, and indulging in a double somerset.

"*Thrown*, Will," corrected Mabel, just now more indignant with his grammar than his slang.

Mabel began to clear with her sleeve an unblurred peep through the pane, and then pressed her nose hard against the glass.

"It's *my* opinion," she said, with great pompousness, "that the Christmas trees are all sold. I told Ely not to put off buying till to-day. Don't you remember, Alice? And so papa is just coming home without them."

Alice poh-pohed. Alice was sitting up stiffly at a table by the fire, stuffing a pin-cushion, assisted, or, more properly, impeded, by her small brother Chrissy, who had offered his services, and would not listen to Alice's nay. Chrissy was not handsome in any light, but by the flickering firelight he looked like a little ogre. He sat hunched up in his chair, his knees drawn up to his nose, the sharp end of his tongue curling out of the corner of his mouth, and his small eyes actually crossed in the earnestness of his work, which consisted in snatching chances at the stuffing with a table-spoon and a cup of bran.



THE LITTLE SLATTERYS.

"I hear them," exclaimed Mabel, springing down from the window, her nose a spectacle.

Now away down stairs flew all the four, who had been wriggling for an hour in the bay window.

"Shut the door, Chrissy," nodded the dignified Alice to Chrissy, whose eyes had marvellously uncrossed, and whose tongue had disappeared at Mabel's announcement. Chrissy drew down his knees, and obeyed. "Spoon up the bran you spilled, Chrissy," directed Alice, calmly stitching at her pin-cushion.

The reluctant Chrissy's obedience was less of a success this time. The noise of a great commotion in the hall below reached the quiet chamber. Chrissy, with his face twisted inquiringly first over one shoulder and then over the other, spooned at random.

The sounds came nearer. Through the hurrying of eager feet and the clamor of glad voices was a tap-tapping on the wainscot and a thumping on the oaken stairs.

"May be it's St. Nicholas?" questioned Chrissy, spooning very unsteadily, his eyes and his ears wide open.

"No; it isn't time for him. He's doing up his pack now, and they are harnessing his reindeer."

"Who? Where?"

The door burst open, and in tumbled four children and the little pine tree. Chrissy darted forward, shrieking with delight, and fell headlong among the family group.

"What a pretty pine!" said Alice, calmly locking up the pin-cushion in her work-box.

Now Ely, still in her fur cap and sack, rushed in excitedly among her struggling brothers and sisters, and rescued the pine tree.

"Sitting up so piminy there, Alice Eliot, your two hands folded, and the beautiful Christmas tree just going to destruction, with those four wretched little thunderbolts pitching into it!"

Ely was purple with wrath.

The four little Eliots were on their feet again in a trice, giggling and nudging each other behind the excited Ely.

"It's a truly lovely pine," remarked Alice, composedly, shaking some bran from her skirt.

"You might have said so, if you had gone round looking for them in the freezing cold, as I did, and then couldn't find one fit to be seen, except—"

"Alice, didn't I tell her so?" interrupted Mabel, pulling Chrissy's fat fingers away from Ely's pocket just as they were about to grasp the protruding heels of a little dancing jack.

Alice now lighted the gas, Ely set the pretty pine tree carefully against the wall, and the four little Eliots danced hand in hand frantically about it.

Then Alice, and Mabel, and Ely went up close to the fender, and whispered together about the presents Ely had brought home to put in the children's stockings, and Mabel helped Ely empty her great stuffed-out pocket; and the fire laughed through the bars of the grate to see the parcels that came forth.

By and by Mabel and Ely took the pine tree carefully down stairs into a beautiful room, and Alice came close behind them with a great covered basket. The four little Eliots followed noisily, striving to peep under the basket covers; but Ely thrust them all out again into the hall, and locked the door upon them.

Now began the Christmas adorning of the little pine tree. Such beautiful things as were hung upon it, and folded about it, and festooned around it! [172]

"How charming to be a pine!" murmured the little tree, with its head among the frescoed cherubs on the ceiling.

"Where are you, Mabel Eliot? Light up the burners now," commanded Ely from the top of a step-ladder.

Ely crept out from under the green baize around the foot of the pine tree, two pins in her mouth, a crimson smoking-cap on her dishevelled head, and a pair of large-flowered toilet slippers drawn over her hands.

"I crawled in behind there to see if there mightn't be a place somewhere for these," explained Ely, hastening for the torch, and proceeding to light up.

The pine tree now saw itself reflected in the great mirror opposite, and echoed the "splendid" of the three girls, who clapped their hands at the gorgeous effect. Then the lights were put out. The silver key was turned in the door again, and the girls went away, leaving the pine tree in darkness indeed.

The four small Eliots, after pinning up their stockings by the chimney, seated themselves in their night-gowns on the hearth-rug, and talked over St. Nicholas before they got into bed. Each agreed to wake the others if he "should just but catch Santa Claus coming down the chimney."

Chrissy, squinting up his eyes till nothing but two little lines of black lashes were visible, was sure "he should catch him; O, yes, he should."

So they all climbed sleepily into bed, pinning their faith on Chrissy.

The night darkened and deepened, the stars moving on in a grand procession. Somewhere about midnight St. Nicholas was off on his ride, galloping over the roof-tops, and knocking at every chimney-top that had a knocker, just getting through at day dawn with the deal he had to do. The "eight tiny reindeer" had barely trotted him out of sight, when thousands of little children in thousands of homes began hopping out of bed to look in their stockings.

The Christmas morning was breaking in joy and gladness, as if the dear Christ Child of eighteen hundred years ago were newly born that day. Little children, and old men, and maidens waked to give good gifts and greetings to each other, remembering whom the good Father in heaven had given to them on that first glad Christmas morn.

In an attic in Bone Court, Mike Slattery, wildly staring about him, bolted up in bed, waked by big Winnie, and little Pat, and Jimmy roaring "Merry Christmas" in his ears.

"Oop, Mike, an' tak' a look at Winnie's Christmas fixin's foreinst yer two eyes," piped Jimmy, flapping the little breeches he was too excited to put on at the little pine branches stuck up thickly in the window.

"Isn't yer fut that better ye might hobble up to see what the good gintleman—him as brought ye home—left behind for yees and us arl—the Christmas things, ye'll mind?" inquired Winnie, combing her tangled auburn locks, and stooping compassionately over Mike.

"There's the big burhd for yees," cackled little Pat, staggering up to the bedside with a goose huggd to his bosom.

"Hooray!" cried Mike, swinging his pillow; "that thafe of a chap didn't do us out of our Christmas dinner, thin. Here's a go beyant mutton and onions."

"Blissid be thim as saysonably remimbers the poor," sniffed Mrs. Slattery, who was down on her hands and knees washing up the broken bit of hearth under the stove.

"That's so," chimed in the little Slatterys; and then they all fell again to admiring the goose. [173]

The sun had climbed a long way up the sky, and was just looking in through the pine branches in the Slatterys' window, when a little golden head, surmounted by a blue velvet hat, looked in through the Slatterys' door.

"Merry Christmas. May I come in?"

Pat looked at Jim, and Jim looked at Mike, and all three, open-mouthed, looked at the little golden head in the doorway.

"I just came in to bring you some pretty story books of mine, and a cap of brother Jack's, and a nice new pair of shoes for Mike. How do you do, Mike, this morning? Papa—he's the doctor who brought you home, Mike—is coming soon to see you."

She had emptied her little leathern bag, laid down her gifts on a chair, and vanished before Winnie got up the stairs from the wood-house, or Mrs. Slattery, in the closet, had finished skewering up the goose, or a single little Slattery had found a word to say.

I cannot stay to tell you about the Slatterys' Christmas dinner, and Mike perched up at the table, with brother Jack's cap on his head, and the new pair of shoes on the floor by his side. I have just time to stop a minute at Meadow Home, where a little golden head, with a little blue velvet hat tilted atop, flits in before me at the great hall door. As I went quickly through the holly and under the wreaths, a little voice, in wheedling tones, called from the gallery above,—

"Stay to dine to dinner?"

At the same time a small dancing jack, dangling from somewhere overhead, caught by his hands and feet in my chignon, as if striving to pull me up. Ah, naughty Chrissy!

Chrissy clapped his hands in delight, and then dropping the string of the little jack, ran away swiftly to hide.

"Do stay to dine, aunt Clara," begged Mabel, and Alice, and Ely, all three springing forward at once to disengage the jumping jack from my hair.

"Ah, do, Miss Clara; I've something to tell you about a little boy I saw this morning," pleaded little golden-head, peering through an evergreen arch. "Do stay and see the Christmas tree lighted after dinner," besought all four, gathering closely around me.

But aunt Clara was engaged to dine at the square old house over the way, with the dear old lady who could not see the pine wreaths that made her old-fashioned parlor so sweet with their resinous, balmy fragrance.

"They remind me of the times when my girls and boys were all about me so gay and happy, and the old house resounded with their 'Merry Christmas.' 'Tis many a year now, dear Clara, since there was a merry Christmas here; but happy Christmases there have been, thank God, not a few. A happy Christmas, dear, to you, and thanks for brightening the day for me," said the old lady, with a gentle sigh, as I placed her at the quiet table.

A merry, merry Christmas to all the little "Merrys" who read this story. Do not forget that there are homes where live forlorn little Mikes and Jimmys, whom you can make glad in this glad time; and do not forget that there are sorrowing homes which the mere sight and sound of your bright young faces and voices will brighten and cheer.

E. G. C.



ANNIE.

ANNIE.

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I'VE a sweet little pet; she is up with the lark,
And at eve she's asleep when the valleys are dark,
And she chatters and dances the blessed day long,
Now laughing in gladness, now singing a song.
She never is silent; the whole summer day
She is off on the green with the blossoms at play;
Now seeking a buttercup, plucking a rose,
Or laughing aloud at the thistle she blows.

She never is still; now at some merry elf
You'll smile as you watch her, in spite of yourself;
You may chide her in vain, for those eyes, full of fun,
Are smiling in mirth at the mischief she's done;
And whatever you do, that same thing, without doubt,
Must the mischievous Annie be busied about;
She's as brown as a nut, but a beauty to me,
And there's nothing her keen little eyes cannot see.

She dances and sings, and has many sweet airs;
And to infant accomplishments adding her prayers,
I have told everything that the darling can do,
For 'twas only last summer her years numbered two.
She's the picture of health, and a southern-born thing
Just as ready to weep as she's ready to sing,
And I fain would be foe to lip that hath smiled
At this wee bit of song of the *dear little* child.

IF; OR, BESSIE GREEN'S HOLIDAY.

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IT seems absurd to say so, and at first sight almost impossible, that that one little word of only two letters could have so much power, and yet there is no doubt that the constant use of "*if*" spoiled Bessie Green's holiday and took away from it all the enjoyment and pleasure which she imagined a long summer day spent in the country would give. How she had thought about it and looked forward to it for weeks beforehand! Her parents were poor, hardworking people who rarely left home, and so the very idea of a treat like this was delightful, and she scarcely slept the night before, so afraid was she of not being ready in time. I cannot tell you how often she got up in the course of the night, either to see what o'clock it was or to look out of the window and wonder whether it was going to be a fine or a wet day, but it seemed to her as if morning would never come. However, long before six she was up and dressed, and with one last good-bye to her mother through the kitchen door was off to the station. And very soon the train went speeding away from the smoky streets of the city toward the green fields and shady lanes of the country.

Now, if Bessie Green had been as wise as her companions, she would have done as they did—looked out of the window and admired all she saw passing by, and so have begun the enjoyment of the day; for to eyes unaccustomed to such scenes even the cows and sheep grazing in the meadows or the horses galloping off across the fields frightened by the train were all new and amusing sights. But our foolish little friend, instead of doing this, began to look first at her own dress and then at her neighbors', and thereby she grew discontented: "*If* I only had a felt hat with a red feather in it, like Mary Jones', instead of this straw one with a plain bit of blue ribbon round it, how I should like it! and *if* mother would buy me a smart muslin frock, such as Emma Smith wears, how much better it would be than the cotton frocks she always gets for me!" And she pouted and frowned and looked so miserable that her schoolfellows would have wondered what was the matter if they had noticed her, but they were so busy thinking of other things that they never saw there was anything amiss. Happy children! They had resolved to enjoy themselves, and they did so from morning till night, while unhappy little Bessie let discontent creep in, and so her holiday—that day she had looked forward to so much—was, as I said before, spoiled.

Ah! I fear there are many people in this world, both young and old, who do as Bessie did: instead of being contented with the state of life in which God has placed them, and doing their best to make themselves and others happy, they let this little word "*if*" creep in on every occasion, and in too many cases spoil not *one day only*, but their *whole lives*.



GOOD-BYE.

But to return to our story. The train went speeding along, miles and miles away from London, with its millions of people and houses and hot, dusty streets and courts, where almost the only green leaves were the cabbages on the costermongers' trucks, out into the pure, fresh, breezy country, where houses were as scarce as trees in the city, and the cornfields stretched away and away, till bounded in the far distance by sloping heathery hills. And what a shout of pleasure arose from the two hundred throats of our little travellers when at length they stopped at a roadside station and exchanged the train for a shady lane leading to a park, the kind owner of

which had placed it at their disposal for the day! Now ought not Bessie to have begun at last to enjoy herself? No; foolish Bessie had seen a carriage at the station, and envied the ladies who got into it: "If I had a carriage and horses, how much pleasanter it would be driving up this lane, instead of walking as I am obliged to do now!" And so she went along at such a slow, sulky pace that she was far behind when the lodge gates were reached, and was almost shut out when the children and teachers were admitted into the park. And as they had shouted for joy at sight of the shady lanes, how much more did they shout when they saw the beautiful spot in which for a whole long day they were to amuse themselves! There were meadows covered with hay—not such hay as is seen in stables, brown and hard and stiff, but soft, green and grassy-looking, smelling sweetly, and just the thing to roll about in and cover one another up with; then there was a nice level cricket-ground, and all ready for the boys to begin a game; there were shady trees under which to sit and listen to the birds' songs, and woody dells and valleys full of ferns and wild flowers; ponds on which swans swam about and came on swiftly and silently through the water in hopes of food, and little streams trickling along with a murmuring noise between the rushes and yellow flags which grew on their banks. Certainly this was a delightful spot to be in; and when in the midst of the beautiful park they saw the house and gardens—a house so large that it seemed a palace in the eyes of the children, while the gardens were filled with flowers of every color—they shouted again, all except Bessie, who of course began again to envy: "Oh, what a splendid house! If I could only live there, I am sure I should never be unhappy again; if I could stay here and not go back to London; if—"

But at this point her grumbling came to a sudden stop, for at a given signal all the children, who had been racing over the grass, formed into line and marched straight up to the house to make their bows and curtsies to the kind lady and gentleman who lived there, and who had come out into the porch with her own little girls and boys to welcome the visitors. Of course Bessie found something fresh to be discontented at: "If I were one of that lady's little girls, I should be dressed as nicely as she is, and then, if I liked to play about here all day long, I could do so."

And in this way she went on all the day. After going to the house and listening to a few words from the owner, and in return singing one of their prettiest songs, the children were sent off to play, and in a few minutes they were scattered in all directions, amusing themselves in different ways; and though Bessie joined in many games, yet that one word "if" was in her mind the whole time, and she did not play as merrily as usual. Dinner came, and the children, called together by a bugle, sat down in a tent; but though the fare provided was better than Bessie was accustomed to, even on a Sunday, yet this spirit of discontent had so possessed her that it was only because she was very hungry that she ate what was given her, all the time wondering what the people who lived at the great house were eating for their dinner, and thinking over and over again, "If I had the chickens and other good things which they are sure to have, I should like it much better than this mutton and cherry pie."

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Oh, Bessie, Bessie! when you are older and know more of the world, you will discover that living in a grand house and having good things to eat do not make people happier; they in their turn may be as discontented as you are, and be always wishing they had something else which does not belong to them, and that word "if" may be as frequently in *their* mouths as in *yours*.

But now the dinner is over, and the merry troop have dispersed again—the boys eager to return to their game of cricket, and the girls to haymaking and swinging under the trees or other modes of spending the hours of this pleasant day; and judging by the laughter and shouts of joy, all are as happy as it is possible to be—indeed, it is a surprise to many when the bugle calls them once more together for tea, and they find that even a summer's day must come to an end at last, and that within two hours they will all be starting once more on their homeward journey. Very quickly did most of the children drink up the fragrant tea and the delicious milk, for they wanted to have a last look at the places where they had spent the day and picked wild flowers or made hay. Bessie was among the foremost of these; for now that she was going away so soon from it, she grew yet more discontented, and that little word "if" was used more than ever as she went about, not, as the others did, just to say good-bye to the fields and woods, but to look at them again and wish they were hers.

I need not stop to tell you of the evening journey, for it was like the morning one, excepting that now the hopes of a pleasant day had been fulfilled, and the children talked of what they had done, instead of what they intended to do. Bessie Green wondered, as she heard them talking, how it was that they all seemed so much happier than she did, and how it was that the longed-for holiday had not been altogether a day of enjoyment. When she arrived at home, she had very little to say about what she had done or seen; but as she has since then been more contented, we must suppose that her wondering has had some effect, and that she is beginning to see what made the day so different to her and to her companions; in which case we may hope that the next time she goes into the country she will not spoil her holiday by the too frequent use of the word "if."

THE FORCED RABBIT.

A FUNNY FACT TOLD IN VERSE.

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YOU have heard of forced potatoes, have you not, dear little folks?

Of melons forced, and cucumbers, and grapes in purple cloaks?

But I have seen, and handled, too—and oh, the sight was funny!—

A rabbit forced, a tiny one, a snow-white little Bunny.

Two little girls of ten and twelve—I love them very much—

Once thought a tenant they would like for their new rabbit-hutch,

So off to town they drove one day, and there a rabbit bought,

And home the furry tenant in their pony-carriage brought.

They petted, nursed and fondled it, and showed it every care,

And said before it went to bed its sheets of straw they'd air;

They also begged it very hard itself at home to make, And hoped, although its bed was strange, it would not lie awake.

How happy was this Bunny white I really cannot tell, But certainly it happy looked, and was extremely well; Its eyes were bright, its nose was cool, its tongue a lovely pink.

And for its pulse—well, that was strong and regular, I think.

When summer came, the little girls were taken to the sea, And left their rabbit with the groom—a youth of twenty-three.

They bathed and dug upon the shore, and played with Cousin Jack;

They heard the band upon the sand, and rode on donkey-back.

Then home they came, and went at once to see their Bunny dear,

To stroke his ribs, and pat his head, and feel each wiry ear;

But oh! alas! they found him not—the rabbit was not there!

His hutch, like Mrs. Hubbard's shelf, was very, very bare.

Now, where is he? They called the groom, the youth of twenty-three,

And said, "Oh, George, where's Bunny gone? Oh where, oh where is he?"

"He's in the hot-house," George replied; "the gardener put him there,

For he was growing thinner, miss, and losing all his hair."

They trotted to the garden then, and there the Bunny found,

And 'neath a vine beheld their pet reposing on the ground.

"Why, what is that?" they both exclaimed; "can that a rabbit be?

I never in my life before so strange a thing did see!"



THE RABBIT.

They were surprised, and certainly the sight was strange
to view,
For Bunny looked so very huge, and such a bundle too!
Such fat he had, and lots of hair, they longed a bit to pull;
He was exactly like a ball of living cotton-wool.

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No tailor ever did produce a coat so superfine,
'Twas white as snow, and very thick on stomach, chest
and spine—
As thick as heads of stupid boys with countenances glum;
And oh! the hair was very long—as long as any sum!

A host of friends and neighbors came the funny sight to
see,
To one and all a rabbit forced was quite a novelty;
And everybody petted him, and loved him very much,
And brought him goody-goodies for the larder in his
hutch.

* * * * *

One day—and now my pen and ink the deepest mourning
wear—
They let him out upon the lawn for exercise and air;
They turned their backs, two dogs rushed up, and one,
with swelling chest,
Seized Bunny by his woolly throat, and—you must guess
the rest.

UP AND DOING.

BOYS, be up and doing,
For the day's begun;
Soon will come the noontide,

Then the set of sun;
At your tasks toil bravely
Till your work is done.

Let your hands be busy
In some useful way;
Don't neglect your study,
Don't forget your play;
There is time enough for each
Every blessed day.

A DARING FEAT.

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REMARKABLE for its spire, the loftiest of St. Petersburg, is the church of St. Peter and St. Paul. An anecdote connected with this church, and not known, I believe, out of Russia, is worth telling. The spire, which rises

“Lofty, and light, and small,”

and is probably represented in an engraving as fading away almost into a point in the sky, is, in reality, terminated by a globe of considerable dimensions, on which an angel stands, supporting a large cross. This angel was out of repair; and some suspicions were entertained that he designed visiting, uninvoked, the surface of the earth. The affair caused some uneasiness, and the government at length became greatly perplexed. To raise a scaffolding to such a height would cost a large sum of money; and in meditating fruitlessly on this circumstance, without knowing how to act, some time was suffered to elapse.

Among the crowd of gazers below, who daily turned their eyes and their thoughts towards the angel, was a mujik called Telouchkine. This man was a roofer of houses (a slater, as he would be called in countries where slates were used); and his speculations by degrees assumed a more practical character than the idle wonders and conjectures of the rest of the crowd. The spire was entirely covered with sheets of gilded copper, and presented to the eye a surface as smooth as if it had been one mass of burnished gold. But Telouchkine knew that the sheets of copper were not even uniformly closed upon each other, and, above all, that there were large nails used to fasten them, which projected from the side of the spire.

Having thought on these circumstances till his mind was made up, Telouchkine went to the government and offered to repair the angel without scaffolding, and without assistance, on condition of being reasonably paid for the time expended in the labor. The offer was accepted.

The day fixed for the adventure arrives. Telouchkine, provided with nothing more than a coil of ropes, ascends the spire in the interior to the last window. Here he looks down at the concourse of the people below, and up at the glittering “needle,” as it is called, tapering far above his head. But his heart does not fail him; and stepping gravely out upon the window, he sets about his task.

He cuts a portion of the cord in the form of two large stirrups, with a loop at each end. The upper loops he fastens upon two of the projecting nails above his head, and places his foot in the others. Then digging the fingers of one hand into the interstices of the sheets of copper, he raises one of the stirrups with the other hand, so as to make it catch a nail higher up. The same operation he performs on behalf of the other leg, and so on alternately. And thus he climbs, nail by nail, step by step, and stirrup by stirrup, till his starting-point is undistinguished from the golden surface, and the spire dwindles in his embrace till he can clasp it all round.

So far, so well. But he now reaches the ball—a globe of between nine and ten feet in circumference. The angel, the object of this visit, is above this ball, and concealed from his view by its smooth, round, and glittering expanse. Only fancy the wretch at this moment, turning up his grave eyes, and graver beard, to an obstacle that seems to defy the daring and intrepidity of man!

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THE SEA.

But Telouchkine is not dismayed. He is prepared for the difficulty; and the means he used to surmount it exhibits the same remarkable simplicity as the rest of the feat. [185]

Suspending himself in his stirrups, he girds the "needle" with a cord, the ends of which he fastens around his waist; and so supported, he leans gradually back, till the soles of his feet are planted against the spire. In this position, he throws, by a strong effort, a coil of cord over the ball; and so coolly and accurately is the aim taken, that at the first trial it falls in the required direction, and he sees the end hang down on the opposite side.

To draw himself into his original position, to fasten the cord firmly around the globe, and with the assistance of this auxiliary to climb to the summit, is now an easy part of his task; and in a few minutes more Telouchkine stands by the side of the angel, and listens to the shout that bursts like sudden thunder from the concourse below, yet comes to his ear only like a faint and hollow murmur.

The cord, which he had an opportunity of fastening properly, enabled him to descend with comparative facility; and the next day he carried up with him a ladder of ropes, by means of which he found it easy to effect the necessary repairs.

THE WORLD.

GREAT, wide, beautiful, wonderful world,
With the wonderful water around you curled,
And the wonderful grass on your breast—
World, you are beautifully dressed.

The wonderful air is over me,
And the wonderful wind is shaking the tree;
It walks on the water, and whirls the mills,
And talks to itself on the tops of the hills.

You friendly Earth, how far do you go,
With the wheat-fields that nod, and the rivers that flow,
With cities, and gardens, and cliffs, and isles,
And people upon you for thousands of miles?

Ah, you are so great, and I am so small,
I tremble to think of you, World, at all!
And yet, when I said my prayers to-day,
A whisper inside me seemed to say,
"You are more than the Earth, though you are such a dot;
You can love and think, and the Earth cannot!"

Lilliput Lectures.

C—A—T.

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FOR THE VERY LITTLE ONES.

BE quiet, good Tabby!
See how still you can be,
For I'm going to teach you
To spell C—A—T.

I'll show you the way
Mother reads it to me:
She looks very sober,
And says C—A—T.

Fred says you can't learn,
But we'll show him that we
Can learn, if we please,
To spell C—A—T.

To what little May said
Tabby did not agree,
And I doubt if she learned
To spell C—A—T.

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C—A—T.

THE creature which forms the subject of this paper is the giraffe, or camelopard (*Camelopardalis Giraffa*) noted for its wonderful and beautiful form and its remarkable habits.

At the first sight of a giraffe, the spectator is struck by its enormously long neck, and will naturally ask himself how it is supported, and how its mobility is preserved. Every one who has the least acquaintance with anatomy is aware that a strong and very elastic ligament passes down the back of the neck, and acts as a strap by which the head is preserved from falling forward. In the giraffe this ligament (popularly called the paxwax) is of great length and thickness, and is divided into longitudinal halves, and proceeds, not only down the entire neck, but along the back, nearly to the tail. So powerful a band requires correspondingly large attachments; and accordingly we find that the vertebræ of the shoulders send out enormously long perpendicular processes, which give to the shoulder that height which is so eminent a characteristic of the animal. To these processes the ligament of the neck is fastened by accessory bands, which add both to its strength and elasticity.

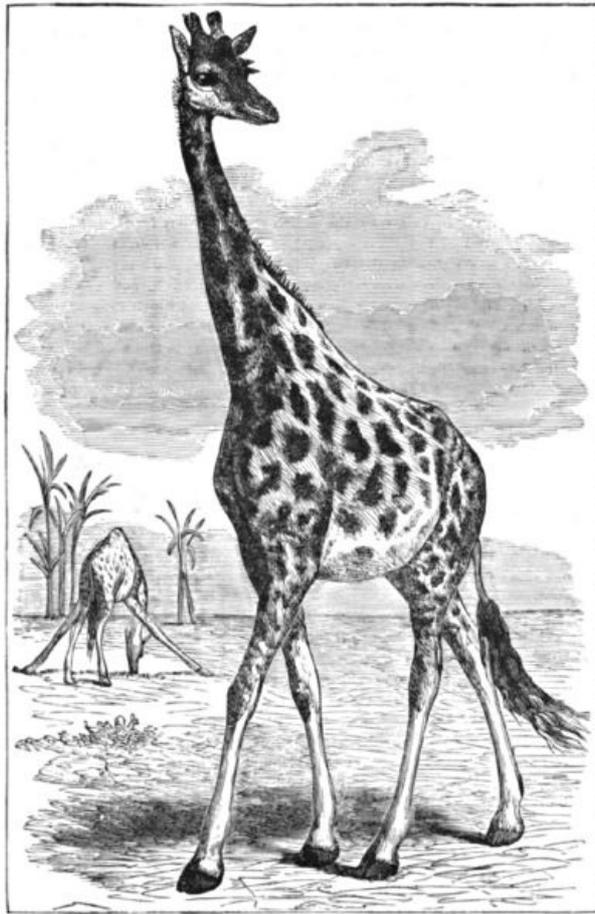
The natives of Southern Africa make great use of this ligament, which is carefully removed and dried. When the native wishes to make a kaross, or any other article of apparel, he soaks a piece of the ligament in water, and then beats it with a stone. This treatment causes it to split into filaments, which can be worked to almost any degree of fineness, and with these the native sews his leathern dress. I have now before me a piece of this Kaffir thread, as it is called. In its dry state, it is shrivelled and contracted, and no one who was not acquainted with it could guess the purpose to which it was originally devoted.

Although the neck of the giraffe is so enormously long, it only consists of seven vertebræ, as is indeed the rule throughout the mammalia. It seems very remarkable that in the neck of the elephant and of the giraffe there should be precisely the same number of vertebræ. Such, however, is the case, and the difference in length is caused by the great length of those bones in the giraffe, and their shortness and flatness in the elephant.

The giraffe is a swift animal, and even upon level ground will put a horse to its utmost mettle; but on rough and rocky ground, especially if the chase be directed up hill, the horse has no chance against the giraffe, which can hop over the stones with the agility of the goat, and even leap ravines which no horse will dare to face. So energetic is the animal when chased, and so violently is the tail switched from side to side, that the long, stiff hairs hiss sharply as they pass through the air.

Sometimes, but very rarely, the giraffe will miss its footing and fall to the ground; but it recovers itself immediately, and is on its feet before much advantage can be taken of the mishap. When it lies down intentionally, it is obliged to pack up its legs in a manner which seems extremely awkward, although the animal can lie or rise with perfect ease; and, like the camel, it possesses callosities upon the knees and breast, on which it rests while reposing.

The height of the giraffe is rather variable, but on an average is from twelve to eighteen feet.



THE GIRAFFE.

THE LION ON THE THRESHOLD.

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AT Rietrivierspoort, South Africa, writes Lichtenstein, we came to the dwelling of a farmer named Van Wyk. Whilst we were resting our tired oxen, and enjoying the cool shade of the porch, Van Wyk told us the following story:—

“It was something more than two years ago that here, in this spot where we are standing, I had to make a daring shot. My wife was sitting in the house near the door, the children were playing about, and I was busy doing something to my wagon on the other side of the house, when suddenly what should we see, on the doorstep, but the shadow of a great lion darkening the bright daylight. My wife, quite stunned with terror, and knowing also how dangerous it often is to try and run away in such cases, remained in her place, while the children took refuge upon her lap. Their cries made me aware of something having happened; and my astonishment and consternation may be imagined when I discovered what guest was blocking up my entrance to my own house.

“The lion had not as yet seen me: but how was I, unarmed as I was, to defend my family? Involuntarily I moved along the side of the house towards the window, which was open; and, most happily for me, I saw, standing in a corner of the room near the window, a loaded gun. I was able to reach it with my hand, though the window, as you see, is too small for any one to get through. Still more providential was it that the room door happened to be open, so that I could see the whole terrible scene through the window. The lion had got into the house, and was looking steadfastly at my wife and children. He made a movement, and seemed about to spring upon them, when, feeling that there was no longer any time to waste in deliberating what was to be done, I uttered a few encouraging words to my wife, and with God’s help, shot right across the room into the passage, where I struck the lion in the head, so that he could not move again. The ball had passed close to the hair of my little boy.”



THE LION.

The same writer, Lichtenstein, says that the lion, like a cat, takes its prey by springing upon it, and never attacks a man or animal which does not attempt to run away from him without first placing himself at a distance of ten or twelve paces off, and measuring his spring. This habit of the lion has been turned to account by hunters, who make it their practice never to fire at a lion until he has so placed himself: long practice enabling them to know exactly where and when to hit it with effect while the animal is preparing for his spring. If any one is so unfortunate as to meet a lion unarmed, the only hope of escape is presence of mind. To run away is certain destruction; if a man has the coolness to remain standing where he is, the lion will not attack him. He will not attempt the spring if the man stands motionless as a statue, and looks quietly into his eyes. The erect figure of the human species of itself alarms the lion, and when, in addition to this, he sees his antagonist calm and unmoved, the feeling of awe is increased. A sudden gesture, indicative of alarm, will of course disturb this impression; but if the man continues to show self-possession, the lion will at last be as afraid of the man as the man of the lion. After a time he slowly raises himself, looks carefully round, retreats a few steps, lies down again, makes a further retreat, and ends by taking a rapid flight, as if his desire were to get as far out of the presence of the human species as he possibly can. Indeed, we are told by the settlers at the Cape, that it is not likely that the experiment has been very often made. Formerly, when there were more lions to be seen there than at present, and when, at the same time, the settlers were inexperienced in lion-hunting, large numbers of hunters used to go in chase of the lion, whom they would endeavor to entice into the plain, and round whom they used to form a circle. They shot at him first from one side and then from another, and if the poor animal tried to break through the left side of the human wall, they would attack him from the right. At present, however, experienced lion-hunters generally prefer going alone after their dangerous prey, and sometimes pursue him to his den. Such species of sport is always dangerous, however, and is often attended with fatal results. We have heard from a reliable source that in many sports among the mountains near the Elephant River, lions are to be seen in such large numbers, that on one occasion our informant saw as many as three and twenty together. Most of them were young, and only eight quite full grown. He had just loosened his oxen on an open place, and took the rather cowardly than humane course of escaping to the tents of some Hottentots, and leaving his oxen to the mercy of the lions, without firing a shot.

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THE SNOW-MAN.

LOOK! how the clouds are flying south!
The wind pipes loud and shrill!
And high above the white drifts stands
The snow-man on the hill.

Blow, wild wind from the icy north!
Here's one who will not fear
To feel thy coldest touch, or shrink
Thy loudest blast to hear!

Proud triumph of the school-boy's skill!
Far rather would I be
A winter giant, ruling o'er
A frosty realm, like thee,

And stand amidst the drifted snow,
Like thee, a thing apart,
Than be a man who walks with men,
But has a frozen heart!

MARIAN DOUGLAS.

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THE SNOW-MAN.

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BARN SWALLOWS.

WHEN I was a youngster,—and that, let me tell you, young friends, was some time ago,—they used to say that swallows lived in the mud all winter, as the eels do. The books made no such stupid blunder; only the ignorant people, such as never seem to use their eyes or their reason. It was one of the popular errors of the time. Silly as the notion seems, it has been held by a great many respectable persons.

Possibly the error may have arisen from the fact that the moment the swallows appear in any locality, in the spring of the year, they immediately search out some muddy place, where they can get materials for their nests. First they carry a mouthful of mud, then some threads of dry hay or straw, then more mud, and so on. These frequent visits to a marshy locality might readily lead an unobserving person to imagine that the birds came from the muddy recesses in the banks. But, of course, they are on a very different errand.

Having commenced their nests, the swallows rest during the warmest part of the day, so that the sun may dry their work, and make it hard and strong. Then more mud is plastered on—more threads of straw; and so the industrious birds continue until the body of the nest is completed. A nice, soft lining of fine grass or hair finishes the whole, and makes a summer home for both birds and their young.

Unlike most other birds, swallows often repair old nests, if the frosts and storms of winter have injured them, as they generally do; and sometimes the birds come back to the same locality for several years. They select some unexposed corner, under the eaves of a barn or house, if possible pretty high from the ground, and in a very few days the entire dwelling, lining and all, will be completed. [195]

If unmolested, barn swallows will form quite a colony in the space of a few years. But, if their nests are injured or torn down, or their young ones are stolen away or disturbed, the birds forsake the locality forever. Where a number of families live together, their chattering, when, as the evening comes on, they are catching gnats and flies for supper, or feeding their young ones, is very pleasant and diverting. And there is music in their language, too—music which a thoughtful person is ever glad to hear.

Last summer, when business was dull, I went on a vacation, away up into the Granite State. While passing through the town of Unity (my little niece insists upon calling it *Utiny*—but she will speak plainer one of these years), my attention was called to a small village church on the wayside. Around the entire building, under the eaves, were brackets, some three inches in width, and perhaps as far apart. In the spaces thus formed were hundreds upon hundreds of swallows' nests. Hardly a single space was left unoccupied, while many contained two, and sometimes three nests. Not content with the eaves, the colony had commenced upon the belfry, and far up towards the spire every possible nook and corner seemed to be spoken for.

I stopped to contemplate the very interesting spectacle. A villager informed me that the colony came regularly every year, and, as near as could be judged, the same birds; that for ten years the birds had been petted by the inhabitants, and protected by all, old and young. He said that the swallows had all disappeared in a body, about a week previous to my visit, adding, "You don't know what a lovely spectacle it is to witness the evolutions of these birds on a summer evening, when they are teaching their young ones to fly. They swarm around the building like bees, and their music is most delightful to hear."

I could readily imagine the beauty of the scene, from the great number of nests, though I mean to see the colony at their devotions this year. "Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even thine altars*, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God."

It would be interesting to know where these birds go as winter approaches. It is very easy, and perhaps very true, to say that they "go south." But to what part of the south? Do they keep in a body there, as here? Do they have nests, and rear their young, there, as with us? There is a fine field for inquiry, which it is hoped some of our boys will go into by and by. For the present, if any of them are passing through Unity, let them remember the church which has its largest congregation on the outside.

W. WANDER.



A GENTLEMAN passing through a field observed a cow showing many symptoms of uneasiness, stamping with her feet and looking earnestly at him. At first he feared to approach her, but afterward went toward her, which seemed to please her much. She then guided him to a ditch where her calf was lying helpless; and he was just in time to save it from death, to the no small delight of the cow. Some days after, when passing through the same field, the cow came up to him as if to thank him for his kindness. As among the various animals with which the earth abounds none is more necessary to the existence of man than the cow, so likewise none appears to be more extensively propagated; in every part of the world it is found, large or small, according to the quantity and quality of its food. There is no part of Europe where it grows to so large a size as in England, whose pastures are admirably suited to its nature. The quantity of milk and butter varies according to the difference of its pasture; some cows in favorable situations yield twenty quarts of milk in a day.

To form a just idea of the value of this animal, we ought to consider that there is scarcely any part of it without its utility to man. The skin is manufactured into leather; the hair, mixed with lime, is used in plastering walls and building houses; the bones serve as a substitute for ivory; when calcined, they are used by the refiners of silver to separate the baser metals; and when ground and spread over the fields, they form a fertilizing manure. Combs, knife-handles and many useful articles are made from the horns, which, when softened in boiling water, become pliable, so as to be formed into lanterns—an invention usually ascribed to King Alfred. We are furnished with candles from the tallow, and the feet afford an oil adapted to a variety of purposes. Glue is made from the cartilages, gristles and parings of the hide boiled in water; calves' skins are manufactured into vellum; saddlers and others use a fine thread prepared from the sinews, which is much stronger than any other equally fine. The blood, gall, etc., are used in many important manufactures.



THE COW AND HER CALF.

MINUTES.

WE are but minutes—little things!
Each one furnished with sixty wings,
With which we fly on our unseen track,
And not a minute ever comes back.

We are but minutes; use, use us well,

For how we are used we must one day tell.
Who uses minutes has hours to use;
Who loses minutes whole years must lose.

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GOING FOR THE LETTERS.

AN AUSTRALIAN STORY.

IT was a bitter cold day in the end of the month of January. The morning had been a very unpleasant one—neither frost nor snow, a sort of compound of rain and sleet; but now the snow was falling fast, and the clear crystals were fast hiding every shrub and plant that had a place in the beautiful flower garden, in front of the drawing-room windows of Arundel Manor, while inside a roaring fire, that made the handsomely-furnished apartment look even more than usually snug and comfortable, was surrounded by a family party consisting of Mrs. St. Clair, the three children, and uncle Godfrey.

It was the “children’s hour,” and his niece was trying to coax a tale out of “dear uncle,” who did not seem much in the humor to comply with her request, when mamma looked up and said, “My dear, do not trouble your uncle so. I am sure, Godfrey, that Lydia must torment you; and if she does, we must send her to the nursery.”

Poor Lydia’s face fell at once. “I am sure I did not mean to tease uncle.”

“Never mind, my pet; I know I promised to tell you a story to-night, and was just thinking what it was to be, when my fit of musing sent memory back many a long day, and revealed a scene distant many a thousand miles. Now that I am fairly awake, I will show you the picture of my waking dream. So up you jump;” and Lydia, catching hold of his hand, was quickly seated on her uncle’s knee, her usual place at story time, and throwing her arms round his neck, exclaimed,—

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“O, you dear old pet!”

“I heard,” began uncle Godfrey, “some boys, who shall be nameless, grumbling this morning at being kept inside, for fear of catching cold on such a raw day, and my thoughts instantly turned to a day similar to this, and how I then prayed to be under the shelter of some friendly roof; and I also thought how thankful every one ought to be who is able to sit at a warm fire, when it freezes hard, or when the snow is covering the earth by inches every hour.

“I dare say you think it fine fun to run over to the lodge and bring the letters from the post-boy; at least I did when as young as you are; but going for letters is not always the pleasantest thing imaginable, as I once nearly found out to my cost.

“If you are all so anxious to hear the contents of letters from your uncle Wilfred, you may fancy how eagerly he and I used to watch for the arrivals of the mails at Sydney, and be sure that one or both of us were certain to be at the office in Kiandra on the day it reached there, and with what delight we read and re-read the letter which never failed to make its appearance monthly to one or other of us.

“Our winter fall of snow generally began about the 12th of May, and from that date till the month of October it was a matter of no small difficulty to get our letters at the place where we lived, a

long nine miles from Kiandra of a very mountainous track.

"186- was an extraordinary season. May passed, no snow—June the same, only heavy, I may say, nearly constant showers of rain. 'A glorious year,' the diggers called it. 'Never such a season for work since the diggings broke out. Two months' work at a time when there is never any water. O, what a wash-up there will be in November!'

"Such was the substance of the conversation when any two of the residents met, varied, perhaps, by remarks as to whether old So-and-so, who had been twenty years in the district, would be right in saying there was to be nine feet of snow, or whether So-and-so was a better judge in saying we were to have none at all?

"I was then living by myself, Wilfred being away in Sydney, and was looking out for him every day, and hoping he might be back before the winter fairly set in, when it was scarcely possible to travel. As I said before, June had passed, and we were getting well into July, when I heard that our English mail would be in Kiandra on the following Wednesday. It was now Friday.

"We had got a fine week for work, raining gently all the time, which is what we diggers like, and no frost, which dries up the water, and makes us all idle, when on Sunday the weather completely changed, and very suddenly, too, as, indeed, it always did there. The wind, which had been from north or east, without any warning chopped right round to the south-west, and we had a strong frost. Next day was cloudy, but at night frost was harder than ever, and everything with liquid in it, even to the tea-pot in a room where there was a fire nearly all night, was full of solid ice.

"The thermometer was down to 18° below zero in the same place; and in bed, in the next room, with four pairs of new blankets, I thought I should have been fairly frozen. We were hard at work all that day, which was a drizzly, snowy one, everything betokening a fall of snow; so, when Wednesday dawned, though not so deep as I expected, I was not surprised to find more than a foot of it all over. [200]

"Down the country the floods had been dreadful; nearly all the bridges had been washed away, and the roads turned into bogs, so that our mails came in very irregularly, sometimes ten days behind time. You may therefore imagine I was in a great worry to hear from Wilfred, my last letter being a month old, as well as anxious for *home* news. So I donned my oil-skin over my blanket-coat, put on my thigh gum-boots, tied my comforter round my neck and up over my ears, and pulling my south-wester on, prepared to face the weather.

"I found the walk into town, though very heavy, not so bad as I expected, and arrived safely, without any mishaps, but rather tired and uncomfortably moist, it being a sort of drizzle all the way; but a letter from Wilfred, saying he would not leave for some time, and so would not be caught in this storm, and the perusal of a kind one from 'the old country' soon made me forget my discomfort, and I spent a pleasant evening at a friend's.

"At bed-time it was a beautiful starry night; but I did not altogether fancy it. There was a kind of half soft feel through the frost, that sounded to me like a change, and the thought of the morrow's walk was not a pleasant one; but there was no use forestalling what might never be. So to bed and to sleep; but ere my eyes were well closed, the wind began to whistle round the corner of the house, and—hallo—what's that! Big drops of rain, and lumps of earth and gravel, were pelting the panes of glass.

"A few minutes there was a lull—a dead silence—when flash! crash!—the room was in a blaze of light, and at the same instant the thunder made the very bed shake again, and also made my heart rise to my mouth. Listening earnestly for some time, and no further disturbances occurring, I began, after thanking a kind Providence for his protection, to think over the matter, and came to the conclusion that at last we were in for a downright fall, this being the third time that, to my knowledge, such had been preceded by a single clap of thunder.

"Next day the snow came down in earnest; and as it was drifting in every direction, I took the advice of my friends, and quietly stopped where I was. Large, feathery flakes fell unceasingly all the afternoon, and by night there was fully two feet in the town; but as it looked a little better on Friday afternoon, and my dog, cat, and fowls could get nothing to eat until my return, I determined to make a start, though against the opinions of most of the town's people.

"When I left Kiandra there was a dense fog, which shortly changed, first to a light, and then to a heavy snow; and by the time I dragged myself the mile to the top of the mountain, it was coming down, and no mistake!

"It was impossible to see one yard in any direction, and my legs were already beginning to *talk*; but it was too late to think of turning. I had had only to fight through one extra deep drift as yet, and knew the road hitherto well; but now I had to turn off from where the track lay hid, and had not gone far when my difficulties fairly began, and I was quickly ploughing my way through some five or six feet of snow.

"Half an hour's hard work found me clear of that, and for a couple of miles everything went swimmingly. The snow was here firm enough to bear my weight, although now and again, bump! down I went through the crust, nearly jerking my joints out. The nearer home the deeper got the snow, and, of course, so much the more tired I felt. The main creek to be crossed was hidden entirely; and as its exact whereabouts was not very easily guessed at, you may depend it was not a pleasant sensation to plump down and find myself up to the neck. Luckily, the water was no [201]

depth, and as my boots were tight and long, a hard scramble pulled me out of my first trouble.

"A short rest, and I was again on my way; but it took me a good many hours to get the next three or four miles, even though I met no more serious difficulty than some very heavy drifts. I was getting very tired, and hungry, too, and you may fancy it was no joke wading the snow, never less than two feet, lucky if not going past the knees at every step; but at last I was in a mess, and how to get out of it I knew not. The look of the country, when a lull gave me the chance of seeing, showed I was off my road; and when I felt I was lost, my thoughts were anything but satisfactory.

"I knew not which way to turn, so sat down to think it over, and was looking around as well as the drifting snow would permit, when coming along my tracks was a large yellow dog. My heart gave a bound of delight, and jumping up, I let a 'cooey,'^[A] to tell its master that some one was in the same predicament, as I doubted not he was.

"Slowly a minute or two passed, but no reply to my communication. Alas! all was silence, and I then saw, by its pointed ears and bushy tail, that it was a dingo, or native dog, which was running my footsteps. It was no use sitting where I was. So on I started in the direction I fancied, every minute feeling more and more fagged, and when at last darkness set in, was almost inclined to give up.

"My yellow friend followed me for some time at a respectful distance; and though the dingo is a sneaking coward, still, had sleep overpowered me, he might have been tempted to try how I tasted, as he must have been hungry to come so close to me as he did. So, although I never had any fear of such an event actually occurring, I was not at all sorry when he trotted off, his tail, as usual, between his legs, to join some of his companions, whose unearthly howls he heard at no great distance; there must have been five or six.

"I felt really glad they came no nearer, as a mob of them are very daring; and I have known them, when well starved for a week or two, kill calves, and even colts, when the mothers were weak and could not fight for them. But it was not very long before I found that they were not after me, as I nearly stumbled against a mare and colt belonging to myself, that were standing under a tree, and whinnied as I spoke. We had sent all our horses away two months ago but this one, as she could not be found, and we thought she was dead. The poor thing could not have tasted food for days; but what could I do but pity the pair, and feel that their end was to be food for the *warregals* (native dogs).

"As I had now been walking seven or eight hours, and hard at it all the time, I could see nothing for it but to yield to necessity, as sleep was fast overpowering me, when I distinctly heard the bark of a dog, which I felt confident was my old watch, 'Jack.' My spirits rose at once, and again I was alive, and pushed in the direction of the welcome sound.

"At the same time I caught a glimpse of a cluster of trees, whose peculiar shape I had often remarked, which told me where I was; and this fact was also quickly proved by my plunging into an old prospecting hole—the only one in the neighborhood. It was about six feet deep, and full of snow and water. I thought I was lost, as the frozen slush went down my back, and that I, who had been picked out of the Canton River, in a dark night, when the tide ran six knots an hour, was fated to be drowned in a filthy pot-hole.

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"But, luckily, such was not my lot on the present occasion, as, after many a failure, I managed to pull myself out, my boots full of water, and my whole body nearly numb from the cold. Luckily, the house was only half a mile off.

"I reached it in safety, and just in time, as my feet were all but frost-bitten, when I should have been fortunate to lose only a few of my toes, as I knew a man here who had *both* legs cut off in consequence of a severe frost-bite.

"As it was, I was a sorry figure; my clothes were like a board, my socks were in a similar state, while icicles hung in festoons from my hair and beard. But, when at last I managed to open the door, and get a light, one or two rough towels, and some ten minutes' hard rubbing, soon put a glow of heat over my whole body; and by the time I turned into bed, after a cup of scalding hot coffee (I was too hungry to eat), my misfortunes were forgotten, and all I felt was thankfulness for having reached my house, which seems to me, even now, to have been a very doubtful matter, had 'Jack' not barked when he did.

"See how many things turned out all for my good—the mare and the colt in the snow, the dingo running after her through hunger, and my dog barking at it, showed me where my house was, when I was fairly lost, and thus saved my life, and enabled me to spin you this yarn, which I must now finish by saying that since that time I am always glad to have a warm house to shelter me in such weather as this, and cannot help thinking that if any boys had ever been placed in my predicament, they would only be too thankful to remain inside on such a day as this, without requiring their mother to order them to do so."

"But what about the poor mare? Did she die? and did the wild dogs eat the colt?"

"O, I almost forgot to tell you that, to my astonishment, in two or three days, when the snow hardened a bit, the pair found their way home, and I, after a deal of trouble, got them to the banks of the Tumut River, which, although only a couple of miles away, was so many hundred feet lower, that they could paw away the snow, and so got grass enough to live till spring when they soon got fat. The little colt I named 'Snowdrop,' and when she was old enough, broke her in;

and many a good gallop we had over the place where she and her mother neighed to me on that dark and dismal night.”

FOOTNOTE:

[A] A peculiar shout, heard at a great distance, which is common among the Australian settlers.

SPRING HAS COME.

SPRING has come back to us, beautiful spring!
Blue-birds and swallows are out on the wing;
Over the meadows a carpet of green
Softer and richer than velvet is seen.

Up come the blossoms so bright and so gay,
Giving sweet odors to welcome the May.
Sunshine and music are flooding the air,
Beauty and brightness are everywhere.

ABOUT “BITTERS.”

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CHARLEY and Jimmie D. were playing near the barn one day, when along came the forlornest looking cur you ever did see. The children commenced calling him, and laughed loudly as the animal came towards them, he was *such* an ill-looking thing.

“Good fellow! nice fellow!” said Charley, patting him. “Jim, you run in, and get him something to eat—won’t you? and don’t tell mother yet; you know she dislikes dogs so. We’ll tie him up to-night, and tell her to-morrow, if no one comes for him.”

Such another looking dog I think I never saw—scrawny and poor, as though he had never been more than half fed; a slit in one ear, tail not much to speak of, and color a dirty black and white.

Jimmie soon came back from a successful forage, and gave him a good supper. At least doggie seemed to think so, for he gobbled it up in about a minute, and then wagged the stump of his tail for more.

“No, sir,” said Charley, “no more to-night.”

Then they shut him up in a little room in a corner of the barn, and ran to find their father, and tell him, well knowing he would not care, if their mother was willing.

They found their father, who went with them to see him, and laughed long and loud as they led out the ugly beast.

Then all went in to supper; the great secret almost revealing itself in their tell-tale looks and occasional whisperings, neither of which attracted their mother’s attention.

Supper over, they made a final visit to their pet, and then left him for the night.

“What shall we name him?” said Jimmie, when they were alone in their room at night.

“O, we must have a funny name, he’s such a sorry looking feller! Wouldn’t you call him ‘Bitters?’” said Charley.

“Bitters!” said Jim, with a laugh.

“Yes, that’s bad enough.”

So Bitters he was named; and next morning they won their mother’s reluctant consent to keep

the dog, provided he was kept at the barn, or away from the house, at all events.

Then they fed and played with him till school time, and shut him up till noon.

Bitters seemed to take to his new admirers, and appeared quite satisfied with his quarters, and was getting to look a little more like a respectable dog, when one morning, as he was running round a corner of the barn, he came suddenly upon the old rooster, who bristled up and showed fight. Bitters turned, and ran for dear life, as hard as he could go, and never has been seen or heard from, from that day to this, much to the boys' regret.

F. E. S.

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DOG STEPHEN.

FRED AND DOG STEPHEN.

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NOW, just one good cuddle," said little six-year-old Freddie, "and then I'll be ready for school;" and he curled himself up like a young Turk in his mother's lap, and nestled there in a very enjoyable way.

She was sitting by the dining-room window; it was open, and a pitcher of wild phlox and pink-and-white wake-robins stood in it. While they sat there they saw Uncle Rube, who lives over on the hillside, coming along the crooked path with a basket on his arm. His head was down, and he was thinking so intently that he did not hear the steps behind him of his young dog, Stephen.

Now, Rube means to make the best dog in the world of Stephen—the playful little puppy!—and he never permits him to follow him anywhere unless by special invitation. About once a week he will say to him, "Stevie, would you like to go to your grandfather's with me? Come on, then;" and here they will come, the puppy so glad that his gait is more awkward than ever, his fat body, twisted out of all shape, wriggling along, while his tail will flap about in every direction and his ears look like wilted cabbage-leaves.

"He doesn't know Stevie is behind him, does he, ma? and now let's watch and see what they will both do when they find out." So they snuggled down by the window and tittered and watched and anticipated rare fun.

Uncle Rube was whispering to himself and nodding his head and making gesticulations with his open hand, while Stephen trotted with his little soft, careful feet behind him, smelling of the

ground, and thinking green grass with the dew sparkling on it was just made purposely for dogs to admire.

Just as Rube came to the big gate and stopped to unlatch it he heard a little whiffy breathing behind him, and then he looked and saw Stephen. He was very much surprised; but as he never scolded the dog, he simply said, in a very earnest way, "Steve, I am astonished! You go right back home immediately. You're a great boy, indeed, to sneak along without ever being invited! I didn't want you, sir, or I'd have told you so. Now go right back again."

Oh, it was *so* funny! Stephen just threw his head back and whirled on his heels, and ran with all his might down the crooked path.

Then the school-bell rang, and Fred's mother kissed him "good-morning," and he started off with his books, and as he turned round the corner his white teeth showed prettily as, half laughing, he said to himself in wonderment, "*Dear little Stevie dog! he just ran back 'zactly as if he wanted to.*"

NOW THE SUN IS SINKING.

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NOW the sun is sinking
In the golden west;
Birds and bees and children
All have gone to rest;
And the merry streamlet,
As it runs along,
With a voice of sweetness
Sings its evening song.

Cowslip, daisy, violet,
In their little beds,
All among the grasses,
Hide their heavy heads;
There they'll all, sweet darlings!
Lie in happy dreams
Till the rosy morning
Wakes them with its beams.

A RIGMAROLE ABOUT A TEA-PARTY.

MRS. DYER
Stirred the fire,
Agnes Stout
Poked it out,
Tommy Voles
Fetched the coals,
Alice Good
Laid the wood,
Bertie Patch
Struck the match,
Charlotte Hays
Made it blaze,
Mrs. Groom
Kept the broom,
Katy Moore
Swept the floor,
Fanny Froth
Laid the cloth,
Arthur Grey
Brought the tray,
Betty Bates
Washed the plates,
Nanny Galt
Smoothed the salt,
Dicky Street
Fetched the meat,
Sally Strife
Rubbbed the knife,
Minnie York
Found the fork,
Sophie Silk

Brought the milk,
Mrs. Bream
Sent some cream,
Susan Head
Cut the bread,
Harry Host
Made the toast,
Mrs. Dee
Poured out tea,
And they all were as happy as happy could be.

THE FAIRY BIRD.

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I 'M so glad to-morrow is Christmas, because I'm going to have lots of presents."
"So am I glad, though I don't expect any presents but a pair of mittens."

"And so am I; but I shan't have any presents at all."

As the three little girls trudged home from school they said these things, and as Tilly spoke, both the others looked at her with pity and some surprise; for she spoke cheerfully, and they wondered how she could be happy when she was so poor she could have no presents on Christmas.

"Don't you wish you could find a purse full of money right here in the path?" said Kate, the child who was going to have "lots of presents."

"O, don't I, if I could keep it honestly!" And Tilly's eyes shone at the very thought.

"What would you buy?" asked Bessy, rubbing her cold hands, and longing for her mittens.

"I'd buy a pair of large, warm blankets, a load of wood, a shawl for mother, and a pair of shoes for me; and if there was enough left, I'd give Bessy a new hat, and then she needn't wear Ben's old felt one," answered Tilly.

The girls laughed at that; but Bessy pulled the funny hat over her ears, and said she was much obliged, but she'd rather have candy.

"Let's look, and may be we *can* find a purse. People are always going about with money at Christmas time, and some one may lose it here," said Kate.

So, as they went along the snowy road, they looked about them, half in earnest, half in fun. Suddenly Tilly sprang forward, exclaiming,—

"I see it! I've found it!"

The others followed, but all stopped disappointed, for it wasn't a purse; it was only a little bird. It lay upon the snow, with its wings spread and feebly fluttering, as if too weak to fly. Its little feet were benumbed with cold; its once bright eyes were dull with pain, and instead of a blithe song, it could only utter a faint chirp now and then, as if crying for help.

"Nothing but a stupid old robin. How provoking!" cried Kate, sitting down to rest.

"I shan't touch it; I found one once, and took care of it, and the ungrateful thing flew away the minute it was well," said Bessy, creeping under Kate's shawl, and putting her hands under her chin to warm them.

"Poor little birdie! How pitiful he looks, and how glad he must be to see some one coming to help him! I'll take him up gently, and carry him home to mother. Don't be frightened, dear; I'm your friend." And Tilly knelt down in the snow, stretching her hand to the bird with the tenderest pity in her face.

Kate and Bessy laughed.

"Don't stop for that thing; it's getting late and cold. Let's go on, and look for the purse," they said, moving away.

"You wouldn't leave it to die!" cried Tilly. "I'd rather have the bird than the money; so I shan't look any more. The purse wouldn't be mine, and I should only be tempted to keep it; but this poor thing will thank and love me, and I'm *so* glad I came in time!" Gently lifting the bird, Tilly felt its tiny cold claws cling to her hand, and saw its dim eyes brighten as it nestled down with a grateful chirp.



THE FAIRY BIRD.

"Now I've got a Christmas present, after all," she said, smiling, as they walked on. "I always [209] wanted a bird, and this one will be such a pretty pet for me!"

"He'll fly away the first chance he gets, and die, anyhow; so you'd better not waste your time over him," said Bessy.

"He can't pay you for taking care of him, and my mother says it isn't worth while to help folks that can't help us," added Kate.

"My mother says, 'Do as you'd be done by;' and I'm sure I'd like any one to help me, if I was dying of cold and hunger. 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' is another of her sayings. This bird is my little neighbor, and I'll love him and care for him, as I often wish our rich neighbor would love and care for us," answered Tilly, breathing her warm breath over the benumbed bird, who looked up at her with confiding eyes, quick to feel and know a friend.

"What a funny girl you are!" said Kate, "caring for that silly bird, and talking about loving your neighbor in that sober way. Mr. King don't care a bit for you, and never will, though he knows how poor you are; so I don't think your plan amounts to much."

"I believe it, though, and shall do my part, any way. Good night. I hope you'll have a merry Christmas, and lots of pretty things," answered Tilly, as they parted.

Her eyes were full, and she felt *so* poor as she went on alone towards the little old house where she lived! It would have been so pleasant to know that she was going to have some of the pretty things all children love to find in their full stockings on Christmas morning! and pleasanter still to have been able to give her mother something nice. So many comforts were needed, and there was no hope of getting them; for they could barely get food and fire.

"Never mind, birdie; we'll make the best of what we have, and be merry in spite of everything. *You* shall have a happy Christmas, any way; and I know God won't forget us, if every one else does."

She stopped a minute to wipe her eyes, and lean her cheek against the bird's soft breast, finding great comfort in the little creature, though it could only love her—nothing more.

"See, mother, what a nice present I've found!" she cried, going in with a cheery face, that was like sunshine in the dark room.

"I'm glad of that, deary; for I haven't been able to get my little girl anything but a rosy apple. Poor bird! Give it some of your warm bread and milk."

"Why, mother, what a big bowlful! I'm afraid you gave me all the milk," said Tilly, smiling over the nice steaming supper that stood ready for her.

"I've had plenty, dear. Sit down and dry your wet feet, and put the bird in my basket on this warm flannel."

Tilly peeped into the closet, and saw nothing there but dry bread.

"Mother's given me all the milk, and is going without her tea, 'cause she knows I'm hungry. Now I'll surprise her, and she shall have a good supper too. She is going to split wood, and I'll fix it while she's gone."

So Tilly put down the old teapot, carefully poured out a part of the milk, and from her pocket produced a great plummy bunn, that one of the school children had given her, and she had saved for her mother. A slice of the dry bread was nicely toasted, and the bit of butter set by for her to put on it. When her mother came in, there was the table drawn up in a warm place, a hot cup of tea ready, and Tilly and birdie waiting for her.

Such a poor little supper, and yet such a happy one! for love, charity, and contentment were guests there, and that Christmas eve was a blither one than that up at the great house, where lights shone, fires blazed, a great tree glittered, and music sounded, as the children danced and played.

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"We must go to bed early; for we've only wood enough to last over to-morrow. I shall be paid for my work the day after, and then we can get some," said Tilly's mother, as they sat by the fire.

"If my bird was only a fairy bird, and would give us three wishes, how nice it would be! Poor dear, he can't give me anything; but it's no matter," answered Tilly, looking at the robin, who lay in the basket, with his head under his wing, a mere little feathery bunch.

"He can give you one thing, Tilly—the pleasure of doing good. That is one of the sweetest things in life; and the poor can enjoy it as well as the rich."

As her mother spoke, with her tired hand softly stroking her little daughter's hair, Tilly suddenly started, and pointed to the window, saying, in a frightened whisper,—

"I saw a face—a man's face—looking in. It's gone now; but I truly saw it."

"Some traveller attracted by the light, perhaps; I'll go and see." And Tilly's mother went to the door.

No one was there. The wind blew cold, the stars shone, the snow lay white on field and wood, and the Christmas moon was glittering in the sky.

"What sort of a face was it?" asked Tilly's mother, coming back.

"A pleasant sort of face, I think; but I was so startled, I don't quite know what it was like. I wish we had a curtain there," said Tilly.

"I like to have our light shine out in the evening; for the road is dark and lonely just here, and the twinkle of our lamp is pleasant to people's eyes as they go by. We can do so little for our neighbors, I am glad to cheer the way for them. Now put these poor old shoes to dry, and go to bed, deary; I'll come soon."

Tilly went, taking her bird with her to sleep in his basket near by, lest he should be lonely in the night.

Soon the little house was dark and still, and no one saw the Christmas spirits at their work that night.

When Tilly opened the door the next morning, she gave a loud cry, clapped her hands, and then stood still, quite speechless with wonder and delight. There, before the door, lay a great pile of wood, all ready to burn, a big bundle and a basket, with a lovely nosegay of winter roses, holly, and evergreen tied to the handle.

"O, mother, did the fairies do it?" cried Tilly, pale with her happiness, as she seized the basket while her mother took in the bundle.

"Yes, dear; the best and dearest fairy in the world, called 'Charity.' She walks abroad at Christmas time, does beautiful deeds like this, and does not stay to be thanked," answered her mother, with full eyes, as she undid the parcel.

There they were, the warm, thick blankets, the comfortable shawl, the new shoes, and, best of all, a pretty winter hat for Bessy. The basket was full of good things to eat, and on the flowers lay a paper, saying,—

"For the little girl who loves her neighbor as herself."

"Mother, I really think my bird is a fairy bird, and all these splendid things come out from him," said Tilly, laughing and crying with joy.

It really did seem so; for, as she spoke, the robin flew to the table, hopped to the nosegay, and perching among the roses, began to chirp with all his little might. The sun streamed in on

flowers, bird, and happy child, and no one saw a shadow glide away from the window. No one ever knew that Mr. King had seen and heard the little girls the night before, or dreamed that the rich neighbor had learned a lesson from the poor neighbor.

And Tilly's bird *was* a fairy bird; for by her love and tenderness to the helpless thing, she brought good gifts to herself, happiness to the unknown giver of them, and a faithful little friend, who did not fly away, but staid with her till the snow was gone, making summer for her in the winter time. [211]

LOUISA M. ALCOTT.



"AS THE NIGHT ADVANCED, THE OLD NEGRO FELT THE COLD PIERCE HIS STIFFENED LIMBS." P. 216.

SAVED BY A FIDDLE.

AMONG the most rapacious and dangerous animals of North America, is the wolf, commonly called the coyote (pronounced ky-o-te) in some of the Southern and Western States. The wolves—far more numerous in the United States than in Europe—are, perhaps, more horrible in aspect than those of the old world. Along desert paths, on the prairies or in the woods, the wolf, the ghoul of the animal race, presents itself to the traveller, with its slaving jaws and flashing eyes, uttering a growl, which is the usual sign of cowardice blended with impudence. "The coyote," says a recent writer, "is a living, breathing allegory of Want. He is always poor, out of luck, and friendless."

It is very difficult to catch coyotes in a trap, but they are frequently hunted down with horses and dogs. Their coat is of a dull reddish color, mixed with gray and white hairs. Such is their ordinary condition, but like other animals they display varieties. Their bushy tail, black at the tip, is nearly as long as one third of their body. They resemble the dogs which one sees in the Indian wigwams, and which are certainly descended from this species. They are found in the regions between the Mississippi and the Pacific, and in Southern Mexico. They travel in packs like jackals, and pursue deer, buffaloes, and other animals which they hope to master. They do not venture to attack buffaloes in herds, but they follow the latter in large packs, watching till a laggard—a young calf or an old bull, for instance—may fall out; then they dart upon it and tear it to pieces. They accompany parties of sportsmen or travellers, prowl round deserted camps, and devour the fragments they find there. At times they will enter a camp during the night, and seize lumps of meat on which the emigrants calculated for their morning meal. These robberies sometimes exasperate the victims, and, growing less saving of their powder and shot, they pursue them till they have rubbed out the mess-number of several. [212]

This breed of wolves is the most numerous of all the carnivora in North America, and it is for this reason that the coyotes often suffer from hunger. Then, but only then, they eat corn, roots, and vegetables—in short, anything that will save them from death by starvation.

The coyote is ignorant of any feeling of sympathy, and for this reason inspires none. Here is an anecdote, however, which proves that this quadruped thief of the wood is capable of feeling a certain degree of sensibility of the nerves, at any rate, if not of the heart. This story was told me under canvas, while we were hunting with the Pawnee Indians.

During the first period of the colonization of Kentucky, the coyotes were so numerous in the

prairie to the south of that state, that the inhabitants did not dare to leave their houses unless armed to the teeth. The women and children were strictly confined in-doors. The coyotes by which the country was infested belonged to the herd whose coat is dark gray, a very numerous species in the northern district, in the heart of the dense forests and unexplored mountains of the Green River.

The village of Henderson, situated at the left bank of the Ohio, near its confluence with Green River, was the spot most frequented by these depredators.

The pigs, calves, and sheep of the planters paid a heavy tax to these voracious animals. Several times in the depth of winter, when the snow covered the ground, and the flocks were kept in the stalls, the starving coyotes attacked human beings; and more than one belated farmer, returning home at night, found himself surrounded by a raging pack, from whose teeth he had great difficulty in defending himself.

Among the many startling adventures I have heard narrated, not one made a greater impression on me than that of which Richard, the old negro fiddler, was the hero, and which I will tell you.

Richard was what is called a "good old good-for-nothing dardy." The whole district allowed that he had no other merit beyond that of sawing the fiddle; and this merit, which is not one in our own eyes, was highly valued, however, by all the colored people, and even by the whites who lived for a distance of forty miles round. One thing is certain—that no festival could be held without Fiddler Dick being invited to it.

Marriages, christenings, parties prolonged till dawn, which are called "break-downs" in the United States, could not take place without the aid of his fiddle; and though the negro minstrel was old, and a good deal of his black wool was absent from the place where the wool ought to grow, still Richard was no less welcome wherever he presented himself, with his instrument wrapped up in a ragged old handkerchief under his arm, and a knotted stick in his hand.

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Old Richard was the property of one of the Hendersons, a member of the family that gave its name to this Kentucky county and village. His master had a liking for him, owing to his obedient and original character, and the slave, instead of tilling the soil, was at liberty to do whatever he thought proper. No one raised any objection to this tolerance, for Richard, whom his master was used to call a necessary evil, had before all the talent of keeping the negroes of the plantation in good humor by means of his fiddle.

Richard, who understood all the importance of his exalted functions, knew nothing but his duty, and was remarkably punctual whenever those who honored him with their confidence let him know that his services were required. In this respect the merest trifle irritated him, and any vexation or disturbance rendered him ferocious.

Despite the proverbial timidity attributed to geniuses, old Dick displayed a touch of the hyena whenever, at any of the negro festivals presided over by him, anything or anybody offended etiquette or the proprieties. As for Dick, he never forgot himself in the slightest degree, and whenever he was called upon to undertake the duties he performed so well, he had never once kept the company waiting. And yet one day—poor Dick! The following narrative will show that it was not by his own fault that he arrived too late at his appointment.

A wedding of colored people was about to come off on a plantation about six miles from the one where the fiddler lived. In order that the feast might be perfect, old Dick had been invited, and he was unanimously appointed master of the ceremonies. It was during the winter; the cold was excessive, and the snow, which had fallen incessantly for three days, covered the ground to a depth of several feet.

While all Mr. Henderson's negroes, with their master's previous permission, hastened to the spot where pleasure called them, the ebony Apollo was arranging his toilet with peculiar delight. A white shirt, a collar as immoderately long in front as it was high in the neck,—so that Dick's head resembled a block of coal in a sheet of white paper,—a blue coat with gilt buttons, and long tails that reached to his heels,—a present from his master,—a red silk cravat fringed at the ends, a green waistcoat ornamented with an orange patch at the spot where the watch-pocket formerly was, boots which had seen their best days, and a wide-awake hat,—such was the elegant and excessively fashionable attire of Dick, the old black fiddler, who, when dressed in these rags, believed himself as handsome as Adonis.

After taking a parting glance at the piece of looking-glass held by three nails on the wall of his bedroom, and favoring himself with a smile that expressed a personal satisfaction, Richard took his fiddle under his arm and set out.

The moon was shining over his head, the stars sparkled—to use the fiddler's picturesque expression—like "gilt nails driven into the ceiling of the firmament by an audacious upholsterer." No sound could be heard, save the crackling of the snow beneath Richard's feet, as he put them down with the heaviness of old age. The road he had to follow was very narrow; its complicated windings passed through a dense forest which the axe had not yet assailed, and whose depths were still as entirely unknown as at the period when the Redskins were the sole owners of the territory. This track could only be followed by a pedestrian; no cart road existed for several miles round.

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The profound solitude of this road must infallibly produce its effect—that of fear or apprehension

—on a being belonging to the human race; but at this moment the old man was so deeply plunged in thought that nothing could make him forget the anxiety he felt at not arriving in time at the place where he was expected. He doubled his pace as he thought of the furious glances that would be bestowed on him by those whose joys his absence retarded, and he regretted the time he had spent in giving an extra polish to his coat buttons and in pulling up the two splendid points of his shirt collar.

While thinking of the reproaches that menaced him, old Dick looked up, and the moon shining above his head proved to him that he was even more behindhand than he had supposed. His legs then began moving like the wheels of a locomotive, so as to keep him constantly ahead of certain black shadows which seemed to be following his every footstep on the forest path.

They were coyotes, horrible coyotes, that cast these shadows, and from time to time gave a snarl of covetousness or impatience; but old Dick paid no attention to them. Ere long, however, he was obliged to devote his entire attention to what was going on behind him. He had walked half the distance, and already saw through the forest arcades the clearing which he must cross to reach the spot where he was expected. The angry barks of the wolves had increased during the last quarter of an hour, and the sound of their paws making the snow crackle inspired the old man with an indescribable terror. The number of animals seemed momentarily to be augmented; it resembled an ant-heap seen through the magnifying-glass of a gigantic microscope.

Wolves, in all parts of the world, look twice before attacking a man; they study the ground, and wait for the propitious moment. This was what was now happening, very fortunately for old Dick, who was more and more perceiving the greatness of the danger, and doubled his speed in proportion as his pursuers grew more daring, brushed past his legs with gnashing teeth, and joyously strove to get ahead of each other. Dick was thoroughly acquainted with the habits of his enemies, and hence carefully avoided running; that would have been giving the signal of attack, for coyotes only rush on persons who are frightened.

The only chance of salvation left him was to prolong this dangerous walk to the skirt of the forest. There he hoped the coyotes, as they do not dare venture into an open plain, would leave him and allow him to continue his walk at peace. He also remembered that in the centre of the clearing there was a deserted cabin, and the thought of reaching this refuge restored him a portion of his courage.

The daring of the coyotes increased with each moment, and the hapless negro could not look around without seeing bright eyes moving in all directions, like the phosphorescent fireflies in summer. One after the other the quadrupeds tried their teeth on old Dick's thin legs, and as he had dropped his stick he had recourse to his fiddle to keep his foes aloof. At the first blow he dealt the springs produced a sound which had the immediate effect of putting to flight the coyotes, which were surprised by this unusual music.

Dick, an observer naturally and by necessity, then began strumming his fiddle with his fingers; and the carnivorous animals at once manifested fresh marks of surprise, as if a charge of shot had tickled their ribs. This fortunate diversion, repeated several times, brought Dick to the skirt of the forest, and taking advantage of a favorable moment, he darted on, still striking the strings, and going in the direction of the hut. [215]

The coyotes halted for a moment, with their tails between their legs, looking at their prey flying before them; but ere long their ravenous instinct gained the upper hand, and with a unanimous bark they all rushed in pursuit of the unfortunate negro. Had the wolves caught up to old Dick in this moment of fury, he might have appealed in vain to his fiddle. By running he had destroyed the charm, and the coyotes would not have stopped to listen to him even had he played like Orpheus in the olden times, or Ole Bull in ours.

Fortunately, the old man reached the cabin at the moment when the coyotes were at his heels. With a hand rendered doubly vigorous by the imminence of the danger, he shut the door of the protecting cabin, and secured it with a beam he found within reach. Then he hoisted himself, not without sundry lacerations of his garments, on the ruined roof, the beams of which alone remained, supported on blocks of wood at the four corners of the walls.

Old Dick found himself comparatively out of danger; but the coyotes displayed a fury which threatened to become terrible. Several of them had entered the cabin, and conjointly with those outside they leaped at the legs of the minstrel, whom rapid movements and repeated kicks scarce protected from numerous bites.

Old Dick, in spite of his agony, had not forgotten his fiddle, which had saved his life in the forest. Seizing his bow with a firm hand, he drew from the instrument a shrill note, which overpowered the deafening barks of the coyotes, and silenced them as if by enchantment. This silence henceforth continued, only interrupted by the hysterical sounds which the fiddle produced under the fear-stiffened fingers of the old negro performer.

This inharmonious music could not satisfy the starving animals for long, and from the efforts which they soon made to reach their prey, old Dick comprehended that noise was not sufficient to enchant the wolves. They dashed forward more furiously than ever to escalate the wall. He considered himself lost, especially when he noticed, scarce half a yard from his trembling legs, the enormous head of a coyote, whose large, open eyes seemed to flash fire and gleam.

"The Lord ha' mussy on all!" he cried; "I am an eaten man!"

And without knowing what he was about, he let his trembling fingers stray over the fiddle, and began playing the famous air of "Yankee Doodle." It was the chant of the swan singing its requiem in the hour of death.

But suddenly—O, miracle of harmony!—a calm set in round the negro minstrel. Orpheus was no fable: the animals obeyed this new enchantment; and when Dick, on recovering from his terror, was unable to understand what was going on around him, he saw himself surrounded by an audience a hundred fold more attentive to the charms of music than any which had hitherto admired his execution. This was so true that so soon as his bow ceased moving, the coyotes dashed forward to renew the battle.

Dick now knew what his means of preservation were. He must play the fiddle till some help arrived. Ere long, yielding to the fascination of the art, the musician completely forgot the danger he incurred. Indulging all the fancies of his imagination, he gave his four-footed audience a concert in which he surpassed himself. Never had he played with more taste, soul, and expression. Hence he forgot, in the intoxication of his triumph, the wedding and the brilliant company, the whiskey-punch and supper smoking hot on the board, that awaited him no great distance off. [216]

But alas! every medal has its reverse in this world, and all days of pleasure have their to-morrow of woe. As the night advanced, the old negro felt the cold pierce his stiffened limbs. In vain did he try to rest; if the bow left the fiddle strings, the coyotes rushed against the walls of the cabin; if, on the contrary, he continued to wander along the paths of harmony, these *dilettanti* of a novel sort squatted down on their hams, with their tails stretched out on the snow, ears pricked up, tongues hanging from their half-opened jaws, and they followed, with a regular movement of the head and body, all the notes produced by old Dick's fiddle.

While this fantastic scene, illumined by the moonbeams, was taking place in the clearing, the negroes, who were awaiting their comrade to begin the fun, were growing sadly impatient, and did not know what to think of the delay of their musician, who was usually most punctual. At last six of them, tired of waiting, left the house to make a voyage of discovery; and on reaching the cabin, on the top of which Dick was perched, they noticed some thirty coyotes in the position I have described. The old player was still continuing his involuntary concert, with his eyes fixed on his deadly foes.

At the moment when the six negroes raised a simultaneous shout, the whole band of coyotes thought it high time to bolt. In a twinkling they disappeared, and the fiddler, frozen and numbed, fell fainting into the arms of his rescuers. His woolly hair, which, in spite of his great age, was perfectly black at the time when he performed his toilet, had turned white in the space of two hours.

SIR LASCELLES WRAXALL.

THE BIRD'S NEST.

DEEP in a leafy dell we found,
When early Summer wove her crown,
A bird's nest on the mossy ground,
From blooming bough blown down.

Five pretty eggs, quite warm and white,
Were waiting for the brooding wing,
That from each shell there might take flight
A bird, to trill and sing.

The mother sat and grieved apart;
Her song had no rejoicing note.
The sorrow of her wounded heart
Seemed sobbing in her throat.

She thought of all the summer days,
With their sweet sunshine, yet to come;
Of fledgelings echoing God's praise,
While only hers were dumb.

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THE BIRD'S NEST.

THE YOUNG ARTIST.

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WELL done, little one! A very pretty tune, and very nicely sung!"

The speaker was a stranger who had just come in sight of the pretty cottage where Robbie and Maria Barnes lived with their widowed mother, and outside of which the little singer sat nursing the baby, while Robbie chopped wood at a little distance.

The widow, hearing a stranger's voice, came to the door, and seeing that he appeared to have been walking far invited him to come in and take a rest. This he very gladly did; and while she dusted a chair for him, Mary brought a mug of fresh milk, and they were soon on very friendly terms with him.

He said that he was an artist, and that he had come to that part of the country for a time to take sketches of the scenery around; that he was at present staying at the village inn, but that he would be very glad if they could arrange to let him live with them for a few weeks. This was agreed upon, and on the next day Mr. Page—for that was the stranger's name—took up his abode in the widow Paul's cottage.

Very pleased Robbie and Maria were with him; and when he came home from his rambles and sat under the shade of the large tree by the side of the house finishing the sketches he had taken, they would stand looking on with wondering interest. Robbie especially, who had never seen any other pictures than those in his spelling-book, was rapt in amazement as he saw hills, rivers, flowers, trees and animals start up into seeming life under the artist's hand. Mr. Page, seeing how interested the boy was in what he saw, invited him to accompany him in his rambles. Robbie did so, and many valuable things he learned in these pleasant wanderings.

When the time came for Mr. Page to leave these simple cottagers, he was as sorry to go as they were to part with him; and he promised that if he lived and prospered, he would endeavor to do something for his favorite, Robbie.

This visit of the artist to their humble abode became the turning-point in Robbie's life. An idea had taken possession of the boy's mind. Why should he not learn to be an artist like Mr. Page? He had watched very carefully the manner in which that gentleman proceeded when taking sketches of the objects around him; he had begun himself to look upon those objects with very different eyes from what he had been accustomed to, and felt sure that with patience and perseverance he could master the art of drawing and painting himself.

His first attempt was a rough sketch of grandma on his slate. It was done with a few strokes of the pencil, but there was really some likeness to the dear old lady in it, and mother felt sure her boy would some day be an artist.



THE YOUNG ARTIST.

Several weeks passed away, and at length he thought he might attempt the portrait of his little dog, "Pink," and, if he could succeed to his satisfaction, he determined that he would carry it home and surprise his mother with it. After much patient labor he finished his task, and showed the sketch first of all to his friend Thomas, who being much pleased with it, they hastened at once to Robbie's home with it. Watching their opportunity, they stood the picture unobserved against the wall, and waited to see the effect it would produce. Little Maria was the first to notice it. "Oh, mother," she cried, "here's a picture of Pinky! Do come and look at it! Isn't it real?"

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The widow turned from her work to look.

"Why, so it is," she exclaimed. "Who painted it, Robbie? Where did you get it from?"

"Robbie did it himself," cried Thomas, unable to keep the secret any longer.

"Robbie did it?" echoed the widow, with a look of bewilderment. "You painted it, Robbie?"

"Yes, mother," laughed Robbie, enjoying her perplexity; "I did it all myself. I have been learning unknown to you. If I can learn to paint as well as Mr. Page, mother, eh! Sha'n't I be able to help you then, mother?"

She smiled and kissed him. His cleverness was pleasing to her, but his loving ambition to be of service to her was still more grateful to her mother's heart.

The famous Benjamin West said his mother's kiss made him a painter. Robbie Barnes might have said the same thing, for from that moment he was more than ever determined to persevere. A few weeks after this, Robbie and Thomas were out in the woods together. It was a holiday with them both, and Robbie had determined to spend the time in sketching a certain landscape he had in view. They had brought their dinner with them; and while Robbie was drawing, Thomas laid out the provisions. Having got it all ready, he went off to the brook to fetch a mug of water, and as he returned called to Robbie to come to dinner. But what was his annoyance, as he came near, to see the mischievous dog munching the last piece of cheese? In sudden passion he caught up a stick and gave chase to Pink, who scampered off with the cheese in his mouth. Robbie was so amused at the comical scene that he thought he would attempt a painting of it, and this idea set Thomas laughing as heartily as himself. It was weeks before he had finished the sketch; but when it was completed, it made a striking picture for a boy of his age.

Years passed, and Robbie worked faithfully at his painting, and made such progress that Mr. Moring urged him to go with him on a visit to the neighboring city, where he could see some gentlemen who might be able to assist him in his desire of becoming a painter. Robbie was unwilling to leave his mother, but she was resolved he should not lose the opportunity for her;

and shortly afterward Robbie, with Thomas and Mr. Moring, was on his way to the great city, which he had never seen before. Arrived there, Mr. Moring took him to an exhibition of pictures, and there introduced him again to his old friend Mr. Page. The artist, to whom Mr. Moring had already showed the painting of the dog running off with the dinner, was exceedingly surprised that a boy so entirely self-taught should have made such progress, and was pleased indeed to see him again. His judgment of the merits of Robbie's work was such that Mr. Moring undertook to have the boy instructed by one of the best teachers of drawing, and so put him in a fair way of attaining that upon which his heart was set—the becoming a painter like Mr. Page. Robbie's mother, though sad to part with him, gratefully consented to his leaving his home for a time for this purpose; and though Robbie was much troubled to think what his mother would do without the little help he had been able to render her, he was persuaded that the best way to serve her was to improve himself. He had not been long away before a message came to his mother telling her that he could earn enough by the sale of his little drawings to pay one of the village-lads to fetch wood and water, and to do other little things for her; that he was improving very fast, and that he had good reason to hope that he should one day be able to earn enough to keep them all in comfort.

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Little Maria was busy braiding straw when this message came.

"I shall not want Robbie to work for me, mother," she said. "I shall soon be able to earn my own living, and I will help to support our dear mother when she grows old."

"God bless you, my child!" said the happy mother. "With such dutiful children as you and your dear brother, no mother need fear to grow old."

YOU'RE starting to-day on life's journey,
Along on the highway of life;
You'll meet with a thousand temptations;
Each city with evil is rife.
This world is a stage of excitement;
There's danger wherever you go;
But if you are tempted in weakness,
Have courage, my boy, to say NO!

THE RUSTIC MIRROR.

[222]

SADIE'S boudoir is a meadow,
Carpeted with blue-eyed grass;
Slender birches, rounded maples,
Frame her inlaid looking-glass.

Curtains woven up in cloud-land
Trail their fringes over all,
Shifting shadows gray and purple,
Which aerial elves let fall.

Hither Sadie, morn and evening,
Comes for water from the spring,
Pausing ere she fills her pitcher
Where the greenest mosses cling,—

Pausing where, as in a mirror,
She a wistful face beholds;
Magic mirror, for within it
Many a vision fair unfolds.

When the April clouds are driven
Over depths of azure skies,
Windows open into heaven,
And she sees her mother's eyes.

When she binds upon her forehead
Wreath of daisies twined with wheat,
She is queen, and wears a jewelled
Crown, with slippers on her feet.

When the glories of October,
Crimson maple, golden birch,
Make her mirror finer, richer,
Than stained windows of a church,—

She of golden-rod and aster
Weaves a garland for her hair,
Leans above the magic mirror,
Murmuring, "Mother called me fair."

But 'tis best when clouds are flying
O'er the clear blue April skies,
And through dreamy depths she gazes
Into heaven and mother's eyes.

M. R. W.

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THE RUSTIC MIRROR.

LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD.

[224]

COME back, come back together,
All ye fancies of the past,
Ye days of April weather,
Ye shadows that are cast
By the haunted hours before!
Come back, come back, my childhood;
Thou art summoned by a spell
From the green leaves of the wildwood,
From beside the charmed well,
For Red Riding-Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore.

The fields were covered over
With colors as she went;
Daisy, buttercup and clover
Below her footsteps bent;
Summer shed its shining store;
She was happy as she pressed them;
Beneath her little feet;
She plucked them and caressed them;
They were so very sweet;

They had never seemed so sweet before
To Red Riding-Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore.

How the heart of childhood dances
Upon a sunny day!
It has its own romances,
And a wide, wide world have they—
A world where Phantasie is king,
Made all of eager dreaming;
When once grown up and tall—
Now is the time for scheming—
Then we shall do them all!
Do such pleasant fancies spring
For Red Riding-Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore?

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LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD.

She seems like an ideal love,
The poetry of childhood shown,
And yet loved with a real love,
As if she were our own—
A younger sister for the heart;
Like the woodland pheasant,
Her hair is brown and bright;
And her smile is pleasant,
With its rosy light.
Never can the memory part
With Red Riding-Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore.

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Did the painter, dreaming
In a morning hour,
Catch the fairy seeming
Of this fairy flower?
Winning it with eager eyes
From the old enchanted stories,
Lingering with a long delight

On the unforgotten glories
Of the infant sight?
Giving us a sweet surprise
In Red Riding-Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore?

Too long in the meadow staying,
Where the cowslip bends,
With the buttercups delaying
As with early friends,
Did the little maiden stay.
Sorrowful the tale for us;
We, too, loiter 'mid life's flowers,
A little while so glorious,
So soon lost in darker hours,
All love lingering on their way,
Like Red Riding-Hood, the darling,
The flower of fairy lore.

LÆTITIA ELIZABETH LONDON.

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HOW MAGGIE PAID THE RENT.

PRESENCE of mind is one of the rarest, as it is one of the most enviable of endowments. It is the power of instantaneously forming a judgment, and acting upon it, and includes not only moral courage, but self-possession. No matter how brave a man may be in the face of expected peril,—if he lacks presence of mind, he is helpless in a sudden emergency. But, as this quality is an ingredient of the highest courage, the bravest men invariably possess it. The presence of mind of one man has often saved thousands of lives in sudden peril, on sea or land. This is naturally enough regarded as a distinctively masculine virtue; but it is one that both sexes may profitably cultivate, as is shown by the following story. Girls as well as boys should be taught self-reliance—to depend on themselves, to think quickly and act promptly. Perhaps no emergency will arise in their lives in which the importance of such mental training shall be illustrated; but it is well to be prepared “for any fate,” and the discipline which produces this virtue gives strength and symmetry to the whole intellectual organism.

“Is supper nearly ready, Maggie? It is time for Jack to return from his work.”

The speaker was an elderly woman in a widow's garb, and the person she addressed was her granddaughter, a pleasant-looking girl, who might perhaps have been fourteen years of age.

“Yes, grandmother, it is just ready, such as it is,” replied Maggie; “but I could wish poor Jack had a better meal after his hard work than what we are able to give him.” [228]

“Ay, ay, child, I wish it as much as you can; but what is to be done? Wishing will never make us rich folk, and we may be thankful if worse troubles than a poor supper do not come upon us

soon."

So spoke the grandmother, and taking the spectacles from her nose, she wiped their dim glasses with her apron.

"Why, grandmother, what do you mean?" cried Maggie, looking up in alarm. "What worse troubles can be coming, think you?" And eagerly and anxiously she fixed her bright blue eyes upon her grandmother's face.

"Well," replied the old woman, "the truth is just this, Maggie: I hear that the new landlord is going to make some changes among his tenants; the cottages are all to be repaired, and the folks who can pay higher rents will stay, while those who cannot must find lodging elsewhere. And how can we ever pay a higher rent, Maggie? Even now, every penny of poor Jack's earnings is spent at the end of the week, and yet we live as cheaply as ever we can."

For a moment or two the girl's face was as perturbed and downcast as that of her grandmother's, and she bent over her knitting in silence; but by an evident effort she quickly assumed a more cheerful aspect. And advancing to the old lady's side, and placing a gentle hand on her shoulder, she said,—

"Don't fret, dear grandmother; God has cared for us so far, and he will never suffer us to want, if we put our trust in him. That's what father used to say, and what he said up to the very day of his death."

So saying, Maggie stooped and kissed the withered cheek of that father's mother, thereby enforcing, as it were, her encouraging words.

"God bless you, my child!" sobbed the old woman, returning the kiss. "You remind me of what I am too apt to forget. Yes, Maggie, your father's God is our God, and he will never forsake his people. I will wipe away these tears, and put faith in him for the future." And the grandmother dried her eyes, and rising from her low seat, said cheerfully, "Maggie, dear, go to the gate, and watch for your brother Jack. When you see him coming across the field, let me know, and I will dish up the supper, so as to have it ready."

Maggie put down her work, and passing through the low doorway of the cottage, stood presently at the little gate that separated the tiny garden from the meadow of a neighboring farmer, who turned his cattle out there to graze.

Opening the gate, Maggie leaned against it, while with one hand she shaded her eyes from the yet dazzling beams of the sinking sun, which bathed with its parting radiance the western horizon, and crimsoned the landscape around.

A moment or two she thus stood, but Jack did not appear; and wondering why he should be so late, Maggie was about to retrace her steps in order to fetch her knitting, when, from that corner of the field which by a stile communicated with the landlord's grounds, she saw a little child emerge, dressed in a bright red frock and jacket, and running heedlessly along, nearer and nearer to the cattle, which hitherto had been grazing quietly in the centre of the field.

Now, however, as the little one approached, directing her steps so as to pass them closely, they raised their heads, and a huge bull, the king and guardian of the herd, attracted doubtless and enraged by the color of the scarlet dress, bounded away from his companions, and with his savage head bent, and his tail raised, gave chase to the child, who, frightened at the bellowing of the angry beast, quickened her pace, and fled screaming towards the cottage gate, at which Maggie was standing. But the utmost speed of which the little one was capable was nothing to the long gallop of the bull, and in the first moment that Maggie witnessed the child's danger, her quick presence of mind and tender heart resolved to do what many strong men, less self-forgetful, would not have dared to attempt.

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Tearing from her head a colored kerchief, which she had thrown over it before she came out, she sprang through the gateway into the meadow, and bounding lightly over the turf, in another minute she had placed herself between the fierce animal and the child. On in his headlong fury came the gigantic brute, and was about to pass Maggie, seeing only the scarlet frock just beyond, when the intrepid girl, springing forward, dashed the kerchief across his eyes, and before he had time to recover himself and recommence his pursuit, she had turned, snatched up the little one, and was running towards the cottage gate. Close behind the fugitives followed the bull, now recovered from his momentary astonishment; but Maggie's feet were winged, for she felt that through God's help she should save the child.

A few more rapid steps, and the gate was reached and barred, while Maggie tottered into the house, still carrying the child, and in the reaction of the fearful excitement, fell fainting on the floor.

Maggie's fainting fit, however, did not last long; and she was fully restored, and had told her grandmother the whole story, before Jack arrived, half an hour later.

He, too, had something to recount. On his way home from the landlord's grounds, where he had been working, he was overtaken by a young woman, who seemed in a great state of alarm. She told Jack that she was the nursery maid, and that while that afternoon she was sitting at work beneath one of the trees, with the children playing around her, one of them—little Gertrude, a child about six years old—must have slipped away from her brother and sisters unobserved; and

when tea time came, and the nurse rose to bring the children home, she was nowhere to be found. The nurse had taken the other three little ones home, and had now come in search of Gertrude, fearful lest she should fall into danger of any kind.

Jack would not stop to eat his supper, after telling his own story and hearing Maggie's, but announced his intention of at once carrying the little truant lady back to her home.

So the kind-hearted youth took Gertrude in his arms, and soon conveyed her safely to the landlord's house, where she astonished every one by the childish recital of her own danger and Maggie's courage.

The next morning Gertrude's mother came down to the cottage to thank Maggie for the preservation of her darling's life, and to bring a message from her husband.

This message consisted of his grateful acknowledgments, and of the promise that Jack should be promoted to the office of assistant gardener as soon as that post was vacant (which would be in the course of a few weeks). But, best of all, the promise included also this, namely, that the widow and her grandchildren should hold the cottage rent free for the remainder of their lives.

Thus was averted, by means wholly unforeseen, the trial of poverty and want so dreaded by the old widow in her thoughts of the future; and never again was she heard to repine, or even to express a fear for herself or for those whom she loved.

DECLAMATION—FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH;

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OR, THE SENTRY OF HERCULANEUM.^[B]

DARK'S the night, dun's the sky with smoke;
Never more my guard they'll change;
Three hours ago I could crack my joke,
And now e'en the thought seems strange.

"Hark! the thunder bellows loud,
And the night's come down apace,
And the lava flame, through its sulphurous cloud,
Is ruddy on my face.

"With a crash did yon temple fall;
But ever, through all the din,
Shrill rose a death-wail o'er all,
The vestals' screams within.

"Men are running, away, away,
With tight zones up yonder street;
But a soldier of Rome must stay
At his post, as seems him meet.

"I remember my levying morn—
I remember my sacred vow;
And I'd hold it matter of scorn
In death's teeth to break it now.

"Jove! lava is all around—
It nears me with scorching breath;
It hisses along the ground
To my feet, and the hiss means—death.

"I've fought as a soldier should
'Neath many an alien sky,
And at home at my post I've stood
Amidst cowards, and now, to die.

"Great Mars, give me heart of grace
Triarii,^[C] over the bowl
Say, 'He died with a smile on his face,
And glory in his soul!'"

W. B. B. STEVENS.

FOOTNOTES:

[B] Overwhelmed, together with Pompeii, by a lava eruption, A. D. 79.

[C] The Roman *Triarii* were old soldiers, of approved valor, who formed the third line in a



THE FAITHFUL SENTRY.

VACATION.

O MASTER, no more of your lessons!
 For a season we bid them good by,
 And turn to the manifold teachings
 Of ocean, and forest, and sky.
 We must plunge into billow and breaker;
 The fields we must ransack anew;
 And again must the sombre woods echo
 The glee of our merry-voiced crew.

From teacher's and preacher's dictation—
 From all the dreaded lore of the books—
 Escaped from the thralldom of study,
 We turn to the babble of brooks;
 We hark to the field-minstrels' music,
 The lowing of herds on the lea,
 The surge of the winds in the forest,
 The roar of the storm-angered sea.

To the tree-tops we'll climb with the squirrels;
 We will race with the brooks in the glens;
 The rabbits we'll chase to their burrows;
 The foxes we'll hunt to their dens;
 The woodchucks, askulk in their caverns,
 We'll visit again and again;
 And we'll peep into every bird's nest
 The copses and meadows contain.

For us are the blackberries ripening
 By many a moss-covered wall;
 There are bluehats enough in the thickets

To furnish a treat for us all;
In the swamps there are ground-nuts in plenty;
The sea-sands their titbits afford;
And, O, most delectable banquet,
We will feast at the honey-bee's board!

O, comrades, the graybeards assure us
That life is a burden of cares;
That the highways and byways of manhood
Are fretted with pitfalls and snares.
Well, school-days have *their* tribulations;
Their troubles, as well as their joys.
Then give us vacation forever,
If we must forever be boys!

BEVERLY MOORE.

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"ESCAPED FROM THE THRALDOM OF STUDY,
WE TURN TO THE BABBLE OF BROOKS."

UNCLE JOHN'S SCHOOL-DAYS.

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THIS picture reminds me, children, of some funny stories that I have heard your uncle John tell, when he and I were boy and girl together, of his exploits as a schoolboy. According to his account, not only he, but most of his schoolfellows, used to lead merry lives enough at school. They had what they called the "Academy Band," and grand music it made, with a hat-box for a drum, cricket-bat for violoncello, and paper flute and trumpets. You would not recognize Uncle John, whom you know only as a man six feet high, in that little lad on the left side of the picture with a battledore for a fiddle. They had a great deal of what he called excellent fun, though I am afraid it sometimes bordered upon mischief or naughtiness. I used to consider that he and his schoolfellows were regular heroes as I listened to his stories when he came home for the holidays; and even now I must confess I cannot help laughing when I think of some of his naughty pranks.

Uncle John first went to a large school when he was eleven years old, and I remember now the tremendous hamper of good things he took with him. The boys who slept in his bedroom were so pleased with the contents of his hamper that they determined to make a great feast. To add to

their enjoyment, they imagined themselves to be settlers in the backwoods of America or Australia. They built a log hut with bolsters, and had a sort of picnic. One of them mounted on the top of the log hut to look out with his telescope for any approaching savages, while the others enjoyed their suppers in and about the hut. When their fun was at its height, the door softly opened, and in walked Dr. Birchall, spectacles on nose and cane in hand. What followed may be imagined.

You know that Uncle John is an engineer now, and even as a little boy he had a great turn for mechanical inventions. Well, he pondered over some means by which such a sudden interruption to the enjoyment of his schoolfellows might be prevented in future; and I will tell you what he did.

It happened that the large room in which he slept formed the upper floor of a wing of the house which had been added to it when it became a school; and there was no access to this room from the principal staircase of the house. You had to pass through the room below and go up a little separate staircase to reach to the floor above. The lower room was also a bedroom for the boys, and Uncle John's little scheme was this:

He made a hole with a gimlet in the frame of one of the windows of his bedroom, passed a piece of string through the hole, and carried it outside the wall of the house down to a similar hole in a window-frame of the room below. To the end of the string in the upper room was fastened a small rattle, while the other end of the string—that in the room below—was taken into the bed of a boy who slept near the window.

This admirable little invention once in order, there was more rioting in the upper room than ever; and the master, disturbed by the noise, soon went, cane in hand, to stop it. The instant he set foot in the lower room the boy there who held the string in bed gave it a little pull: the rattle sounded—ting! ting!—in the room above, and in an instant every boy was in bed and snoring. Perhaps they had been playing at leap-frog the moment before, but as Dr. Birchall entered the room—and he crept up the staircase very quietly, that he might catch them unawares—he found some twenty boys lying in bed, seemingly sound asleep, though snoring unnaturally loud.

The doctor was so disconcerted by this unexpected state of things that he retired at once, fancying perhaps that his ears had deceived him when he thought he had heard a noise in the room. The same thing happened two or three times; the doctor was puzzled, and the invention appeared a complete success; but at last all was discovered.

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THE ACADEMY BAND.

The boys one evening began imprudently to play at "tossing in the blanket" before they were undressed. The rattle sounded, and they had just time to hide away the blanket. But the doctor coming in, and finding they were only then beginning to undress, knew they must have been at

some mischief, and began questioning one after another. Unluckily, while he was in the room the rattle sounded again by accident; perhaps the boy in the room below had pulled the string by moving in bed. The doctor looked about, found the rattle hanging just below the window, saw the string, opened the window and traced its course outside, went down into the room below, and understood the whole arrangement. Then he put the rattle in his pocket and went away without saying a word. The boys declared he had such difficulty in keeping himself from laughing that he was afraid to speak lest he should burst out.

However, next day every boy in that room had a slight punishment, and so the matter ended.

Now I will tell you another of Uncle John's pranks at school. There was a large tree in the playground, the upper branches of which spread out very near to the windows of the bedroom I have been describing. One evening Uncle John got hold of a large hand-bell which was used for ringing the boys up in the morning; and climbing up the tree, he fastened it by a piece of string to a branch near the top. Then another boy threw him the end of a long string from a window of the bedroom into the tree, and he fastened it to the bell in such a way that when it was pulled in the bedroom it made the bell ring in the tree. Having accomplished this arrangement, he came down from the tree and went to bed.

At ten o'clock at night the household was disturbed by the loud ringing of this bell. The master, in his dressing-gown, came out into the playground, and soon discovered where the sound came from, but of course supposed that some boy had climbed up into the tree, and was ringing the bell there. It was the middle of summer, and a beautiful moonlight night, so the boys could see from the windows all that took place. Dr. Birchall stood at the foot of the tree, looking up, and exclaimed, angrily,

"Come down, you naughty boy! Come down, I say, directly! Oh, I'll give you such a flogging! Stop that horrible noise, I tell you, and come down!"

The bell still went on ringing. At last the string—being pulled too hard, I suppose, in the excitement of the fun—broke, and the bell tumbled down from the top of the tree, falling very near the old schoolmaster. This was worse than all.

"What!" he exclaimed; "you throw the bell at me? Why, if it had hit me on the head, it might have killed me. Oh, you wicked boy! I'll expel you, sir. I'll find out who you are if I stop here till morning."

At last, however, his patience was exhausted, and he went away, but left an old butler to watch the tree all night. The boys from the windows could see this man settle himself comfortably on a seat which was at the foot of the tree. He lighted his pipe, and prepared to carry out his master's orders and watch till daylight. By three o'clock in the morning the dawn broke; then the man began to look up occasionally into the tree. Now and then he walked a little distance away, first in one direction, and then in another, to look into parts of the tree that he could not see from underneath. He kept this up till the sun had risen and it was broad daylight; then at last he became convinced that it was impossible there could be a boy in the tree. He walked slowly into the house, still smoking his pipe, with a puzzled expression on his face.

And I suspect he was not the only person who felt puzzled. The next day the boys were going home for the holidays, so that no further inquiry could be made. I wonder if Dr. Birchall ever found out how it had been managed?



FAITHFUL FRIENDS.

THE dog has sometimes been called the "friend of man." This is because, of all animals, it is the one whose attachment to mankind is purely personal. It is found in almost every part of the world, sharing every variation of climate and outward lot with the human race. There are only a few groups of islands in the Southern Pacific Ocean where this valuable creature is wanting. Without its aid, how could men have procured sustenance among tribes to whom the art of tilling the land was not known? or how could they have resisted the attacks of the beasts of prey that roamed in the forests around them?

Anecdotes of dogs, when they are well attested, are always welcome; and I will therefore relate a few.

There were some time ago two families, one living in London, the other at Guildford, seventeen miles distant. These families were very friendly with each other, and for several years it was the custom of the one residing in London to pass the Christmas with the one at Guildford. It was the visitors' uniform practice to arrive to dinner the day before Christmas day; and they were accompanied by a large spaniel, which was a great favorite with both families.

These visits were thus regularly paid for seven years. At the end of that time an unfortunate misunderstanding between the friends caused the usual Christmas invitation from the country to be omitted. About an hour before dinner, on the day before Christmas day, the Guildford gentleman, who was standing at his window, exclaimed to his wife,—

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"Well, my dear, the —s have thought better of it. I declare they are coming as usual, though we did not invite them; here comes Cæsar to announce them."

Sure enough, the dog came trotting up to the door, and was admitted, as he had often been before, to the parlor. The lady of the house gave orders to prepare beds; dinner waited an hour; but no guests arrived.

Cæsar, after staying the exact number of days to which he had been accustomed, one morning set off for home, and reached it in safety. The correspondence which this visit of the favorite spaniel occasioned, had the happy effect of renewing the intercourse of the estranged friends. As long as Cæsar lived, he paid the annual visit, in company with his master and mistress, to Guildford.

"A Frenchman named Chabert, who, from his wonderful performances with fire, was known as the 'Fire King,' was the owner of a very beautiful Siberian dog, which, when yoked to a light carriage, used to draw him twenty miles a day. Chabert sold him for nearly two hundred pounds; for the creature was as docile as he was beautiful. Between the sale and the delivery, the dog happened to get his leg broken. Chabert, to whom the money was of great importance, was almost in despair, expecting that the lamed animal would be returned, and the price demanded back. He took the dog by night to a veterinary surgeon, and formally introduced them to each other.

"'Doctor, my dog; my dog, your doctor.'

"He next talked to the dog, pointed to his own leg, limped around the room, and then requested the surgeon to apply bandages to his leg; after which he walked about the room sound and well. Chabert then patted the dog on the head, who was looking by turns at him and the surgeon; desired the surgeon to pat him, and to offer him his hand to lick; and lastly, holding up his finger to the dog, and gently shaking his head, quitted the room and the house. The dog immediately laid himself down, submitted to have the fracture set, and to have a bandage put on the limb, without a motion beyond once or twice licking the operator's hand. He was afterwards submissive, and lay all but motionless day after day, until, at the end of a month, the limb was sound and whole once more. So perfect was the cure, that the purchaser never knew the dog had sustained any injury."

I will finish my paper with a story of a dog that saved the life of a French soldier who was wounded in one of the terrible battles that have been lately fought in France:—

"The man had been struck by a ball in the chest, near the village of Ham, and lay on the ground for six hours after the fighting was over. He had not lost consciousness; but the blood was flowing freely, and he was gradually getting weaker and weaker. There were none but the dead near him; and his only living companion was an English terrier, which ran restlessly about him, with his master's *kepi*, or military cap, in his mouth.

"At last the dog set off at a trot; and the wounded soldier made sure that now his last friend had deserted him. The night grew dark, the cold was intense, and he had not even the strength to touch his wounds, which every instant grew more and more painful.



“At length his limbs grew cold, and, feeling a sickly faintness steal upon him, he gave up all hope of life, and recommended himself to the mercy of God. Suddenly he heard a bark, which he knew belonged to only one little dog in the world, then felt something lick his face, and saw the glare of lanterns. The dog had wandered for miles till he arrived at a road-side *cabaret*, or country wine-shop. The people had heard the cannonading all day, and seeing the *kepi* in the dog’s mouth, and noticing his restless movements, decided to follow him. He took them straight to the spot—too straight for a little cart they had brought with them to cross fields and hedges—but just in time. When the friendly help arrived, the man fainted; but he was saved. There were honest tears in the man’s eyes when he was telling me,” says the narrator; “and I fully believed him. The dog, too, had been slightly touched in the leg by a ball in the same battle, and has since been lame. He got him, when a puppy, from an English sailor at Dunkirk, and called him ‘Beel;’ very probably the French for Bill.” [239]

This little terrier showed something more than instinct—some share, at least, of common sense. At all events, he deserves to be immortalized; so here you have his portrait, with the cap in his mouth, begging the people whom he has found in the way-side inn to come to the help of his wounded master.

X.



THE ERL-KING.

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THE ERL KING.

WHO rideth so late through the night-wind wild?
It is the father with his child;
He has the little one well in his arm,
He holds him safe, and he folds him warm.

“My son, why hidest thy face so shy?”
“Seest thou not, father, the Erl King nigh?
The Erlen King, with train and crown?”
“It is a wreath of mist, my son.”

“Come, lovely boy, come go with me;
Such merry plays I will play with thee!
Many a bright flower grows on the strand,
And my mother has many a gay garment at hand.”

“My father, my father, and dost thou not hear
What the Erl King whispers in my ear?”
“Be quiet, my darling, be quiet, my child;
Through withered leaves the wind howls wild.”

“Come, lovely boy, wilt thou go with me?
My daughters fair shall wait on thee,

My daughters their nightly revels keep,
They'll sing, and they'll dance, and they'll rock thee to
sleep."

"My father, my father, and seest thou not
The Erl King's daughters in yon dim spot?"
"My son, my son, I see, and I know
'Tis the old gray willow that shimmers so."

"I love thee; thy beauty has ravished my sense;
And willing or not, I will carry thee hence."
"O, father, the Erl King now puts forth his arm—
O, father, the Erl King has done me harm."

The father shudders, he hurries on;
And faster he holds his moaning son;
He reaches his home with fear and dread,
And lo! in his arms the child was dead.

From the German of Goethe.

THE SILLY YOUNG RABBIT.

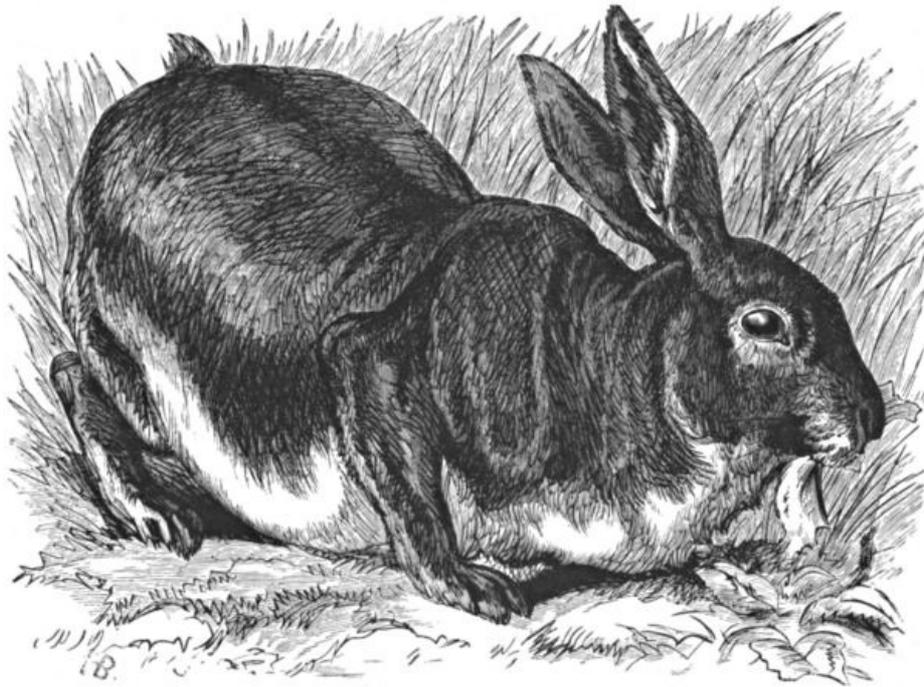
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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

THERE was a young rabbit
Who had a bad habit—
Sometimes he would do what his mother forbid.
And one frosty day,
His mother did say,
"My child you must stay in the burrow close hid;
For I hear the dread sounds
Of huntsmen and hounds,
Who are searching around for rabbits like you;
Should they see but your head,
They would soon shoot you dead,
And the dogs would be off with you quicker than boo!"

But, poor foolish being!
When no one was seeing,
Looking out from his burrow to take a short play,
He hopped o'er the ground
With many a bound,
And looked around proudly, as if he would say,
Do I fear a man?
Now catch me who can!
So this young rabbit ran to a fine apple tree,
Where, gnawing the bark,
He thought not to hark
The coming of hunters, so careless was he.
Now, as rabbits are good
When roasted or stewed,
A man came along hunting rabbits for dinner;
He saw little bun,
Then raised his big gun,
And there he lay dead, the foolish young sinner.

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THE SILLY RABBIT.

NINO.

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THE rain was just beginning to fall in a thin, chilling drizzle, and the cold air nipped sharply any unwary toe that showed itself, as Nino played a little air full of thoughts of birds and flowers. His thin jacket was no protection, and his dark eyes looked as if a shower might drop from them; but the clouds had been over his life too long, and there were no tears left to fall. He was not so old that this must be the case; but he stood alone in the wide street, and no one spoke to or noticed him. One friend he had—his guitar; and now he put that under his jacket, lest the rain should hurt it.

"Ah, carissima!" he murmured, as he hugged it under his arm; "you are never hungry or tired, and you shall not be wet. One of us shall be happy."

The guitar gave a little whisper as his jacket rubbed against it, and Nino smiled and nodded in answer. Now the rain was falling rapidly, and he stepped under an awning, to wait until it held up. There was a lady standing there, her skirts held high, and her cloak drawn closely, and Nino stood one side; for why should he be near any one? He well knew no one wanted him. He watched the water run by in the gutter, and looked into the barrel of apples at his side—large, rosy apples, that would be so good; and he glanced up to see if any one saw him. Why not take one? He could hide it, and eat it afterwards. The grocer had so many; he had none, and it was days since he had eaten anything but dry bread. He knew it was not right to take what belonged to another; but he heard so little of right, and hunger and want pressed him every day.

As he stood thinking, not quite resolved to take one, there was a patter of little feet, a merry laugh, and a bright vision stood by his side.

Was she a fairy? She looked as he always felt his guitar would look if it could take a human form—slender, active, fair. A shower of golden hair, not pale, but bright, like the summer sun; eyes as deep and blue as the distant sky; a face of which one would dream. Nino held his breath, and as the blue velvet coat brushed his ragged arm, drew a sigh, and stepped back.

"Did I frighten you, little boy?" asked the child. "It was raining so hard, and nurse had to run."

"Come, stand in here, where it does not drip," cried the nurse, drawing her away.

Nino peeped under his coat, to be sure his guitar had not been transformed, and then stepped aside under the eaves. It seemed as if he ought to be wet when such a lovely being was obliged to endure the discomfort of standing there. As she chattered, he drew near again, and wondered whether angels did not look like that. She was certainly more beautiful than those in churches. He had forgotten that he was cold, and was feeling very happy, when the intentness of his gaze attracted the child's attention. She was whispering to her nurse, when a harsh voice cried out,—

"Boy, go away from there! I can't watch those apples all the time."

Nino had thoughtlessly laid his hand on the barrel, and when the grocer spoke, moved hastily

away.

"Here, little boy," cried the silvery tones of the child; "don't go; I want to give you an apple." Then she said to the grocer, "A big one, please."

"Yes, miss; I did not notice you were there; but those boys are so bad!"

Nino's face flushed, and his eyes glittered; but when the child handed him the apple, he smiled, touched his hat, and said,— [245]

"Thankee, little lady."

As he walked away, he did not notice the falling drops, but laid his cheek against the apple, and smoothed its plump rosiness before he tasted its rich juiciness.

Nino had no associates among the rough boys in the streets; he had a pride that kept him above their coarse ways. As he played and sang the songs he learned in Italy, dim memories of a better life came to him, and his music seemed a holy spirit. He would have died but for that, his life was so cold, hard, and bare.

He had been brought over by a sea captain, who dealt in boys; and as he was very ill on the voyage, the captain let an old woman take him for a small sum. She thought his thin, sad face would move the passers, and in pity they would give him money. For this reason she sent him out day after day, in storm or shine, ill clad and weary, giving him but little food. But nature helped him. In spite of this treatment, he became stronger, and after a time ran away from her. Then he joined himself to a party of boy musicians, and by their help got his guitar. But they were unkind to him; for he was yet weak and timid, and the leader, a large boy, sometimes beat him if he refused to play. One night Nino ran away from them, his precious guitar under his arm; and since then he had played and sung through the streets, sometimes begging, sometimes in despair, with thoughts of stealing.

His chief delight and comfort was to lie in the sun on a fair day. He was always hungry, almost always cold, and when the wind did not blow, and the sun was hot, he liked to bask on a step, and dream of good dinners, pretty clothes, and a soft bed. The sun was the only thing he could find in the cold northern climate which was like his old home. In this way he would be nearly happy; but when storms came, he was chilled within and without. The world then was gray; he could not even play on his guitar, which in sunny days brought him pleasant pictures of green fields, dancing water, and leafy vines, loaded with purple grapes.

His guitar was his only companion, and he treated it as if it was alive; he talked to it, cared for and loved it with a tenderness which was of no value to the instrument, but was of service to the friendless boy, in giving him an unselfish motive.

The autumn was fast advancing when he met the golden-haired child; and as the days became colder, he cherished the thought of her, and it made him warm when the sky was cloudy, as if she was a ray of sunlight. He had generally slept on steps or any spot where the police would leave him unmolested; but now the nights were so chill, that he tried hard with a few cents to pay for a lodging.

With this purpose in his mind, he stopped before a house in a private street one evening just after dark. The gas was already lighted; but the curtains were not drawn, and Nino could see the table bountifully spread, and a servant moving about, adding various articles to it. A dancing figure passed and repassed the window, now peeping out, and again running back. Nino's voice trembled as he saw this light and warmth; and as he sang of "love and knightly deeds," he thought of himself out in the cold, with nothing to love but his guitar, and he felt very sad.

In a moment the door opened, and out sprang the child he had thought of so long. The light seemed to follow her, and she cried,—

"Here are some pennies." Nino removed his ragged hat, and held it out, and she said, "O, you're the same little boy! Wait a minute, and I'll get you a cake."



NINO.

Nino stood with his hat off until she returned and gave him a cake.

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"You play such pretty tunes! and I know you now; for I've seen you twice," she said, folding her hands, and looking at him.

Nino murmured,—

"Thankee, pretty lady," and looked at her as if she was a being from another world.

"What is your name?" she asked.

"Nino."

"Come, darling; don't stand out there," called her mother from the house.

"My name's Viola. Good by," she cried, as she ran in.

Nino sang one more song, and then kissing his hand to the little form at the window, went on his way happy. The money brought him a night's lodging and permission to leave his guitar. In the morning—for the following day was Sunday, and if he carried it with him, the police might arrest him for trying to play—he made a light breakfast on a roll, and went to the street where Viola lived, to see if he could meet her. As the bells were ringing, she came down the steps with her parents, and Nino followed at a respectful distance, until they went into church. Nino attempted to go in also; but the sombre sexton at the door frightened him with a severe look, and he wandered on. After a time he came to a mission church, where, by a sign, all were invited to enter. Taking a back seat, and trying to understand the preacher, he fell asleep. When he awoke, the preacher was gone; but the room was full of ragged children, and for the first time Nino found himself in a Sunday school.

The teacher nearest to him was a sweet-faced lady, who spoke gently to the boys of being kind to others, and patient with those who had not the chance to learn that they had; she told them stories, to show them how kindness would return to them, and how happy it made them to have others gentle with them. Nino listened, and thought of Viola; and when all sang some hymns while a lady played the piano, a new life stirred in him.

When the services were over, the teacher gave him a paper, and asked him to come again. He sat on the steps after all were gone, looking at the pictures, and when he returned to his lodging went around by Viola's house, and was rewarded by seeing her sitting in the window with a book. When he reached the wretched place where he had spent the night, and looked for his guitar, he could not find it. Asking the woman about it, she said she was cleaning up, and it was somewhere on the floor. Nino's heart began to swell, and when he found it in one corner, snapped and

broken, his grief and anger burst forth in a volley of Italian. He hugged it, and sobbed over it, called the woman a beast, and pointed to the ruin of his favorite in angry despair.

In the midst of this tumult of feeling the paper he had received dropped out of his bosom, and striking his feet, recalled the teacher's words and Viola sitting quietly by the window. Nino stopped, and for a moment was silent, then saying, "You didn't mean to," picked up the paper, folded his jacket over the guitar, and left the house. His anger had vanished; but his grief remained. He spent the evening in tears and wretchedness, alternately gazing at his guitar, stroking it, and then giving way to passionate crying. At last he slept, curled up in one corner, and in the morning awoke with a cough which hurt his side.

Now he had only his singing to depend on; he had not been taught any useful employment, and did not know how to work. He wandered about in the most disconsolate manner, his cough getting worse, and his grief for his guitar, which he always carried with him, still tormenting him. Sometimes, when people saw the poor boy crouching in a corner, hugging a broken guitar, and crying bitterly, they would give him a few cents. He would not beg; something held him back, and the thought of Viola would not let him steal. [248]

On the Saturday after he had been to Sunday school, as he was sitting on a step, sadly thinking, he saw Viola and her nurse crossing the street towards him. At that moment a carriage with wildly running horses turned the corner. Men on the sidewalk shouted and waved their arms. Viola, confused by their cries, turned back, and the horses, startled, dashed in the same direction. Nino threw aside his guitar, and sprang forward, drew Viola out of danger, but fell himself, and the carriage passed over his foot, crushing it, while in falling he hit his head against the pavement, and lay insensible. Some of the men ran after the horses, some helped the nurse carry Viola home,—for she was crying and trembling with fright,—and a policeman took Nino away.

When Viola was restored, she began to ask for Nino.

"It was Nino, mamma, and I want to see him," was her constant cry.

Her father and mother were also anxious to reward the brave boy who had saved their only child, and made many inquiries to find him. The policeman had taken him to the station-house, and there no one remembered anything about him.

"There are so many of those children brought in, madam, you have no idea. We don't pretend to keep track of them all," was the only information they could get.

At last they were obliged to give up their search; but Viola was much dissatisfied.

About a week after the accident Viola's mother was invited by a lady friend to visit one of the city hospitals. She took Viola with her, and as they walked by the white beds, the child held her mother's hand tightly, and felt quite subdued at the pale, sick faces about her. But suddenly she bounded away, and climbing on a little bed, cried,—

"O, I've found him! here he is—my dear Nino."

Nino—for it was he—shrank back into his pillows, and covering his face with his hands, cried aloud. From the station-house he had been taken to the hospital, where his foot had to be amputated, and he had lain for several days, with a bandaged head, in great pain. His guitar was lost, and he had been so lonely, though the nurses were kind, that at the sight of Viola his fortitude gave way.

"Don't cry, and don't be frightened," said Viola, kissing him, and taking her handkerchief to wipe his tears. "I love you, dear Nino, and now I've found you."

"Is this your Nino, Viola?" asked her mother, while the nurses and other patients looked on with surprise.

"Yes, mamma; is he not pretty?" and she tried to remove his hands.

When he was a little more composed, Viola's mother thanked and praised him for saving her daughter's life, and persuaded him to tell her what he knew about himself. And the nurses told how patient he had been, and she gave him some fruit, and promised to come again. When Viola bade him good by, she put her arms about his neck and kissed him, and they left him quite happy.

A few days after they came again, and Viola cried when she saw him.

"You are going to come and live with us, and be my brother."

"If you would like to," said her mother; and Nino's eyes sparkled with joy at the thought.

Then he was carefully laid in the carriage, and taken to his beautiful new home. More than he had ever dreamed, or fancied, came to him—books, pictures, toys, kind care, love, and a fine new guitar, with the promise of learning to play it better. An artificial foot was to help him walk, and the wonders and delights of his home ever multiplied. [249]

Best of all was his sister Viola. He almost worshipped her; and it was a long time before he could bring himself to treat her with any familiarity. When she caressed him, which was often,—for she loved him dearly, and he was a lovable boy,—he always kissed her hands. One day she shook her head at this, and said,—

"Nino, that is not the way; kiss me good;" and she turned her face, with its rosy mouth, towards him.

With reverence, as if he was saluting a queen, Nino leaned towards her, and then with a sudden impulse, caught her in his arms, and kissed her heartily. That was the seal of their affection, and from that time Nino assumed all a brother's pride, care, and tenderness. After he had recovered, they were constantly together, and their mother was never so content as when Nino had the charge of Viola. He never spared himself to serve her, and she was ever an impulse to goodness and truth, shining before him like a star, as she had from the first time he saw her. And she clung to him with the same love she had first felt, proud of her brother, who developed a noble character; and they all learned to thank the accident which had brought them so happily together.

SARA CONANT.

COMMON THINGS.

THE sunshine is a glorious thing,
That comes alike to all,
Lighting the peasant's lowly cot,
The noble's painted hall.

The moonlight is a gentle thing;
It through the window gleams
Upon the snowy pillow where
The happy infant dreams;

It shines upon the fisher's boat
Out on the lovely sea,
Or where the little lambkins lie
Beneath the old oak tree.

The dewdrops on the summer morn
Sparkle upon the grass;
The village children brush them off,
That through the meadows pass.

There are no gems in monarchs' crowns
More beautiful than they;
And yet we scarcely notice them,
But tread them off in play.



SALLY SUNBEAM.

SALLY SUNBEAM.

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THIS is not her real name. Her real name is Sally Brown. Why, then, have I called her Sally Sunbeam? Why, because everybody else calls her so.

The reason is this: she is such a pleasant, happy, kind, sweet-tempered child that wherever she comes she comes like a sunbeam, gladdening and brightening all around her. It was her uncle Tom who first gave her her new name. He was spending a few days with the family for the first time for some years, for he lived a long way off and had not seen Sally since she was a baby. Sally became very fond of him at once, and so did he of Sally. As soon as he came down of a morning, there was Sally with her merry, laughing eyes to greet him. Whatever he wanted done, there was Sally with her ready willingness to do it for him. Wherever he went, there was Sally with her merry chat and her pleased and happy face to keep him company.

And when the evening came, and Sally, with an affectionate kiss, had bidden him good-night and gone away to bed, he felt as though a cloud had cast its shadow over the house. So one morning, when Uncle Tom was going out for a walk and wanted Sally to go with him, he said, "Where is my little sunbeam? Sally Sunbeam, where are you? Oh, here you are!" laughing as she came skipping in from the garden.

"But my name is not Sally Sunbeam, uncle," she said. "My name is Sally Brown."

Her mamma smiled. "It is only your uncle's fun," she said.

"Well, it is only my fun," said Uncle Tom. "But it's a very proper name for her, for all that. She is more like a sunbeam than anything else. So come along, Sally Sunbeam. Let us go and have a nice walk."

And from that time Uncle Tom never called her by any other name. And other people came to call her by it too, and everybody felt that it was as true and fitting a name for her as ever a child could have.

Here she is in our picture, hanging up her doll's clothes, that she has just washed. How bright and happy she looks! Uncle Tom may well call her Sally Sunbeam. But it is not only her cheerfulness and playfulness that makes her worthy of her name. This, of itself, would not be sufficient to make her loved as she is loved. Oh no! It is the kindness of her heart, the gentleness of her disposition, the delight she takes in trying to make everybody happy. This is what makes everybody love her.

Only the other day a group of several children passed the garden gate on their way from school. There was one poor little thing amongst them whose dress was so shabby and whose shoes were so bad as to make it evident that her parents must be very, very poor.

Sad to say, her schoolfellows were jeering her and teasing her about her appearance. One of these especially was taunting her very cruelly, and the poor child was crying. Sally ran out to her, and putting her arm lovingly round her said,

“What is the matter, dear? What do you cry for?”

“Because they keep on laughing at me so,” sobbed the child.

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“Well, who can help laughing at her?” cried the girl who had been teasing her the most. “Look at her shoes! Do you call those shoes?”

And at this the children all burst out laughing afresh.

“You ought to be ashamed of yourselves,” said Sally, “to laugh at the poor child and make her cry. It is very cruel of you. Suppose *you* could not get good shoes, how would *you* like to be laughed at?”

And there was something so serious and pitying in her tone that the children *were* ashamed of themselves, and went off without saying another word.

“Never mind what they say,” said Sally to the child. “Come into my garden till they have gone right away. There! sit down on that seat for a minute,” she said, leading her to one. “I will be back again directly.”

And she ran to her mamma, and in a great hurry told her all about it, and when the story was finished said, “I’ve got a boxful of money, mamma, that I have saved to buy toys with. May I buy the little girl a pair of new boots with it?”

“I must go and speak to her first,” said her mamma.

So Sally’s mamma came to the child and asked her a few questions, and found that the little thing had no father, and that her mother was ill, and that she had several brothers and sisters, and the good lady judged from all this how poor they must be.

Having satisfied herself that the child’s mother was not likely to be offended by the gift of a pair of boots to her little one, she said, “My little daughter here would like to buy you a new pair of boots. Would you like to have a pair?”

“Buy *me* a new pair of boots!” said the child, with a look of astonishment. “Oh, but they’ll cost a lot of money. Mother has been going to buy me some for ever so long, only she hasn’t been able to get money enough.”

“But I’ve got ever so much money that I was going to buy toys with,” said Sally, “only I would rather buy you a pair of boots if you would let me. And then those naughty girls won’t be able to tease you about your shoes any more, you know. So come along, and we’ll buy them at once. May we, mamma?”

“Yes, if you like.” And away they all went together to the bootmaker’s, and the money that Sally had thought to buy herself all sorts of toys with was expended upon a nice warm pair of boots for the stranger-child.

Don’t you think that Sally must have seemed like a sunbeam to that poor little one?

But this is only one of the instances of her kindness and sympathy and goodness of heart. She has learned of Him who all his life “went about doing good,” and every day tries to follow his blessed example. She has her faults, of course, like the rest of us, and these she has to fight against. But it is her virtues, not her faults, that she is known by—her brightness, her good temper, her sweetness of disposition, her kindness, her unselfishness; and this is how it is that everybody agrees to call her Sally Sunbeam instead of Sally Brown.

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AUNT THANKFUL.

She was our school teacher, a little bit of a woman, hardly larger than a good-sized doll. She had moved into our village years before I was born; for so I heard the folks say, I don't know how many times. Nobody seemed to know where she came from. She had no relatives—at least, none called to see her or to visit her. Once or twice, as I grew older, I heard dark hints whispered about Aunt Thankful, about her having left her early home to get away from unpleasant memories, but no whisper against her character. She was a good woman, a Christian woman—only the people called her *odd*.

But everybody loved her. In sickness or health, in trouble or joy, in prosperity or adversity, everybody was sure they could depend upon assistance and sympathy, if needed, from Aunt Thankful. She was always ready to extend her helping hand, always ready to do a generous act. She was ever true to herself as well as to her neighbors. Perhaps that was the reason why the world called her *odd*. If so, how earnestly I wish there were a great many more odd folks!

Aunt Thankful lived many years in the village before she began to keep school. I remember how funny she used to look as she came down the street towards the school-house. She was so small that I should not have been astonished to see her driving a hoop to school.

Then she wore her spectacles in such a funny way! What use they were to her, I never could discover. If she looked at the scholars in the school-house, she looked *over* the glasses; if she was reading or writing, she looked *under* them. I have often heard boys, who were considered truthful, declare that on no occasion was she ever known to look *through* them.

But what made Aunt Thankful so popular with the children was her kind manner and her kinder words. Somehow or other she used to like the poor and the friendless children the best. That was quite a puzzle to me at first. We usually pay most attention to such as are well off, and prosperous, and dressed nicely. But not so was it with Aunt Thankful. She took sides always with the weak and the down-trodden. I have seen her mend many an apron, many a torn dress worn by a poor scholar, during school hours. She did it, too, in such a kind way, that it made one forget that they were poor. That was because she was *ODD*, you know.

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As I grew up, I began to understand more of this good lady's character than I ever dreamed when I went to school. I saw things in a different light, as it were. And for her many good acts, from the fact that she was about my first school teacher, I do not think I shall ever forget her.

There is another reason why I shall never forget Aunt Thankful. Perhaps I had better tell you about it. She kept our village school one summer; I think it must have been the second or third year I went to school. Anyhow, I was in one of the lower classes.

The school-house was a little box of a thing, hardly bigger than a decent-sized shed. There was only one room in the building. The teacher sat upon a small platform on one side, while the seats for the scholars were raised, one above the other, on the opposite side. Over the teacher's desk was a little square window, looking out upon the horse shed in the rear.

It was a hot summer forenoon, and the windows were all open; the morning lessons had been completed. Aunt Thankful sat writing at her desk, now and then casting her eyes round the school-room, to see that everything was in order. But there was mischief brewing. The children were waiting impatiently for noon recess, and more than one of them were having a quiet whisper or giggle all by themselves.

All at once some of the children saw the mischievous face of a monkey peeping in at the little back window behind the teacher's desk. Of course those who saw such an unusual sight laughed outright, greatly to the astonishment of Aunt Thankful.

Rap! rap! rap! went her ruler upon the desk, as a signal for quiet. At the noise the monkey dodged out of sight in a moment, and soon the children were restored to order. Aunt Thankful went on writing.

To explain so unusual a sight, I ought to say that a strolling organ man, with a monkey, had been in the village that day. He had stopped in the shed behind the school-house to eat his dinner. Accidentally, he had fallen asleep; and his monkey, being of an inquisitive turn, had got loose, and was exploring on his own account. He carried a part of his chain upon his neck all the while, and somehow or other he had climbed up to the little square window, as related.

Aunt Thankful went on writing. But soon the monkey appeared again over her head, turning his funny little face to one side and the other, showing his teeth, grinning, and going through other performances. This time the laughing was louder than before, because more children saw the show. I must record here that a funnier sight I never have witnessed.

The teacher looked up once more, and rapped on her desk quite indignantly. "James Collins," she said, with severe authority, "come here, this moment. If you cannot sit in your seat without laughing, come and stand by me. You, too, Walter, and Solomon. And you, Martha Hapgood. I am astonished at your conduct."

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The reculant children ranged themselves before the teacher, who seemed to think she had now quenched the rebellion. I noticed that they managed to stand so they could have a good view of the window, as if they expected, or even hoped for, another occasion for laughing.

And they didn't wait long, either. In a minute or two the monkey appeared for the third time; and on this occasion he came wholly into sight, chain and all, and began to dance up and down in his peculiar way, bowing and nodding to the spectators. By this time all the children had found out—by the usual school telegraph, I suppose—what was going on, and joined in a loud and universal laugh.

"Sakes alive!" exclaimed Aunt Thankful, jumping up and seizing her ruler; "what's got into the children?" Whether the monkey thought the flourish which the teacher's ruler took was a signal for a fight or not, I never knew; but certain it is he began to scream and shake his chain. The children laughed louder than ever. Aunt Thankful turned round, saw what the trouble was, and raised her hands. The monkey construed this as an act of war, and with a single jump landed on the desk. Here for a few moments he made the papers fly pretty nimbly. He upset the inkstand, scattered the sandbox and pens, screaming all the while like mad. After he had experimented long enough, he gave another jump out of the window; and that was the last we saw of him.

Aunt Thankful looked as white as a sheet. She was taken by surprise, and seemed really frightened.

"Marcy on us," she said, as soon as she could find words, "what a dreadful creature! You may go to your seats, children; I guess you can be excused for laughing."

The poor lady proceeded to pick up her papers, and set matters to rights. It was quite a task. The ink had run over all her papers and into her desk. For years after, that ink spot was pointed out by the children to the new comers, and the story of the monkey had to be related.

Before noon the organ grinder had wakened from his after-dinner sleep, and finding out that his monkey had been into mischief, concluded that it was best to be off. He was not seen in the village any more.

Aunt Thankful kept school afterwards for several years, and then age compelled her to give up her office. About that time, and just when she wanted it most, one of the inhabitants of our village left her three thousand dollars in his will, as a "mark of his esteem." Surely never was charity more properly bestowed, or more gratefully received. I don't think there was a person in the world who envied her the gift, or thought it undeserved.

M. H.





HOW A GOOD DINNER WAS LOST.

TING a ling ling! a ling ling! ling ling! ling! So went the dinner bells—first mamma's, then Mrs. Green's, Mrs. Brown's, Mrs. White's, and all the other neighbors' with colored names. It was everybody's dinner hour; and by the way, is it not funny how everybody gets hungry together?

Dinner was to be eaten at the healthy, good old-fashioned hour of noon, between the two sessions of school. The children were just fresh from slates, with long, crooked rows of hard figures, and heavy atlases, with unpronounceable towns and rivers that would not be found out. There were chickens and dough-balls for dinner. The smell of them made the children ravenous; and they very nearly tripped up Maria and her platter in their haste to reach the table.

Mamma looked around to see if they were all there, and counted on her fingers,—

"Baby, Jelly, Tiny—Tiny, where's Bunch?"

"Why, I thought she was in the kitchen," said Tiny, looking wistfully at the tempting drumsticks. "Papa, won't you please help us little folks first—just to-day? 'cause we're so awful hungry."

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"Tiny, I do believe that Bunch has gone down to the Midgetts'. You must go and find her before you eat your dinner; and hurry, now."

"O, dear! can't she hear the dinner bell just as well as I can?" and off flew Tiny, with the streamers of her jockey standing straight out behind her, and her new buttoned shoes spattering water from every mud-puddle in her way.

We were not invited; so we can't stay to dinner; but perhaps we will have time to learn something about the little ones while Tiny is hunting her tardy sister Bunch.

Her name was not really Bunch; that is, she was not christened so. At school she answered

"Present" at roll-call to the prettier name of Florence; but uncle Tim—he's such a jolly fellow!—said, when he first held her in her delicately-embroidered blankets, that she was such a bouncer, so red and so dumpy, that she would never be anything but a bunch; and so dubbed, she carries the name to this day. But did not she disappoint him, though! for, in some unaccountable way, she daily stretched long, and flattened out, and became thin and bony. Her collar-bone grew to be a perfect shelf, and her stockings got a very awkward fashion of wrinkling about her ankles.

Soon after, when Tiny's little red face began to screw and squint at uncle Tim, she was such a mite that he was sure to be right this time if he nicknamed her Tiny; and she was so little, that an ordinary pillow made her a bed of a comfortable size; and all the old cronies in the village whispered that the new baby would either die off pretty quick, or live to be a second Mrs. Tom Thumb. But Tiny lived, and spited them, and waxed fat and bunched, while Bunch astonished them all by waning lean and tiny.

Jelly's name came no one knew how. Some mischievous sprite probably whispered it to her; for she persisted that it was her name; and so she was indulged in it.

Near their home was a vacant lot—vacant, excepting for a one-story shanty, with a cellar, piles of broken crockery, old shoes, dislocated hoop skirts, and bushes of rank stramoniums, with their big, poisonous blossoms. Cows strayed in the lot, munching the ugly snarls of grass, and the neighbors' pigs and fowls made a daily promenade through the wilderness of refuse.

Although it seemed a very unattractive place for a neat little girl to visit, now especially, since a pipe of the great sewer had overflowed, and had deluged parts of the ground. But to that miserable shanty mamma believed her little Bunch to have strayed; and there Tiny found her, seated on a log of wood in the corner of the largest room, with her apron thrown over her face and the Midgett girls—there were two of them—first staring at her, and then winking at each other.

"Bunch," said Tiny, "Bunch, mamma says to hurry right straight home; and guess what there is for dinner. Chicken pot-pie, and it's my turn to have the wish-bone! Why, Bunch, what's the matter with you? What a baby! You're always forever a-crying about something or other. Come on now. I'm going right home; and you'll get an awful punishing for coming here!"

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The eyes of the Midgett girls glared at her and the insult.

"O, dear! O, dear!" sobbed Bunch, just peeping from one corner of her apron at the outer door.

"O, dear, what?" snapped Tiny, in such a hurry for a drumstick.

"Tiny, did you see anything on the front stoop when you came in?" asked Bunch, her eye still peeping at the outer door.

"Any what?"

"O, any—any cats—any wildcats?"

"Wildcats—what are they?"

"O!" said the Midgetts, shouting together; "wildcats! dreffle ones! my! yes! green eyes! awful cats, that spit fire out o' their mouths, and claws that'll scratch yer to death;" imitating the clawing with their long dirty fingers quite in the face of poor Bunch, who immediately retired to the seclusion of her apron, and continued her frightened sobs.

"O, where? where?" asked Tiny, excitedly, opening wide her big blue eyes, and glancing uneasily in every corner.

"Why, jist out o' there, hid under the stoop; an' when yer go out, they'll pounce onto yer."

"O," said Tiny, bravely, "'tain't so! I don't believe it. There wasn't any there when I came in."

"That's because they was asleep, then," said Ann Matilda. She had red, fiery red hair, was freckled, and had tusks for teeth. "They've just got woke up now; and they're hungry, too."

"So am I," said Tiny. "Come, Bunch, let's hurry past, and they can't touch us; besides, you know no wild animals live about here nowadays."

"O, but these ones are what comes up out of the sewer," instructed the Midgetts.

Tiny's courage began quickly to ooze away, and every bit of it deserted her when she and Bunch just put their noses outside of the door, and heard a most ferocious ya-o-o-ing from—well, they could not tell where.

Of the Midgett tribe, there was no one at home but the two girls. There was no Mr. Midgett, but there was a Mrs. Midgett, who was out washing. The children had seen her plunging her hard, red arms into the soap suds, over their mother's wash-tub. She probably had a hard time managing a living. They were very poor. Sometimes the girls got employment as nurse girls or as extra help in the neighbors' kitchens; but no one cared particularly to employ them, they were so vulgar, indolent, and slovenly. So they subsisted on the odd bits of broken victuals which they begged from door to door in baskets. Some people said they always gathered so much, that they must keep a boarding-house to get rid of the stuff; but I always regarded this as a fine bit of sarcasm. The Midgett mansion was a forbidden haunt of the children; but on this day Bunch had

gone, for the last time, on special business of her own.

On Christmas last, Santa Claus had visited their home, and left for each a pretty doll of the regulation pattern, with blue eyes, and golden crimped hair, dressed in billowy tarleton, and the height of fashion, the beauty of which dolls quite bewildered the unaccustomed eyes of the Midgetts when the children took their young ladyships for an airing. And so one day the Midgetts borrowed them for a minute, while the children neglected their responsibilities, leaving them on a door stone, while they crowded for a closer peep at the mysterious dancers in a hand-organ. From that day to this the whereabouts of the dollships has remained a solemn secret from the knowledge of all but the Midgetts. And it was to them Bunch had gone for a clew to her treasure. [259]

"O," said Keziah Jane, "while we was a-standin' a-waitin' for yous two to git away from the music, and give us a chance to peek in at the dancin', the black feller what lives down the sewer come, and snatches 'em away; and we chases him like fury, and he run; and we never seed those ere dolls agin—nor him nor the dolls."

"Sh! sh!" cautioned Ann Matilda. "Who's that a-knockin' at the door? Run quick in the bed-room, and hide under the bed. Maybe it's that ere black feller, or those wildcats."

Scramble under the dirty bed went the two little girls while the door was opened. Only Jelly; no black man, nor wildcats, either. Jelly, and unharmed; Jelly sent from mamma to escort her naughty sisters home, but who was readily frightened into remaining with them; and so there were three little entertainers for the Midgett ogresses that afternoon.

In the course of a half hour came another rapping at the door. What a reception the Midgetts were having! Keziah Jane pushed the children under the bed, while Ann Matilda opened the door. This time it was the grown-up sister Rosa.

O, how the children's hearts throbbed when they heard Rosa's pleasant voice! but they dared to speak never a word; for Keziah Jane crawled down on the floor close beside the bed, and looked hard at them with her wicked black eyes, and said,—

"Wildcats!"

"Are my little sisters here?" asked Rosa.

O, how they wished she was just near enough so they might pull her dress!

"O, no, mem!" said red-headed Ann Matilda, with the door opened on a most inhospitable crack. "O, no, indeed! they haven't been here in a month. I seed 'em a-goin' to school with their books jest as the town clock struck'd two."

"How strange!" thought Rosa. "They wouldn't have gone back to school without their dinners."

And when she reached home, she told uncle Tim that she half believed they were there, though what could entice them to the horrible hut she could not imagine.

"O my! how cramped up my neck is!" said Bunch.

"O, O, how hungry I am!" cried Tiny, remembering the drumsticks.

"I don't like it here, and I want to go home," sobbed Jelly.

"Well, get up, then, and le's hev dinner," said the Midgetts.

Dinner! There were old baked potatoes, and a mess of turnips, and a bite of fried beefsteak, all mixed in a heap in a rusty tin pan on the table; and Tiny whispered to Bunch that there was "a piece of the very codfish balls which were on mamma's breakfast table." Her appetite had deserted her, Bunch had cried hers away, and Jelly had left hers at her own bountiful table. But the Midgetts ate, and enjoyed.

"Now," said they, "if you'll be real good, and mind, we'll give you a gay old treat. Want to go a-swimmin'? We dunno as we mind a-givin' yer a little pleasure, pervidin' yer'll mind, and not go near the closet where the black snake lives."

"O," shouted the children, "we don't want to go near any snakes!"

"Besides, we can't swim," said Tiny.

"Well, we'll show yer how," said Keziah Jane; "besides, yer all look jest's if a good bath wouldn't hurt yer—don't they, Ann Matilda?"

Ann Matilda laughed, and said yes, looked down at her own bare feet, and bade the children to "be a-takin' off their shoes and stockin's."

"Now, then, foller me," said Keziah Jane, opening the door which led to the cellar stairs. [260]

The children looked down into the black hole, and shrank back with fear. The stairs ended in a pool of black, muddy water, in much the same way that they do in a *bona fide* swimming-bath. You will remember that a pipe of the sewer had burst, and the dirty water had overflowed the Midgetts' cellar. To wade about in this had been the recreation of the Midgetts for days.

"Come on now," said they; "lift up your dresses, and come along."

The cellar was growing every minute lighter the longer they were in it; and soon the children lost their fear, and began to paddle about with their naked feet, taking excellent care to steer clear of the closet containing the black snake.

"It's getting awful, awful dark," said Jelly.

"That's so," said Bunch, wondering, and looking up to see why the small window gave so little light. Something outside moved just then. The window was opened, and there were two faces looking down at them—two faces full of astonishment. They belonged to Rosy and uncle Tim.

"Children, get right out of that filth, and go up stairs," ordered Rosy.

Up stairs they went, one hanging behind the other, and entered the room from the cellar just as Rosy came in at the front door. Can you imagine how they must have looked, drenched and spoiled with the impure water from the dainty ruffles at their throats to the very nails of their toes? Like drowned rats! Rosy only said, with a withering glance at the Midgetts,—

"Never come to our house again for cold pieces."

Then bidding the children gather up their stockings and shoes, she marched them off barefooted between herself and uncle Tim. Tiny's new buttoned shoes had found a watery grave; for, as the bathers came up stairs, one of the Midgett feet pitched them gracefully into the cellar.

"Tiny," said Bunch, as they walked mournfully home, amid the astonished gaze of the returning school children. "I don't believe there was a wildcat there any of the time."

"No, nor a black man in the sewer," said Tiny.

"Nor a black snake in the closet," said Jelly.

But there were a hot bath and clean clothing at home for them, and warm beds. Whether there was anything more severe than a good lecture, I will leave you to guess; for mamma said they were old enough to know better than to believe in any such ridiculous nonsense, all excepting little Jelly.

I should be ashamed to finish the conclusion of the affair; for what do you think, children? It all actually happened, once upon a time, to myself and two of my sisters.

FANNIE BENEDICT.

MIRTH is a medicine of life:
It cures its ills, it calms its strife;
It softly smooths the brow of care,
And writes a thousand graces there.

LAME SUSIE.

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CHILDREN," said Miss Ware to her little band of scholars, "Susie Dana is coming to school next Monday. She is lame, and I want you to be kind and thoughtful toward her. She does not show her lameness until she commences to walk, and then you can see that one of the fat little legs is longer than the other, which makes her limp. So do not watch her as she walks. Be sure not to run against her in your plays, and don't shut her out from them because she cannot run and jump as you do, but choose, some of the time, plays in which she can take part. Remember, I make this rule: When you leave the room at recess or after school, wait, every one of you, in your places till she has passed out; then she will not be jostled or hurt in any way. Her lameness is a hard trial for a little girl. She would like to run and dance as well as any of you, and I do hope you will feel for her, and at least not make her burden heavier. How many, now, will promise to try to make her happy?"

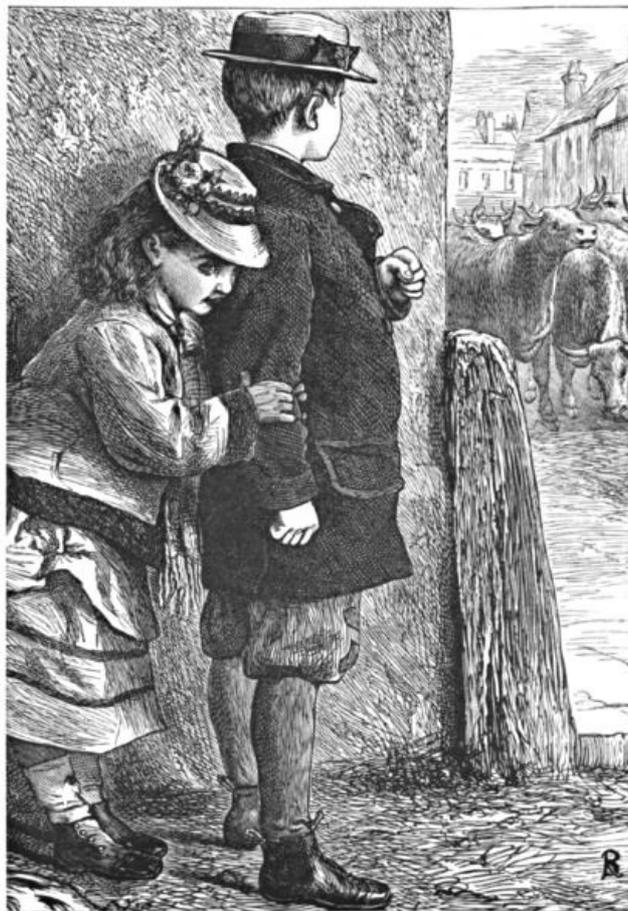
Every hand was instantly raised, and the children's clear, honest eyes met their teacher's with a look which was a promise.

You have read stories, no doubt, of lame, blind or deformed children, and poor ones in patched clothes, who met treatment from others harder to endure than their poverty, privation or pain. Sometimes their schoolmates have been foolish and cruel enough to shun them, cast them out from their plays and pleasures, brush roughly against them, talk about, and even ridicule, them. But I hope it is not often so. In this case it was by far the reverse.

These children remembered their pledge, and they made Susie so happy that she almost forgot her lameness. She was a cheerful, pleasant, good little girl, and her schoolmates, who had begun by pitying her and trying to help her, soon loved to be with her.

"May I sit with Susie, Miss Ware?" became a frequent request.

"Susie dear, here's a cake I've brought you," one would say at recess.



NOTHING SHALL HURT YOU.

One day, as Susie was on her way to school she met a large drove of oxen. Poor little girl! she was very much frightened, and the big blue eyes were fast filling with tears when Harry Barton, one of the school-boys, stepped up before her and said, "Don't cry, Susie. I will take care of you. Nothing shall hurt you while I am here." And right bravely he stood before her until the last one had passed, and then took Susie to school, kindly helping her over the rough places. [263]

So the seasons wore on, and Susie, who, though she ardently desired to learn, had dreaded going among other children, was always happy with them. She loved her teacher and schoolmates, and made such progress as she could not have done had these things been different.

The summer vacation was over. The glorious days of early autumn, with sunshine glinting through the crimson foliage, dropping nuts and golden harvests, passed swiftly away, and cold weather came.

The school-room was pleasant still with its cheery fire and bright faces. One day, when all were busy as usual, a cry rang out,

"Fire! Fire! The school-house is on fire!"

Books and pens dropped from trembling hands, little faces paled, and eager, appealing eyes turned instantly to the teacher.

"Run, children!" she said, hurriedly.

Only one moved—lame Susie. She limped along as fast as she could, and all the rest, frightened as they were, remained in their places till she was safe outside the walls. Then with a rush they cleared the room almost in an instant. Even in that time of peril and dread they remembered their duty and kindness toward her, and gave her the richest proof in their power of their thoughtful love. Not mere obedience to a rule could have prompted this unselfish act, and as such a proof she must have felt it.

It is a beautiful illustration, as it is a *true* one, of God's love for all living and for all times.

"As ye would they should do to you, do ye to them."





THE SECRET.

PEPPER BAKER, don't you tell!
 If you ever do, I'll— Well,
 I'll do something you'll remember
 Till the last day of December.

Pepper, look me in the eye!
 You must be as shy, as shy—
 Play, you don't know where I'm going,
 Don't know anything worth knowing!

When the bell for breakfast rings,
 I will bring you cakes and things;
 Don't go down till Ben calls, "Pupper,
 Pupper; come and 'ave your supper!"

What I've told you no one knows,
 Only you, and I, and Rose
 (Maybe she has told her kitty),
 No one else in Boston city.

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Pepper, look at me, and say
 With your eyes,—look straight this way,—
 With your teeth, and mane so shaggy,
 With your ears and tail so waggy,—

"I will never, never tell.
 They may tie a ding-dong-bell
 To my little tail so waggy,
 Singe my ears and coat so shaggy.

"They may drown me in the well,
 All because I will not tell."
 That will do, you grim old Quaker!
 I can trust you Pepper Baker.

MARY R. WHITTLESEY.

SILVER or golden, which is the best—
Which with God's love is most richly blest?
Which is the fairer I cannot tell,
Grandfather dear or my baby Bel.

The soft twilight hour, when shadows fall,
To little Bel seems the best of all;
Then grandfather lays aside his book;
He cannot resist the pleading look.

There's room for two in the great arm-chair;
His arms enfold her with loving care;
Upturned is a smiling, rosy face;
Two dimpled arms have found their place.

Sweet eyes of hazel, so clear and bright,
Look up with a happy, loving light;
The curls are golden that softly stray,
While breezes amid their sunshine play.

Little she dreams of sorrow and care;
Life is unknown, and to her seems fair.
As years roll by the face may grow old;
But the loving heart will never grow cold.

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SILVER AND GOLD.

When the hand of Time on her head is laid,
The lustre of gold must surely fade;
But lovely is even a silver frost,
If truth and goodness have not been lost.

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Pride and passion have left no trace
On the old man's placid, saintly face;
The journey so long is almost done—
The strife is over, the victory won.

The voice that speaks is gentle and deep;
Surely it means God's grace to keep.

Eyes like the heavens so darkly blue;
Surely God's love is shining through.

Forehead so noble, calm, and fair;
Surely God's peace is resting there.
The snowy locks are a silver crown;
Softly the blessing of God came down.

Silver or golden, which is the best—
Which with God's love is most richly blest?
Which is the fairer I cannot tell,
Grandfather dear or my baby Bel.

ELLIS GRAY.

TWO MORNINGS.

STEP softly; the baby sleeps;
Drop the curtains, and close the door;
Baby sleeps, while mother weeps—
Sleeps, never to waken more.

Not a breath disturbs his repose;
The blossom he wears has forgotten to blow.
Once his two cheeks were red as a rose;
Now they are lilies, you know.

Morning will come, with its sweet surprise,
Waken the flowers, and scatter the dew;
But never again shall the baby's eyes
Watch the sunbeams break through.

Yet in heaven his morning is growing
To fairer dawning than ours has known—
A fountain of light forever flowing
Forth from the great white throne.

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TIM, THE MATCH BOY.

TIM had been standing for a long while gazing in at the confectioner's window. The evening was drawing in, and ever since morning a thick, unbroken cloud had covered the narrow strips of sky lying along the line of roofs on each side of the streets, while every now and then there came down driving showers of rain, wetting him to the skin.

Not that it took much rain to wet Tim to the skin. The three pieces of clothing which formed his dress were all in tatters. His shirt, which looked as if it never could have been whole and white, had more than half the sleeves torn away, and fell open in front for want of a collar, to say nothing of a button and button-hole. The old jacket he wore over it had never had any sleeves at all, but consisted of a front of calf-skin, with all the hair worn away, and a back made with the idea that it would be hidden from sight by a coat, of coarse yellow linen, now fallen into lamentable holes. His trousers were fringed by long wear, and did not reach to his ankles, which were blue with cold, and bare, like his feet, that had been splashing along the muddy streets all day, until they were pretty nearly the same color as the pavement. His head was covered only by his thick, matted hair, which protected him, far better than his ragged clothes, from the rain and wind, and made him sometimes dimly envious of the dogs that were so far better off, in point of covering, than himself. His hands were tucked, for warmth, in the holes where his pockets should have been; but they had been worn out long ago, and now he had not even accommodation for any little bit of string, or morsel of coal, he might come across in the street.

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It was by no means Tim's habit to stand and stare in at the windows of cake shops. Now and then he glanced at them, and thought how very rich and happy those people must be who lived upon such dainty food. But he was, generally, too busy in earning his own food—by selling matches—to leave him much time for lingering about such tempting places. As for buying his dinner, when he had one, he looked out for the dried-fish stalls, where he could get a slice of brown fish ready cooked, and carry it off to some doorstep, where he could dine upon it heartily and contentedly, provided no policeman interfered with his enjoyment.

But to-day the weather had been altogether too bad for any person to come out of doors, except those who were bent on business; and they hurried along the muddy streets, too anxious to get on quickly to pay any heed to Tim, trotting alongside of them with some damp boxes of matches to sell. The rainy day was hard upon him. His last meal had been his supper the night before—a crust his father had given him, about half as big as it should have been to satisfy him. When he awoke in the morning, he had already a good appetite, and ever since, all the long day through, from hour to hour, his hunger had been growing keener, until now it made him almost sick and faint to stand and stare at the good things displayed in such abundance inside the shop window.

Tim had no idea of going in to beg. It was far too grand a place for that; and the customers going in and out were mostly smart young maid-servants, who were far too fine for him to speak to.

There were bread shops nearer home, where he might have gone, being himself an occasional customer, and asked if they could not find such a thing as an old crust to give him; but this shop was a very different place from those. There was scarcely a thing he knew the name of. At the back of the shop there were some loaves; but even those looked different from what he, and folks like him, bought. His hungry, eager eyes gazed at them, and his teeth and mouth moved now and then, unknown to himself, as if he was eating something ravenously; but he did not venture to go in.

At last Tim gave a great start. A customer, whom he knew very well, was standing at the counter, eating one of the dainty buns. It could be no one else but his own teacher, who taught him and seven and eight other ragged lads like himself, in a night school not far from his home. His hunger had made him forgetful of it; but this was one of the evenings when the school was open, and he had promised faithfully to be there to-night. At any rate, it would be a shelter from the rain, which was beginning to fall steadily and heavily, now the sun was set; and it was of no use thinking of going home, where he and his father had only a corner of a room, and were not welcome to that if they turned in too soon of an evening. His teacher had finished the bun, and was having another wrapped up in a neat paper bag, which he put carefully into his pocket, and then stepped out into the street, and walked along under the shelter of a good umbrella, quite unaware that one of his scholars was pattering along noiselessly behind him with bare feet.

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All Tim's thoughts were fixed upon the bun in his teacher's pocket. He wondered what it would taste like, and whether it would be as delicious as that one he had once eaten, when all the ragged school had a treat in Epping Grove—going down in vans, and having real country milk, and slices of cake to eat, finishing up with a bun, which seemed to him as if it must be like the manna he had heard of at school, that used to come down from heaven every morning before the sun was up. He had never forgotten that lesson; and scarcely a morning came that he did not wish he had lived in those times.

The teacher turned down a dark, narrow street, where the rain had gathered in little pools on the worn pavement, through which Tim splashed carelessly. They soon reached the school door; and Tim watched him take off his great-coat, and hang it up on the nails set apart for the teachers' coats.

Their desk was at a little distance; and he took his place at it among the other boys, but his head ached, and his eyes felt dim, and there was a hungry gnawing within him, which made it impossible to give his mind to learning his lessons, as he usually did. He felt so stupefied, that the easiest words—words he knew as well as he knew the way to the Mansion House, where he sold

his matches—swam before his eyes, and he called them all wrongly. The other lads laughed and jeered at him, and his teacher was displeased; but Tim could do no better. He could think of nothing but the dainty bunn in the teacher's pocket.

At last the Scripture lesson came; and it was one that came home to Tim's state. The teacher read aloud first, before hearing them read the lesson, these verses: "And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him," etc. Read Mark vi. 34-44.

Tim listened with a swelling heart, and with a feeling of choking in his throat. He could see it all plainly in his mind. It was like their treat in Epping Grove, where the classes had sat down in ranks upon the green grass; and O, how green and soft the grass was! and the teachers had come round, like the disciples, giving to each one of them a can of milk and great pieces of cake; and they had sung a hymn all together before they began to eat and drink. Tim fancied he could see our Saviour as once he had seen him in a beautiful picture, with his hands outstretched, as if ready to give the children surrounding him anything they wanted, or to fold them every one in his loving arms. He thought he saw Jesus, with his loving, gentle face, standing in the midst of the great crowd of people, and asking the disciples if they were sure they had all had enough. Then they would sing, thought Tim, and go home as happy as he had been after that treat in Epping Grove. All at once his hunger became more than he could bear.

"O, I wish He was here!" he cried, bursting into tears, and laying his rough head on the desk before him. "I only wish He was here."

The other lads looked astonished; for Tim was not given to crying; and the teacher stopped in his reading, and touched him to call his attention.

"Who do you wish was here, Tim?" he asked.

"Him," sobbed the hungry boy; "the Lord Jesus. He'd know how bad I feel. I'd look him in the face, and say, 'Master, what are I to do? I can't learn nothink when I've got nothink but a griping inside of me.' And he'd think how hungry I was, having nothink to eat all day. He'd be very sorry—he would, I know."

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Tim did not lift up his head; for his tears and sobs were coming too fast, and he was afraid the other lads would laugh at him. But they looked serious enough as the meaning of his words broke upon them. They were sure he was not cheating them. If Tim said he had had nothing to eat all day, it must be true; for he never grumbled, and he always spoke the truth. One boy drew a carrot out of his pocket, and another pulled out a good piece of bread, wrapped in a bit of newspaper, while a third ran off to fetch a cup of water, having nothing else he could give to Tim. The teacher walked away to where his coat was hanging, and came back with the bunn which he had bought in the shop.

"Tim," he said, laying his hand kindly on the lad's bowed-down head, "I am very sorry for you; but none of us knew you were starving, my boy, or I should not have scolded you, and the lads would not have laughed at you. Look up, and see what a supper we have found for you."

It looked like a feast to Tim. One of the boys lent him a pocket knife to cut the bread and carrot into slices, with which he took off the keen edge of his hunger; and then he ate the dainty bunn, which seemed to him more delicious than anything he had ever tasted before. The rest of the class looked on with delight at his evident enjoyment, until the last crumb had disappeared.

"I could learn anything now," said Tim, with a bright face; "but I couldn't understand nothink before. Then you began telling about the poor folks being famished with hunger, and how Jesus gave them bread and fishes, just as if he'd been hungry himself some time, and knew all about it. It is bad, it is. And it seemed such a pity he weren't here in the city, and I couldn't go to him. But, I dessay, he knows how you've all treated me, and I thank you all kindly; and I'll do the same by you some day, when you've had the same bad luck as me."

"Yes," said the teacher, "Jesus knew how hungry you were; and he knew how to send you the food you wanted. Tim, and you other lads, I want you to learn this verse, and think of it often when you are grown-up men: 'Whosoever shall give to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, He shall in no wise lose his reward.'"

ENVY PUNISHED.

A BURMESE potter, it is said, became envious of the prosperity of a washerman, and to ruin him, induced the king to order him to wash one of his black elephants white, that he might be "lord of the white elephant," which in the East is a great distinction.

The washerman replied that, by the rules of his art, he must have a vessel large enough to wash him in.

The king ordered the potter to make him such a vessel. When made, it was crushed by the first step of the elephant in it. Many times was this repeated; and the potter was ruined by the very



WINGS.

WINGS.

IF I only had wings like you!" said Addie Lewis, speaking to her pet bird as she opened the cage door.

"Chirp, chirp!" answered the bird, flying out and resting on Addie's finger.

"Ah, birdie, if I only had your wings!"

"Wings!" spoke out Addie's mother. "You have wings," she said, in a quiet way.

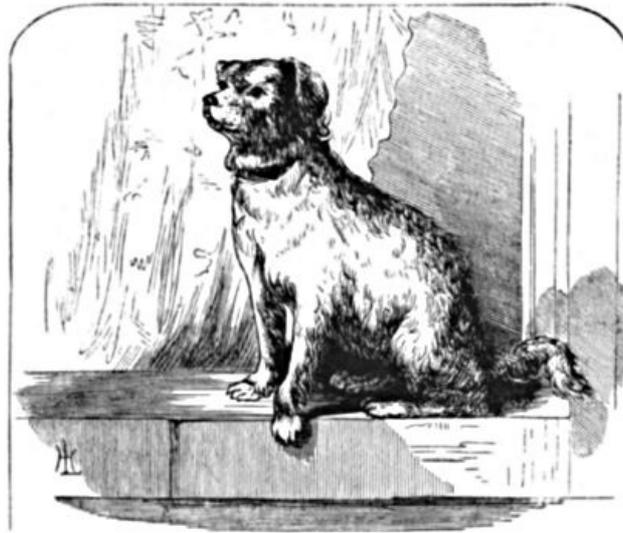
Addie looked at her shoulders, and then at her mother's. "I don't see them," she said, with a little amused laugh.

"We are using them all the while," said Mrs. Lewis. "Did you never hear of the wings of thought?"

"Oh! That's what you mean? Our thoughts are our wings?"

"Yes; and our minds can fly with these wings higher and farther than any bird can go. If I read to you about a volcano in Italy, off you go on the wings of thought and look down into the fiery crater. If I tell you of the frozen North, you are there in an instant, gazing upon icy seas and the wonders of a desolate region. The wings of an eagle are not half so swift and strong as the wings of your thought. The very king of birds would perish in regions where they can take you in safety."





SQUANKO.

WHAT a name for a dog, auntie!"

"Name! Why, Frank, when you hear the whole, like the Queen of Sheba, you'll say the half has not been told you."

"Why, didn't you find Squanko quite enough for one dog?"

"His full name," said my aunt, loftily, "is Squanko Guy Edgerly Patterson."

She rolled out these resonant titles with due gravity, and Squanko, turning his bright eyes from one to the other, solemnly wagged his tail, as if to signify approval.

I was a New Hampshire boy, and this was my first visit to the city. My experience with dogs previously had been that of a country boy bred up among sportsmen. I had known several highly-trained hounds, and famous bird dogs, though my ideal of canine perfection was that marvel of sagacity, the shepherd dog. Still, my first love among dogs had been a noble old hound, who, though sightless from age, would follow a rabbit better than any young dog was capable of doing. The scent of powder brought back his lost youth. Let him hear the loading of a gun,—or the mere rattle of a shot-pouch was enough,—he would break out into the wildest gambols, dashing hither and yon, in an ecstasy of delight.

Running headlong against rock or tree, as he was liable to do, only tempered his zeal for a moment; the next, he was tearing along more madly than ever. Dear old Trim! I had shed a boy's hot tears over his grave on the hill-side, and I was not ashamed of it either.

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I felt a tenderness for Squanko. The yellow spots which marked his white fur reminded me of Trim's. Remembering the accomplishments of my lost favorite, I ventured another question.

"What is he good for, aunt Patterson? Can he hunt?"

"Good for!" ejaculated my aunt—"good for! I couldn't keep house without him." A certain fine disdain curled her lip; she had utterly ignored my second question. Completely quenched, I was fain to accept Squanko at once, hunter or no hunter.

And we were, on the whole, pretty good friends, in spite of the battles we fought, nearly every evening, for the possession of the lounge. It made small difference to Squanko if I was beforehand with him. Though quite a large dog, he would creep up behind me, slowly insinuating himself between me and the back of the lounge. Then, watching his opportunity, he would brace his feet suddenly, and more than once the execution of this manœuvre sent me rolling, ignominiously, upon the floor.

The intruder ousted, his majesty would settle himself for a nap, not heeding in the least the shouts of laughter which his triumph never failed to evoke.

On all occasions (excepting only nights, when he slept tranquilly on a rug in my aunt's room) he felt it his duty to keep watch and ward over the premises. His favorite perch, in sunny mornings, was in the window of my aunt's chamber. If by any chance the white curtain had not been looped up, as usual, leaving the window sill exposed, Squanko went down for help, and by whining,

pulling his mistress's dress and similar arts, persuaded her to go up and remove the obnoxious curtain. Carefully seating himself upon the sill, which was all too narrow for his portly figure, he would fall to work, by barking furiously at every person—man, woman, or child—who presumed to pass up or down the street. Most fortunately for him, the window he occupied overlooked the lawn at the side of the house, instead of the pavement in front; for on several occasions his fury became so ungovernable, that he barked himself sheer off his foundation.

Catching a glimpse of his whirling figure, my aunt rushed out, armed with a bottle of liniment; and while she bathed his imperilled legs, she strove also to soothe his outraged feelings. For the time all vanity seemed to have been dashed out of him; but comforted by sympathy and caresses, he again mounted his perch, and barked with undiminished ardor.

At table, my aunt always occupied what is termed an office chair. Being quite small in person, a portion of the great leather cushion, at the back, was left vacant. Squanko rarely failed to possess himself of this vantage-ground, and squatting thereon, peered wisely over his mistress's shoulder, as if studying the problem of what portion of the goodly meal before him might safely be counted on as a remainder.

Yet Squanko had his grievances. One was, not being allowed the freedom of the garden. If he went out, my aunt's careful hand hastened to link the long chain, attached to his house, to his collar. She had a chronic fear of his running away.

Squanko utterly disdained to occupy the bed of straw which graced his dwelling, but climbing to a board which surmounted the ridge of the roof, would lie upon that narrow ledge, ready to pounce upon any one who ventured near.

Missing him one morning, both here and on the window-sill, one of the wee Johnnys of the neighborhood, who stood in wholesome awe of Squanko, put his curly head in at the doorway. [276]

"Where's Squanko, Mrs. Patterson?"

"Gone to walk."

"*Gone to walk,*" chuckled Johnny, bursting with merriment. "That's funny—a *dog gone to walk!*"

Squanko's *walk* was rarely omitted; generally it was performed under my aunt's tutelage, when she went a little way with her husband, whose business took him to the city every morning. If, for any reason, Mrs. Patterson let her husband go to the cars alone, she sent Squanko off by himself, with strict orders to return speedily, which direction he had never failed to obey.

Besides his chain, Squanko had one other trial to endure—a thorough ablution once a week. Bathing was his aversion; still, he had been obliged to submit to it from his puppyhood, and Mrs. Patterson was inexorable. A dog who was not faultlessly clean could have no place in the arrangements of her household. In and about her dwelling all was spotlessly neat. Everything susceptible of polish shone, from the window-panes, and the great cooking-stove, to Squanko's white coat. In vain were his protests, his indignant snorts and sneezes, his incipient growls; into the tub of warm water he had to go, while the scrubbing-brush performed its office upon his fat sides. Having been duly washed and wiped, he always indulged in a vicious shake or two, producing a sort of mist in his immediate vicinity. After being wrapped in his own blanket shawl, he was placed on the lounge, to repose while drying. His luxurious nap completed, he would emerge from his retirement, his short white hair shining like satin,—as clean a playfellow as one might desire. His temper,—not usually of the best,—after one of these baths, would remain sunny for hours.

But Squanko—like many another spoiled darling,—was not content with the home where he was so petted and indulged.

As his master opened the door to go into the garden, one evening, Squanko rushed past him, and made for the street. In vain our hurried search, up and down, in the dark spring night. In vain his mistress's frantic calls. If Squanko was hidden in some nook hard by, and heard her entreaties, his heart must have been harder than a stone. That hasty exit was the last we ever saw of him. Night after night my uncle, coming home from the city, inquired for Squanko, only to receive the sad reply,—

"No, Roy! We never—never shall see Squanko again."

Soon a fat, brindled puppy was installed in the vacant place. Day by day he grew, both in bulk and in the affections of the family. My aunt named him "Trouble." All the devotion which had been Squanko's was straightway lavished on him.

When, in process of time, the tidings were borne to my aunt's ears, that Squanko, forgetful of former friends, was leading a jolly existence in a neighboring town, she only replied, with a toss of her head, "Let the ungrateful imp stay there. Trouble is worth a dozen of him!"

F. CHESEBORO.





POLLY had expected to be very happy in getting ready for the party; but when the time came she was disappointed, for somehow that naughty thing called envy took possession of her, and spoiled her pleasure.

Before she left home she thought her new white muslin dress, with its fresh blue ribbons, the most elegant and proper costume she could have; but now, when she saw Fanny's pink silk, with a white tarlatan tunic, and innumerable puffings, bows, and streamers, her own simple little toilet lost all its charms in her eyes, and looked very babyish and old-fashioned.

Even Maud was much better dressed than herself, and looked very splendid in her cherry-colored and white suit, with a sash so big she could hardly carry it, and little white boots with red buttons.

They both had necklaces and bracelets, ear-rings and brooches; but Polly had no ornament except the plain locket on a bit of blue velvet. Her sash was only a wide ribbon, tied in a simple bow, and nothing but a blue snood in the pretty brown curls. Her only comfort was the knowledge that the modest tucker drawn up round the plump shoulders was real lace, and that her bronze boots cost nine dollars.

Poor Polly, with all her efforts to be contented, and not to mind looking unlike other people, found it hard work to keep her face bright and her voice happy that night. No one dreamed what was going on under the muslin frock, till grandma's wise old eyes spied out the little shadow on Polly's spirits, and guessed the cause of it. When dressed, the three girls went up to show themselves to the elders who were in grandma's room, where Tom was being helped into an agonizingly stiff collar.

Maud pranced like a small peacock, and Fan made a splendid courtesy, as every one turned to survey them; but Polly stood still, and her eyes went from face to face with an anxious, wistful air, which seemed to say, "I know I'm not right; but I hope I don't look very bad."

Grandma read the look in a minute; and when Fanny said, with a satisfied smile, "How do we look?" she answered, drawing Polly toward her so kindly, "Very like the fashion-plates you got the patterns of your dresses from. But this little costume suits me best."

"Do you really think I look nice?" and Polly's face brightened, for she valued the old lady's opinion very much.

"Yes, my dear; you look just as I like to see a child of your age look. What particularly pleases me is, that you have kept your promise to your mother, and haven't let any one persuade you to wear borrowed finery. Young things like you don't need any ornaments but those you wear to-night,—youth, health, intelligence, and modesty."

As she spoke, grandma gave a tender kiss that made Polly glow like a rose, and for a minute she forgot that there were such things in the world as pink silks and coral ear-rings.



"THE SWEET ONE FOR POLLY."

and her plain dress looked charming all of a sudden.

"Polly's so pretty, it don't matter what she wears," observed Tom, surveying her over his collar with an air of calm approval.

"She hasn't got any bwetelles to her dwess, and I have," said Maud, settling her ruffled bands over her shoulders, which looked like cherry-colored wings on a stout little cherub.

"I did wish she'd just wear my blue set, ribbon is so very plain; but, as Tom says, it don't much matter;" and Fanny gave an effective touch to the blue bow above Polly's left temple.

"She might wear flowers; they always suit young girls," said Mrs. Shaw, privately thinking that her own daughters looked much the best yet, and conscious that blooming Polly had the most attractive face.

"Bless me! I forgot my posies in admiring the belles! Hand them out, Tom;" and Mr. Shaw nodded toward an interesting-looking box that stood on the table.

Seizing them wrong side up, Tom produced three little bouquets, all different in color, size, and construction.

"Why, papa, how very kind of you!" cried Fanny, who had not dared to receive even a geranium leaf since the late scrape.

"Your father used to be a very gallant young gentleman once upon a time," said Mrs. Shaw, with a simper and sigh.

"Ah, Tom, it's a good sign when you find time to think of giving pleasure to your little girls."

And grandma patted her son's bald head as if he wasn't more than eighteen.

Thomas, Jr., had given a somewhat scornful sniff at first; but when grandma praised his father, the young man thought better of the matter, and regarded the flowers with more respect as he asked, "Which is for which?"

"Guess," said Mr. Shaw, pleased that his unusual demonstration had produced such an effect.

The largest was a regular hot-house bouquet of tea-rosebuds, scentless heath, and smilax; the second was just a handful of sweet-peas and mignonette, with a few cheerful pansies and one fragrant little rose in the middle; the third, a small posy of scarlet verbenas, white feverfew, and green leaves.

"Not hard to guess. The smart one for Fan, the sweet one for Polly, and the gay one for Pug. Now, then, catch hold, girls;" and Tom proceeded to deliver the nosegays with as much grace as could be expected from a youth in a new suit of clothes and very tight boots.

"That finishes you off just right, and is a very pretty attention of papa. Now run down, for the bell has rung; and remember not to dance too often, Fan; be as quiet as you can, Tom; and, Maud, don't eat too much supper. Grandma will attend to things, for my poor nerves won't allow me to come down."

With that Mrs. Shaw dismissed them, and the four descended to receive the first visitors.

LOUISA M. ALCOTT.



THE ACCIDENT.

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OM named his velocipede Black Auster, in memory of the horse in "The Battle of Lake Regillus," and came to grief as soon as he began to ride his new steed.

"Come out and see me go it," whispered Tom to Polly, after three days' practice in the street, for he had already learned to ride in the rink.

Polly and Maud willingly went, and watched his struggles with deep interest, till he got an upset, which nearly put an end to his velocipeding forever.

"Hi, there! Auster's coming!" shouted Tom, as he came rattling down the long,



steep street outside the park.

They stepped aside, and he whizzed by, arms and legs going like mad, and the general appearance of a runaway engine. It would have been a triumphant descent, if a big dog had not bounced suddenly through one of the openings, and sent the whole concern helter-skelter into the gutter. Polly laughed as she ran to view the ruin, for Tom lay flat on his back with the velocipede atop of him, while the big dog barked wildly, and his master scolded him for his awkwardness. But when she saw Tom's face, Polly was frightened, for the color had all gone out of it, his eyes looked strange and dizzy, and drops of blood began to trickle from a great cut on his forehead. The man saw it, too, and had him up in a minute; but Tom couldn't stand, and stared about him in a dazed sort of way, as he sat on the curbstone, while Polly held her handkerchief to his forehead, and pathetically begged to know if he was killed.

"Don't scare mother—I'm all right. Got upset, didn't I?" he asked, presently, eying the prostrate velocipede with more anxiety about its damages than his own.

"I knew you'd hurt yourself with that horrid thing. Just let it be, and come home, for your head bleeds dreadfully, and everybody is looking at us," whispered Polly, trying to tie the little handkerchief over the ugly cut.

"Come on, then Jove! how queer my head feels! Give us a boost, please. Stop howling, Maud, and come home. You bring the machine, and I'll pay you, Pat." As he spoke, Tom slowly picked himself up, and steadying himself by Polly's shoulder, issued his commands, and the procession fell into line. First, the big dog, barking at intervals; then the good-natured Irishman, trundling "that divil of a whirligig," as he disrespectfully called the idolized velocipede; then the wounded hero, supported by the faithful Polly; and Maud brought up the rear in tears, bearing Tom's cap.

LOUISA M. ALCOTT.



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"It would have been a triumphant descent, if a big dog had not bounced suddenly



POLLY ARRIVES.



HE train was just in when Tom reached the station, panting like a race-horse and as red as a lobster with the wind and the run.

"Suppose she'll wear a top-knot and a thingumbob, like every one else; and how ever shall I know her? Too bad of Fan to make me come alone!" thought Tom, as he stood watching the crowd stream through the depot, and feeling rather daunted at the array of young ladies who passed. As none of them seemed looking for any one, he did not accost them, but eyed each new batch with the air of a martyr. "That's her," he said to himself, as he presently caught sight of a girl, in gorgeous array, standing with her hands folded, and a very small hat perched on top of a very large "chig-non," as Tom pronounced it. "I suppose I've got to speak to her, so, here goes;" and, nerving himself to the task, Tom slowly approached the damsel, who looked as if the wind had blown her clothes into rags, such a flapping of sashes, scallops, ruffles, curls, and feathers was there.

"I say, if you please, is your name *Polly Milton*?" meekly asked Tom, pausing before the breezy stranger.

"No, it isn't," answered the young lady, with a cool stare that utterly quenched him.

"Where in thunder is she?" growled Tom, walking off in high dudgeon. The quick tap of feet behind him made him turn in time to see a fresh-faced little girl running down the long station, and looking as if she rather liked it. As she smiled, and waved her bag at him, he stopped and waited for her, saying to himself, "Hullo! I wonder if that's Polly?"

Up came the little girl, with her hand out, and a half-shy, half-merry look in her blue eyes, as she said, inquiringly, "This is Tom, isn't it?"

"Yes. How did you know?" and Tom got over the ordeal of hand-shaking without thinking of it, he was so surprised.

"Oh, Fan told me you'd got curly hair and a funny nose, and kept whistling, and wore a gray cap pulled over your eyes; so I knew you directly." And Polly nodded at him in the most friendly manner, having politely refrained from calling the hair "red," the nose "a pug," and the cap "old."

"Where are your trunks?" asked Tom, as he was reminded of his duty by her handing him the bag, which he had not offered to take.

"Father told me not to wait for any one, else I'd lose my chance of a hack; so I gave my check to a man, and there he is with my trunk;" and Polly walked off after her one modest piece of baggage, followed by Tom, who felt a trifle depressed by his own remissness in polite attentions.

LOUISA M. ALCOTT.



“THIS IS TOM, ISN'T IT?”

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

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LAST month a gentleman related an incident in his early life, showing how kindness to the brute creation makes them entirely subservient to our will. Similar experience is familiar to every one of us. This volume would not begin to contain the proofs which come under notice every day of our lives. Your dog or your cat understands your disposition as well as your brother or your sister. Give them a kick as you pass by, pull their ears or tail whenever you get an opportunity, and they will shun you as they would the plague. On the other hand, speak a kind word to them, give them a morsel of food, or fondle them kindly, and they will soon treat you as a friend.

I have a cat who waits for my coming home every night as regularly as the sun. And if, perchance, I do not come at my usual time in the train, she shows her disappointment by mewing. She will roll over as obediently as you ever saw a dog, at the word of command. After supper, when I put on my slippers and take the evening paper, puss takes possession of my lap, and then she seems contented and happy.

Kindness did all this—nothing else. Any cat can be taught to “roll over” in a week’s time. Any cat will be your friend, and love you, if you will treat her well.

It is precisely thus with wild animals. They know who their friends are as well as you know yours. They don’t need to be told. There is no end of stories about the elephant, the horse, the dog; about their docility, and the affection they have for those who treat them kindly. Even the lion, when brought under the dominion of man, becomes strongly attached to those who treat him with kindness. An instance of this is related of one that was kept in the menagerie of the Tower of London. He had been brought from India, and on the passage was given in charge to one of the sailors. Long before the ship arrived at London, the lion and Jack had become excellent friends. When Nero—as the lion was called—was shut up in his cage in the Tower, he became sulky and savage to such an extent that it was dangerous even for his keeper, who was not over kind to him, to approach him.

After Nero had been a prisoner for some weeks, a party of sailors, Jack being among the number, paid a visit to the menagerie. The keeper warned them not to go near the lion, who every now and then turned round to growl defiance to the spectators.

“What! old shipmate!” cried Jack, “don’t you know me? What cheer, old Nero, my lad?”

Instantly the lion left off growling, sprang up to the bars of his cage, and put his nose between them. Jack patted it on the head, and it rubbed his hand with its whiskers like a cat, showing evident signs of pleasure.

"Ah," said Jack, turning to the keeper and spectators who stood looking on with astonishment, "Nero and I were shipmates, and you see he isn't like some folks; he don't forget an old friend."



But here's a story of another sort. Some weeks ago a caravan was exhibiting in Illinois. Among the animals was an elephant, to whom a mischievous boy had given an apple with tobacco concealed inside. As soon as the animal discovered the trick, the boy began to laugh at the joke which he had played on the creature. The elephant, however, looked angry, and the keeper, having heard of the affair, told the boy to keep out of his reach, unless he wanted to be hurt. [285]

But, although the lad did not come so near that the elephant could get hold of him, he hung round in the vicinity. Presently a pail of water was brought for the elephant to drink. The insulted creature filled his trunk as full as he could, and seeing a good opportunity, blew the whole of it upon the boy who had given him tobacco, wetting him from head to foot. Verdict of the spectators, and of the readers of this book, "Served him right."

ROBERT HANDY.



ALL AMONG THE HAY.

ALL among the buttercups,
All among the hay!
Oh that spring would come again,
With its merry May!

Hasten summer's pleasant days,
Summer's pleasant hours;
Send us back the butterflies
And the pretty flowers.

Yes, bright days will come again,
Winter soon will go,
And the smiling sun shall melt
All this dreary snow.

Then beside the flowing stream
Merrily we'll play,
All among the buttercups,
All among the hay.

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THE MOUSE AND CANARY.

ALADY, having gone rather early into an apartment in which she had a fine canary, whose cage hung on the knob of the window-shutter, was much surprised to find the bird sitting asleep in the bottom of the cage, side by side with a live mouse, also asleep. On raising the window-blind, the mouse squeezed itself through between the wires of the cage and fled. The box of seeds, crumbs, etc., intended for the canary was found to be cleaned out, doubtless devoured by the strange companion. On the following evening, while the lady and her husband were sitting quietly by the fireside, they were still further astonished at seeing a mouse (no doubt the same one) climbing nimbly up the shutter and entering the cage between the wires. Thinking it might do harm to the bird, they tried to catch the mouse, but it made its escape as before. The cage was then suspended from a nail, so that the mouse could not gain access. Strange to say, however, on the following morning the canary was found asleep on the floor of the room (the cage door having been left open), and a piece of potato beside him. Most likely the mouse had spent the whole of the night there.



A STORY FOR BOYS.

MANY years ago two youths, whom we will call only by their Christian names,—Walter and Sidney,—were at the same boarding-school, at Mount's Bay, in Cornwall. They were each the sons of captains in the merchant service; but though they were equals in station, there was a great difference in their circumstances, for Walter inherited considerable property. Sidney's father had not been a prosperous man, and it was as much as he could do to give his boy a good education.

Among the whole school there were no two lads so closely knit in friendship as Walter and Sidney; they were within a week of the same age (thirteen) at the time our narrative begins. It is always a pleasant sight, and also a good example, when two intelligent, kind-hearted boys become friends. They show to others what a disinterested and noble thing true friendship is. Thus, in their lessons and their sports, these boys were helpful to each other. They shared together every indulgence that the kindness of friends procured them, and if any added study were imposed, Sidney, who learned easily, would, after he had swiftly mastered his own lesson, take upon himself both the office of teacher and companion, and never rest until Walter was as well up in the task as he himself was. Most certainly the punishment of one was ever the punishment of both, for, if they were sharers in each other's joys, they were not the less so in their troubles. Perhaps the vigilance which each exercised over the other was the reason why they were comparatively seldom in any very serious disgrace, and their characters stood high in the school, both with masters and pupils.

But while in the little world within the walls of the school all went equally well with the youthful friends, in the great world outside, heavy troubles came to Sidney's father. The vessel he commanded was lost near the mouth of the River Mersey, and though the crew were saved, yet it was judged that some mismanagement caused the disaster, and Sidney's father lost his certificate, and no owners would again trust him to command a vessel. The poor man took this so much to heart that he fell into a bad state of health, and declined so rapidly, that the week after Sidney received from Liverpool the first intimation of his father's illness, tidings came that he was dead.

It was in the autumnal quarter, about eight weeks before Christmas, that the sad letter was received which told Sidney he was now an orphan. The only aunt the poor boy had, his father's sister, wrote the account, and she was obliged to add the painful fact that, with the loss of his father, Sidney would lose the means of further education, and must look forward to some humble means of earning his daily bread, with as little delay as possible.



“Why, Sid,—what’s this? Dear old fellow, what’s the matter?”

In his first great grief at hearing of his father's death, all else seemed trivial. Change of circumstances, hard work, any trouble, would have been as nothing if his father had been spared to him. But after the first shock of his sorrow, Sidney admitted that he must leave school; that it would not be honest, either to his aunt or his schoolmaster, to remain. Strangely enough, the very week in which this trouble came to Sidney, his friend Walter was at home for a few days, joining in the celebration of his father's fiftieth birthday. He had wanted Sidney to have a holiday also; but the latter, being already aware of his father's reverses and illness, though having no fear of any greater grief impending over him, had declined his friend's kind invitation. So it happened that, while a happy jubilee was being celebrated in Walter's home, Sidney was suddenly made a poor orphan.

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Never, during the three years that they had been school-fellows, had the countenances of the two boys showed such a contrast of expression as when they met in the playground a few minutes after Walter had alighted at the gate, on his return from the pleasant sojourn at his home. He was flushed with health and happiness, and ran up, with a boyish shout of mirth, to greet his friend. Poor Sidney, pale and choking with the effort to restrain his tears, could only grasp the proffered hand in silence, and turn away his head, unable to look up,—almost unable to bear the pent-up grief that throbbed at his heart, and tightened his chest with a sense of suffocation.

"Why, Sid, what's this? Dear old fellow, what's the matter?" was Walter's astonished inquiry, when a boy near whispered in his ear the brief words,—

"His father's dead!"

That explained all; and Walter, twining his arm round his friend, led him away to a quiet spot, where they could weep together. The greater grief so completely absorbed Sidney on his first meeting with Walter, that it was not until the next day that any mention was made between them of how this bereavement would affect the future. Young and prosperous as Walter was, he knew well enough how sad it would be for his friend to lose the advantages of education just at the time when his studies would be needed to fit him for some pursuit in life.

Meanwhile, as Sidney's aunt had not been able to send the money for the poor lad to go so long a journey as from West Cornwall to Liverpool, to attend his father's funeral, there was no immediate hurry at the school in preparing for the youth's departure. Walter, therefore, had time to carry out a plan which his affection suggested. He wrote an urgent letter to his father, filled with praises of Sidney, and accounts of all the help which his cleverness and conduct had afforded to him (Walter), and earnestly pleading that he might have the gratification of paying for a year or more schooling for his orphan friend, adding, as a concluding argument,—

"You know, papa, that I have forty pounds that aunt Margaret put in the savings bank for me, to do as I like with; and how could I spend it better, or so well, as in helping a good clever fellow like Sidney? It would be a real treat to me—the best I could have; and you promised to increase my pocket-money: you needn't; I can screw myself down famously, if you'll only give it to help Sid, who's always been helping me, I can tell you."

Walter was too earnest, it seemed, to pick and choose his words. He meant to have corrected and rewritten his letter, but there was no time; so he sent it, faults and all. And his father, in reading it, felt the heart-throb that beat in his boy's generous words; and though a man not at all demonstrative, he was observed to be taken as if with a sudden cold in his head, to judge by the vigorous use of his pocket handkerchief; but all he said was conveyed in a single nautical phrase,—*"The youngster is on the right tack."*

The day after, the principal of the Mount's Bay School received an intimation that Sidney was to continue his studies there as long as he proved diligent; but the name of his patron was not to be told him. So, to the lad's great satisfaction, he was informed that a friend who had known his father would, for the present, help him. Walter knew the truth, but though he felt the intense joy that a good action always yields to the doer even more than to the receiver, he was careful to obey his father, and keep the secret.

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If Sidney was studious before, he redoubled his diligence now, and in the year made such great progress, that a Dutch gentleman, who visited the school, offered him a situation in his office at Rotterdam; and as Sidney knew that a residence abroad would be a great improvement to him, and also was eager to enter upon some mode of earning his own living, he wished earnestly to take the offer. At no time during their now four years of mutual school-life and friendship would Walter have heard with patience of Sidney leaving. But a parting now came.

Walter's father had become an invalid, and was ordered to a warmer climate. The family removed to Florence, in Italy, and, of course, Walter went with them; his greatest grief being that Sidney could not accompany them.

With the keenest pangs of youthful sorrow, the two friends parted, promising to write often, looking forward to meet at no distant future, for the world did not seem too wide for them, accustomed as they were, by association, to maritime people and travellers.

It was three months after Walter had left, when Sidney took leave of his kind master, and the school which had been a home to him, and went, in cold spring weather, to the Venice of the north—Rotterdam. When he left he made one request, which his tutor thought it not wrong to grant. He desired to know the name of the benefactor who had so munificently helped him; and

though he was not very much surprised when he heard the source from whence the aid had come, and was indeed glad that his gratitude was due where his friendship had so long been given, yet it naturally moved him very deeply when he found how Walter had been the means of effecting this. He also remembered vividly some acts of self-denial that added to the delicacy of his friend's silence, and made the action truly noble.

"I can never repay you, dear Walter, nor your kind father; I shall ever be your grateful debtor," he wrote; "but I will try to employ the talents you have cultivated, so as not, at all events, to disgrace your friendship."

Though railways made the continent open to travellers, and the desire to see his friend Walter never languished, yet years went by and it was not realized. Some tidings there were of reverse of fortune through a lawsuit, and of journeyings to different places. The last that Sidney heard of his friend was in a letter from Madeira, where his father was lingering on in too weak a state to bear removal.

The desultory, unsettled life that the family had led seemed to have prevented Walter from making much progress as a sculptor,—a profession he had thought of while in Italy,—and his letters were somewhat vague and unsatisfactory as to his future plans.

Then came a long interval with no tidings, and afterwards a returned letter with the one word DEAD, written under the name of Walter's father on the superscription.

So, like a pleasant morning that ends in clouds and gloom, the friendship seemed to end which had so gladdened the youth of Sidney, and even blended with all the fondest memories of his boyhood. Many were the prayers he breathed, that one who had been as a brother might not be entirely lost to him. [292]

As years went on great changes occurred in the firm that Sidney served. He had risen in the confidence of his employers. They had a business in Australia, under the care of a partner, who was also a relative. He died, and as there was a sudden increase of business facilities at Melbourne, Sidney was sent out, and a share in the concern was given him. His surname did not appear. He was announced, as many a junior partner is, by the little word "Co." appended to the principal name of the firm.

Sidney had been in the colony some three years, and was now a stalwart young man of twenty-seven, when one day, riding on horseback towards a suburb of the rapidly growing city of Melbourne, called Brighton, he noticed a gang of young men working on the road. He knew that many respectable emigrants had come over during the first excitement of the gold discoveries. Clerks used only to the pen, students, unsuccessful professional men, all in the first delirium fever-fit of the gold fever, had come in the expectation that hands unused to hard toil could use the pickaxe of the gold-digger, or wash the rubble for the precious ore. Ah, it was a wild, a fatal delusion! Many a gentleman and scholar pined to death with hardships and disappointments, while some, after weeks of sickness, rose to earn their bread by the humblest manual labor. Working on the roads, for which government pay was given, was often the resource of those who had been worsted in every other effort. Unable to help among such numbers of claimants on sympathy, Sidney had contented himself with joining in the subscriptions raised for the relief of the sick and destitute: but now, as he passed along, he felt a desire to speak to the workers in this gang. As his eye scanned them he saw only a group of thin, toil-worn, weather-beaten men, with rough beards half hiding their wasted features. Nothing was more acceptable, as a recreation to the emigrants, than books, and Sidney had commenced a lending library of books and publications; so, after a cheerful salutation, he now reined up his horse, and began to tell them of his plan, and to add, "I have opened a room, friends, two nights a week,—it is but a rough shed, but I hope to make it better soon,—as a meeting-place, where a comfortable, pleasant, and profitable evening may be spent."

"Then," said a man with a strong Irish brogue, "your honor's the great Dutch merchant."

"Yes, at the Dutch merchant's store; but I am English; my name is Sidney—"

There was a wild panting sort of cry, and a man in the group fell to the ground.

"He's in a fit." "He oughtn't to have come." "Poor fellow!" "Fetch water!" "Give him air!" These were the cries that were uttered. Meanwhile, throwing his horse's bridle over a post, Sidney dismounted, and helped to lift in his strong arms the tall but wasted form of a man from the ground. He was borne to a bank at the side of the road. Sidney put aside the matted hair that fell over his brow, and taking the pannikin, which some one had filled with water, he put it to his lips, wholly unconscious that he had ever seen that face before, until the eyes slowly opened, and the old expression, the soul-gaze, shone in them, and the hoarse and altered voice, yet with tones that woke old echoes, said, "Sidney! Dear friend! Don't—don't you know me—Walter?"

Walter! Yes it was he. The once blooming, prosperous, happy boy was this wasted, worn skeleton of a man. O, the tide of feeling that rushed through Sidney's every vein, as he recognized his early friend—his benefactor! To raise him up, put him on his own horse, lead him gently to his own home, and, once there, to send for the best medical skill, and tend him through the illness that supervened, with a tenderness feminine in its thoughtful gentleness, was Sidney's privilege. [293]

In the intervals of his illness Walter related that his father had died at Madeira; that, hoping to obtain a settlement of some claims, he had visited America; that, waiting to have better news of

himself to communicate, he put off writing from time to time; that he had gone with a company of adventurous young men to California, and there, instead of finding gold, spent all his means. Hoping to retrieve his position, he had come to Australia, and there his lot, though hard, was only that of hundreds, in the first trying time of mad excitement and wild adventure. "And I must get to work again. I'm not going to be here idle much longer," he said, at the conclusion of a conversation on the past.

"As to work, I've plenty for you to do."

"I can't continue to be a burden on you, Sid. I've no claim."

"You've every claim. As to burdens, you remind me how long I was a burden on you and your father. Once for all, I say, the help you gave me fitted me to get my living, and, by God's blessing, to make my way in life. Share with me in my business."

Walter was beginning to interrupt; but Sidney, raising his hand, deprecatingly, said,—

"You have still the advantage over me, that you gave me help when I had done nothing to deserve it of you. I only make a small repayment—a mere instalment of a great debt. Dear Walter, my good fellow, let there be no contest between us. Are we not friends? Does that not mean helpers?"

And so it was. The tie, never broken, was knit again yet more closely. Brothers in friendship, they ultimately became so in relationship; for as soon as Walter had a home, he invited a sister to share it with him, and she, in a few months after her arrival, became the wife of Sidney. And so the bond of brotherhood prospered, for many years.

PUSS.

IS it not a little more than surprising that the common domestic cat, an animal which we are better acquainted with than the dog, should be permitted to grow up with so little instruction? I think so. Almost every dog has some tricks; many dogs have a great number. Yet how rarely do you see a cat of which anything more is expected than that she shall purr when she is petted, play with your ball of yarn, or growl when you give her a nice dinner.



MUFFY RINGING THE BELL.

You teach your dog to bark at the word of command, to roll over, to stand upon his hind feet, and hold up his paws, to jump through a small hoop, to sing, and a thousand other pretty tricks; but

why do you neglect your cat? You can teach her all these things,—except to bark,—and quite as easily. Any cat, not more than a year old, can be taught, in less than fifteen days, to “roll over;” and she learns other capers quite as freely. Bear in mind that to do this you have to appeal to the creature’s love of food. That is her nature. She cares nothing for you; it is the dinner she is after. So, when you desire to teach puss to turn over, take her when she is hungry. Put your hand upon her back, and turn her over; and then give her a small bit of meat. Gradually she will require less and less force. She will understand what you want, and know what must be done in order to be served. Never disappoint her, but let the food immediately follow obedience. Other tricks may be taught in the same way. If you wish to teach her to go through a hoop, you will be obliged at first to take her up bodily, and put her through. But this will not be for a great while. She will soon understand what you desire.

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I once had a cat which would open any door in the house. She learned herself! The latch-doors came pretty easy, but the knobs bothered her a good deal. She persevered, however, and became an expert at either.

I have a cat now—a Maltese—which is a marvel of intelligence. There seems to be no end to her interesting feats. She is terribly rough at play; if you impose upon her, you must look out for her claws. She watches for my coming from the city quite regularly; and as soon as I sit down to read, she plants herself in my lap. She had some kittens a few weeks ago. One evening, soon after, as I sat in the rocking-chair, with my newspaper, puss came into the room with one of her kittens in her mouth. She placed it carefully in my lap, and immediately went for the other one.

A neighbor of mine has a cat which rings a bell when she is hungry. The bell is a small one, and hangs about a yard high, so that Miss Puss has to exert herself to reach it.

Another cat I heard of recently seems to have discovered a way to get into the warm kitchen whenever she is accidentally shut out in the cold.

At the side wall of the house there is a small aperture, of about two feet square, opening into the kitchen, and intended for the use and convenience of butchers, bakers, or grocers, who would otherwise have to go round to the back entrance; inside of this aperture is suspended a bell, which Miss Muffy must, no doubt, have often seen used by butchers, bakers, and grocers, to call the attention of cook. She has, therefore, adopted the same plan; and when tired of her prowlings about the garden, or hunting for birds in the adjoining wood, she springs up to the little door, and, with her paw or head, keeps ring, ring, ringing at the bell until the door is opened, and she gets admission.

Muffy is not only a very intelligent little cat, but I can tell you she is also a very good-natured one, too. She submits to being dressed in the doll’s clothes, and will sometimes lie quite still in the cradle for hours together, and when told to stand upon her hind legs and give a kiss, does so with a gracefulness hitherto unknown in the annals of cats.

These funny marks of intelligence in dumb creatures are quite interesting. As you grow older, you will spend many an hour in trying to discover where the dividing line between INSTINCT and REASON is. It is SOMEWHERE. If you hatch some chickens by heat, miles away from any other fowls, the hens will cackle, and the cocks will crow, all the same, although no one has taught them. Why is it?

If you could hatch a robin’s egg in the same way, far removed from other birds, the bird would, when grown, build its nest precisely as other robins do, and of the same material, although it never saw a pattern in the world. INSTINCT, or, if you prefer, NATURE, teaches all this. But it is not REASON, as you will know as you grow older.

Just exactly so it is the instinct of a dog or a cat to obey you whenever you require it. Take notice that you can never teach a dumb creature by observation. One cat will never learn to turn over by observing that another one gets its food thereby.

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But I will not try to mix you up in this discussion now. You will reach it soon enough if you live. And when you reach it, you will find a very difficult, as well as a very interesting question to solve.

ROBERT HANDY.



HOLIDAY LUCK.

MOTHER, mother!" with a prolonged *er*.

"Mary, where's mother?" and the children raced through the house, looking into every room on the way.

"Here, Willie; what do you want?"

"O, mother, we are to have a holiday. Miss Mortimer has gone home."

"Isn't it fun!" cried Ada, swinging on her mother's arm.

"That depends upon how you spend it," Mrs. Constant replied.

"Why, a holiday means to have fun, and do just what you please," asserted Willie.

"And not get any lessons," said Dolly, snipping the tape with her mother's scissors.

Mrs. Constant took them from her, and smiled on the excited three.

"I hope you will have a pleasant day, and try to be good."

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"Not too good, mother," expostulated Willie.

"No, only don't get into mischief."

"What shall we do first?" asked Ada.

"I don't know," replied Dolly. "Isn't it fun to have one whole day which is not Christmas or Thanksgiving?"

For a short time the children remained in Mrs. Constant's room, upsetting her baskets, tangling her silk, and plying her with numberless questions.

"I think you had better take a run in the garden," she finally said. "You are so restless and full of holiday, I think the fresh air would relieve you."

"What a dear mother!" they cried; and having tumultuously kissed her, they repaired to the garden.

They lived in a country town, and had a large plot of ground at the back of the house, through the farther end of which flowed a brook. Each one had his garden bed, and at one side was a summer-house, where they kept their garden tools and many of their playthings, also a pet rabbit, named Blackhawk. It was too late in the fall for flowers, only a few sturdy asters and hardy verbenas being in blossom, and they played tag, hide-and-seek, and chased each other with handfuls of dead leaves. While they were thus occupied, their mother called them, and told them that aunt Clara had sent for her to come and spend the day; she had sprained her ankle, and wanted some one to sit with her.

"Won't you be home to dinner?" they asked in despairing chorus.

"No; but Mary will take care of you, and you can enjoy yourselves; but don't do foolish things, or your holiday will be spoiled. Now, you must all be mother to each other, that I may find you well and happy when I come home."

For a while after she had gone, they amused themselves being mother to one another; but Willie made such a failure that they gave it up.

"Let us play with the dolls a little while," suggested Dolly.

The proposition met with favor, and they went to the summer-house. Ada had a large family of paper dolls, and Dolly of wooden ones. They played tea party, and dinner, and visiting; but Willie could not forget that they had a holiday, and he longed to do something unusual.

"You have too many girls, Ada," he cried. "Let us play China, and burn some up."

A funeral pyre was soon constructed with splinters of wood, Dolly ran to the kitchen for matches, and Willie turned his jacket inside out, tied Ada's sack about his neck by the sleeves, put the watering-pot on his head, and was ready to personate the priest. Ada selected four victims, who were securely bound with thirty cotton, and laid on the pile.

"Let us have Blackhawk for the idol," cried Ada.

Blackhawk was brought forth, a string of colored beads put about his neck, and he was bolstered up in the arm-chair of the Princess Widdlesbee, Dolly's largest doll. But when the match was struck and applied with a great flourish, he sprang from his throne, and fled to the farthest corner.

"The god is displeased; the sacrifice must cease," cried Ada, who began to feel remorse as her dolls crisped and turned to ashes.

"No," shouted Willie, "I am the priest; I know he means burn all;" and seizing a brand, he applied it to Dolly's village, which stood near by. For a moment it was fun to see the flames bursting from the roofs of houses, and lapping about the fences; but Dolly soon gave a cry of dismay.

"Susanna and Posy are in the church; I don't want them burned."

"To the rescue!" shouted the heathen priest, snatching the pot from his head, and running to fill it with water. [298]

But Dolly could not wait, and had already burned a hole in her apron, and singed her hair, trying to save her favorites. Blackhawk cowered in the corner, stamping his hind feet, while Ada was pulling apart the pyre on which her dolls had perished.

"O, Willie, the floor is burned. Hurry, hurry!" cried Dolly.

Willie ran, deluged the burning village, and Dolly seized Susanna and Posy, free from damage, with the exception of Posy's legs, which were so long, they lay outside the church door, and were burned off. When they cleared away the ruins, there was a round, black spot on the floor, where the village had stood, and the children's hands and clothes were wet and grimy.

"Do you think mother will care?" asked Dolly, after they had looked solemnly at one another.

"I don't believe she will as long as we did not burn any more," replied Willie, stepping back on the rest of the matches.

They were explosive, and lighted with a snap that made him jump. When he saw what he had done, he turned the watering-pot over them, and put his foot on it.

"Now they are safe," he cried. "Let us bury the pieces of the village."

"No," said Ada. "After I get a carrot for Blackhawk, let us make a raft of some of them, and put the rest on, and let them float away on the brook."

This was speedily done, and when the little craft had passed the boundaries of their garden, Willie proposed they should build a dam, and some time he would put up a mill. They were hardly fairly at work when Mary called them to dinner.

Willie took the head of the table, and was rather offended that Mary did not let him cut the meat.

"At any rate, I'll help the pie," he declared.

Mary prudently cut the pieces before she put it on, and while they were eating it, Willie very grandly said,—

"You may go now, Mary."

His mother usually dismissed her at dessert, and Willie wished to have all the privileges of the place he occupied. Mary retired with a smile, and when the first pieces of pie were disposed of, Willie offered the girls a second. It was mince pie, very nice and tempting; and though Ada knew a second piece was not generally allowed, she thought a holiday might make a difference. Dolly was busy feeding Prig,—a brisk Scotch terrier, with large, bright eyes, stiff, rough hair, and a tail about two inches long,—and refused.

After dinner they returned to their dam, Ada and Dolly bringing the material, and Willie building. But Dolly became dissatisfied, and insisted on being allowed to work in the water, while Ada deserted altogether, and played with Blackhawk, whom they had let out.

"Dolly," cried Willie, "won't you go to my room and get my hammer? and be quick, for I've got to

hold this while you are gone.”

The dam was nearly finished, and both were much excited with the success of their work; for the water had collected in quite a pool above, and would soon flow over in a fine fall. Dolly ran, leaving the doors open behind her. Back she came, and Willie was carefully adjusting the last beam, when Ada shouted,—

“Here’s Prig, and Blackhawk’s out.”

All three started, calling Prig, and running after her and Blackhawk in wild confusion. Prig misunderstood their anxiety, and supposing they were setting her on the rabbit, joined in the hunt. Poor Blackhawk tried to escape, but Prig caught him, gave one shake, and the pretty rabbit lay dead.

“O, you wicked dog!” cried Ada, while Willie and Dolly stood quite overcome by the misfortune. [299]

Prig saw in a moment she had made a mistake, and when Willie rushed at her with uplifted hammer, hid behind the summer-house. With loud grief and many tears, the children raised their dead pet, and laid it on a bench in the out-house. Its blue eyes were half open, its soft black-and-white fur wet and ruffled, and they cried and blamed Prig as they tenderly arranged it on the bench. Ada fairly howled, and Bridget and Mary ran out to see what was the matter.

“Ay,” said Bridget, “and it was Dolly herself left the door open, though I told her to shut it.”

“I didn’t know Prig was there,” sobbed Dolly.

“It’s all Prig’s fault,” said Willie, “and I’ll kill her.”

“No, no,” pleaded Dolly, with whom Prig was an especial favorite.

A consultation was held over the bench, and it was finally decided that the case should be referred to Mrs. Constant on her return, though Willie still vowed vengeance. Prig had crept back, and crouched in the doorway; but when the children saw her, they drove her away, throwing stones and calling her the worst names they could invent. She skulked outside very unhappy, until Willie shut her up in the summer-house, while the children spent the rest of the long afternoon over their dead rabbit. Dolly tied the Princess Widdlesbee’s best blue sash about his neck, Willie emptied his toolbox to lay him in, and Ada spread her best doll’s bed-quilt over him. Then they sat and cried together until Dolly started up, and said,—

“There’s mother.”

The first thing Mrs. Constant heard when she entered the house was the cry of,—

“Mother, mother!”

Not with the joyous ring it had in the morning, but with an appeal in it which told her some trouble had come which mother could best heal. All told the story separately and together, laying Blackhawk on her knees, and crying on her shoulder.

“And I’m going to hang Prig for a wicked, bad dog,” said Willie, to conclude. “She is a murderer!” and he fiercely wiped his tears.

“My dear little boy, I don’t think poor Prig was to blame at all.”

“O, mother!” cried a mournful chorus.

“No; Dolly left the door open, you all excited her, and I begin to think you were having too much of what Willie calls a holiday.”

“But it wasn’t her holiday, and she’s killed Blackhawk. O-o-o!” and they all cried again.

Mrs. Constant soothed them, and sympathized.

“Don’t cry any more. You will be sick. I would not kill Prig, for then she would be gone too, and to-morrow you would be sorry. And besides, she was only trying to do as you wanted her to, and following out her doggy instinct.”

But half convinced, the children went to the summer-house and called Prig; but she would not come. Then they drove her out, and as she stood trembling before them, reproached her, and raising their arms, shouted,—

“Go!”

Prig hesitated a moment, looked from one to another, then with her tail between her legs, her hair on end, she uttered an unearthly howl, and fled at full speed, crowded under the gate, and disappeared.

The children went to bed early, as Mrs. Constant thought the excitement was bad for them, and in the night she was called to the little girl’s room. Dolly was feverish, and ill with a sore throat, and Ada in great pain. They were sick all night, and in the morning Mrs. Constant heard about the second piece of pie and Dolly’s dam building. Her sleeves had been wet all the afternoon, and the grief, added to the pie and wet, had made them both ill. [300]

They were not able to go out that day, and Willie buried Blackhawk alone, while they watched

him sadly from the window. They took their last farewell of their pet at the kitchen door, and would have given all their yesterday's sport to have helped Willie with the funeral. He had meant that Prig should have attended as chief mourner, but she was nowhere to be found. No one had seen her since her flight, and for days they could find no trace of her. This added to their discomfort; for they all loved her, and Ada and Dolly were confined to the house for some time, and wanted her to play with them.

About a week after, on a rainy night, Bridget found her at the kitchen door, and with great difficulty persuaded her to come in. She was very thin and unhappy, and hid from the children, when they, already sorry for their harshness, were kind to her, and tried to play with her. It was a long time before she was the lively Prig she used to be, and was always a little lame in her left fore foot. Something had hurt her in those days of absence; and though after a while the children forgot their holiday and the consequences, I am afraid poor Prig never did.

SARA CONANT.

LET HIM LIVE.

WHEN one sees a harmless snake,
Lying torpid, scarce awake,
On a chilly morning,
Is it well his life to take
Without leave or warning?

Pretty brown and yellow snake,
Whom the sun doth gently wake
In the lap of nature,
Here is room for weed and brake—
Room for every creature.

Teach us, Nature, how to love,
Not the flower and bird alone,
Gracious man and woman—
Not the beautiful alone,
Whether brute or human.

Teach us, that we may not wound
Even a striped snake on the ground,
Sunshine all around him!
We will go without a sound—
Leave him as we found him.

MARY R. WHITTLESEY.

MONKEYS.

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BEFORE the advent of man, and with him civilization, monkeys were spread over a much larger portion of the earth than at present. They lived in the south of Europe, in England, and in France. Except a few of the Paviane, those of the present time are found only in warm climates, and are very sensitive to cold.

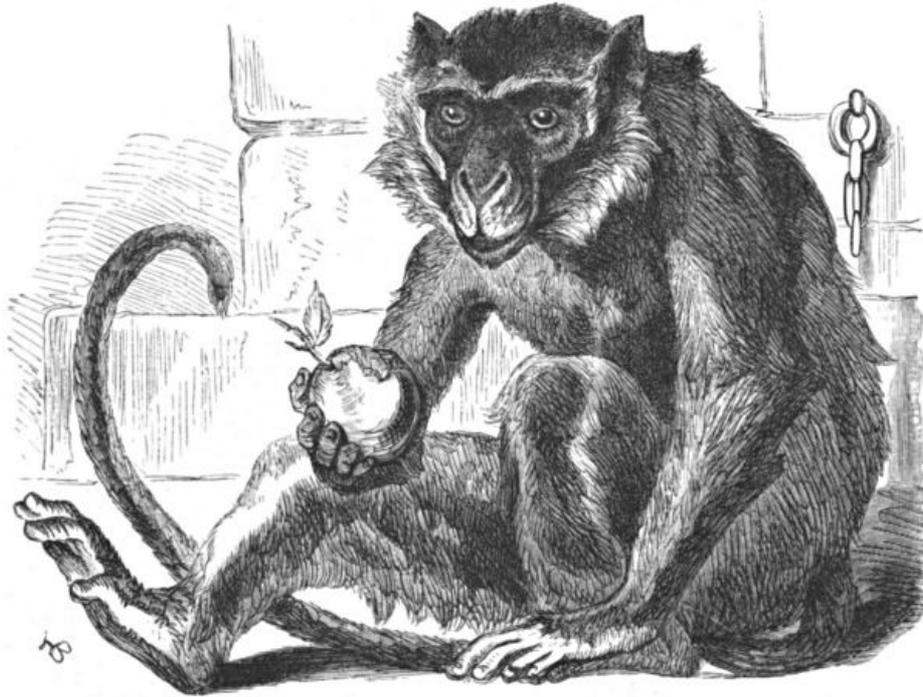
Monkeys belong to the liveliest and most active of the mammalia. As everything eatable is acceptable to them, there is always something to catch, to dig, to gather—insects, fruits, roots, nuts, succulent herbs, buds, leaves, eggs, &c.

Many stories are told about the orang-outang, or pongo, an inhabitant of the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. It is the largest of the apes, being, in some cases, seven feet high.

Vosmarin, a Hollander, kept a tamed pongo for a long time. He says, "My pongo had rather a sad and downcast look, but was gentle and affectionate, and very fond of society, preferring those persons who busied themselves about it. Once it seized a bottle of Malaga, uncorked it, brought the wine to a secure place, recorked the bottle, and set it back again. This monkey was very fond of roasted and boiled meats, and sucked eggs with great delight; however it preferred fruits to all other food. After drinking, it was in the habit of wiping its mouth with the back of the hand, as men sometimes do, and it generally used a toothpick. It made great preparations before going to sleep, shaking the hay for its bed, and making a bundle for a pillow; it covered itself with any cloth or garment it could find.

"Seeing me unlock a door, it observed very attentively, then put a piece of wood in the keyhole, and tried to turn it round. Having been scratched by a cat with which it was playing, it could never be induced to touch pussy again. It untied knots easily, and regularly practised upon the shoes of those who came near. It could lift very heavy burdens, and made as good use of its hind as of its fore legs; for example, if it could not reach a thing with the fore hands, it lay on its back, and drew the object with the hind ones. It never cried except when left alone. At first the crying resembled the howling of a dog, then it became rougher, and at last resembled the noise of a wood-saw. It died of consumption."

Jeffries tells of an orang-outang which was very neat; it frequently washed the floor with a cloth, after carrying away all remnants of food. It also washed its face and hands like a man. This animal was very affectionate towards all who spoke kindly, and often kissed its owner and waiter.



THE MONKEY.

The chimpanzee is more like man, in shape, than any other animal. It is from four to five feet high; is found in the west part of Africa. Its strength is astonishing; one chimpanzee can break off branches of trees which two men cannot bend. It is kind and amiable, and very teachable. [303] Captain Grantpret speaks of a chimpanzee, which he had on board ship, as follows: "It worked with the sailors, casting anchor, reefing sails, &c., and doing its full share of work faithfully. The ship's baker depended upon it to heat the oven, which it did with wonderful care and exactness, never letting the coals fall, and ever getting the right heat. It made a peculiar motion to show that the oven was ready, and the baker, fully confiding in its judgment, was not disappointed. The sailors were very fond of it, and treated it as a companion; but the pilot, a cruel, heartless man, abused the animal, despite its pitiful looks and gestures, as it placed its hand upon its heart, and then stretched it towards him, to tell the pain it felt. However, it did not resent his continued ill-treatment, but refused to take any nourishment; five days after it died of hunger and a broken heart. The sailors bemoaned its loss as that of a companion."

We read of another chimpanzee, which sat at table, ate with knife, fork, and spoon, drank from a wine-glass, used a napkin, put sugar into a cup, poured out tea, stirred it with a spoon, and sipped from the cup until cool enough to drink.

A sick monkey is truly a pitiable object; it sits quiet and sad, and its look, as it seems to beg for help, in its distress, is almost human. The nearer it approaches its end, the gentler and milder it becomes; losing in its animal, it seems to gain in its spiritual nature. It perceives a benefactor in its attending physician, and thankfully acknowledges his kindness. If it has been relieved by bleeding, it invariably stretches out its arm at the doctor's approach, as if desiring to be bled again.

L. B. U.

I RECALL a little verse my mother taught me one summer twilight, which, she remarked, she had taught the older children when they were little like me. It was this:—

“HAVE COMMUNION WITH FEW, BE INTIMATE WITH ONE, DEAL JUSTLY BY ALL, AND SPEAK EVIL OF NONE.”

And then she added cheerfully, “It took some time to get your brother to repeat it correctly; he would say *untimate* for intimate, and *justless* instead of justly. But he learned it correctly at last, and, I may add, has never forgotten it.” So with amusement were mother’s good instructions blended; after the pleasant story about my brother’s childhood it was impossible to forget the text.

But, alas, I have never taught it to my children; so many papers, books, and magazines made expressly for children of this generation, hasten the lighting of the evening lamp, and the twilight lessons of home become fewer. But in them all, I never read a more comprehensive paragraph, and one that would do to put in practice in every particular so thoroughly, and I hope if it gets into print, not only my children, but those of other households, will commit it to memory, imbibe its spirit, and put it in practice through life.

E. E.

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SAILING THE BOATS.

SAILING THE BOATS.

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HO! the jolly sailors,
Lounging into port!
Heave ahead, my hearties—
That’s your lively sort!
Splendid sky above us,
Merrily goes the gale.
Stand by to launch away
Rag and paper sail!

Archie owns a schooner,
Jack a man-o’-war,
Joe a clipper A 1
Named the Morning Star;

Charlie sails a match-box,
Dignified a yawl;
Breakers on the lee shore—
Look out for a squall!

Now we're bound for China—
That's across the pond;
When we go a-cruising
Many a mile beyond.
Man-o'-war is watching
A rakish-looking craft—
Kerchunk! goes a bullfrog
From his rushy raft.

There's a fleet of lilies
We go scudding round,—
Bumblebees for sailors,—
And they're fast aground.
Here's a drowning fly
In her satin dress.
All hands, about ship!
Signals of distress.

Argosies of childhood,
Laden down with joys,
Gunwale-deep with treasures!
Happy sailor boys,
May your merry ventures
All their harbors win,
And upon life's stormy sea
Every ship come in.

GEORGE COOPER.

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IT TAKES TWO TO MAKE A QUARREL.

A STORY FOR OUR YOUNGEST READERS.

HOW Harry Marshall had reckoned upon that piece of currant-pudding! The farmer's wife, whose name was Jolly (and a very fit name for her it was), had promised him a plateful for dinner, because he had taken such good care of her pet brood of chickens while she had been away from Elm Tree Farm on a visit.

Harry was a farmer's lad, ten years old, tall and stout for his age, and able to do a great many more things than some city boys of fourteen. He could ride and drive, keep the stable in order, and even handle a plough. Nor was he a dunce; for, thanks to an evening school, which some of his Sunday teachers had opened in the village, he had learned to read and write very fairly. He

had a comfortable place at farmer Jolly's; but there was plenty of work to do, and the food was plain, though he always had enough; so he did not get pudding every day. No wonder, then, that he should go to bed and dream about that particular currant-pudding of which I am writing. You must not suppose that this was made with such "currants" as are put into a *Christmas* pudding; they are only small *grapes*. No; it was a real currant-pudding, full of nice red fruit and juice, enough to make your mouth water.

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The long morning's work was at last over, and Harry, nothing loath, hastened in and took his place at the side table in the kitchen, where he usually sat. His plate of meat and potatoes was soon cleared, for the boy's appetite had been sharpened by several hours in the fields.

"And now, Harry," said Martha, the servant, "here's your pudding, and a nice piece it is; but you mustn't be long about it, for John and Peter will want you back in the field; they have been gone this half hour." So saying, Martha placed the longed-for treat before Harry, and went out to attend to some work in the farm-yard.

Just at that moment a wasp, who had grown tired of buzzing about the peaches in the garden, and trying in vain to get at them (for Peter had covered them with network), peeped in at the window with one of his many eyes, and, spying Master Harry's pudding, thought, I suppose, that he should like a share. So, without waiting to be invited, he flew in with a loud hum, and made straight for the table, just as Harry had stuck his fork into the first piece of crust.

Now, our farmer's boy, though he liked pudding, did not like wasps, which he fancied were always ready to sting; and being himself rather hasty in temper, he at once declared war against the little intruder. First he hit at it with his knife, but without success; and then with his fork, but only with this result—that the pudding, instead of going into Harry's mouth, flew under the grate among the ashes, while the wasp seemed to be humming a song of defiance.

Harry grew red in the face, and vowed vengeance against "the nasty thing;" but "the nasty thing" would not come and be killed. Seizing a large wooden pudding spoon, which lay close at hand, Harry jumped on one of the wooden chairs and aimed a desperate blow at the poor insect. But Yellow-band was too sharp for him, and Harry, losing his balance, fell down with a thump on the sanded floor, while his weapon, spinning across the kitchen, came in contact with one of Mrs. Jolly's basins, and brought it down with a crash. In rushed Martha in a fright, and, worse still, farmer Jolly's round, good-natured face appeared close behind.

"Bless the boy," cried Martha, "what have you been up to now?"

"Why—why," said Harry, rubbing his shoulder and looking ruefully at the broken china, "it was all that horrid wasp."

"And why couldn't you leave the wasp alone?" retorted Martha, angrily, as she picked up some of the pieces.

"Ay, boy," said farmer Jolly, "why couldn't you leave the wasp alone, eh? Why couldn't you leave it alone?" he repeated, catching Harry by the arm with a grip that made him wince.

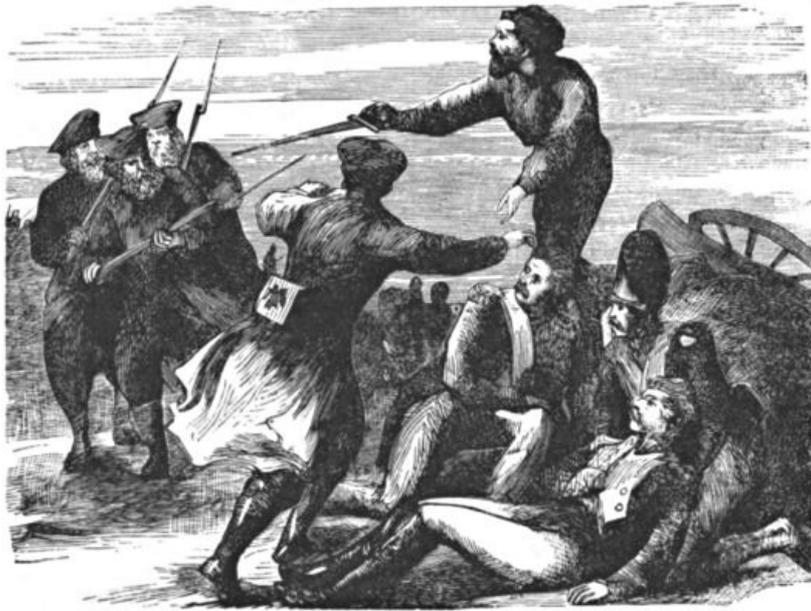
"Please, sir—please, sir," stammered the boy, "I thought the nasty—the wasp I mean—was going to sting me."

"Stuff and nonsense," replied the farmer; "if you don't interfere with the wasps, the wasps won't interfere with you. How often have I told you that *it takes two to make a quarrel*? Now you have wasted your time, spoiled your dinner, and done mischief; so you had better be off to your work, and Martha will put the pudding away till to-morrow."

Harry hastened out, looking very foolish, and feeling very much disappointed. "I wish I'd left the wasp alone," he said to himself; "then I shouldn't have lost the pudding. The farmer says, 'It takes two to make a quarrel,' and I suppose it does. At that rate we needn't quarrel at all, unless we like. I'll think about that, so I will." And so he did; and when he felt inclined to quarrel, not only with wasps, but with boys, he checked himself by calling to mind farmer Jolly's words.

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And I am of opinion that, if the boys and girls who read this story would remember it too, they would escape many unpleasant and disagreeable things, and be more likely to have a really happy year. For a far wiser Teacher than farmer Jolly once said, "Blessed (or happy) are the peacemakers."



A GOOD WORD NOT LOST.

FIELD-MARSHAL ALEXANDER SUVAROFF, the commander-in-chief of the Russian army during the reigns of Catharine II. and Paul I., was especially fond of mixing with the common soldiers, and sharing in their sports and conversations, being always highly delighted when his men failed to discover him; and this happened pretty often, for, thanks to his small stature and ugly face, as well as the extreme plainness of his dress, the great marshal looked as little like a general as any man could do. In this way he got to understand thoroughly the character of his soldiers, and had a greater power over them than any Russian general before or after him. His marvellous power of enduring fatigue, his insensibility to heat, cold, or hunger, and his untiring energy on the field of battle (in all which points he surpassed the hardest of his grenadiers), made him the idol of the rough soldiers whom he commanded; and a word of reproof from Father Alexander Vasilievitch, as his men affectionately called him, was more dreaded than the fire of a battery.

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Before one of his Italian campaigns, Suvaroff gathered together a number of his best men, and made them one of the short pithy speeches for which he was famous, and some of which are remembered among the peasantry to this day:—

“My children, we are going to fight the French. Remember, whatever you meet, *you must go forward*. If the enemy resist, kill them; but if they yield, spare them; and always remember that a Russian soldier is not a robber, but a Christian. Now, go and tell your comrades what I have said!”

A few days later a great battle took place, in which the day went against the French, who began to retreat about sunset; and a soldier named Ivan Mitrophanoff, who had distinguished himself by his bravery throughout the whole day, captured, with the help of a comrade who was with him, a French officer and two of his men. Mitrophanoff bound up the officer’s wounded arm, and seeing that the prisoners appeared faint from want of food, shared with them the coarse rye loaf which was to have served him for supper. He had scarcely done so, when up came three or four Russian grenadiers, hot with fighting, and raising furious cries.

“What,” cried they, “three of these French dogs living yet!” and they ran upon the prisoners with levelled bayonets.

“Hold, my lads!” cried Mitrophanoff. “I’ve given them their lives, and no one must touch them now!”

But the soldiers would not listen to him, and were rushing forward, when a stern voice from behind shouted, “Halt!” and a little, pug-nosed, dirty-faced man, dressed only in a coarse linen shirt and a pair of tattered gray trousers, stepped into the circle. But, ragged and dirty as he was, the fierce soldiers could not have looked more frightened had he been a giant in full armor.

“The general!” muttered they, slinking off.

“Ay, the general!” roared Suvaroff, “who will have some of you shot presently, if you can’t learn to obey orders better! And you,” he added, turning to Mitrophanoff, “who taught you to be so good?”

“Your highness’ own self taught me,” answered the grenadier. “I haven’t forgotten what you told us last week—that a Russian soldier is not a robber, but a Christian!”

"Right!" exclaimed Suvaroff, with a brightening face. "A good word is never lost, you see. Give me your hand, my lad; you shall be a sergeant to-morrow, and a right good one you'll make!"

And the next day he made good his word.



PONTO.

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OUR dog Ponto is a knowing old fellow. It is as good as a show to watch him sometimes. He has one quality that most of us might seek after with advantage—that is, a will to overcome difficulties that scarcely anything can hinder. If Ponto takes it into his head to do anything, he is pretty sure to succeed. What helps his dogship is the faculty of imitation. He is like a monkey in this, only a great deal more sensible than any monkey I ever heard tell of. You never catch him venturing upon unknown danger, or making himself ridiculous, because his human friends and companions choose to step aside from the ways of safety and respectability.

One day, a few years ago, Ponto was missing. He had been about as usual during the morning, but all at once disappeared. A neighbor told us that he had seen him fighting with the butcher's dog about noon, and that he was getting the worst of it. I went over to the butcher's during the afternoon, and the butcher's boy confirmed the neighbor's story. Ponto had come over there for a fight, as the boy said, and "got more than he bargained for."

"He'll not try it again very soon, I'm thinking," added the boy, with a malicious pleasure.

"Do you know where he is now?" I asked.

"Home, I suppose. He went off that way, limping," answered the boy.

"Was he much hurt?"

"Considerable, I guess."

I went back home, but no one had seen Ponto. I was beginning to feel anxious about the dog, when he was found in one of the third-story rooms, snugly covered up in bed, with his head on the pillow. On turning down the clothes a sight met our eyes. The sheets were all stained with blood, and the poor dog, hurt and exhausted, looked as helpless and pitiful as any human being.

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PONTO.

I will not tell you of all the wounds he had received. There were a great many of them, and some quite severe. "A good lesson for him," we all said. And it proved so, for he was a little more careful after that how he got into a fight.

A few months before, I had been thrown from a wagon and badly hurt—so much so that I was

confined to bed for a week. Ponto was with me at the time of the accident, and on my arrival at home followed me into the house and up to the chamber where I was taken. He watched every movement as I was laid in bed, and then sat down with his eyes on my pale face, regarding me with such looks of pity and interest that I was touched and surprised.

When Ponto's turn came, he remembered the comfortable way in which I had been cared for, and profited by what he had seen. But his mistress, while she pitied the poor animal, did not fancy having her spare bedroom turned into a dog-hospital; and so we removed him to an out-house and made him as comfortable there as possible.

One cold winter evening Ponto was absent from his accustomed place in the hall, where he slept on a mat. The wind was high and there was a confusion of sounds outside.

"Hark!" said one.

We all listened.

"I thought I heard a knock at the hall door."

"Only the wind," was replied.

"Yes; there it is again."

We all heard two distinct knocks, given quickly one after the other.

I arose, and going into the hall went to the front door and opened it. As I did so Ponto bounded in past me, gave two or three short, glad barks, and then paid his boisterous respects to the family in the sitting-room. I waited a moment, and then stepped out to see who had lifted the knocker, but found no one. Ponto had done it himself, as we had proof enough afterward; for ever since that time he has used the knocker as regularly as any two-legged member of the family. [313]

I could tell you stories for a whole evening about Ponto, but these two must answer for the present.

BRUIN AT A MAPLE-SUGAR PARTY.

ONE evening near the first of April, three years ago this spring, I was making my way the best I could down from the west branch of the Penobscot River towards the plantation of Nikertou. (Up in Maine they call an unincorporated town a plantation. Down south the word has a different meaning.) How and why I came to be in that wild section, at the hour of twilight, may need a word in explanation.

A month previously I had been sent up to the "Head of Chesuncook" from Bangor, by the lumbering firm of which my uncle was a member, to pay off one of their "gangs," which made the "head" of that lake a sort of depot and place of rendezvous.

Both going up and coming back as far as the foot of Lake Pemadumcook, I had had with me, as guide and armed protector, an old hunter named Hughy Clives. But on getting down to the foot of this lake, and within six or eight miles of Nikertou, old Hughy had been seized with a sudden desire to leave me and to go to Millinocket Lake in quest of otters; and so giving me my "course" for Nikertou, he had bidden me "good luck," and again started northward.

It was a warm, spring-like afternoon, though the snow in that region still lay to the depth of three or four feet; but on my snow-shoes I didn't mind the depth; the main thing was to keep out of the brush and the dense hemlock and cedar thickets.

It was about two o'clock when I left the river; and I had expected to get down to the little "settlement" by sunset. But the sun went below the distant spruce-clad ridges, and dusk fell, with as yet no signs of a "clearing." Had I lost my way? My little pocket-compass said I was all right—if Hughy had given me a correct course; and I had all confidence in the old man too. Still, as the twilight deepened around me, with the unbroken forest stretching drearily ahead, I began to feel rather uneasy; especially as (since parting with Hughy and his rifle) I had no weapon save a jack-knife and a little pocket-pistol I had brought along with me from Bangor—not very effective arms in case a catamount should take it into his head to drop down upon me from a tree-top, or a big black bear to step out from behind one of those low hemlocks, or even a cross old "lucivee" to rush out from some of those thick cedar clumps. For thoughts of these things had begun to pop into my mind. I was but seventeen then, and hadn't quite outgrown my fear of the dark. And thus plodding timorously onward, thinking on many things injurious to a boy's courage, I had begun to think I should have to make a night of it there, somewhere, when the red gleam of a fire, from the crest of the ridge before me, suddenly burst out on the darkness, banishing all my fears. For a fire, whether in a hunter's camp or a farm-house window, is good evidence of man's presence, with food and shelter—the two great wants of the belated. [314]



Hurrying on, I made my way up the slope. The fire seemed to be in the open air, among trees—a woodman's camp probably; and, knowing that these men are sometimes a little *ticklish* about having strangers come too suddenly into their night camps, I halted, while yet at some distance, for a good look ahead.

There seemed to be several large kettles, slung with chains from a "lug-pole" supported by strong crotched stakes at each end—a circumstance which struck me as a little odd at a hunting-fire. No one was in sight, though a sort of half shelter of hemlock might contain the campers. Whatever they were, it would be well to hail them. So, calling in my breath, I gave a loud "hullo."

Two dusky figures rose from the shelter, and looked out towards me into the darkness.

"Hullo!" I repeated; and in response heard a clear boyish voice exclaiming,—

"Who's there?"

"Belated tramper."

"Well, walk up, Mr. Tramper, where we can see what you are."

I moved up to be seen, and on my part saw a couple of youngsters, of about my own age, who were tending what turned out to be a sugar-camp. [315]

"Where from?" demanded the taller of the two.

"Head of Chesuncook. Going to Bangor. Can I stay here to-night?"

"Of course you can. Had any supper?"

"Not a mouthful."

"Something left—wasn't there, Zeke?" said he, turning to his comrade, who was now pouring cold sap into the "heater."

"Enough for one, I guess," said Zeke; and, taking a bucket and a wooden bowl from under the hemlock, he produced a slab of johnny-cake from the former, and, pouring out something like a quart of maple sirup into the latter, bade me "go ahead."

I did so without further invitation, and never made a better supper, the programme being to dip the bread into the sirup, mouthful by mouthful.

The boys were now preparing their night's wood.

There had been, they said, "an excellent run of sap" during the last few days. The kettles were kept boiling day and night, steadily. It was truly a wild scene. Clouds of steam gushed up from the surging kettles; and the fires gleamed brighter as the darkness deepened, while all about us seemed a wall of blackness. But my long tramp had thoroughly tired me down, and my recollections of the remainder of the evening are a little drowsy, though I learned in the course of it that the names of the two youthful sugar-makers, upon whose camp I had stumbled, were Zeke Murch and Sam Bubar; and I also helped to take off a large kettle of hot sirup, which we set in a snow-drift, two or three rods from the fire, to cool. This done, I was soon asleep, rolled up in an old coverlet, and knew very little till, hearing voices, I opened my eyes to the fact that the sun was staring me in the face from over the eastward ridge, as if surprised at my sloth.

Hastily unrolling myself, I saw Sam and Zeke out at the kettle we had set in the snow, pointing and excitedly discussing something.

"Old scamp!" exclaimed Zeke. "What work he's made here!"

"All this sugar gone—spoiled!" cried Sam.

"What is it?" said I, going out to them. "What's the matter?"

"Why," said Sam, turning and laughing in spite of his vexation, "something has *guzzled* up 'most the whole of this 'honey' we set out here last night. Only see there!"

The kettle, which must have held several pailfuls, was nearly empty; and what was left hadn't a very inviting look certainly.

"What in the world ate all that?" cried I.

"Well—a bear, we expect," said Zeke. "There's been one hanging round here for several nights. We heard him *hoot out*, down in the swamp, ever so many times, after you had gone to sleep last night. Didn't think he'd come up so near the fire, though. But we both got to sleep a little while after midnight. I suppose he must have *lushed* up the sirup then."

"Tremendous fellow, too," said Sam. "Look at those tracks!"

Tracks indeed! There in the snow about the kettle were his broad, deep footmarks, long as a man's boot, and much wider, pressed down, too, into the snow, as only great weight could have pressed.

"Gracious!" exclaimed I, "you wouldn't have caught me going to sleep here if I had known there was such a monster as that round!"

"Rather lucky, I think," said Zeke, "that he didn't take it into his head to *top off* his sirup with some of us." [316]

"And I'm mad, too," continued Zeke. "We were depending on this kittle of sirup for our party to-night."

"Your party?"

"Yes; we've invited a lot of the boys—and girls, too—to come up here this evening, to make 'sheep-skins.' You'll stay—won't you? We were going to ask you."

"Don't know," said I, still thinking of the bear.

"O, I don't think he'll meddle with us," said Sam, guessing at my hesitation. "I'm going down to get some *fixins*, and shall bring up a gun. If he calls again, he may get a dose of buckshot."

No one is apt to be a great coward after the sun is up. Thus reassured, I concluded to stop to the party, for which the boys were intending to make a great preparation.

"Let's do the thing up in style now," said Sam.

We went at it. First we cut low, shrubby evergreens, hemlocks mostly, and with these made a sort of enclosure, some four rods in diameter, around the kettles, by planting them in the snow. Then clipping off an immense quantity of smaller boughs, we strewed the snow inside the enclosure with these. We thus had a sort of green room (without any roof), in the centre of which steamed the boiling kettles; and at the entrance, or doorway, we made a grand arch of cedar. For seats we rolled in "four-foot" cuts from the trunk of a large poplar they had lately felled, first splitting off a slab from the side of each to form a seat, which we cushioned with cedar.

Meanwhile another kettle of sirup was boiling down to supply the place of that the bear had drank; and filling some fifteen or twenty sap-buckets with clean snow, crowded down hard to make the "sheep-skins" on, we were ready for our company.

It was nearly night before all this had been completed. Sam had been down to the "settlement" and brought up a quantity of bread to go with our honey; and I was glad to see that he hadn't forgotten the gun; for, as night began to close in again, I couldn't help remembering the great tracks out there in the snow-drift. As it grew dark and the fire began to shine on the green boughs, our scenery looked even better than by daylight; and for beacons to our incoming guests, we fixed torches of pitch-wood upon stakes thrust into the snow around our camp, and at several points out in the woods, like lamp-posts in a town.

"Quite a show," said Sam, surveying the preparation. "How changed and odd it makes it look all about!"

Ere long voices began to be heard coming up through the woods,—merry shouts and hails,—to which the boys responded, bidding them hurry, and promising a big "sheep-skin" to the one who first got up there.

A chorus of merry cries and laughter followed this announcement; and in a few moments a racing, panting crowd of a dozen boys and girls came up in sight, and poured under the arch—sturdy lads, and lasses in red frocks and checked aprons. And here be it said that a girl—a certain rosy Nell Ridley—won the sheep-skin by being the first under the archway. But the others were not far behind, and in another moment our green arena was swarming with the young folks.

Though a stranger, I soon found myself acquainted and on the best of terms with everybody.

Sheep-skins were now being run by the dozen, the process being to pour hot sirup upon the cold, hard-pressed snow in the buckets, where it instantly cooled, becoming tough and of the color of sheep-skin. And if one has a "sweet tooth," nothing among all the "sugars" can compare with a maple sheep-skin.

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We all had *sweet teeth* there, and were in the midst of a furious romp around the kettles in chase of Nell, whom some one had accused of appropriating "the great one," when somebody suddenly cried,—

"Hark!"

There was an instant hush; when clear on the evening air there came a wild cry—a long, quavering "Hoo-oo-oo."

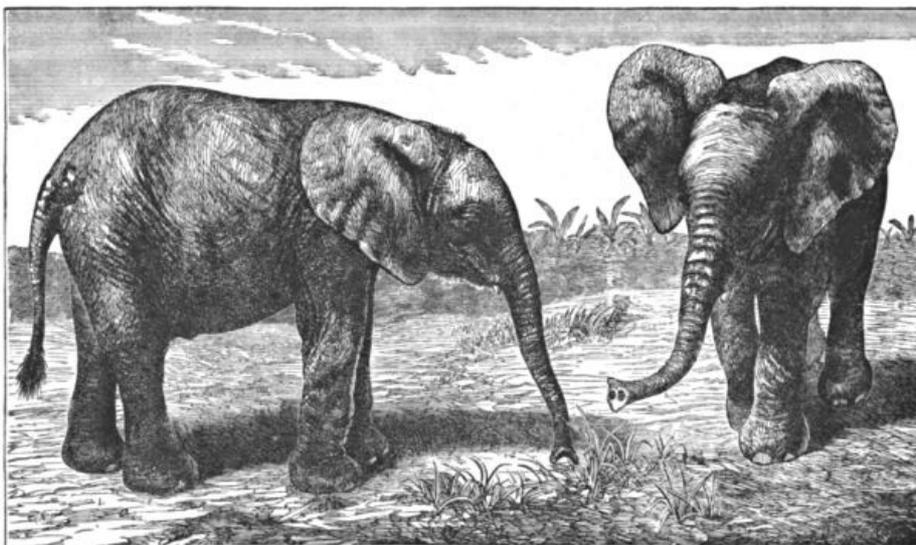
"Bear! A bear!" exclaimed several of the boys, to whom bruin's nightly cries were but familiar sounds. But save that a few of the girls looked a little startled, no one seemed to be much alarmed. I saw Zeke looking to the priming of the old gun, though; and for a while we were pretty whist, listening; but the cry, which had seemed at a considerable distance, was not repeated. Indeed, in the merriment which soon succeeded, the most of us had entirely forgotten it, I think. At least we were all in the midst of another scrimmage over the "last biscuit," when a loud snort, like that of a startled horse, a sort of "woof! woof!" accompanied by a great rustling in our evergreen hedge, startled us; and turning, we saw—I shall never forget the sight—an enormous black creature coming through our *fence*, with all the independence of a sole proprietor! Of course, as Zeke afterwards expressed it, "if *he* was *coming in*, we wanted to *go out*."

The girls were not of the fainting sort; but they did scream some, and we all sprang away like cats through the opposite side of the hedge. The gun had been left standing near the place where the bear had broken in, and was not to be got at, of course. But, catching out my pistol, as we scrambled through the hemlock, I discharged it at the old fellow, hitting him, I guess; for he growled and came straight after me. 'Twas no time to be loitering. Down the slope we all ran together, slumping and sprawling full length in the soft snow! Up and on again, knocking out spiles and kicking over sap-buckets, bumping and grazing ourselves against the rough bark of the maples; for it was pitch dark in the woods. But on we went for dear life, expecting every moment to feel the bear's teeth or claws from behind. At first I had a sort of impression that we boys should have to wait and put ourselves between the girls and the bear; but I soon found I had all I could do to keep up with them. Such girls to run I never saw before! And we never stopped till, at a distance of a mile below, the forest opened out into a cleared field.

There we began to discover that the bear was not after us, and gradually came to a halt. After getting breath, however, we kept on—at a little slower pace, though—down to the "corners," where, after seeing the girls to their respective dwellings, guns were procured, and, rallying out Mr. Bubar and Mr. Murch, senior, with several other men, we all started back to hunt up the bear. Going quietly up through the woods, we cautiously approached to a point where the gap we had made in rushing out of our enclosure enabled us to see what was going on inside; and there by the firelight we beheld the bear sitting cosily before the coals, and gazing wistfully into the boiling kettles. He had probably found them too hot for his use.

Raising their guns, the men all fired together—a murderous volley of bullets and buckshot. Rearing upon his haunches with a sullen growl, old bruin glared around a moment, then fell over backwards, and, with a few dying kicks and groans, was dead. And this was the end of Bruin and the maple-sugar party.

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THE AFRICAN ELEPHANT.

THERE is not the least difficulty in distinguishing the Asiatic from the African elephant. The ears of the former are comparatively small, only reaching a little below the eyes, while the ears of the African species are of enormous dimensions, actually crossing on the back of the neck, drooping far below the chin, and extending beyond the shoulder-blade. Generally, the ears are laid so flatly against the neck, that they seem almost to form part of the skin of the head and shoulders; but when the creature is suddenly roused, the ears are thrown forward, and stand out so boldly, that they look more like wings than ears. Towards the lower part the ears form themselves into slight folds, which are not without some degree of elegance.

The end of the trunk also differs from that of the Asiatic species. In that animal a kind of finger projects from the upper part of the extremity; but in the African species the end of the trunk is split so far, that the two lobes act as opposable fingers, and serve to grasp any object which the animal desires to hold. This structure can easily be seen by offering the animal a piece of biscuit. The forehead, too, affords another means of distinction, being convex in the African, and flat or slightly concave in the Asiatic.

Another very decided difference lies in the teeth. These enormous engines of mastication are made up of a number of flat plates laid side by side, and composed of enamel and bone. In the Asiatic species these plates are nearly oval in form, and may be imitated by taking a piece of cardboard, rolling it into a tube, and then pressing it until it is nearly flat. But in the African species these plates are of a diamond shape, and may be rudely imitated by taking the same cardboard tube, and squeezing it nearly flat at each end, leaving the centre to project. In consequence of these distinctions, several systematic zoölogists have thought that the African elephant ought to be placed in a separate genus, and have therefore called it *Loxodonta Africana*, the former of these words signifying "oblique-toothed." I think, however, that there are no real grounds for such a change, and that the genus *Elephas* is amply sufficient for both species.

The enormous ears of the African elephant are not without their use to the hunter, who finds in them an invaluable aid in repairing damages to his wagons and guns. Even if a gun-stock be smashed,—an accident which is of no very unfrequent occurrence in South African hunting,—a large piece of elephant's ear, put on while fresh and wet, and allowed to dry in the sun, sets matters right again, and binds the fragments together as if they were enclosed in iron. Sometimes the ear seems to be a protection to the animal; for it is so tough and strong, despite its pliability, that the hunter will occasionally find several bullets lodged in the ear, which have not been able to penetrate through a substance at once tough and flexible.

This species is of a thirsty nature, so that wherever elephant paths are seen, the hunter knows that he is not very far from water of some kind. And as elephants have a fashion of travelling in Indian file, it is easy enough to trace their footsteps, and so to find the water. The animals go to drink in the evening, as do many other wild beasts, and the quantity which they consume is enormous. They go close to the water's edge, insert the end of the trunk into the liquid, draw it up until the two nostril-tubes are full, turn the end of the trunk into the mouth, and then discharge the contents into the stomach. When satiated, they amuse themselves for a while by blowing water all over their bodies, and then retrace their steps to the forest glades whence they came. [320]

The enormous quantity of water which they carry home within them has a rather curious effect. At tolerably regular intervals a loud, rumbling sound is heard, much resembling the "glug-glug" produced by pouring wine out of a bottle, and lasting a few seconds. Were it not for this phenomenon, the hunters would meet with far less success than at present is the case. When hiding from a foe, the elephant can remain motionless, so that not a cracking stick nor a rustling leaf betrays its presence. But it cannot prevent this periodical rumbling; and accordingly, when a hunter is in the bush after elephants, he sits down every few minutes, and waits, in order to catch the sound which tells him that elephants are near. Even in the semi-domesticated specimens at the London Zoölogical Gardens, this sound is easily to be heard.

The African elephant is more hunted than the Asiatic species, and affords better sport and greater profit to the hunter. It seems to be a fiercer, more active, and probably a more cunning animal, and, owing to the character of the country through which it ranges, it seems to be of a more nomad disposition. The chase of the African elephant appears to exercise a kind of fascination over its votaries, like the chase of the chamois among the Swiss mountaineers; and when a hunter has fairly settled down to the business, he cannot tear himself away from it without exercising great self-denial. Perhaps few sports are encompassed with greater difficulties and dangers, or involve greater hardships; and yet the wild, free, roving life has such charms, that even a highly-educated European can scarcely make up his mind to return to civilization.

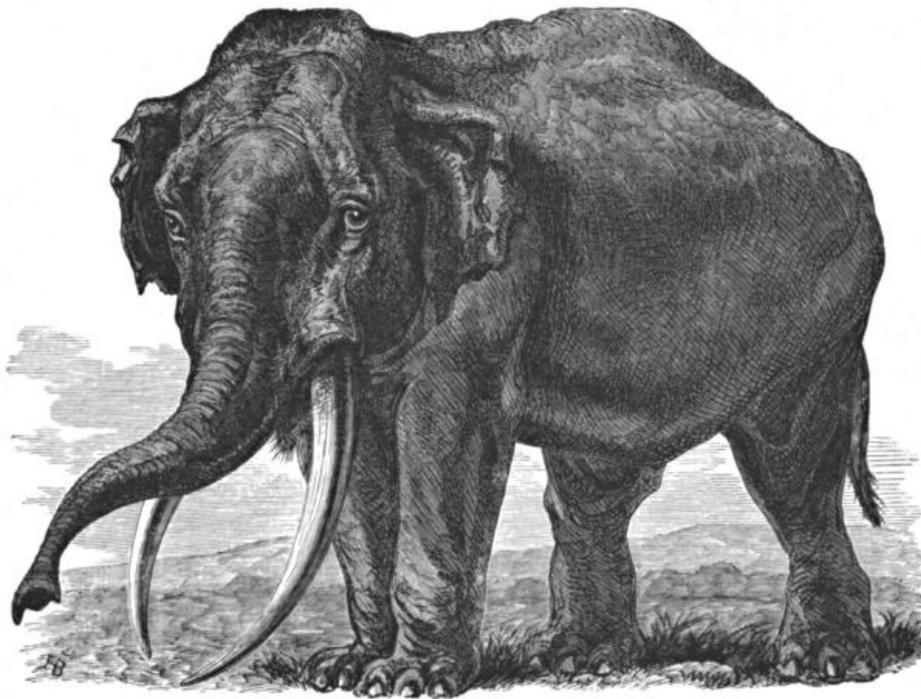
In the first place, elephant hunting is not, as are many sports, an expensive amusement. On the contrary, a hunter who possesses a sufficiency of skill, courage, and endurance will be able not only to cover his expenses, but to pay himself handsomely for his trouble. There is certainly a very large expenditure at the outset; for a hunter will need two wagons, with a whole drove of oxen, several good and seasoned horses, a small arsenal of guns, with ammunition to match, provisions for a lengthened period, and plenty of beads and other articles which can be bartered

for ivory. Moreover, a number of native servants must be kept, and the amount of meat which they consume daily is almost appalling.

Then there are always great losses to be counted upon. The cattle get among the dread Tsetse flies, and die off in a few hours; the horses catch the "paardsikte" (a kind of murrain), or tumble into pitfalls; wagons break down, servants run away with guns, native chiefs detain the wagons for weeks, together with a host of minor drawbacks. Still, if a man is worthy of the name of hunter, and boldly faces these difficulties, he will pay himself well, provided that his health holds out—there are so many valuable articles to be brought from Southern Africa, such as the horns and furs of animals, the skins of birds, ostrich feathers, and ivory.

The teeth of the elephant, too, are valuable, and are made into various articles of use and ornament. A set of knife-handles made of elephant's tooth is sometimes to be seen, and I have now before me an excellent specimen of a knife-handle, which shows the alternate rows of enamel and bone in a very striking manner, and is certainly a much handsomer article than a handle made of simple ivory.

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THE ELEPHANT.

The elephant is, indeed, one of the most eccentric of animals. There is no possibility of calculating upon it, and nothing but experience can serve a hunter when measuring his own intellect against the elephant's cunning. The scent or sight of a human being at the distance of a mile will send a herd of powerful male elephants on their travels, the huge creatures preferring to travel for many miles rather than meet a man. Yet, when assailed, there is scarcely any animal which is more to be dreaded. It forgets fear, and, filled with blind rage, it will chase an armed man in spite of his rifle, and will continue to charge him until it dies. [322]

It will engage in deadly battle with its own species, or with the mail-clad rhinoceros, and yet will run away at the barking of a little dog. There was a curious instance some years ago, when an elephant that was travelling in America went mad, escaped from its keeper during the night, and traversed the country for miles, doing great damage. It broke carts to pieces, killed the horses, and was trying to force its way into a barn where another horse had taken refuge, when it was checked by a bull-dog, which flew at the huge animal, bit its legs, and worried it so thoroughly, that the elephant, mad as it was, fairly ran away. Indeed, nothing seems to cast this gigantic animal into such a state of perplexity as the noisy attacks of a little, cross-tempered, insolent, yapping terrier. The elephant cannot understand it, and gets into such a state of nervous irritation, that it never thinks of running away or annihilating its diminutive foe, but remains near the same spot, making short and ineffectual charges, until the hunter comes up and deliberately chooses his own position for attack.

The flesh of the elephant is anything but palatable, and when cut into strips and dried in the sun, has been aptly compared to leather straps. A well-known hunter said that the character of elephant's flesh might easily be imagined by taking the toughest beefsteak ever cooked, multiplying the toughness by four, and subtracting all the gravy. The natives, however, are possessed of marvellously strong jaws and sharp teeth, and to them meat is meat, whether tough or tender. There are, however, several parts of the elephant which are always good; and these are the heart, the feet, and the trunk. The heart and trunk are simply roasted, with the addition of some of the fat from the interior of the body; but the feet require a more elaborate mode of cookery.

While some of the men are cutting off the feet, others are employed in digging a circular hole in the ground some ten feet deep and three wide, the earth being heaped round the edge. An enormous heap of dry wood and leaves is then piled over the hole, set on fire, and allowed to burn itself out. As soon as the last sticks have fallen into the hole, the men begin to rake out the glowing embers with long poles. This is a laborious and difficult task, the heat being so great, that each man can only work for a few consecutive seconds, and then gives way to a cooler comrade. However, there are plenty of laborers, and the hole is soon cleared. The elephant's foot is then rolled into the hole, and covered over with the earth that was heaped round the edge. Another pile of wood is then raised, and when it has completely burned out, the foot is supposed to be properly baked. Thus prepared, the foot is thought to be almost the greatest luxury which South Africa can afford, the whole interior being dissolved into a soft, gelatinous substance of a most delicate flavor. There is never any lack of fuel; for the elephants break down so many branches for food, and in their passage through the bush, that abundance of dry boughs can always be picked up within a limited area.

THE SONG OF THE BIRD.

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I.

IN those unhappy days when revolution prevailed in France, there were a number of noble families who were reduced to extreme poverty. One of these was the family of Duke Erlan, who was a noble and highly-respected man, while his wife was kind and charitable to such an extent that all the poor people in the surrounding country loved her with great affection.

They had two children—Carl and Lillie. When a certain revolutionary outbreak had occurred, the duke removed from the city where he lived to his chateau, in a retired part of the country, where he was surrounded by rocks, vineyards, and fields of grain, far removed from the bustle and turmoil of city life.

The good man regarded himself as very fortunate in being permitted to live here in quiet with his family, and become the teacher of his children.

Notwithstanding the great danger prevailing in the country, this was indeed a happy family.

The duke was a good musician, and he made it an object to teach his children to play on the piano; and though they were quite young, both of them knew a number of very beautiful tunes.

On one stormy evening, near the end of winter, all four of them sat together near their splendid piano. The duke had composed a little song for his two children. It was such a pleasant, lively melody, that they had learned it very easily, and each of them could play it. Their mother, however, did not know it, and the children now thought it a great thing for them to have the privilege of teaching it to her.

“Carl,” said the duke, “you play, and we will sing.”

And they sang this song:—

“Take courage, bird;
Our Father says,
In winter's storms
And summer's rays
You have no barns,
You sow no wheat,
But God will give you bread to eat.”

While they were singing, they heard some one knock at the door. They heard the bell ring, and when the door was opened, five soldiers, clad in uniform, demanded Duke Erlan to deliver himself up. They walked straight up to him, and told him that he must go immediately to prison. His wife cast herself at their feet, and begged them to let him live in peace.

“We cannot help it,” said they. “We have our orders, and must obey them.”

Not five minutes elapsed before that good man was taken from the midst of his happy family, and hurried to prison. The duchess and her son and daughter were overwhelmed with sorrow. They could not sleep that night, and the next morning, as they looked out of the window and saw how the storm had prevailed in the vineyards and on the fields, they felt that the storm in their own hearts had been far more destructive.

The unhappy duchess now determined to use every means to rescue her beloved husband. She went to the judges and assured them of her husband's innocence; but they did not seem to have any more feeling than so many marble statues. She received, in reply to her entreaties, this answer:—

“In a few days your husband will be beheaded.”

She returned to the castle after three days, and found that it was occupied by soldiers. The furniture had all been taken away, and the treasures were missing. She was not permitted even to enter the castle, and was informed that her children, for whom she was weeping in great sorrow, were gone—nobody could tell where.

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It was late at night, and she did not know where she would sleep. Going out into the castle-yard, she was met by Richard, an old and faithful servant, who said,—

“Good mistress, you are in danger every moment of being arrested. There is no safety for you unless you flee as quickly as possible. I cannot conceal you, for that would be dangerous for all. I cannot save your husband, and if you stay here it will be certain death. Your children are at my house. Come with me. My brother, the old fisherman, who keeps the ferry at the Rhine, is already informed of the matter. I will go with you this very night, and he will take you and your children safely over the river. Run—let us run for life.”

The duchess came to the house of good Richard, where she found her children. But Lillie was quite sick, and lay upon Richard’s cot, suffering from a high fever. She did not even know her mother. How could that good lady leave her sick child? She did not wish to do it, but the peasant told her that she could be of no assistance, and that he would see that she was well provided for.

“Run,” said he, “for your life is in danger.”

It was a sad moment when Lillie’s mother was compelled to leave her child lying upon that sick bed; but the good woman, before giving her a parting kiss, knelt at her side, and said,—

“O Lord, I commit this dear child to thee for safe keeping. I believe thou wilt one day restore her to me.”

The duchess was silent for a few moments; then, calmly arising, she kissed her child, took Carl by the hand, and hastened through the door towards the distant river.

She finally came to the old ferryman’s house, and he gave them a great deal of welcome, having provided some warm soup and bread to strengthen them. They were taken over the river, and the two brothers, Solomon and Richard, returned in the boat.

It was a desolate condition in which the duchess and her child were placed, and we must follow her in her wanderings. The farther she went from the river, the safer it would be for her and Carl. She followed the direction which Richard had given her, until she reached Switzerland. But her delay there came near costing her her life, for she learned that a detective officer was in search of them. With all the haste possible, she got across the Swiss boundary into the Tyrol, which was Austrian territory. There she was safe. They passed over high mountains, and through deep valleys, seeking a place where they could settle. At last they came to a certain valley, which, in quiet beauty, surpassed anything that they had seen.

“This reminds me more of home,” she said, “than any country through which we have passed. I have got several hundred louis which good Richard saved when our house was plundered, and we can afford to rent a little cottage.”

The old Tyrolese peasant told her that there was no house for sale in all the valley. “But,” said he, “you can board in my cottage if you choose.”

The price was agreed upon, and the duchess and her son became inmates of the family. The little room which was to be their home was very plainly furnished; but simple as it was, the first thing that she did on entering it was to kneel there with her child, and thank God for a shelter. She arranged her affairs as well as she could for a permanent residence with the Tyrolese peasant, and she began to look upon it as home.

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One day she told the peasant that she wished to send her little boy Carl to school, if there was a good schoolmaster in the neighborhood.

“The pastor in a neighboring village,” said the peasant, “will be here to-day to catechise my child. He teaches school, and I think you can make an arrangement with him.”

That day the gray-haired old pastor came, and an arrangement was made with him for Carl to go to school to him. Books were provided for him, and he went to school with the greatest pleasure. He was a rapid student, and repeated his lessons every evening to his mother.

In the Tyrol a great many canary birds are trained, and are sold to dealers all through the country. The old Tyrolese peasant with whom the duchess and Carl were boarding had a young and beautiful bird, which sang very sweetly. Carl asked his mother to buy this bird, saying,—

“Mother, this bird is very much like the one that our dear, sweet Lillie used to have. Buy it for me, so that it may learn how to sing.”

The duchess bought the bird, and soon became very much attached to it. Carl took the greatest pleasure in its training, and in due time, little Tim—for that was his name—would come to him and peck at his fingers, and rub his little head on Carl’s hand.

Carl was a natural musician, just as his father was, and would sometimes play on a flute which the old Tyrolese peasant had. Little Tim would imitate his tunes, and sometimes the concert was well worth hearing.

The old pastor provided the duchess with news. One day he gave her a French newspaper, and in the first column which she read there was a long list of the names of noblemen who had been beheaded. Among them she read the name of her husband, Henry Erlan. The newspaper fell from her hands, and she swooned away. A severe illness came on, and it was a long time doubtful whether she would recover. The old Tyrolese despaired of her life, and said,—

“The coming autumn may find her no more with us; but who knows what the good Lord will bring out of all this sorrow?”

II.

The old servant Richard, having rescued his good mistress from arrest, and probably from death, now formed the resolution to save his master too. He had not much time to plan, for he learned that the duke was to be beheaded the following week. It so happened that the son of his brother Solomon, the ferryman, belonged to the National Guard, and was stationed at the prison to guard it. If he could only secure him to engage in the enterprise, he felt that he could succeed. It was a difficult thing to get a word to say to any member of the National Guard. But old Richard had done many kind things for his nephew, and he succeeded in getting a note to him through the post office, appointing a time, when he was off duty, to meet him. Richard opened the whole enterprise freely to his nephew, and told him all the great injustice that had been done a noble family, and the sufferings through which the different members had passed.

The duke was informed that he was to be beheaded next day, and his door was marked by the prison-keeper as the room of a man who was to be executed the following morning. The good man knelt in prayer after the intelligence had been conveyed to him, and said,—

“To whom shall I go for help and courage, this last night of my life, but to thee, O Lord? Thou knowest best what will happen to me. If it be in accordance with thy will, permit me to see my wife and children again. If thou seest that it is not best for thy glory that I should live, then I will obey willingly. Thy will, not mine, be done.”

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“FATHER, FATHER! THAT IS THE VERY TUNE WHICH WE WERE SINGING TOGETHER THE NIGHT THAT YOU WERE ARRESTED.” See page 327.]

That was a noble prayer. Scarcely had the last word fallen from his lips, when he heard somebody gently lifting the latch of his door, and inserting the key.

“Save yourself,” whispered the person who entered, who was none other than old Solomon’s son, to whom Richard had confided his enterprise. It was two o’clock in the morning, the very best time to accomplish his purpose.

“Put on these clothes,” said he, as he unfolded a soldier’s uniform; “take this hat, and here is a gun. As quickly as you possibly can, transform yourself into a soldier.”

They escaped in safety from the prison, accompanied by the faithful Richard, and went as rapidly as they could towards the Rhine. They reached old Solomon’s ferry house. The young man knocked gently at the window, and asked his father to come out as soon as possible and take the duke over the river.

“Are you not going to take your little girl with you?” said the old ferryman.

“What little girl?” asked the duke.

"Your little daughter, whom my brother has brought here this very day; and she is as sweet a child as I ever saw in my life. She lies asleep now in the corner of the room."

This was news which the nobleman did not expect to hear, and he was almost overcome with joy. But he had no time to spend in greeting, except to give his dear Lillie a kiss. Soon they were over the Rhine; but before reaching the bank on the opposite side, they were fired at by soldiers who had come in search of them. A bullet passed through the top of the duke's high soldier hat, but he was not harmed, and escaped in safety. [327]

The great task for him to accomplish now was to find his wife and boy, though he had but little hope of ever finding them. Old Richard had enough money to buy the duke a horse; so the father mounted the horse, and took his little daughter on the saddle with him. They travelled over the mountains and through the vales, asking, whenever they met any person, to tell them if they knew of any strangers in that section of the country. But nobody gave any information.

Old Richard was yet with them, for he had still enough money left to buy a mule, and he rode beside his good master and Lillie until the 17th of July arrived, and that was Lillie's birthday. The duke determined that they three should stop and celebrate it by taking a little rest and a good meal in a cottage by the wayside. Having finished their dinner, they went out of doors and looked about the beautiful yard, which was all blooming with flowers. A bird cage was hanging by the side of the door, and the bird was singing the tune to these words:—

"Take courage, bird;
Our Father says,
In winter's storms
And summer's rays
You have no barns,
You sow no wheat,
But God will give you bread to eat."

Lillie was astounded at again hearing that sweet melody, and she exclaimed,—

"Father, father! that is the very tune which we were singing together the night that you were arrested."

The little bird went over it two or three times, and the father said,—

"You are right, my dear child. That is the melody—not a note is wanting. This is truly wonderful. I do believe that this bird has been taught to sing that song by Carl and your good mother. O, Richard, can you not find out how this bird came here?"

Richard said in reply,—

"I will do all I can, but I am afraid that it will be very difficult."

He made inquiries of the man who owned the bird, and who had furnished them with the dinner, as to where the bird came from. The Tyrolese replied,—

"I don't know where it came from, except that a young man who passed along the road, and who lives about three miles from here, sold it to me for a trifling sum one day. I was pleased with its appearance, because it was a beautiful bird, and the price was very low."

Then Richard said,—

"Can you not see that young man, and find out where he got it from?"

"I will do so if you wish," he answered.

Richard then told him to report as soon as possible what he had learned.

That afternoon, about five o'clock, the young man was brought to Richard and the duke, and inquiries were made as to where he got the bird. He said that he did not know where it came from exactly, except that it was found one day after it had escaped from somebody's cage. He did not know who owned it, or else he would have taken it to its owner.

"Where was it you found it?" said the duke.

"About ten miles from here, when I was going to see my mother, who lives a great many miles away."

"Do you know whether any strangers are in that neighborhood?" asked the duke.

"I heard my mother say that there were a lady and a little boy living some three miles the other side of her house, and that she was a very good woman." [328]

"Did you ever see the boy yourself?" inquired the duke.

"Yes, I saw the boy going to school."

The duke, on making further inquiries as to his appearance, came to the conclusion that the boy whom he had seen was probably none other than Carl. He accordingly made his arrangements to go to the place of which the young man had spoken.

That night he reached the house where this good lady and her son were boarding. True enough, the duke and little Lillie were in the presence of the duchess and Carl. It was a happy meeting, far beyond my power to describe. Their gratitude to their heavenly Father for preserving them to each other knew no bounds. It was an hour of such happiness as is seldom permitted any one to enjoy.

They sat up late that night and recounted their experiences to each other, and then the duke revealed the secret of his coming to that house; that it was a canary bird which had been the instrument of his finding her and Carl. They spent a few days in great happiness there, and made a bargain with the man who owned the canary bird which had escaped from Carl's cage to get it back again.

Two years passed on, and peace and quiet were again restored to France. The duke and his family were permitted to return to his castle, and the government made him ample reparation for all the losses that he had incurred. They took with them their little canary bird, which had lost none of its sweet notes by the lapse of time.

One day a magnificent new piano arrived from Paris, and after tea the duke said,—

“Now we will try the piano in our own quiet home. What shall we sing?” asked he.

The duchess, and Carl, and Lillie all answered with one voice,—

“We must sing our bird song.”

“Take courage, bird;
Our Father says,
In winter's storms
And summer's rays
You have no barns,
You sow no wheat,
But God will give you bread to eat.”

THE SHEEP AND THE GOAT.

NOT all the streets that London builds
Can hide the sky and sun,
Shut out the winds from o'er the fields,
Or quench the scent the hay swath yields
All night, when work is done.

And here and there an open spot
Lies bare to light and dark,
Where grass receives the wanderer hot,
Where trees are growing, houses not;
One is the Regent's Park.



THE GOATS.

Soft creatures, with ungentle guides,
 God's sheep from hill and plain,
 Are gathered here in living tides,
 Lie wearily on woolly sides,
 Or crop the grass amain.

And from the lane, and court, and den,
 In ragged skirts and coats,
 Come hither tiny sons of men,
 Wild things, untaught of book or pen,
 The little human goats.

One hot and cloudless summer day,
 An overdriven sheep
 Had come a long and dusty way;
 Throbbing with thirst the creature lay,
 A panting, woollen heap.

But help is nearer than we know
 For ills of every name;
 Ragged enough to scare the crow,
 But with a heart to pity woe,
 A quick-eyed urchin came.

Little he knew of field or fold,
 Yet knew enough; his cap
 Was just the cap for water cold—
 He knew what it could do of old;
 Its rents were few, good hap!

Shaping the brim and crown he went,
 Till crown from brim was deep.
 The water ran from brim and rent;
 Before he came the half was spent—
 The half, it saved the sheep.

O, little goat, born, bred in ill,
 Unwashed, ill-fed, unshorn!
 Thou meet'st the sheep from breezy hill,
 Apostle of thy Saviour's will,
 In London wastes forlorn.

Let others say the thing they please,
 My faith, though very dim,
 Thinks He will say who always sees,
 In doing it to one of these
 Thou didst it unto him.

FROM BAD TO WORSE.

COME, children, leave your playing,
 And gather round my knee,
 And I'll tell you a little story:
 Away across the sea,
 In a meadow where the mosses
 And the grass were frozen brown,
 Three little maids sat milking
 One day as the sun went down—
 Not cows, but goats of the mountain;
 And before their pails were full,
 The winds, they pierced like needles
 Through their gowns of heavy wool.
 And as one hand, then the other,
 They tried to warm in their laps,
 The bitter weather froze their breath
 Like fur about their caps.
 And so, as they sat at their milking,
 They grew as still as mice,
 Save when the stiff shoes on their feet
 Rattled like shoes of ice.

At last out spoke the youngest
As she blew on her finger-nails:
I have planned a plan, sweet sisters:
Let us take our milking-pails,
And go to the side of the mountain
As fast as we can go,
And heap them up to the very top
From the whitest drifts of snow;
And let us build in the meadow
Where we will milk our goats at night
A house to keep us from the cold,
With walls all silver white.

We will set the door away from the wind.
The floor we will heap with moss,
And gather little strips of ice
And shingle the roof across.

Then all the foolish maidens,
They emptied their pails on the ground,
And bounded up the mountain-side
As fast as they could bound,
And came again to the meadow
With pails heaped high with snow,
And so, through half the night, the moon
Beheld them come and go.

But when with the daybreak roses
The silver walls shone red,
The three little foolish maidens
Were lying cold and dead.
The needles of the frost had sewed
Into shrouds their woollen coats,
And with cheeks as white as the ice they lay
Among their mountain goats.

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ALICE CARY.



GRACIE AND HER FATHER.

MY STORY.

MANY years ago, when the sky was as clear, the flowers as fragrant, and the birds as musical as now, I stood by a little mahogany table, with pencil and paper in hand, vainly trying to add a short column of figures. My small tin box, with the word *Bank* in large letters upon it, had just been opened, and the carefully hoarded treasure of six months was spread out before me. Scrip had not come into use then; and there were one tiny gold piece, two

silver dollars, and many quarters, dimes, half-dimes, and pennies. For a full half hour I had been counting my fingers and trying to reckon up how much it all amounted to; but the problem was too hard for me. At last I took pencil and paper, and sought to work it out by figures.

"What are you doing, Gracie?" pleasantly inquired my father, entering the room with an open letter in his hand. [333]

"O, papa! is that you?" I cried, eagerly turning towards him. "Just look—see how much money I've got! John has just opened my bank. It is six months to-day since I began to save, and I've more than I expected."

"Yes, you are quite rich."

"So much that I can't even count it. I've done harder sums in addition at school; but somehow, now, every time I add, I get a different answer. I can't make it come out twice alike."

"Where did you get that gold piece?"

"Why, don't you know? *You* gave it to me for letting Dr. Strong pull out my big back tooth."

Father laughed.

"Did I?" said he; "I had forgotten it. But where did you get those two silver dollars?" he inquired.

"O, grandmother gave me this one. It's *chicken* money. She gave it to me for feeding the chickens every morning all the while I staid there; and the other is *hat* money. Aunt Ellen told me if I'd wear my hat always when I went out in the sun, and so keep from getting sun-burned, that she would give me another dollar; and she did."

"Where did the remainder come from?"

"Mostly from you, papa. You are always giving me money. These two bright, new quarters you gave me when you looked over my writing-book, and saw it hadn't a blot. How much is there in all?" I earnestly asked.

Father glanced at the little pile, and smilingly said,—

"Seven dollars and ten cents. That's a good deal of money for a little girl only nine years old to spend."

"And may I spend it just as I please?"

"Certainly, my dear; just as you please. It's a great thing for little people to learn to spend money wisely."

Saying this, he seated himself by the window, and drawing me towards him, placed me upon one knee.

"Gracie, dear, I have just received a letter from grandmother. She proposes that I come to Vermont and bring you; that I remain as long as business will admit, and leave you to pass the summer just as you did last year. How would that suit?" fixing his kind dark eyes full upon my upturned face to read my changing thoughts.

"O, I should like it very much!" I quickly exclaimed, clapping my hands with delight. Then I reflected a moment, and a shadow fell over my prospective happiness.

"On the whole, papa," I said, earnestly, "I think I had better go, and not stay any longer than you can stay. I am all the little girl *you* have, and you are all the parent *I* have, and we should be very lonely without each other."

I felt his warm, loving kiss upon my cheek as he folded me to his heart, and a tear fell on my forehead. For two years I had been motherless; but a double portion of pity and tenderness had been lavished upon me by my indulgent father. He was a New York merchant of ample means. Our home was elegant and tasteful.

The home of my father's only surviving parent, my doting grandmother, whom we were designing to visit, was a plain, unpretending farm-house, snugly nestled up among the hills of Vermont. There were tall poplar trees and a flower-garden in front, a little orchard and a whole row of nice looking out-buildings in the rear. There was no place on earth so full of joy for me. The swallows' nests on the barn; the turkeys, geese, and chickens; the colt, lambs, and little pigs; in short, everything had an ever-increasing attraction, far exceeding any pleasures to be found within the limits of the crowded city.

The prospect of another visit to Woodville filled my heart with intense delight.

A week passed, and on one of the sunniest and freshest of June mornings we started for Vermont. I was exceedingly fond of travelling in the cars, and it seemed as if a thousand sunbeams had suddenly fallen upon my young life. The train left New York, and we found ourselves rapidly whirling past hills, forests, towns, and villages. Sometimes we were flying through dark, deep cuts, then crossing streams and rich green fields and meadows. [334]

We expected to reach grandmother's that evening. I had written to inform her of our coming. One hour after another passed. The day was declining, and the sun was slowly sinking in the west.

"How much longer have we to go?" was the question I had asked for the fiftieth time at least.

"About another hour's ride, Gracie," smilingly answered my father. "I think we shall reach Woodville about eight."

The cars continued to hurry on till we were within a few rods of the station.

The bell was ringing its usual warning, and the bell from a train from behind was beginning to be heard. We had commenced to switch off, to allow the express train to pass. But by some carelessness or miscalculation our train was a minute too late. Father and I were comfortably occupying one of the front seats of the rear car; and I was in a state of impatient excitement to reach our destination. But there came, in an instant, a stunning, frightful crash; and I was thrown violently forward. What followed for the next ten minutes I do not know.

I think I must have been in a semi-unconscious state, for I have a dim recollection of strange sounds, confusion, anxiety, and terror. Strong hands seemed to pull me out from under a heavy weight, and gently lay me down. I felt dizzy and faint. I opened my eyes, and light came gradually to my darkened vision. A gentleman stood over me with his fingers upon my wrist. A kind, sunny-faced old lady was wetting my head.

"Are you much hurt?" she tenderly inquired, gazing upon me in undisguised anxiety.

"What's the matter? Where am I?" I cried, springing up and gazing wildly around.

In a moment my eye caught sight of the broken rear car. There were several wounded and bleeding people about me. I saw the front cars emptied of passengers, who were actively employed in caring for the injured. I comprehended in an instant that there had been an accident.

"My father! my father!" I cried.

"You shall see him soon," soothingly answered the gentleman by my side. "Drink this;" and he held to my mouth a glass of something pleasant and pungent. I drank its entire contents. I think it helped to quite restore me. I ran wildly about in search of my missing parent. There was a little group of men and women a short distance off. I hurried towards it, and recognized Peter, my grandmother's man, who had come to meet us at the station.

"Where is my father?" I said in a voice hardly audible from terror, seizing Peter's arm.

Before he could reply, I saw father, white and motionless, upon the ground.

"He is dead!" I shrieked, springing towards him, and convulsively throwing my arms about him.

"He is stunned, *not* dead, my child," said the physician, kindly drawing me away, to minister to him. "We hope he will soon be better."

In spite of his soothing words and tones, I read the truth in his face; that he feared life was almost extinct.

"O, what can I do? Save him! save him! You must *not* let him die! you must *not*!"

"My poor child, I will do all I can," replied the physician, touched by my distress.

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But no efforts to restore my father to consciousness availed anything. There was a deep, ugly cut on one side of his head. No other external injury could be found; yet he had not spoken or moved since he was taken out from the broken car.

The accident had occurred but a few rods from the station; and as grandmother's house was scarcely a mile distant, Peter strongly urged that he should be taken there at once. Accordingly a wagon was procured. The seats were taken out, and a mattress placed upon the bottom, and father was carefully laid upon it; and Peter drove rapidly home, while I followed with the doctor in his buggy. A man had been sent in advance of us to inform grandmother of our coming. She met us at the door with a pallid face, but was so outwardly calm, that I took courage from beholding her.

Father was laid upon a nice, white bed, in a little room on the ground floor; and again every means for restoring him was resorted to. Still he remained unconscious.

The hours went on. The old family clock had just struck two, and we were watching and working in an agony of suspense.

I had not left my father's bedside, till the low, indistinct conversation between the doctor and grandmother, in the next room, fell upon my ear.

"There is life yet," said he. "I thought once he had ceased to breathe."

"And you are quite sure he does?" she inquired.

"Yes. I held a small mirror over his face; and the mist that gathered upon it proves there is still faint breathing."

I shuddered and ran out to them.

"You think he will die!" I cried, seizing grandmother's hand with desperate energy.

"I cannot tell, dear Gracie. His life, like yours and mine, is in the hands of God. We cannot foresee

his purposes. We can only submit to his will.”

Saying this, she returned with the doctor to the sick room, and I was left alone.

The prospect of being deprived of my only surviving parent almost paralyzed me. I looked out of the open window. It was a calm, clear summer night. The moon shone out in all its glory and brilliancy, and the stars twinkled as cheerily as though there was no sorrow, suffering, or death in the world.

I sprang towards the door and closed it, and then threw myself upon my knees, and poured out my great anguish into the pitying ear of the heavenly Father.

“O, good, kind Father in heaven, do hear and quickly answer me. Do save my own dear papa from death. Mother, Bessie, and little Fred have all gone to live with thee; and he is all I have left. Do, I entreat thee, help him to get well; I will be more kind, and generous, and obedient than I have ever been before, and will try to please thee as long as I live.”

I arose comforted and strengthened. Returning to my father’s room, I saw the doctor with his fingers upon his wrist again.

“A faint pulse,” he said, turning towards grandmother.

Another hour passed. The breath was perceptible now, and the doctor looked more hopefully.

Morning came, and the glad sunlight streamed in through the windows. Father remained in a deep stupor, but manifested more signs of life than at any time since the accident. He had moved slightly several times, and as the hours went on his breathing became more natural and regular.

Suddenly he opened his eyes and gazed feebly around.

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“Father, dear father, are you better?” I cried in a choking voice.

He smiled faintly, then closed his eyes again, and sank into a sweet, refreshing slumber.

Another day came, bringing joy immeasurable to all of us. Father was conscious and rallying fast, and before night the doctor assured us all danger was past. The weeks went on.

June went out and July came in. We had been nearly a month in Woodville; and how different my visit had resulted from the season of perfect happiness I had so ardently anticipated!

Father was gradually regaining his former health; and although the wound on his head was but partially healed, he was pronounced doing admirably by the attentive physician.

He was now able to go out, and we took many long rides together, keenly enjoying the beautiful scenery and the pure air. As strength increased, the necessity of returning to his business pressed upon my father, and the first week in September was appointed for our departure.

On the last Sunday of our sojourn in Woodville, grandmother and I went in the morning to church. There had just been a fearfully destructive fire in one of the neighboring towns, and a large number of people were homeless. The minister announced that at the close of the afternoon service, a collection would be taken up for the sufferers, and he strongly urged a generous contribution from his parishioners.

I had hitherto paid little heed, when in church, to what the minister said; but since the dreadful accident and father’s almost miraculous recovery, I had been far more thoughtful and attentive than formerly. My heart went out in deep sympathy and pity for the poor men, women, and children who were made houseless in a single night, and I ardently longed to do the little in my power to relieve them.

So, during the intermission between the services, I took out the money I had brought with me, and which father had told me I was free to spend as I pleased. I tied it up in my handkerchief. There was too much for my pocket-book to conveniently hold, for it was all of the carefully hoarded treasure of my bank. It was my design to put it into the contribution-box.

Grandmother did not go to church in the afternoon; but father decided to go, and I accompanied him. After the services were over, two men arose and began to pass round the boxes to collect money for the people whose homes had been burned. As I beheld one of them coming slowly up the aisle, stopping at every pew, I was in a flutter of excitement. It was a novel thing for me to put money into the contribution-box, and my heart beat violently.

I drew out my handkerchief from my pocket, and hurriedly began to untie the knot. But my usually nimble fingers were provokingly slow to act now; and I pulled and pulled away, but to no purpose. The knot obstinately refused to yield. The man with the box had nearly reached our pew, and I began to fear I should lose the chance to give.

“Don’t let him slip by me,” I whispered so loudly to father as to cause at least a dozen persons in the adjacent seats to stare wonderingly at me. “I’ve something to put in.”

Another prodigious effort, and the knot yielded.

The man passed the box first to father, and he put in a bill. He glanced at me, evidently thinking a child would hardly have money to give, and was about to go on; but I looked beseechingly towards him, and he stopped and extended the box to me. In an instant the entire contents of my

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handkerchief were emptied into it—as much money as my two chubby hands could hold.

Father looked down upon me, and a half-amused smile flitted over his face, as he beheld my unexpected act.

After we had returned home, father sat down by the window in an easy chair, and calling me to him, placed me upon his knee.

“Gracie, dear,” said he, smilingly, “tell me how it happened you put so much money into the contribution-box. It must have taken nearly all you had.”

“It *was* all I had, papa. It was the money I saved in my bank, and you told me I could spend it just as I pleased.”

“O, yes, dear; I am glad to have you; only it was a good deal for a little girl.”

“I gave it because I wanted to please God,” I replied with earnest solemnity. “That dreadful night, when we all thought you would die, dear papa, I promised God I would be a better girl than I have ever been before. I would be more kind, generous, and obedient, and would try and please him all my life, if he would only let *you* get well; and I gave my money to-day because I am so glad and grateful to him.”

“Precious child,” said he tenderly and with much emotion, drawing me close to him, “and I am glad, and grateful too, for the rich gift of my dear little daughter.”

SARAH P. BRIGHAM.

THE WAY TO WALK.

AS I tramped over a stony path,
One cloudy morning early,
I learned the only way to step,
To keep from being surly.

Don't hurry, and stride, and come down hard
Upon the rolling pebbles,
But lightly step; and that's the way
To charm all kinds of rebels.

Don't hurry, and stride, and come down hard,
Even on troublesome people;
But carry your feet, and tread on air,
As though you lived on a steeple.

There are rolling stones in every path,
And rocks with jagged edges,
Which, if we gently touch, may turn
To flowers and bending sedges.

M. R. W.



THE CAMEL.

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CAMELS.

THE Bactrian camel may be at once known by the two humps upon its back, which give the animal a most singular appearance.

This species is a native of Central Asia, China, and Thibet, and is generally as useful in those countries as is the dromedary in Arabia, being employed for the saddle, for draught, and burden. It is, however, chiefly employed for the second of those purposes, and is of the greatest service to its owners.

The vehicle to which this camel is generally harnessed is a rude cart of wood, ingeniously put together, without a particle of iron, and, after the fashion of such structures, shrieking, creaking, and groaning as the wheels turn on their roughly-made and ungreased axle. The drivers, however, care nothing for the hideous and incessant noise, and probably are so accustomed to it, that they would not feel at home with a cart whose wheels moved silently. The mode of harnessing is precisely that which so simple a vehicle requires. From the front of the cart projects a pole, and to this pole are hitched a pair of camels by a yoke that passes over their shoulders. In fact, the entire harness is nothing more than a wooden yoke and a leathern strap.

In spite, however, of the rude machine to which they are attached, and the great loss of power by the friction of the badly-fitted wheels, the animals can draw very heavy weights for considerable distances. A burden of three thousand pounds' weight is an ordinary load for a pair of camels, and a peculiarly strong yoke of these animals will draw nearly four thousand pounds' weight. This camel is commonly yoked in pairs.

For the plough the camel is never employed, not because it is not sufficiently strong for the task, but because it does not pull with the steadiness needed to drag the ploughshare regularly through the ground.

Sometimes, however, the Bactrian camel is employed as a beast of burden, the bales being slung at each side, and the water-skins suspended below the belly. When the animal is employed for this purpose, a kind of pack-saddle is used, somewhat similar in shape to that which has already been described in the history of the one-humped camel, but necessarily modified in its structure. The owner of the camel takes great care not to overload his animal, as he is afraid of injuring the

humps, and thereby detracting from the value of the camel.



CAMEL OF A TARTAR EMIGRANT.

In Persia the camel is employed for a very singular purpose. There was, and may be now, a corps of the army which is called the camel artillery. It consisted of a number of camels, each fitted with a peculiar saddle, which not only accommodated the rider, but carried a swivel-gun of about one pound calibre. These weapons had a greater range than the ordinary Persian matchlocks, and, owing to the rapidity with which they could be transferred from spot to spot, formed a valuable branch of the artillery.

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When the enemy saw that a detachment of the camel artillery was about to attack them, their usual device was to reach such a position as to force the camels to traverse wet and muddy ground, in which they were sure to slip about, to lose all command over their limbs, and sometimes to lame themselves completely by the hind legs slipping apart.

Camels were especially serviceable for this purpose, because they are wonderfully sure-footed when the ground is dry, almost rivalling the mule in the certainty of the tread. The Arabian camel is notable for his sure tread, but the Bactrian species is still more remarkable in this respect. Owing, in all probability, to the elongated toe, which projects beyond the foot, and forms a kind of claw, the Bactrian camel can climb mountain passes with perfect security, and in consequence of this ability is sometimes called the mountain camel.

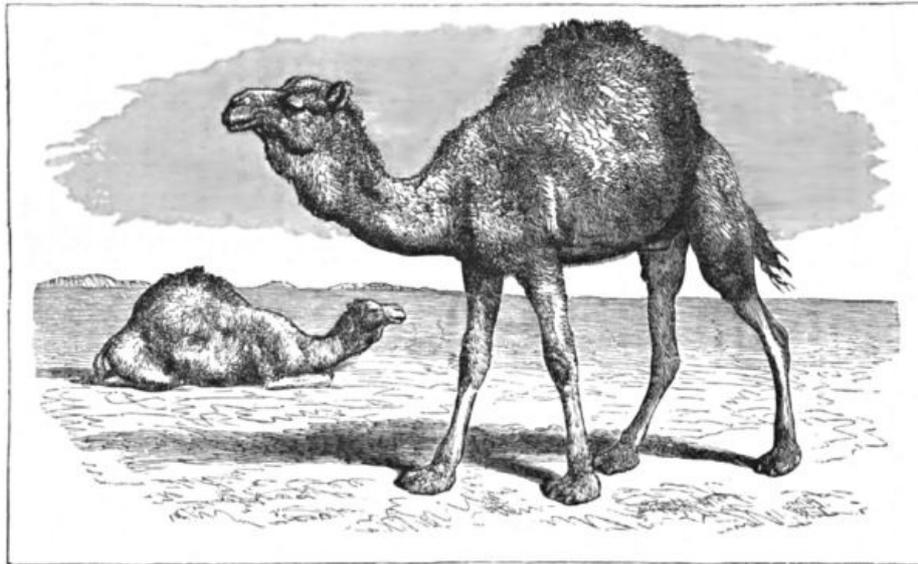
It is as serviceable in winter as in summer. The soft, cushion-like feet, which slide about so helplessly in mud, take a firm hold of ice, and enable their owner to traverse a frozen surface with easy security. In snow, too, the Bactrian camel is equally at home; and the Calmucks would rather ride a camel than a horse in the winter, because the longer legs of the former animal enable it to wade through the deep snow, in which a horse could only plunge about without finding a foothold. No greater proof of the extreme utility of this animal can be adduced than the fact that a body of two thousand camels were employed in conducting a military train over the "snow-clad summits of the Indian Caucasus" in winter time, and that throughout the space of seven months only one camel died, having been accidentally killed.

Although the camel has so strong an objection to mud, it has none to water, and will wade across a river without hesitation. It can even swim well when the water is too deep to be forded; but it does not appear to have much power of directing its course, or of propelling itself through the water with much force. Indeed, it may rather be said to float than to swim.

In point of speed it cannot approach the Arabian dromedary, although it is little inferior to the ordinary camel of burden. About two and a half miles per hour is the average pace at which a pair of Bactrian camels will draw a load, varying in weight from three to four thousand pounds;

and if they travel over a well-made road, they can do their thirty miles a day for many successive days. In countries, therefore, which are adapted to its habits, the camel is far superior to any other beast of burden, whether for draught or carriage.

One great advantage of the camel is, that its feet are so tough, that they can pass over rough and stony places without suffering, and that therefore the animal does not require the aid of shoes. In an ordinary march, the constant attention to the shoeing of horses and cattle entails great labor, much watchfulness, and often causes considerable delay, so that the peculiar formation of the camel's foot, which neither requires nor admits of an iron shoe, is of exceeding value in a forced march. In some places a leathern shoe is fixed to the camel's foot, but is really of little use.



THE CAMEL.

The very worst time for the Bactrian camel is the beginning and end of winter, when frost and thaw occur alternately. At such times of the year the snow falls thickly, is partially melted in the daytime, and at night freezes on the surface into a thin cake of ice. Through this crust the feet of the camel break, and the animal cuts its legs cruelly with the sharp edges of the broken ice.

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For the cold weather itself this species of camel cares little, passing its whole time in the open air, and feeding on the grass when it is caked with the ice formed from the dew. Indeed, it bears a severe winter better than either horse, ox, or sheep, and has been observed to feed with apparent comfort when the thermometer had sunk many degrees below zero. In some places—such as the country about Lake Baikal—the camel is partially sheltered from the cold by a thick woollen cloth, which is sewn over its body; but even in such cases its owners do not trouble themselves to furnish it with food, leaving it to forage for itself among shrubs and trees of higher ground, or among the reeds and rushes that grow on marshy land and the banks of rivers.

Almost the only disease among the Bactrian camels is an affection of the tongue, which is covered with blisters, so that the poor animal cannot eat, and dies from starvation.

The fleece of the Bactrian camel ought to weigh about ten pounds, and is used for making a coarse and strong cloth. In the summer time the hair becomes loose, and is easily plucked off by hand, just as sheep used to be "rowed" before shears were employed in removing the wool. The camel in the Zoölogical Gardens may be seen in the summer time in a very ragged state, its fleece hanging in bunches in some parts of the body, while others are quite bare. The price of the wool is about six cents a pound.

The skin is used for making straps, ropes, and thongs, and is seldom tanned. It is thought to be inferior to that of the ox, and is in consequence sold at a comparatively cheap rate, an entire hide only fetching about two dollars. The milk is used for food, but is produced in very small quantities, the average yield being only half a gallon. The flesh is eaten, and when the animal is fat is tolerably tender, and is thought to resemble beef. If, however, it be in poor condition, the meat is so tough and ill-flavored, that none but hungry men, armed with good teeth, can eat it. The price of a good Bactrian camel is about fifty dollars.

The weight of a full-grown animal is about one third more than that of the average ox—that is to say, about twelve hundred pounds. The average height is seven or eight feet, and the animal generally lives about thirty-five or forty years.

Dissimilar in external appearance as are the Bactrian and Arabian camels, their skeletons are so alike, that none but a skilful anatomist can decide upon the species to which a skeleton has belonged. The legs of the Bactrian species are rather shorter in proportion than those of the Arabian animal, and in them lies the chief distinction of the two species. Indeed, many naturalists deny that there is any real difference of species, and assert that the two animals are simply two

varieties of the same species.

The specimen in the Zoölogical Gardens is called "Jenny" by the keeper, and has rather a curious history, being associated with one of the great events of the present century. During the late Russian war her mother was taken from the enemy in the Crimea, and was unfortunately killed. The deserted little one ran about among the soldiers, and was adopted by the corps of Royal Engineers, who towards the end of 1856 presented her to the Zoölogical Society. Both the camels are fed upon the same diet, and eat about the same quantity.

J. G. WOOD.

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WHAT SO SWEET?

WHAT so sweet as summer,
When the sky is blue,
And the sunbeams' arrows
Pierce the green earth through?

What so sweet as birds are,
Putting into trills
The perfume of the wild-rose,
The murmur of the rills?

What so sweet as flowers,
Clovers white and red,
Where the brown bee-chemist
Finds its daily bread?

What so sweet as sun-showers,
When the big cloud passes,
And the fairy rainbow
Seems to touch the grasses?

What so sweet as winds are,
Blowing from the woods,
Hinting in their music
Of dreamy solitudes?

Rain, and song, and flower,

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When the summer's shine
Makes the green earth's beauty
Seem a thing divine.

MARY N. PRESCOTT.

COUNTING BABY'S TOES.

DEAR little bare feet,
Dimpled and white,
In your long night-gown
Wrapped for the night,
Come let me count all
Your queer little toes,
Pink as the heart
Of a shell or a rose.

One is a lady
That sits in the sun;
Two is a baby,
And three is a nun;
Four is a lily
With innocent breast,
And five is a birdie
Asleep on her nest.

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THE WELL.

THORNS.

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DEERDALE is a delightful place to visit." So thought little Nellie Harris when she went there to see Cousin Rose. All day long they wandered over the farm with Uncle John, first to feed the chickens, then to the well so dark and deep Nellie shuddered when she looked far, far

down into it, and held tight to Rose for fear of falling. Uncle John turned the windlass to let Rose and Nellie see the bucket rise all dripping from its watery bed.

One morning after Nellie's return to the city, Rose was walking alone in the garden.

The flowers were charming, for the dew was not yet off their delicate petals; and they were so fragrant that little Rose's nose was put close up to a great many, to find which it was that smelled so very sweetly. First she was sure it was a great cabbage-rose that nodded at her from its stalk, but soon after she was surer that it was a little bed of pansies, or "Johnny-jump-ups," which turned all their bright little faces to the sun, like a family of newly-washed and clean-aproned children just starting for school. Soon, however, she was surest that it was a patch of mignonette under the pear tree, which, though it looked so plain and humble with its little bits of blossoms, was pouring out the richest perfume.

"Oh, it is you, is it?" said little Rose. "Mamma read to us yesterday that perfume was the soul of flowers. I guess you have got the biggest soul of them all, if you are so little."

Pretty soon Rose began to think of something more substantial than bird-songs, sunbeams and flowers. There were very nice raspberries, red and ripe, over beyond the currant-bushes, and her mamma allowed her to pick them in that part of the garden, for she knew how delightful it is for little folks to eat their fruit just where they pick it from the bushes.

Little Rose went around into the lower walk, where she could see the raspberries. A good many had ripened over-night, and hung on the long, waving stems, waiting to be picked.

There was a short way to them, right across between two great branching currant-bushes. She saw it was guarded by long briar-stalks with sharp thorns all along their sides, but it was so much nearer than to go around the long row of currants. "Mamma says we must not be afraid of trials and discouragements in our way," Rose said. She was very fond of quoting things she heard said or read, and applying them to her own experience.

"I guess I can get through. Little girls must be brave!" And she pushed boldly into the middle of the space between the bushes. But there she caught fast, and could not go a step farther. One great, strong branch of thorns was stretched across her foot, the sharp points sticking fast in her stocking, and hurting her flesh cruelly if she tried to move it. Another one caught hold of her little garden-shawl and pulled it away back off her shoulders. She pulled and twitched with all her might, but could not get it loose. On the other side her little bare elbow was torn and bleeding from a scratch, while her dress was held as fast as if a hundred invisible hands were pulling at it. There she was. She could not get on nor back. There was nothing to be done but to call for her mother. This she did so loudly that everybody in the house came rushing to see what was the matter. Dolly and Hannah, leaving their dish-washing in the kitchen, got there first, and setting to work soon had Rose out, but with scratched hands, arms and feet and two great rents in her dress. [348]

"How in the world did you come in there among the briars?" asked mamma, after they were in the house again and Rose became comforted a little.

"It was the nearest way to the raspberries," she answered.

"The nearest? Yes; but not the best. It would have been far better to go around by the path."

"I heard you tell Cousin Lucy the other day that folks must never mind if there were thorns in their way," said little Rose, almost sobbing again, for she had thought that at least her mother would praise her courage and philosophy.

Her mother smiled, but presently looked grave.

"My darling," she said, "it is true we must not mind thorns if they are in the path of duty. But when they grow in any other path, we have a right—indeed, we ought—to avoid them if we can."

"But wasn't I in the path of duty when I tried to get the raspberries, mamma? You said that I might pick all that grew down there."

"You were not doing wrong in trying to get them."

"Isn't that the same as duty?"

"Not exactly. Would it have been wrong for you to do without them? Or would you have been to blame for going by the path?"

"Oh no," said Rose; "it would not have been wrong, for nobody said I must get them, or that I must go through the currant-bushes."

"Then you see it was not duty."

"Please tell me exactly what is meant by duty, mamma."

"Duty is not only something which we may do, it is something which we ought to do, and which it would be wrong to neglect. It is not simply permission, but obligation. Is that plain?"

"Yes, mamma. I understand now. I was permitted to pick the berries, but I was not obliged to do it or else do wrong. But if you had sent me to pick them for you, it would have been duty."

"And do you think that in that case it would be right to go through the thorns?"

"No, mamma; I see now. It is right to take the plainest, easiest way when we can."

"Yes, my dear. We must not be afraid of thorns if our path leads over them. But if we leave the true path and foolishly try to push ourselves through unnecessary obstacles, it is not bravery or fortitude, but vanity and silly rashness."

UNDER THE PEAR TREES.

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UNDER the pear trees one August day,
In the long-ago and the far-away,
Four little children rested from play,

Cheering the hours with childish chat,
Now laughing at this or shouting at that,
Till a golden pear fell straight in Fred's hat.

"I'm lucky," he cried as he hastened to eat
The mellow pear so juicy and sweet;
"If I tried for a week, that couldn't be beat."

Then Tom and Jenny and Mary spread
Their hats and aprons wide, and said,
"We can catch pears as well as Fred."

Then long and patient they sat, and still,
Hoping a breeze from over the hill
Their laps with the golden fruit would fill.

Till, weary of waiting, Tom said with a sneer,
"I could gather a *bushel* of pears, 'tis clear,
While idly we *wait* for a *windfall* here."

Then up the tree he sprang, and the power
Of his sturdy arm soon sent a shower
Of yellow fruit as a golden dower.

It was long ago, that August day
When four little children rested from play
Under the pear trees far away.

And the children, older and wiser now,
With furrows of care on either brow,
Have not forgotten the lesson, I trow—

The lesson they learned on that August day,
That for having our wishes the surest *way*
Is to *work*, and in *earnest*, without *delay*.

THE CAVE OF BENTON'S RIDGE.

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THE cave was a large opening in a ledge of rocks, about half a mile from the village of M—, and had for years been a favorite resort for the boys on the holidays.

'Twas at the close of school, on a bright June day, when, with a rush and a shout, out came a bevy of boys from the school-house, and over the wall with a bound were half a dozen before the rest had emerged from the open door. The first ones took their way across the fields to the cave, and had thrown themselves down on the rock at the entrance, and were busily talking, when the last comers arrived.

"We've planned to have a time Saturday; if Miss Walters will take the botany class for a walk, we'll come here and have supper, and go home by moonlight," said Fred Manning. "How does that strike you?"

"Count me in," said Phil Earle. "I second the motion," said Arthur Ames. "Where shall we go to walk?" said another; "this is nearly far enough for some of the girls."

"Pooh! no! we can get some nice pitcher-plants, if we go to Eaton's meadows; we haven't been there for ever so long," said Phil.

All agreed it would be fun, and Phil was deputized to ask Miss Walters, and with her complete the

arrangements.

"It's Thursday now; and I'll ask father if we can't have some of the hay they are making down in the lower field, to put inside the cave; for we must fix up a little," said Arthur. Willie Eaton said his mother would make them a jug of coffee; and as he lived near, he would run round that way at noon, and put it in the spring, so as to have it nice and cool. For one of the attractions of this place was a lovely spring, that bubbled and sparkled among the ferns, just under the rock where the cave was.

Fred and Phil began to lay the stones for the fireplace; for though it was not cold on these bright June nights, still a fire was one of the grand features of the occasion.

They all worked, some brushing out the cave with bushes, some getting old wood in piles to burn, rolling stones for seats, etc., until it was time for them to go home, when, with merry shouts, off they ran down the rock, and over the fields, home.

Next morning Phil called for Miss Walters, and on the way told her of the plans for Saturday, into which she entered heartily, and wanted the boys to stay a few moments after the morning session, to perfect the arrangements.

At recess she called the girls of the botany class to her, and said,—

"Girls, can you go on Saturday to walk? The boys have invited us to take supper at the cave."

"O, yes!" "O, yes!" "Yes, indeed!" "Splendid!" answered half a dozen voices.

"We will meet here at two o'clock; and you must dress for the meadows. I believe the boys are mostly web-footed, by the way they take to such places; however, we do find the best specimens there. Another thing—the boys are to furnish eggs and coffee, they say; and each of you can bring what is most convenient."

Off went the girls, eager to plan and discuss the welcome project.

Saturday came—a bright, cloudless day. All were at the school-house at two, or before, and set forth, looking like strollers, as they were. [351]

They did not make many collections on the high land; but when they entered the meadows, they soon found a variety of pretty grasses.

"Fudge!" said Ella Barton; "I'm not going to get any of that old hay—would you, Miss Walters?"

"No, certainly not, if I did not want the trouble of carrying it; but I think them very lovely to put with branches of bayberry, as they form such a pretty contrast of color with the delicate pearl-gray berries and brown branches; and if you add a few bunches of bright red arum berries, you have a pretty, fadeless winter bouquet."

"Where can we get the bayberries?" said Fred, coming up.

"In most places near the salt water. In the town where my home is, there are acres and acres of it; and may be at Thanksgiving time I can send you some to distribute, or, better still, you might make up a party, and come down. I'll promise you a fine tramp, plenty of berries, and perhaps my mother will let you taste of her Thanksgiving pies."

Off went Fred's hat high in the air. "Hurrah for the pie! I'll certainly go, if you'd like to have me."

Miss Walters laughed, and said nothing would give her greater pleasure than to welcome the whole party.

"O, Miss Walters, what's this lovely flower?" "Come here, come here!" "O, how lovely! here's plenty more!" "And here, and here," were the exclamations of several of the advancing stragglers.

All who were with Miss Walters hastened forward; and there, in a wet, treacherous-looking place, grew patches of a most delicate lilac-colored or light purple flower.

"O, that's Arethusa," said the teacher; "it is very beautiful." Rubber boots only can get at them; and two or three boys soon returned with hands full, which they distributed. Miss Walters said they could not stop to analyze any that day, but some of each kind must be put in the botany box, for the class to work with at some future time. As they walked along, Miss Walters told them that the flower was named after Arethusa of Grecian story, who was changed by Diana into a fountain, to escape from the god of the river where she was one day surprised by him while bathing.

They had not gone far when Phil and two of the girls came running up with hands full of the *Sarracenia*, or pitcher-plant.

"What fine specimens!" said Miss Walters.

"O, I know where they grow!" said Phil. "I always go for them every year, just over that old fence, in a boggy place. I like them better than almost any of the plants, they are so curious. But where's a basket?"

"Here, Amy!" called Bessie White; "can't you let me put my small lunch in your big basket with yours, and let Phil have mine for a specimen basket?"

This arrangement being satisfactorily made, they moved along, one of the girls telling the newcomers of the *Arethusa* and its name. And it was decided that all Miss Walters might tell them concerning the flowers should be written down, for the benefit of all, as they were often separated, searching for specimens.

In the next meadow they came upon beds of *Menyanthes*—an ugly name, and its common one of buck-bean is not much better. They could find but few perfect specimens of the pretty white velvety flowers, with their yellow and brown anthers, as it was rather late for them.

They found *Pogonias* and buds of *Calopogon*,—pretty pinkish flowers,—both of which Miss Walters told them were closely related, and, indeed, belonged to the same family as the *Arethusa*. This was the Orchid family, which contained a large number of beautiful but strange plants, about a dozen of which were common in New England. [352]

On the edge of an overgrown ditch near by they found very nice specimens of *Andromeda*.

“See,” said Miss Walters, “how white and lovely these bells are, in spite of the cold wet places where it is compelled to grow. It is named after *Andromeda*, famed in Grecian myths, a victim to her mother’s pride of beauty. Her mother had dared to compare herself to the sea nymphs, for which they, enraged, sent a huge monster to ravage the coast. To appease the nymphs, her father thought he must sacrifice his daughter; so he chained her to the water’s edge; but as the monster approached, *Perseus*, assisted by the gods, killed him, delivered *Andromeda*, and afterwards married her.”

The party now turned from the meadows on to higher ground. *Houstonias* and violets, with here and there *Potentilla*, covered the ground, the last so called because it was supposed to be powerful in medicine, *potens*, from which it is derived, meaning powerful.

The *Saxifrage* on the rocks, derived from Latin words, indicating its manner of growth.

Anemones, or wind flowers, were not entirely gone; so named because it was formerly thought the flowers only opened when the wind blew.

Specimens multiplied. Each little group found something new.

Trilliums, remarkable for having leaves, sepals, petals, and seed-vessels in threes; *Smilacina*, with its clean, green leaves, and white flowers, grew plentifully about them; *Streptopus*, meaning twisted foot, called so because its foot, or pedicel, is twisted.

About five o’clock they began their homeward walk, which took them round through some grand old pine woods. At last they came to their resting-place. All were more or less tired; and glad were they when they saw the black mouth of the cave open invitingly before them. Some threw themselves on the rock outside, some went in and rested on the fragrant hay that Arthur had piled on the floor.

After resting a while in the cool shade, Phil said, “I have a bright thought that rhymes with ‘light.’”

“Is it the opposite of ‘loose’?”

“It is not ‘tight.’”

“Is it what you are sometimes?”

“It is not ‘bright.’”

“O, I meant a ‘fright!’”

“Thank you; it is not ‘fright.’”

“Is it what we are all wishing for?”

“It is a ‘bite.’”

This was greeted with a shout, and committee number one, self-appointed, started for the baskets. Others arranged the table with boards and rocks put outside the cave door. The eatables were soon temptingly arranged. The jug of coffee and bottle of milk, with rubber mugs, were placed under Arthur’s care; and he soon had as much as he could do to pour the refreshing draughts.

The girls had little to do, the boys doing the honors in fine style. Very merry they grew over the good things; and so intent were they trying to sell the last at auction, that they never noticed a large cloud that had overspread the sky, until a few drops of rain fell upon the table.

“Here’s a pretty go!” said Fred. “Run, Miss Walters; and, girls, get into the cave, and we’ll clear the tables.”



Busy hands quickly disposed of all the articles to be kept dry, and the boys were glad to get into the friendly shelter. Down came the rain, heavily rolled the thunder, and for a little while the lightning was vivid. Soon the rain began to find its way into the cave. [353]

"This will not do. Where's the table, Fred? We must have up a storm door," said Phil.

"All ready to slide right up," said Fred. "Arthur, will you get the chandelier ready? for it will be rather dark when the door is up."

Arthur crept on his hands and knees to a little crevice in the inner part of the cave, and drew out a tin box, with four holes in the cover. The girls gathered around, and were much amused to see him take out his four candles. These he stuck into the holes of the box; and lighting them, he placed them on a shelf prepared expressly for the occasion.

Never were boys and girls more happy. They were enjoying excitement without danger or discomfort. They sang, played games; and when the rain had nearly ceased, some of the boys ran out and lighted the fire. They had kept the wood dry. Then turning the table on its side, they put out the candles, and had the full benefit of the fire-light. For a while conundrums were the order of the day; then they drew lots to determine who should tell the first story. It fell to Millie Gray, who, with timid modesty, demurred; but the penalty threatened for default was so great, that though she had never told a story in her life, she thought she had better begin now. Attentively they listened, waiting for her to begin. Presently she commenced.

"There was, once upon a time, a beautiful little girl, with blue eyes and golden hair."

"O," interrupted Fred, "can't we have this one with black eyes and red hair, or brown eyes; I'm tired of blue eyes and yellow hair." [354]

"No, no, no," said Arthur; "I like blue eyes. Go on, Millie." With a blush—for her own were blue, and she knew what Arthur meant—she continued.

"Well, I like to oblige all parties," replied Millie. "Suppose we say her eyes were black and blue; but if any one else interrupts, I'll have them committed for contempt of court, and they shall be bound over to keep the peace."

"Which piece?" Fred was beginning to say, when Arthur jumped up and placed his hand over Fred's mouth, saying, "Consider yourself bound over, sir."

"Well, this little girl lived in a deep forest, in a little bit of a house, with no one for company but her grandmother and a little yellow dog.

"The grandmother was just as cross as she could be, and poor little—let's see, what shall I call her?"

"Odahbeetoqua," suggested Fred. "I suppose she was descended from the Indians."

"Yes," said Millie, very seriously, "that was her name; but nobody called her by it all at one time; they said Daisy, for short.

"Well, one day little Daisy felt so sad and lonely, and her grandmother had been so cross, that she said to the little yellow dog,—

"'Tip, let's run away. I'm tired of staying here. Granny is so cross, I cannot stand it another minute.'

"Yes, indeed. I'll go with you, Daisy," said Tip, wagging his tail; 'for this morning, when I was licking up a bit of butter off the floor, she kicked me, and hit me over the head with a broom, and threw a stick of wood after me as I indignantly left the premises, and wounded my feelings very much.'

"But then, Tip, suppose we should get lost in the woods, and die of starvation, and bears should eat us up.'

"Trust to me, Daisy," Tip replied. 'I will lead you safely out of the wood, and see that nothing hurts you.'

"Just then a woman came to the door, and said, 'I have heard your conversation. Come with me, and you shall both live in a nice house, where you can play all day, and have fine clothes, and plenty to eat.'

"Ah, wouldn't that be pleasant!" said Daisy; and she was just preparing to go with the woman, when she stopped suddenly, and said, 'But who will get wood for granny's fire? and who will pick berries for her? She'd die if we should leave her alone. No, I can't leave her. She's very cross; but then, she is sick all the time, nearly, and I won't go.'

"O, yes, do!" said the woman. 'I have a lovely white pony, as gentle as a kitten, that you shall have to ride, and beautiful dresses. You'd better come.'

"Thank you," said Daisy; 'I'd like to go with you. You may take Tip. Perhaps he'd like to go, but I won't leave grandmother; she'd die if I did.'

"No sooner had Daisy finished speaking, than the woman turned into a beautiful fairy, the shanty turned into a palace, granny turned into a queen, Daisy into a lovely princess, with black and blue—I mean heavenly—eyes, and Tip turned into a beautiful prince, all dressed in embroidered green velvet; and down on his knees he fell at the princess's feet, vowing love and fidelity untold.

"The fairy spread her wings over the young couple, saying, 'Behold the reward of unselfishness!' and vanished, leaving them in all their bliss."

Millie's story was greeted with shouts of applause and flattering comments.

The boys were about renewing the fire, when Miss Walters announced that it was seven o'clock.

"O, don't go yet!" shouted Phil from the wood-pile. "We've wood enough for an hour yet. Seven o'clock's awful early." [355]

"Don't go, don't go!" came from a chorus of voices; and Miss Walters, who only cared for their comfort, said she would stay if that was the general wish, or would go with any of the girls that were in haste to get home. No one made any movement to go, and she was quietly led back to her throne on the hay, at the entrance of the cave.

A song was proposed, and Miss W. led them in the sweet words of "In the Beauty of the Lilies," the boys coming out strong with the chorus. Then two girls sang a duet very sweetly. Another hour glided swiftly away, when Miss Walters said, "Phil, your fire burns low; push the blazing ends for a final blaze, so we may get all our things; for we must go now."

Everything arranged, they bade good by to the hospitable cave, then marched down the hill, the boys whistling "When Johnny comes marching Home."

On they trudged, dropping various members of their little party as they turned off to go to their homes. All agreed they had had a delightful day.

F. E. S.



THE HAUNTS OF WILD BEASTS.

IN crossing the forests which lie about that singular system of ponds and lakes that occupy the northern interior of the State of Maine, the tourist and hunter will often come upon well-beaten paths, running through the woods, trodden hard, as if by the passage of myriads of feet; and this in a region rarely, or never, entered by man. They are the paths of wild beasts—bears, lynxes, wildcats, the moose, and the caribou,—along which they pass from lake to lake, in pursuit of their food, or upon hostile forays. When two lakes adjoin each other, with no more than a mile or half a mile of forest between them, there will nearly always be found, across the narrowest part of the isthmus, a path of this sort, more or less worn, according as the locality abounds with game, or the lakes with fish.

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THE GRIZZLY BEAR.

One of the widest and most used of these that I have ever seen, led from the bank of Moose River up to the low shores of Holeb Pond, in one of the not yet numbered townships near the Canada line—so near that the high, dingy summit of the "Hog's Back" was plainly visible to the north-westward. Starting out from between two large boulders on the stream, which at this point is broken by rips, it runs crooking and turning amid clumps of hazel and alder, till lost to view in a wide flat, covered with "high bush" cranberries, but lost to sight only, however; for its tortuous course still continues beneath the thick shrubs, until at a distance of two hundred rods it

emerges on the pond.

Happening to cross it a year ago last autumn, in company with Rod Nichols (my comrade on these tramps), the idea suggested itself that a good thing might perhaps be done by setting our traps along the path. For where there were so many passing feet, some of them might without doubt be entrapped.

Rod thought it was the "beat" of some bears, or "lucivees," while I inclined to the opinion that otters or "fishers" had made it.

So we brought up our traps,—half a dozen small ones, which we used for sable and otter—from the dug-out (canoe) down on the stream, and during the following afternoon set them at different points in the path, between the border of the cranberry flat and the river. Then drawing our canoe up out of the water, we encamped on the stream about a mile below the path, and waited for the game.

Our stock of deer meat had got out. We had to content ourselves, both for supper and breakfast, the following morning, with a couple of hares—lean as usual. Who ever saw a fat hare?

Old hunters are always telling the young sportsman about the marvellous properties of shaving-soap made from hare's tallow and cedar ashes. The flesh has about as much taste and nutrition in it as—so much paper pulp, for want of a better comparison to express its utter lack of flavor. But during the forenoon we managed to shoot four partridges. These we first parboiled in our camp kettle, then broiled on coals. They made us a comfortable dinner; and towards sunset we again paddled up the stream, to visit the traps.

Coming near where the path strikes out from the river, we drew up the dug-out, and followed in to the place where we had set the first trap. It was gone; but the grass about the spot was beaten down, and the bushes broken. And on looking around, we discovered a trail leading off through the weeds. Following this for ten or a dozen rods, we came to a large, rough stone; and near it lay the trap, shattered and bent, with the springs broken, and the jaws gaping and powerless. The stone, too, looked newly scratched, as if from heavy blows. The trap had evidently been beaten upon.

"Some large animal," said I.

"Bear, probably," said Rod. "They will frequently smash up a small trap to get it off their feet."

Whatever it was, the creature had freed himself and gone. Rod picked up the broken trap, and we went back, and on to the next.

This one was just as we had placed it—not sprung. So we kept on to the third, which was sprung, but empty, with little clots of hair clinging to the teeth. The hair looked like that of a sable; but he, too, had escaped. [358]

The fourth was sprung and drawn out of the path. We crept cautiously up, and lo! we had a contemptible little musquash (muskrat)—skin not worth a shilling. He was busy as a bee gnawing at his leg. In a few minutes more he would have been at liberty—minus a foot. If left any length of time after being caught, they will frequently gnaw off the leg in the trap. For this reason, those who make a business of trapping them set their traps under water, well weighted. They will then drown in a few moments, and may thus be secured.

The last two traps were not sprung.

"A big thing this!" muttered Rod. "Had our labor for our pains. Too bad."

We were near the edge of the cranberry flat; and just as Rod was bemoaning our poor luck, a slight crackling out in the thick cranberry bushes came to our ears.

"Hark!" whispered Rod; "something out there. The bear, perhaps."

Standing on tiptoe, we peeped quietly over the tops of the bushes, now laden with the green cranberries. Off some seventeen or eighteen rods, something was slowly moving. We could see it plainly—something which, at first sight, looked like the roots of an old dry pine stump, a great mass of stubs and prongs.

"A moose!" exclaimed Rod, in an eager whisper. "A moose browsing the cranberries! Quick with your rifle! Together now!"

We both fired. The huge animal, fully nine feet in height beneath his antlers, bounded into the air at the reports, with a wild, hoarse cry, which I can compare to nothing I have ever heard for hideousness. In a frightful way it resembled the neigh of a horse, or, rather, the loud squeal of that animal when bitten or otherwise hurt—bounded up, then fell, floundering and wallowing amid the cranberries, uttering hideous moans.

As quickly as we could for the thick and tangled bushes, we made our way out towards the spot. The fearful struggles stilled as we drew near. Our aim, at so short a distance, had been thoroughly fatal. A great opening in the bushes had been smashed down, in the midst of which lay the moose, with its large nostrils dilated, gasping and quivering. But its great ox eyes were set, and rapidly glazing. The bushes were all besprinkled and drenched with blood. One bullet had struck and broken the skull into the brain; that was Rod's. Mine had gone into the breast, striking the lungs,—probably, from the profuse bleeding.

"A pretty good shot!" exclaimed Rod, looking upon the slaughter from a purely business standpoint. "Moosehide is always worth something. So are those antlers. A noble set—aren't they? All of four feet broad across the top. Pretty heavy to lug; we can put them in the canoe, though."

"Then there's the meat," said I.

"That's so," cried Rod, smacking his lips. "No more rabbit's broth for us at present. O, won't we have some grand moose steaks! Do you hear that, old boy? How does that strike your fancy? Come, let's skin him, and cut him up. I long to behold some of that surloin broiling! Rabbit meat, indeed!" and Rod whipped out his hunting-knife, and fell upon the carcass with the zeal of a hungry bald eagle.

In a few minutes we had stripped off the skin. Rod then wrenched off the antlers, cut out the muffle (the end of the nose), and also about a hundred weight of what he considered the choicest of the meat. The rest of it—nine or ten hundred pounds—we could only leave where it had fallen. It would be of no use to us, so far from the settled lands.

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THE TIGER.

To carry our spoils down to our canoe, we had to make two trips; for the antlers alone were as much as one could take along at once. We had gone back after them and the hide. [360]

"Too bad," remarked Rod, "to leave all this flesh here to rot above ground."

"I doubt if it be left to rot above ground," said I. "There are too many hungry mouths about for that."

"Right there," said Rod; "and that makes me think we might use it to lure them, and to bait our traps with. Drag it out to the path, and set the traps round it."

The idea seemed a good one. So we cut the remains of the carcass in two. Whole it was too heavy to be moved. Then, fastening some stout withes into them, we dragged the pieces, one after the other, out to the path, and left it at the place where the path entered the cranberry bushes. This done, we set the traps about it,—the remaining five,—and then went back to the canoe with the antlers and skin.

"Made a very fair thing of it, after all," remarked Rod, as we floated with the current down to our camp. "Tell you what, old fellow, these steaks are not to be sneezed at. More than ordinary pot luck just at this time."

It is needless to say that we fully satisfied our taste for venison that night, or that our breakfast next morning was merely a repetition of supper. Such things are to be expected in the wilderness. Suffice it to add, that we neither overate nor overslept, but were up betimes, and off to examine our traps considerably before sunrise. We did not go up in the canoe on the river, but walked along the bank through the woods.

"We may surprise a bear or a lynx at the carcass," said Rod.

So, as we drew near the place where we had left it in the path the evening before, we made our way amid the brush with as little noise as possible. A small hollow, overrun with hackmatack, led up towards the spot. We crept along the bed of it, in order to approach unobserved. Pausing a moment to listen, the clank of a chain came faintly to our ears, then a growling, worrying noise,

heard when two creatures, jealous of each other's rights, eat from the same piece.

"Game!" whispered Rod.

Climbing quietly up the steep side, we peeped out from amid the green boughs. We had got up within nine or ten rods; but intervening bushes partially hid the carcass. Something was moving about it, however—something black. The trap chains were rattling. Then a big black head was raised, to growl; and as if in reply came a sharp snarl from some animal out of sight. The black creature darted forward; and a great uproar arose, growling, grappling, and spitting, at which there flew up a whole flock of crows, cawing and hawing; and the noise increasing, there sprang into the air, at a single flap, a great yellow bird, uttering a savage scream.

"An eagle!" whispered Rod; "and that black creature's a bear, I guess. Can't see him just plainly. Growls like one, though. Fighting with some other animal—isn't he? Some sort of a cat, by the spitting."

"Shall we fire on them?" said I.

"No; let 'em have it out," said Rod. "One of them will be pretty sure to get chewed up, and the other won't leave the carcass. Besides, the cat's in the trap, I reckon, by the rattling." For the jingling of the chain could still be heard over the howling they were making. But ere the fight had lasted many seconds, a suppressed screech, followed by a crunching sound, told ill for one or the other of the combatants. "The cat's got his death hug," muttered Rod.

Presently the bear—a great, clumsy-looking fellow—came out into view, strutted along, scrubbing his feet on the grass, like a dog, and went back to the carcass. The eagle and the crows had come back to it. They flew before him. [361]

"Keep your eye on the eagle," whispered Rod. "I would like to get him. It isn't a 'white head.' Never saw one like it."

The great bird circled slowly several times, then stooped, almost touching the bear's shaggy back with its hooked talons. At that the bear raised his ugly muzzle, all reeking from his feast, and growled menacingly. This was repeated several times, the bear warning him off at each stoop, and sometimes striking with his big paw. Finding the bear not inclined to divide with him, the eagle, with one mighty flap of his wings, rose up to the top of a tall hemlock standing near, and perched upon it. We could see the branches bend and sway beneath his weight.

"I'll have him now," muttered Rod, poking the muzzle of his rifle out through the boughs. "You take the bear. Ready! now!"

We blazed away. With a wild shriek the eagle came tumbling down through the hemlock. Rod ran out towards him, and I made up to the bear. Old Bruin was merely wounded—an ugly flesh wound; and not knowing whence it came, he had flown at the dead lynx,—for such it turned out to be,—and was giving him another hugging. Seeing me, he started up, to rectify his mistake, probably; but I had put in another charge, and instantly gave him a quietus. Just then Rod came up, dragging the eagle.

"Never saw one like it," exclaimed he. "I mean to take it down to Greenville."

After skinning the bear and the lynx, we gathered up the traps, and went down to our camp. Together with the spoils of the moose, we had now a full canoe load, and stowing them in, went down the river that afternoon. Two days after, we arrived at Greenville, at the foot of Moosehead Lake. There we fell in with a party of tourists—from Boston, I believe. They pronounced Rod's "big bird" to be a golden eagle.

C. A. STEPHENS.

WORSHIP OF NATURE.

THE green earth sends her incense up
From many a mountain shrine;
From folded leaf and dewy cup,
She pours her sacred wine.

The mists above the morning rills
Rise white as wings of prayer;
The altar curtains of the hills
Are sunset's purple air.

A HUNTING ADVENTURE.

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TIRED of the heat and confusion of the city, my friend Clarke and I left New York one fine morning for a hunting excursion on the prairies.

At Galena, on the Mississippi, we went aboard a steamer which conveyed us to St. Paul. Here we fitted out for the trip, and finally, at Sauk Rapids set our foot for the first time on the prairie.

From the Mississippi, at Sauk Rapids, we struck about north-west across the prairie for Fort Garry, a Hudson Bay Company's fort, at the junction of the Assiniboine and Red River, where we replenished some of our stores; and thence we travelled through the Sioux, or Da-ko-tah country, until we reached Turtle Mountain.

Our party consisted of Clarke and myself, two French Canadians, whom we had engaged at St. Paul, and a half-breed, whom we had met on the frontier before reaching Fort Garry.

One evening, before camping at the base of Turtle Mountain, Clarke and I gave chase to some buffalo, and I killed one, which I proceeded to cut up at once by removing the tongue and undercut of the fillet. The meat I tied to the thongs of my saddle, placed there especially for that purpose, and I rejoined the camp before nightfall. Clarke came back shortly afterwards, having killed his buffalo in three or four shots, and after a long chase. This had delayed him so much, that he lacked time to cut up his animal; so he marked the spot as well as he could by its bearings with Turtle Mountain, and he rode homewards to the camp, intending to go on the following morning, and get the meat for home consumption.

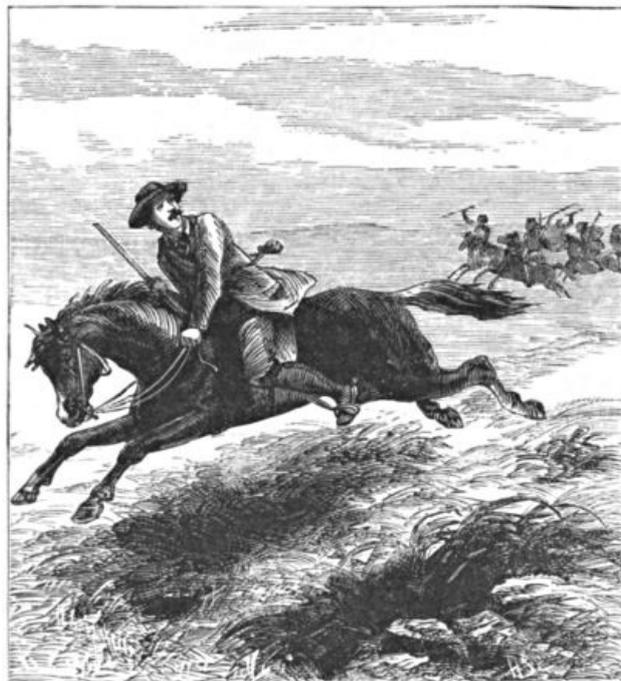
We cooked and ate our dinners, and rolling ourselves up in our buffalo robes, we slept most soundly. The following morning, Clarke went out and fetched his pony, which was picketed near the camp, saddled it, took his rifle and hunting-knife, and then off he started to look for the dead buffalo of the previous evening, cut it up, and bring home some of the meat.

I remained in camp; and as my wardrobe was rather dilapidated from constant hunting, and the limited number of clothes I had with me, I proceeded to mend my trousers, which were worn through just where it might naturally be expected they would first give way. This I could only do by shortening the legs of the garment. However, the end justified the means in this case.

These repairs, with other necessary work about our rifles and guns, occupied the morning very pleasantly; and about midday I went up the hill behind our camp, where a small bluff, or headland, projected from it over the vast grassy plain. I took my telescope with me, as every traveller in those wild regions should always do, when spying out either the fatness of the land or the possible surrounding dangers. Far and wide my eye fell over the gentle undulations of the prairie, but no deer or buffalo could I see.

No; instead of quietly feeding game, I discovered my friend Clarke, some three or four miles from camp, galloping at the top of his horse's speed towards us, and five Indians in hot pursuit of him.

Knowing his danger, I of course ran down the bluff as hard as I could to the camp, and holloed to the men to make haste and come to the rescue. I then ran for my pony, which was picketed at a short distance from our tent; but he was difficult to catch, or had drawn his peg out of the ground. At any rate, I could not get hold of him; so I gave him up, and seizing my rifle, darted off as hard as I could to meet my friend. [363]



The men also turned out with their guns; and soon afterwards Clarke rode up, both he and his

pony looking much distressed. Clarke was as white as a sheet, and his pony was completely blown. The Indians sheered off on seeing us ready with our rifles. So no shot was fired; for they never came within range.

I then asked Clarke what had happened; and I give you his story of the affair.

On leaving camp in the morning, he had gone in search of the dead buffalo of the previous night. He soon found the carcass; and wishing to bring home the meat, he got off his pony, tied the animal to the horns of the buffalo,—as you are always taught to do in the Indian country,—and straightway began to cut off the pieces of meat which he wished to bring back to camp. Whilst so employed, he thought he saw another herd of buffalo not far away; so he finished cutting off the meat, and rode towards the new herd, on murderous thoughts intent.

He stalked the herd for some distance, until he thought himself tolerably near, when he looked round the corner of a hillock, and then to his horror found he had been carefully approaching five Indians, who were congregated round a dead buffalo, their horses close by, and the men occupied in cutting up the beast.

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Before he could turn to flee out of sight the Indians discovered him. They were Sioux, and at war with the whites. Instantly they jumped on their horses and gave chase, fired, no doubt, with the noble zeal to hang a white scalp in a Sioux lodge. Off went Clarke as hard as his little pony could carry him, the Indians shouting behind, and brandishing their guns in the air as they became excited by the chase, whilst he was thinking of the probability that existed of his scalp returning to camp, or dangling at the saddle-bow of one of these bloodthirsty savages.

Clarke supposes that he was five or six miles from camp when the chase began; and he recollected well throwing the cover away from his rifle, in preparation for a fight should his pony fall, or the Indians catch him through the superior speed of their animals.

Imagine the horrible feelings of a young fellow galloping away from five wild redskins, who not only desire to kill him then and there, but have, further, the sportsman-like anxiety to strip his scalp, and hang the dearly-beloved trophy in some filthy lodge, where it will gradually dry up, and remain the most valued heirloom in the family of the "Big Snake," or the "Screeching Eagle," or some other no less happily-named Sioux.

Their horrible shrieks ring in his ears, whilst he anxiously measures with his eyes the distance betwixt himself and his bloodthirsty pursuers; he endeavors to estimate his chances of escape, and longs for the protection of the camp, as Wellington longed for night or Blucher, knowing that if he falls he will be shot, or tomahawked and scalped, in the course of a couple of minutes.

No wonder, then, that poor Clarke did look as if he had seen a ghost, or encountered something even much worse; nor do I believe that during his subsequent army service he was ever much nearer a horrible death than during the few minutes which that pursuit lasted.

To conclude the account of this adventure, we covered his return to camp with our rifles, as I mentioned in the earlier part of this story; and you may conceive that we kept a very strict watch in the camp during the night, fearing lest the Sioux should either stampede us with an increased number of their friends after nightfall, or try to carry off our horses, and leave us deserted in the midst of the prairie. However, the night passed off quietly; and often since then have Clarke and I talked over this memorable adventure.

ONE step and then another,
And the longest walk is ended;
One stitch and then another,
And the largest rent is mended.
One brick upon another,
And the highest wall is made;
One flake upon another,
And the deepest snow is laid.

NEARLY LOST.

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I KNOW what I shall do!" exclaimed Walter Harrison to about a dozen other boys, his schoolfellows, who were standing round him. "I shall just tell 'old Barnacles' that my father and mother wish me to have a holiday this afternoon, and he can't say 'no' to that. It's the simplest and best way. If you all agree to it, we shall get a holiday all around. Who'll go in for my plan?"

"I will! and I! and I!" responded nearly all the boys.

The facts of the case were simply these: There were taking place in a park close by a series of athletic sports, and this afternoon the admission was free to any one who chose to go. Of course all the boys in Mr. Jackson's school were mad to see the sports; but by the time the school was

out the best fun would be over, and the majority of the boys guessed pretty shrewdly what would be the result of asking their parents to let them stay away. The grand idea was to induce the master to give a general holiday, but the question was how that desirable end was to be brought about. It had been suggested to stay away bodily, without so much as saying, "With your leave or by your leave;" but as such a course carried a certainty of punishment in its train, it was universally rejected. Another idea, which had received some favor, had been to trip up the poor half-blind schoolmaster, quite by accident, and by rendering him incapable obtain the desired holiday, but there had been a majority found to protest against such cruelty; and now Walter Harrison had suggested his plan. But although most of them were inclined to adopt it, there were two who resolutely refused to do so.

"Why won't you join us?" asked Walter of these two.

"I sha'n't, because I'm not going to tell a pack of lies for the sake of a holiday," answered Willie Ford, the younger of the two.

"How good we are!" replied Walter, tauntingly; and then throwing his cap up into the air, he sang out:

"There was a curly-headed boy
Who never told a lie;
He knew a trick worth two of that:
That was the reason why.'

"Sly fox!" he said, patting Willie on the back. "He does the 'good' dodge to perfection, and finds it answers too; don't you, Ford?"

Walter's sallies were received with roars of laughter by the boys. Willie took no notice of them, although it was a difficult matter to restrain his anger.

"What a milksop the fellow is!" cried out one of the boys.

"A stupid little muff!" cried another.

"Am I?" cried Willie, his temper now fully roused; "I'll show you about that. Although I'm not going to tell lies, I'll fight any one of you. Come now, Harrison, let's have it out together."

Harrison burst out laughing: "Fancy me fighting with a little cock-sparrow like you! I should like to see myself!"

Willie was about to burst out again, but a friendly hand was laid on his arm, and his friend Philip said, gently, "Come away, Will; no fighting about such a trifle as that, lad."

"What a peppery little chap!" called out Walter as Willie turned away with his friend. "Pepper and sop! Ugh! what a nasty mess!"

The boys followed out their plan, and got their holiday, all except Willie and Philip and several little fellows who had taken no interest in the matter.

School over, the two boys rushed off in the hope that they might be in time to see something. They were too late, however, for the performances were just coming to an end when they arrived, so they started for a stroll through the beautiful park, which was not often open to the public.

"Why, there are our fellows!" said Philip as they suddenly came in sight of a group of boys on the edge of the magnificent lake. [366]

"What are they up to? They're very busy about something!" exclaimed Willie.

"Let's go and see," Philip said, in reply.

As they came nearer they could tell that the boys were gesticulating and shouting to something in the water.

"It can't be one of them gone in and lost his depth," said Willie, anxiously.

No such thing, as they found when they got close—only a dog that the boys were amusing themselves by seeing how long they could keep under water. The creature was making frantic efforts to gain a landing-place, but as he approached the shore they drove him back with sticks and stones.

"We're teaching him to swim," cried one as Philip and Willie came up. "A miserable little mongrel! he can't swim a bit!"

"Why, don't you see," cried Willie, eagerly, "that he's as weak as a rat? He can scarcely support himself in the water. I should think he's been starved."

At this moment the dog, being turned back once more, disappeared, quite close to the shore. With a loud cry of pain and anger, Willie darted through the boys, and wading into the shallow water succeeded in enticing the drowning dog toward him. He came out, holding the dripping creature safely in his arms.

"We must carry it home," he said to Philip, after they had vainly endeavored to set it upon its feet; and accordingly, they started off at a good pace, the poor half-drowned animal safely

sheltered in Willie's arms.

Well might his mother be alarmed to see him come home to tea in such a plight; but when she heard his explanation, she was quite ready to sympathize with him, and told him he had done bravely and well to rescue the poor animal. As he seemed none the worse for his wetting, he was allowed to come down stairs again as soon as he had put on dry things. Very tenderly the little half-starved dog was fed with warmed milk. He had fallen into good hands. Willie's father and mother were kind Christian people, who had taught their children to be gentle and considerate to the meanest of God's creatures.

"Why, Willie, he's a fine fellow, and only quite a puppy; he will be a splendid dog when he is fully grown," his father said, when the animal had recovered sufficiently to be examined.

And so it proved. Bruno, as Willie named him, turned out a splendid creature. His devotion to the whole family, but especially to Willie, was quite touching to see. He would obey the slightest gesture of his young master in every matter except one. As a child once burned dreads the fire, so Bruno, once nearly drowned, could never be induced to enter the water.

While Bruno was developing into a handsome dog, Willie, you may be sure, was not standing still. He had grown into a fine strong lad, and got beyond poor old Dr. Jackson's school.

To the last day of his stay there he and Walter Harrison never managed to get on very good terms, and a suspected unfairness in the matter of obtaining a prize made them part with still greater coldness.

A year or two after he had left school Willie's parents went with their family to spend the summer months near the sea. Before they had been in their new quarters many weeks, much to Willie's vexation and disappointment, he found that Walter and his parents were also staying in the same town, and quite close to him.

The two lads frequently met, but they could get on no better now than they had done in the old days. Walter still looked upon Willie as a contemptible little milksop, and Willie was inclined to consider Walter's exploits more the result of foolhardiness than bravery.

One day they met on the beach. Walter had come down with a friend to take a boat.

"Rather rough for rowing," Willie called out as he passed, "but I suppose you're a good oar."

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"What's that to you?" responded Walter, insolently; "I suppose you're afraid of a little sea."

"I don't see the pleasure of going out when there's any risk," Willie replied, good-humoredly.

"How precious careful you are over yourself!" replied Walter.

The boat pushed off, and away started the two friends. Willie, not caring to watch them after the haughty, rude manner in which his remark had been received, turned away; but before he had gone far his attention was attracted by a succession of shouts and ejaculations.

The tiny boat had come to grief before they had got much more than fifty yards from the shore. In the unskilful hands of the two lads the little bark was a mere plaything in the angry sea. Carried on with a swiftness they were unable to check, they rushed headlong on to one of the hidden rocks with which the coast abounded. The boat turned over and disappeared, leaving its occupants struggling in the water.

There were but few bystanders, and of these no one did more than talk and gesticulate and ask wildly what was to be done.

The same impulse that had prompted Willie to rescue a drowning dog now caused him to risk his life in order to save that of the boy who had always shown so unfriendly a disposition toward him.

Pulling off his coat, he threw it and his hat down on the shore; and giving Bruno an injunction to guard them, he plunged bravely into the tempestuous waves. He could swim well, and succeeded with great difficulty in reaching the spot where Walter had but a moment ago disappeared, and then began the terrible struggle for life.

Bruno sat by his master's clothes and gazed out over the sea with eyes which looked almost human in their intelligent anxiety. Presently he grew restless, and in another moment the faithful creature dashed into the waves, and made resolutely for the spot where his master was laboriously engaged in trying to convey one of the drowning lads to shore.

By the powerful aid of the noble dog Walter and Willie were saved; and a boat having now put off, Walter's friend was picked up after a while. What a cheer rent the air when the dog and the two lads gained the shore I cannot attempt to describe. Willie was never called a milksop any more, and Bruno was more loved and prized than ever.



CHARLEY.

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I MADE the acquaintance of my little friend Charley under very unusual and startling circumstances. I saw a lad about fifteen years of age clinging desperately for very life to the topmast of a sunken ship. I will tell you how it happened.

I must go back nearly twenty years. Indeed, I ought to explain that Charley was a little friend of mine a long time ago; now he's a grown-up man. Well, twenty years ago I was not very old myself, but my sister, who is some years older than I am, was already married, and her husband was very fond of yachting. They lived during a great part of the year in the Isle of Wight, and there I often used to go to stay with them.

The "Swallow"—that was the name of my brother-in-law's yacht—was a beautiful boat, and many happy hours have I passed on board her as she skimmed merrily over the sparkling water. I delighted to sit on deck, watching the fishing-boats as they rode bravely from wave to wave, or sometimes wondering at some large ship as it passed by, on which men live for weeks and months without ever touching land. We used to sail long distances, and occasionally be out for several days and nights together. My brother-in-law's skipper could tell me what country almost every vessel that we saw was bound for. Some were sailing to climates where the heat is so great that our most sultry summer in England is comparatively cold; others were off northward, perhaps whale-fishing, where they would see huge icebergs and hear the growling of the polar bears.

We were taking our last cruise of the season. It was already near the end of October, and the weather was becoming stormy. Passing out of the Solent into the Channel, we found the sea much rougher than we expected, and as night came on it blew a regular gale. The wind and sea roared, the rain poured down in torrents, and the night seemed to me to be the darkest I had ever known. But on board the "Swallow" we had no fear. We trusted to the seamanship of our skipper and the goodness of our vessel, and went to bed with minds as free from fear as if the sea were smooth and the sky clear.

I awoke just as dawn was breaking, dressed quickly, and throwing a water-proof cloak over me popped my head up the companion-ladder to see how things looked. The old skipper was on deck; he had not turned in during the night. I wished him good-morning, and he remarked, in return, that the wind was going down, he thought. Looking at the sea, I observed two or three large fragments of wood floating near, and they attracted his notice at the same moment.

"Has there been a wreck, captain?" I asked, with a feeling of awe.

"That's about what it is, miss," answered the old seaman.

"Do you think the people are drowned?" I inquired, anxiously.

"Well," replied Captain Bounce, casting, as I thought, rather a contemptuous glance at me, "people don't in general live under water, miss."

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CHARLEY'S WELCOME HOME.

"Perhaps they may have had boats," I said, meekly. "Do you think boats could have reached the shore in such a storm?" [370]

"Well," answered the old captain, "they might have had boats, and they mightn't; and the boats, supposing they had 'em, might have lived through the storm, and at the same time they mightn't."

This was not giving me much information, and I thought to myself that my friend the skipper did not seem so much inclined for a chat as usual. I turned to look at the sea in search of more pieces of wreck, when I discovered in the distance a dark speck rising out of the water. I pointed it out to the skipper at once, who took his glass out of his pocket, and after looking through it for a moment exclaimed,

"There's something floating there, and a man clinging to it, as I'm alive!"

As he spoke my brother-in-law came on deck, and also took a look through the telescope. Then he, the captain and every sailor on board became eager and excited. You would have thought it some dear friend of each whose life was to be saved. The yacht was headed in the direction of the object, the boat was quickly lowered, the captain himself, with four sailors, jumping into it, and in another minute they caught in their arms a poor little exhausted and fainting boy as he dropped from the mast of a large sunken ship. We could now distinguish the tops of all the three masts appearing above the waves, for the sea was not deep, and the ship had settled down in an upright position.

Poor Charley Standish was soon in the cabin of the yacht, and after swallowing some champagne he revived sufficiently to tell us his story. The sunken ship was the "Melbourne," bound for Australia, and this was Charley's first voyage as a midshipman on board. During the darkness of the night she had been run into by a large homeward-bound merchantman of the same class. She sank within an hour of the collision. In the scramble for the boats Charley thought he had but little chance for finding a place; and as the ship filled and kept sinking deeper in the water, an instinct of self-preservation led him to climb into the rigging. Then up he went, higher and higher, even to the topmast; and at last, when the vessel went down all at once, he found himself, to his inexpressible relief, still above the surface.

What most astonished us all was that a boy so young should have been able to hold on for more than an hour to a slippery mast, exposed to the fury of the wind, and within reach, even, of the lashing waves. We sailed home at once to the Isle of Wight, and wrote to the boy's mother, a widow living in London, to tell her of his safety. The boy himself stayed with us two or three days, until we bought him new clothes, and then went to his mother. Great was her joy when she once

more clasped him to her loving heart. My brother-in-law took a great fancy to him. He has watched his career, and seen him at intervals ever since. Charley Standish is now a chief mate on board a great merchantman of the same class as the "Melbourne."

THE PARSEES.

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THE Parsees are supposed to be descendants of the ancient Persians, who, after the defeat of their King Yezdezerd, the last of the dynasty of Sassan, by the followers of Mohammed, fled to the mountains of Khorasan. On the death of Yezdezerd, they quitted their native land, and putting to sea, were permitted to settle at Sanjan, a place near the sea-coast, between Bombay and Surat, about twenty-four miles south of Damaun.

The Parsees are now chiefly settled in Bombay, numbering about one hundred and fifteen thousand souls, or one fifth of the population.

The most enterprising, in a commercial point of view, of the various races of Bombay, are the Parsees, some of whom are even more wealthy than the most successful of the European merchants. They bear the very highest character for honesty and industry, and are intelligent and benevolent. The late Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy was a faultless model of a merchant prince, in integrity, enterprise, and munificence. He founded a hospital that bears his name, and made himself conspicuous for his active benevolence up to the day of his death.

Great numbers of the poorer Parsees are clerks in the government offices—a species of service for which they are peculiarly fitted, on account of their attention to business, industry, and general intelligence. Their inclinations are essentially pacific; and such a phenomenon as a Parsee soldier is almost unknown.

The Parsees are alive to the advantage of affording a good education to their children; and among the largest seminaries in the city of Bombay are those belonging to this community. A Parsee school is an interesting sight. The children are decidedly pretty; and as they sit in rows, with glittering, many-colored dresses, and caps and jewels, they look like a gay parterre of flowers.

On account of their peculiar religious belief, the Parsees are known also as "Fire Worshippers;" but however great their awe for fire and light, they consider them only as emblems of a higher power. The Parsees pay reverence to two kinds of fire—the Adaran, lawful for the people to behold; and the Behram, which must be seen by none but the chief Dustoor, or priest, and must be screened from the rays of the sun. When required for a new temple, a portion of the sacred fire is procured in a golden censer from Mount Elbourg, near Yezd, where resides the chief pontiff, and where the holy flame is perpetually maintained. The Behram fire is said to have had its origin from the natural bituminous fires on the shores of the Caspian, and to have never been extinguished. It is supposed to be fed with sandal and other precious and aromatic woods, and is kept burning on a silver grating.

The Parsees are the only Eastern nation who abstain from smoking. They do not eat food cooked by a person of another religion, and object to beef and pork.

When a Parsee dies, a dog must be present, as it is supposed to drive away evil spirits, who are on the alert to seize upon the dying man's soul. This precaution is called the *sagdad*, or dog-gaze. One of the chief reasons for the great veneration in which dogs are held by Parsees arises from the tradition that in their emigration from Persia to India their ancestors were, during a dark night, nearly driven upon the shores of Guzerat, and that they were aroused and first warned of their impending danger by the barking of the dogs on board their ships.

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PARSEE CHILDREN, BOMBAY.

When a Parsee dies, the body is dressed in clean, but old clothes, and conveyed to its last resting-place on an iron bier; meat and drink are placed at hand for three days, as during that time the soul is supposed to hover around in the hope of being reunited to its late earthly tenement.



A PARSEE.

The Parsee sepulchres are of so peculiar a character as to merit particular notice. Should any of my readers ever go to Bombay, he will find two of these *dakhmas*, or Temples of Silence, in a secluded part of Malabar Hill, though admittance is denied within the walls enclosing the melancholy structures to aught but Parsees. The interior is fitted up with stages or stories of stone pavement, slanting down to a circular opening, like a well, covered with a grating, into which the bones are swept, after the fowls of the air, the dew, and the sun have deprived them of every particle of flesh.

The Parsees assign as their reason for not burying their dead, that, having received many benefits from the earth during their lifetime, they consider it defiled by placing dead bodies in it. Similarly, they do not adopt the Hindoo custom of burning their dead, as another element, fire, would be rendered impure.

The chief distinctive feature of the Parsee dress is the hat, to which the community cling with a pertinacity that would be extraordinary, were it not common. Even the Parsee representative of "Young Bombay," dressed from top to toe in European costume, including a pair of shiny boots,

cannot be induced to discard the abominable *topee*, or hat, distinctive of his race; though, perhaps, after all, we who live in glass houses should not throw stones; for what can be more hideous than the chimney-pot hat of our boasted civilization? The Parsee head-dress, which contests the palm of ugliness with its English rival, is constructed on a strong but light framework, covered with highly-glazed, dark-colored chintz. The priests, who dress like the laity, wear a hat of much the same shape as the former, but white, instead of a dark color.

On occasions of ceremony, the ordinary tight-fitting narrow garment is exchanged for one with very full skirts, like a petticoat; and a shawl is usually worn round the waist, which is at other times omitted. The costume of the women is a combination of that of the Hindoos and Mussulmans, consisting of the short body and *sarree* of the former, with the full trousers of the latter. Both sexes endue themselves, at seven years of age, with the sacred shirt, which is worn over the trousers; the *sadra*, as it is called, is made of a thin, transparent muslin, and is meant to represent the coat-of-mail the men wore when they arrived in India, and with which they believe they can resist the spiritual assaults of Ahriman, the evil principle. The hair of the women is concealed by linen skull-caps, fitting tight to the head.

It is a singular and interesting sight to watch the Parsees assembled on the sea-shore, and, as the sun sinks below the horizon, to mark them prostrating themselves, and offering up their orisons to the great giver of light and heat, which they regard as representing the Deity. Their prayers are uttered, it is said, in an unknown tongue; and after the fiery face of the orb of day has disappeared in his ocean bed, and the wondrous pillars of light shooting aslant the sky, proclaim that the "day is done," and the night is at hand, they raise themselves from their knees, and turn silently away from the beach, which is left once more to twilight and the murmur, or, if in angry mood, the roar, of the sea as it breaks on the shore. [374]



THE CRIPPLED BOY.

FROM THE FRENCH.

DON'T cry any more, Genevieve; you must get married again," said a man in the working dress of a slater, just returning from his day's work, to a poor woman who was sitting at the foot of a camp bed, weeping, and rocking her baby at the same time. "Your husband is dead; he fell from a ladder, and it killed him. It is a great misfortune for you and your family; but crying won't help you." [375]

Saying these words in a rough voice, to hide the emotion caused by the poor woman's despair, the workman brushed away a tear with his coat sleeve.

"My poor George!" said the woman.

"If your son was only good for anything," added the workman, rudely, throwing a glance of disdain upon a poor, pale, weak, and crippled boy, who was seated on the floor in a corner of the room; "if that child would ever grow into a man, I would take him with me, and teach him how to clamber over roofs, and to keep his balance upon the beams, and drop from the end of a rope. But no, he grows worse and worse every day; and now he can hardly bear his own weight. He is almost twelve years old, that son of yours; and if they said he was four, it would be a compliment."

"Is it the fault of Jacques that he came crooked into the world, my brother?"

"No, certainly not. I don't blame him, poor child, I don't blame him; but he will always be a useless mouth in the world. Luckily, he will not live long," he whispered in the ear of his sister. Then he rose, and went out, calling, "Good by till to-morrow," in a tone of voice which betrayed the anxiety he felt at the situation of his sister and her children.

"*Luckily* I shall not live long," was repeated by a sweet, sad voice, in an accent which only belongs to those who have suffered deeply.

"What are you saying, Jacques?" inquired Genevieve.

"That I am good for nothing. My uncle was right."

"Take courage, my son. When you are older, you will grow stronger."

"Yes, if—" said the boy.

But he left the sentence unfinished, and his mother was too much absorbed in her grief to ask him what he meant. It was late, and in a few minutes the poor family retired. It was hardly light when Jacques went down into the court-yard to see the grooms curry the horses, wash the carriages, and get ready for the day.

It was summer, and very soon a pretty little girl came down into the court. Jacques uttered a loud cry when he saw her.

"Without crutches, Mademoiselle Emilie!"

"So you see, Jacques," replied the young girl, with a sweet smile. "I shall not use them any more. To be sure, I am a little weak here," she added, showing her left arm and foot, which were smaller than the right; "and besides," she said, "I am a little crooked."

"And mademoiselle believes that she is entirely cured?"

"Certainly, Jacques. Only think, I was worse than you are! Stop, Jacques! I do really believe that *you* would be cured if you would go with me, and take lessons in gymnastics at the house of Colonel Amoros."

"I am too poor to do that, mademoiselle. Somebody told my mother that these academies of gymnas—gym—I don't know what—are very expensive; and besides that, what good would they do me? for my uncle says I shall not live long."

"Perhaps your uncle does not know any better than our doctor. But really, Jacques, have you not seen sometimes old people crooked and deformed? They have lived long, perhaps, those same old people."

"But it is not at all likely that they were obliged to earn their living, mademoiselle."



THE LITTLE CRIPPLE BOY.

“Poor Jacques!” exclaimed Emilie, in a tone of compassion. “You listen to me. When I am married, and have lots of money, I promise you that it will give me pleasure to make any sacrifice to pay for your being cured.” [377]

“Ah, I shall be too old then, or dead—who knows?”

“What can be done?” she exclaimed, tapping the toe of her boot on the ground with an air of vexation.

Then seeing an elderly lady come into the court, she ran to meet her, exclaiming,—

“My dear friend, allow Jacques to go with us to the Amoros gymnasium. You gave me one ticket. Say, will you give me two?”

“It is impossible, mademoiselle. I cannot give away your tickets without leave from your father.”

“Leave from my father, who is not here!” cried Emilie. “He is in Martinique. Before we could get an answer—O, dear! O, dear!”

“Do not distress yourself so, my child,” said the governess. “I have heard that they receive free pupils in the gymnasium conducted by M. Amoros. For many years they have taken those unfortunate children who are unable to pay the price of subscription. It is very generous and kind in Colonel Amoros, for it must be very expensive to support an establishment of this kind in the city.”

“It is very good in the colonel; but then I want to pay for Jacques, because if every one went without paying, the school would soon come to an end.”

“But what money have you to pay with?”

“Ah, you shall see, my kind friend.—Jacques,” she added, turning to the poor boy, whose pale and suffering face expressed all the interest he took in this conversation,—“Jacques, you must come with me to the gymnasium.”

“Never, for I cannot walk so far as that, mademoiselle,” said Jacques, sadly.

“But you must ride in my carriage.”

“Just think of that, mademoiselle! No, I am too poorly clothed,” said the poor son of the slater, glancing at his worn-out vest and at his green trousers patched with gray.

“Haven’t you any Sunday clothes?”

"Yes, mademoiselle, but they are very little better."

"They must be cleaner, certainly. Go and put them on. Hurry!"

Jacques obeyed. A few moments later, he came down, looking a little better dressed; but it was owing to the careful hands of a good workwoman, and not to the quality of the cloth which made his garments.

Emilie was obliged to use all her authority before the servants would allow the little peasant to enter the coach. At last she placed him on the seat before her, and he was much more astonished than delighted at finding himself run away with by a pair of frisky young horses.

In a street named Jean-Goujon you can see a large white building, of a very elegant style of architecture. On the front of it was printed, in large letters, the words GYMNASÉ CIVIL ORTHOSOMATIQUE, and other inscriptions to explain the object of the edifice.

In 1815 Colonel Amoros made the first effort to introduce gymnastics into France. Messrs. Jomard and Julien not only seconded him fully, but insisted on the importance of these exercises, not alone for physical development, but for moral and intellectual strength.

Colonel Amoros was of Spanish origin, and became distinguished in the Spanish army. He formed two companies of Zouaves, and achieved the most daring exploits with them in Europe and Africa. Then he became private secretary to King Charles IV. He formed a large gymnasium in Madrid, which was destroyed in the war of 1808. But in devoting, his life to the physical training of children in Paris, Colonel Amoros performed the greatest service to humanity. Though societies decorated him with medals, and France gave him funds for his military gymnasium, he will find in grateful hearts his best reward.

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But let us return to little Emilie, when the coach stopped at the gymnasium.

The exercises had not begun. The professors, who were all young and active men, wore the same dress—a white vest and trousers, with a tri-colored belt, and a little blue cap on the head. They only waited for a signal to begin, as they stood in groups in the centre of the court. Very soon a middle-aged gentleman appeared among them. Though he was no longer young, he was still strong and active, and seemed to have a powerful constitution. He wore a blue coat, and a decoration at his button-hole, which was given as a token of bravery. He wore a cap upon his head.

He came forward to speak to Emilie, and his eye fell upon poor Jacques, who was overcome with emotion at seeing a school where children who had been lame from weakness found the use of their limbs on recovering their health.

Before the colonel had time to ask who this boy was,—for he knew Jacques was not one of his scholars,—Emilie seized his hand, and with the coaxing voice that children know how to use so well when they want to ask a favor, she said,—

"I can walk without crutches now, colonel."

"I am rejoiced to hear it, my child. You ought to be able to do so."

"And I have grown almost an inch in six months. O, I am so much obliged to you, colonel!"

"You mean to my gymnasium, my dear child."

"No, to you, colonel, to you. For really I was much worse than Jacques is, and to-day I am better than he is."

"Who is Jacques?"

"This boy that you see here," said Emilie, taking the hand of Jacques, who was hiding behind her, and making him come forward before the colonel. "He is the son of a slater. His father is dead. He fell from a roof. Poor man! His mother is very miserable, for she has another child to take care of; so you see yourself, colonel, it is quite necessary that he should be able to stand alone."

All the time that M. Amoros was examining Jacques, rolling up the sleeves of his jacket to see his arms, turning up his trousers to look at his legs, feeling his spine, and making him stretch out his limbs, Emilie continued, with a coaxing voice,—

"If you are willing, Colonel Amoros, we can make an arrangement. O, you must not refuse me, I beg of you!"

"What?" said the kind man, continuing his examination.

"This boy is very poor—very, very poor. If he is not cured, he will never be able to get his living. He has a mother and sister to support; and see, colonel, I am very sure my poor Jacques will die soon."

"Will you hold your tongue, you little simpleton?" said the colonel, suddenly turning round at the word "die."

"He will die soon if you don't take pity on him, dear Colonel Amoros," added the little girl, clasping her small hands eagerly before the colonel, who was too much engaged in examining poor Jacques, and considering the best way to cure him, to pay much attention to Emilie's words.

"Please let Jacques take part in the exercises, and I will pay you out of my savings; or if you are willing to wait, I will pay it when I am married. And besides that, I will write to my father, and tell him to let me come and take lessons here after I am entirely cured."

The colonel could not restrain his mirth at the idea of Emilie wishing to pay him for a kind action, which his generous heart prompted him to do without any persuasion. [379]

"It does not require so much eloquence to urge me to do a kindness, my little friend," he replied. "Do you think I don't enjoy my practice? I will receive your protégé with pleasure, if he will promise to obey my orders, and if he will resemble his protectress in the love of doing good."

While speaking these words, the colonel called one of the teachers, and pointing to Jacques,—who did not know whether he was dreaming or not,—he said,—

"Take this boy, give him a belt, and a knot of scarlet ribbon on the left shoulder; that is the side which needs strengthening."

Then he explained which exercises he should take, and those he ought to avoid.

He then gave a signal for the bell to ring, and the professors and children were soon busy in the centre of the gymnasium.

It was a pretty sight, I can assure you. Such a wonderful combination of poles, ropes, posts, and ladders! You might wonder, at first, what they all meant. But soon every child came along in his turn, without effort, and with such perfect enjoyment, that it explained the mystery.

Gymnastic exercises were practised with great care by the ancients. They formed part of the education of a gentleman. They give that physical beauty and grace which only spring from a fine muscular development. Among the Greeks and Romans, men frequented the gymnasium and the circus. Philosophers, judges, and soldiers took part in these exercises with the citizens, that they might become stronger and more athletic, more active and capable of bearing fatigue.

M. Amoros not only gave health and strength to the pupils of his gymnasium, but he taught them to call only those deeds *great* which were inspired by bravery, love of humanity, and pure benevolence.

Two years had passed away; spring had arrived at the old chateau on the Loire, and M. Martel, the father of little Emilie, had returned from his voyage to Martinique. He was busy in making many necessary repairs in his family mansion, and many workmen came from Paris for that purpose. The night after their arrival, the chateau was discovered to be on fire. M. Martel awoke in haste; startled by the light of the flames, which suddenly illuminated his room, he ran to see where the fire sprang from, and called aloud for his daughter, whom he could not see anywhere. The spectacle that met his view quite overwhelmed him. The story that was on fire was the place where his daughter slept. It could be reached only from a neighboring roof, that was almost consumed. A single beam connected one building with the other. Notwithstanding his age and the gout, which paralyzed one of his limbs, the poor father wished to climb up and save his daughter, or to die with her. They held him back; he uttered fearful shrieks, when a young man, little more than a boy, was seen on the beam, which tottered with his weight. He walked along without fear. A profound silence succeeded to the cries of terror. The souls of the spectators seemed to look out of their eyes. M. Martel fell upon his knees.

The intrepid youth reached the window, and scaled it. They saw him unroll a long rope, or rope-ladder, and fasten it securely to the iron balcony which ornamented the window; then he disappeared.

Not a sound betrayed the anxiety of the spectators. The unknown man returned; he held a young person supported upon his back. He mounted the iron balcony, and suspended himself with his precious burden upon it, for she was well secured by a strong belt. This horrible suspense was more than M. Martel could bear. He covered his face with his hands. But soon the universal shouts of joy told him that his daughter was safe. [380]

After the first moments of delight, the young girl turned to her deliverer. An exclamation of surprise fell from their lips.

"Jacques!"

"Mademoiselle Emilie!"

Then they gazed at each other in silence by the red light of the fire.

They were no longer two pale, sad children, with haggard little faces, already prematurely old. They had been separated ever since Emilie had left the gymnasium, and, not living in the same place, they hardly recognized each other. Emilie was a tall and beautiful girl, enjoying all the delight of perfect health. Jacques almost had become a man.

M. Martel had not heard without emotion about his daughter's generous act, and her efforts to have Jacques received as a pupil in the Amoros gymnasium.

"Am I not well rewarded?" she exclaimed, extending her hand to the young man. "You would not have had any daughter without him, papa. The horror of my position, the impossibility of my finding a rope, a ladder, or any way of escape, frightened me so, that I lost my senses, and I should have been burned alive, if it had not been for Jacques."

"Ah, mademoiselle," said the slater's son, with emotion, "it is not life alone that I owe to you; is it not more than life? It is health, the use of my limbs, and the happiness of being able to support my mother. Yes, mademoiselle," added Jacques, with fervor, "I am a workman, and thanks to the lessons of our excellent professor, Colonel Amoros, I am more skilful than any of my fellow-laborers. I can support my family, and my wages are higher, because I can work harder and work longer than the rest."

"Brave boy!" exclaimed M. Martel, pressing Jacques in his arms, who was quite overcome at the meeting. "From this day forward you shall be my son. I will take charge of your education and your advancement, of your mother and your sister. Brave boy! My daughter has done much for you, but you deserve it; she understood your heart."

M. Martel kept his word. And some days after, when Jacques and his uncle met in the small attic of the poor widow, and were rejoicing over the happy change in their fortunes, the poor mother clasped her boy's head to her heart, and bathed his curls with tears, and covered them with kisses, exclaiming,—

"Now you see, brother, Jacques was not a useless creature. It is owing to him that our fortune is made."

"Yes, thanks to Colonel Amoros," said the workman.

"Thanks to Mademoiselle Emilie," said Jacques, heaving a sigh.

S. W. LANDER.



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A DINNER AND A KISS.

I HAVE brought your dinner, father,"
The blacksmith's daughter said,
As she took from her arm the kettle,
And lifted its shining lid.
"There is not any pie or pudding;
So I will give you this;"
And upon his toil-worn forehead
She left the childish kiss.

The blacksmith took off his apron,
And dined in happy mood,
Wondering much at the savor

Hid in his humble food,
While all about him were visions
Full of prophetic bliss;
But he never thought of the magic
In his little daughter's kiss.

While she, with her kettle swinging,
Merrily trudged away,
Stopping at sight of a squirrel,
Catching some wild bird's lay,
O, I thought, how many a shadow
Of life and fate we would miss,
If always our frugal dinners
Were seasoned with a kiss!

MY MOTHER.

[382]

"Honor thy father and thy mother."

FATHER and mother! sacred names and dear;
The sweetest music to the infant ear,
And dearer still to those, a joyous band,
Who sport in childhood's bright enchanted land.

And when, as years roll on, night follows day,
The young wax old and loved ones pass away,
Through mists of time yet holier and more dear,
"Father and mother" sound to memory's ear.

The days, the hours, the moments as they speed,
Each crowned by loving thought or word or deed,
Oh, heart's long-suffering, self-denying! sure
Earth holds no love more true, and none so pure.

Thou happy child whom a good God hath given
A parents' shelt'ring home, that earthly heaven,
Where ceaseless care, where tireless love and true,
Nurse thy young life as flowers are nursed by dew.

E'en as the flowers, for the dear debt they owe,
Bloom, and sweet odors in rich meed bestow,
Let the fair blossoms of thy love and duty
Cluster about thy home in fragrant beauty.

Never from eye or lip be seen or heard
The sullen glance or the rebellious word,
And never wilfully or heedless pain
The tender hearts that cannot wound again.

But fond caress, sweet smile and loving tone,
Obedience prompt and glad, be thine alone,
For filial love, like mercy, is twice blest;
While to the parent of earth's joys the best,
Richer than treasures of the land or sea,
It wins God's blessing, O my child, for thee!

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MY MOTHER.

REGINALD'S FIRST SCHOOL-DAYS.

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ONE frosty morning in January two delicate-looking children were sitting before a blazing fire in a long, low nursery with oak rafters running across the ceiling. Between them lay a great shaggy dog.

"You will take good care of Rover whilst I am away?" said the boy, winding his fingers in Rover's shaggy hair and leaning his head against him.

"Yes; he shall go for a walk with me every day, and in the twilight I will talk to him about you," answered Alice. "You might send messages to him in your letters," she added.

"Would you understand them, old fellow?" asked Reginald, lifting up the dog's head and looking into his eyes.

The dog wistfully returned his master's gaze and gave him his paw.

"I believe he understands," said Reginald, throwing his arms round the dog's neck. "Oh, Rover, Rover, if I could only take you with me!"

"It would not be so bad then," sighed Alice.

"It won't be really bad when I get accustomed to it. Just at first it may be strange, but I shall be sure to like one, at any rate, out of the forty boys. It is going out into the world, and my father says it is well for a boy to learn his level early. On the whole, I am glad I am going; it is only the first bit of it that one is not sure about."

It was a large room, with desks and benches on either side, and an aisle, as Reginald called it, up the middle. It had four large windows looking out on the playground, and a fireplace at each end, round which some dozen or two of boys were clustered.

Reginald advanced toward the fireplace at the lower end of the room, hoping that some one might speak to him and rid him of the strange, uncomfortable feeling that crept over him; but none of the boys spoke, though they regarded him critically, as if measuring the sort of being he was before committing themselves to any closer acquaintance.

So he sat down on a bench halfway down the school-room, tried to look unconscious, and half wished himself at home again.

"Have any of you fellows got a knife? I want to cut this piece of string," said a tall boy, addressing the group generally.

In a moment Reginald had taken out his new knife and offered it to the speaker.

"Ah!" said Thompson, the tall boy; "a capital knife. Much obliged; will borrow it for the present;" and after using it he quietly put it into his pocket.

Some of the boys laughed. One of them, however, murmured, in an undertone, "What a great shame!"

Reginald's color rose. He walked straight up to Thompson:

"Will you please to give me my knife again?"

Thompson looked surprised:

"No; I shall please to do nothing of the kind. You offered it, and I accepted it. An offer's an offer."

"I lent it to you to cut the string."

"You did not say so."

"I do not think it just of you to take my knife in that way," said Reginald, thoroughly aroused; "and if you do not return it at once, I shall speak to Dr. Field about it."

"Oh!" said Thompson, coolly; "you're a sneak, are you?"

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INDUSTRIOUS REGINALD.

The boys, who had been gathering round Reginald, admiring his spirit in confronting the tall boy, now drew back, and the words "tell-tale!" "blab!" "sneak!" were distinctly heard. And Reginald found himself standing alone, deserted by those who had drawn near in sympathy with him, for Thompson was the tyrant of the school.

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Presently, when the boys had returned to their places by the fire, and Reginald was apparently forgotten, a merry-looking boy a year older than himself sat down by him.

"No," said he; "you must not say anything to Dr. Field. You must let your knife go, and learn wisdom for the future."

Reginald looked up.

"It's mean and unfair," he said.

"That may be, but the boys would say it was meaner still to complain. One has to put up with things of this sort at school, and make the best of them."

"What's your name?" asked Reginald, suddenly, for there was something about the boy that he liked, and he thought this might be the one who was to be his friend.

"Barton. And yours?"

"Reginald Murray."

"Murray's enough, without the other."

"I should like you to be my friend."

Barton glanced at the large dark eyes that were fixed upon him, and at the delicate and somewhat mournful face, and felt attracted also.

"I think I shall like you," he returned; "but I must wait and see how you go on. I think you've the right spirit; but you must take my advice about the knife. Will you?"

There was a struggle in Reginald's mind. It was very hard to give up the knife that Alice had saved up her pocket-money to buy for him. Still, Barton had been at school for some time, and knew better than he what ought to be done, so he answered, "I will."

But Barton was not prepared for his manner of carrying out the decision. To his great surprise, Reginald marched straight up to Thompson. "I shall not," he said, "speak to Dr. Field about the knife. It's unfair and unjust of you to take it, and I sha'n't be friends with you as long as you keep it. But Barton says it would be telling tales if I made a complaint."

Some of the younger boys stood quite aghast at Reginald's boldness; one or two even murmured, "Well done!"

Thompson stared, half in astonishment, half in anger. "You're too fast, young sir; you'll have to be put down, I see," said he. But he did not give Reginald his knife again.

School was indeed a new world to Reginald. He made friends and found enemies; he worked hard—indeed, often sat up by candle-light to prepare examples for the next day. He played well, and on the whole was tolerably popular. Thompson, however, still kept the knife, using it upon all occasions, which caused a thrill of indignation to go through Reginald's delicate frame.

"If I can't get it one way, I will another," thought he; and he brooded over the knife until he magnified every word that Thompson said into a series of insults to himself, and Thompson, pleased with the power he possessed over the boy, exercised it on all occasions.

So the spring went by, and the summer came, and the days slipped away, and the holidays were close at hand.

"If I were strong enough, I would fight him for it," said Reginald to Barton, one day, when Thompson had been more than usually aggravating. [387]

The remark was repeated to Thompson, who was standing by the side of the river that ran at the foot of the playground.

At that moment Reginald drew near.

"So you would like to fight me if you were big enough?" said he, with a sneer.

"I should!" answered Reginald, warmly.

"Ah! it's a bad state of feeling. If the knife causes such wicked thoughts, the best way is to get rid of it. So here it goes, and there is an end of it!" And drawing the knife from his pocket, he flung it into the river. It fell short of where he intended, and Reginald saw his beloved knife through the clear river, lying within what he supposed to be an easy reach. Without a moment's thought he jumped in after it, regardless of the cry that rose, "The water's deeper than it looks!"

His hand had, as if by instinct, grasped the knife, but as he tried to struggle back through the swiftly-running water he got confused, for, as the boys had called out to him, it was a great deal deeper than it looked, and just there the ground shelved suddenly, and Reginald, taking a false step, lost his footing.

There was a general outcry, which brought Dr. Field and a visitor who had just arrived to the spot:

"Murray's in the river!"

And they pointed to the spot where the poor boy had sunk.

With such a cry as the boys long remembered, the visitor had plunged into the water, and had caught the boy, who had risen for the last time, by the arm.

And the next thing that the boys knew was that a white, dripping form was carried through the playground into the house.

Then a whisper went round, "It was his father."

Then a whispered question, "Is he dead?"

And Thompson shuddered as he heard it.

But Reginald did not die; he opened his eyes to find his father clasping his hand. At first he could remember nothing, then he looked round anxiously: "Is the knife safe? I went to pick up my knife."

Then he closed his eyes and remained for a long time silent; and when he spoke again, it was in the wild ravings of delirium.

The shock had been too much for the delicate boy. Fever came on, and it was weeks before he could be moved home. And then he was ordered to the South, and Italy was the chosen place in which Mr. and Mrs. Murray and their two children should sojourn until Reginald should have completely recovered his health.

And this time Rover was to go with his young master.

The day before Reginald left home a carriage drove up to the door, and Thompson stepped out of it.

He and Reginald were alone for a quarter of an hour, and they parted friends.

"I have my knife now, Thompson," said Reginald, "and so the quarrel is over."

And Thompson returned to Dr. Field's a better and a wiser boy. He never bullied any one again.



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CLEOPATRA.

WE'VE called our young puss Cleopatra;
'Twas grandpa who named her like that.
He says it means "fond of good living"—
A queer enough name for a cat!

She leads the most lovely existence,
And one which appears to enchant;
Asleep in the sun like a snow-flake
That tries to get melted and can't;

Or now and then languidly strolling
Through plots of the garden, to steal
On innocent grasshoppers, crunching
Her cruel and murderous meal!

Or lapping from out of her saucer—
The dainty and delicate elf!—
With appetite spoiled in the garden,
New milk that's as white as herself.

Dear, dear! could we only change places,
This do-nothing pussy and I,

You'd think it hard work, Cleopatra,
To live, as the moments went by.

Ah! how would you relish, I wonder,
To sit in a school-room for hours?
You'd find it less pleasant, I fancy,
Than murdering bugs in the flowers.

EDGAR FAWCETT.

DECLAMATION.

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SHAKSPEARE.

SHE sat in her eternal house,
The sovereign mother of mankind;
Before her was the peopled world,
The hollow night behind.

"Below my feet the thunders break,
Above my head the stars rejoice;
But man, although he babbles much,
Has never found a voice.

"Ten thousand years have come and gone,
And not an hour of any day
But he has dumbly looked to me
The things he could not say.

"It shall be so no more," she said;
And then, revolving in her mind,
She thought, "I will create a child
Shall speak for all his kind."

It was the spring-time of the year,
And, lo! where Avon's waters flow,
The child, her darling, came on earth
Three hundred years ago.

There was no portent in the sky,
No cry, like Pan's, along the seas,
Nor hovered round his baby mouth
The swarm of classic bees.

What other children were he was;
If more, 'twas not to mortal ken;
The being likest to mankind
Made him the man of men.

Before he came, his like was not,
Nor left he heirs to share his powers.
The mighty mother sent him here
To be her voice and ours;

To be her oracle to man;
To be what man may be to her;
Between the Maker and the made
The best interpreter.

RICHARD H. STODDARD.

SMILES AND TEARS.

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BOTH sword and guns are strong, no doubt,
And so are tongue and pen,
And so are sheaves of good bank-notes,
To sway the souls of men;
But guns and swords, and gold and thought,
Though mighty in their sphere,
Are often poorer than a smile,

NICOLO'S LITTLE FRIEND.

NICOLO, *Nicolo*, where are you? Where have you hidden yourself? Come here; I want you."

It was a very bright-eyed little girl who spoke these words—under a bright sky, too—the sunny sky of Italy.

But *Nicolo*, a boy some years older than herself, looked far from bright or happy; he was lying full length on the ground in the sunlight; but his face was overcast and melancholy.

"Lazy fellow!" said little *Gianetta*, laughingly, as she came up to him; "I am out of breath calling to you. Come along; I want you. Mother has done with me, and we can make some music together."

But *Nicolo* shook his head, though he smiled at his little friend.

"What is it?" asked *Gianetta*. "Why can't you come? Is it the father again?"

Nicolo sighed. He was a cheerful, happy-tempered boy by nature. And yet *Gianetta* often found him looking very sad.

"Tiresome, bad man!" broke forth the little girl. "He has been scolding you again; but no. Stop; I will say no wicked things of him, for he is your father; and we must honor our parents, be they bad or good, Father *Clement* says. But tell me, *Nicolo*, what has he said or done?"

"It is nothing," said *Nicolo*, rousing himself at length—"nothing, my little *Gianetta*; but it wearies me. It is the old tale; he likes not my music—thinks it an excuse for idleness. Listen, little one. I make my plans now. I cannot bear this life. I must do as he wishes—learn a trade or somewhat, and give up my violin."

"That you never shall do," said *Gianetta*, earnestly. "You think me naughty, *Nicolo*; but I am not. I only see it plainer than you or your father. God has given you this talent,—this great one,—and you shall not hide it, you shall not bury it." The little girl's face was so eager, that *Nicolo* smiled at her.

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But she went on, more excitedly:—

"Get up this moment, *Nicolo*, and come in with me. We will play somewhat together. Your father never scolds you when I am by. And you shall not give up your music."

The boy, half in earnest, and half amused, let the child drag him into a little house near, put his violin into his arms, and then seat herself at the piano, while in the distance sat *Nicolo's* father, gloomily watching the pair.

"Begin," said *Gianetta*, "and tell me when I play wrongly."

But for such a mere child, *Gianetta* played with marvellous correctness. As for *Nicolo*, his countenance cleared with every sound that he drew from his beloved violin; he forgot his gloomy father; he thought no longer of his dull, sad home. He was wrapped in that wonderful content which the possession of some great talent gives.

With the last chord the brightness faded, however, out of his face.

"Take me home now," said the little girl.

Home was only across the street; but *Gianetta* wanted another word in private with her friend.

"*Nicolo*," she said, gravely, "never speak more of giving up the music; it is not to be. I am sorry for you, my poor boy; I know it is a hard life, but—"

"But I will make a name for myself at last," said *Nicolo*, catching her enthusiasm; "and then, perhaps, my father will have faith in me. Till then I will be brave, little one; so good night."

It was a hard life for *Nicolo*—his mother dead, his father with no care for his son's one great passion—music. Many a time the boy's spirit failed, and he even grew to doubt his own powers under the cold glance and cruel taunts which daily met him.

He was sitting one day, feeling even sadder than usual,—discontented even with the sounds he drew from his instrument,—when *Gianetta's* mother stood in the doorway.

"The child is ill," she said, hurriedly—"very ill, and calls ever for you. Come."

So *Nicolo* went, and, though tossed with fever, his little friend smiled on him. There was, however, a longing look in her eyes; but her parched lips could not form a word.

"Is it the violin?" asked *Nicolo*, softly.

She smiled again, and *Nicolo* fetched his treasure.

"A sleeping song?" he questioned.

The little face grew calm and soft at his question. Sweetly the music floated through the room, stilling the little sufferer, and comforting the watchers. When he had finished, Gianetta stretched out her arms.

"Thank you, dear Nicolo," she said; "that was pleasant. Now I shall sleep; but *you* must never sleep; you have much else to do; you must go out into the world, and be famous—go away far, far from here. Do you mind my words? Will you remember them?"

And she lay back exhausted on her pillow, never more to ask for music in this world. Gianetta was listening even then to the angels' song.

That night Nicolo sat beside the dead body of his little friend. Lights burned, flowers were scattered round her, and prayers were said without ceasing in all those long hours. It was the custom of the country; it did not disturb the dead, and it comforted the living.

And when morning dawned, the friendless boy went back to his little room across the road, and there he poured out his heart in a farewell strain to his dear companion who had thus suddenly been snatched from him.

There was no more now to be done but to fulfil her last command—to go out into the world, and to make himself famous. [392]

Did he do so?

Ask those who love music, and hold dear all great names in its roll of fame, if they ever heard of Nicolo Paganini; for it is of his boyhood that I write.

How far he owed his success in life to a little girl, each reader may judge for himself. She certainly inspired him with courage when he was very down-hearted; and through all his brilliant career, I think he at least must always have remembered her with gratitude.

H. A. F.

A CHILD'S PETITION.

O THOU above,
From whose great love
The world all good receives,
Make me as bright
With thy blessed light
As a rose with all her leaves.

Wash me as clean
From every sin,
O pitiful, pitiful One;
And make me shine
With thy grace divine,
Like a lily with the sun.

Take pride away,
Dear Lord, I pray,
And make me pure and true,
That I may be fed
On thy living bread,
As the daisy is fed on the dew.

Help me still
To do thy will
Till life has passed away,
And in the dark
To sing like a lark
At the golden gate of the day.

THE TRUANT.

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WHAT'S the matter with Neddy Oram?" I said as a noise outside drew me to the window, and I saw old Mrs. Oram dragging her grandson along the street. She looked angry and determined.

"He's played truant, I guess," answered my little girl as she came to my side. "He played truant last week, and Mr. Jonas made him stand on one foot ever so long a time. And when he got tired

and put the other one down, he switched him on the leg. Oh dear! I don't want to go this morning. I wish Neddy wouldn't play truant, nor be bad in school! He's such a nice boy, and I can't bear to see him whipped. Mr. Jonas will cut him dreadfully, I know he will, for he said he'd take the skin off of him if ever he played truant again."

Neddy was a nice boy, as my little girl said. He was bright and active, kind-hearted and generous. I never saw him do a mean or selfish thing. But he had a free, rather reckless spirit and a will that was stubbornness itself when aroused. Kindness softened, but anger hardened, him.

Neddy's father and mother were both dead, and the boy lived with his grandmother, who was rather a hard woman, and believed more in the power of force than in the power of kindness.

As soon as I understood the case I put on my bonnet hastily and ran after Mrs. Oram, hoping to come up with her before she reached the school-room. I was a few moments too late for this, but in time to have a word with Mr. Jonas, who stood at the door holding the struggling boy firmly by the arm.

"I want you to promise me one thing," I said, laying my hand on the schoolmaster's. I spoke in as quiet a voice as I could assume, but very seriously. My words and manner threw Mr. Jonas off of his guard. His hold on the boy relaxed, and in the next instant Neddy was beyond his reach and running off as fast as his feet could carry him.

"After him!" cried the schoolmaster, greatly excited. "After him, John Wilkins!"

A large, coarse-looking boy started forward, and was about passing through the door, when I put my hand on him, and pressing him back said,

"Wait a moment, John. Maybe, after I've said a word to Mr. Jonas, he'll not want you to go. Tell him to wait, Mr. Jonas; do, now, because I want you."

I softened my voice to a persuasive tone, and so made my interference effectual. The schoolmaster told John Wilkins to go back to his seat.

Mrs. Oram had started after her troublesome grandson on the instant of his escape, and so I was left alone with the excited teacher.

"Now, don't be angry with me," said I, "nor tell me to go away and mind my own business. Two heads are sometimes better than one; and it's my opinion that if you and I put our heads together, we can save this poor boy from being ruined. There is a great deal of good in him, but as things go now I'm afraid it will be lost. With natures like his, 'love has readier will than fear.' His grandmother doesn't know how to manage him. Let us try to show her a better way."

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THE TRUANT.

By the time I had said this the thoughts of Mr. Jonas had become clearer and his anger against Neddy much abated. I saw this in his face.

"Let the boy go now," I added. "After school come and see me, and we'll have a long talk over the matter. But promise me one thing."

"What is that?" he asked.

"If old Mrs. Oram brings Neddy back to-day, don't punish him."

"Very well. It shall be as you say," answered the schoolmaster.

That evening Mr. Jonas called to see me. He was a better man, on the whole, than he was a schoolmaster. Out of school he was kind and genial, but as a teacher he was not always as wise and as patient as he should be. Like Neddy's grandmother, he believed more in the power of force than he did in the power of kindness. His rod was always in sight, and too often in his hand. He ruled by fear, and not by love.

"Did Neddy come back to school?" I asked.

Mr. Jonas shook his head gravely.

"Oh, mother," cried my little girl, rushing into the room just at this moment, "Neddy Oram's lost or run away!"

She stopped on seeing Mr. Jonas; her face, that had been a little pale, flushed deeply, and her eyes had an angry flash. "And it's all your fault!" she added, with a sudden brave indignation in her tiny voice as she turned on the schoolmaster and looked at him steadily.

"My fault!" said the schoolmaster, in a startled voice.

"Yes, sir. It's all your fault. If you hadn't made him stand on one leg until he was almost tired to death, and switched him when he put the other down, and if you hadn't said you'd cut the skin off of him, he wouldn't have run away."

And here little Carrie burst out crying, and buried her face, sobbing, in my lap.

"Brave talk for my timid little girl, Mr. Jonas," I said, in an undertone, "but all true, I'm afraid."

"What is true?" he asked, looking bewildered.

"All that Carrie has said. This way you have of flogging children does more harm than good. A man of your clear mind and kindly nature might surely find some better way to govern your scholars."

Mr. Jonas did not answer. There was a look of pained surprise on his face.

"Run away, lost!" he exclaimed, after a few moments, rising to his feet. His manner had become suddenly agitated. "Poor boy! I must see about this;" and he went out hastily.

When Neddy Oram, who was only ten years old, escaped from the schoolmaster, he went directly home and hid himself in the garret, behind some boxes and old furniture. He ran so much faster than his grandmother that she lost sight of him and did not see him go into the house. So no search was made for him in the garret. Like some poor hunted animal that had gained a place of safety, he crouched panting in his hiding-place, enjoying for a time a sweet sense of security. But Neddy could not long forget how small and weak and dependent he was. It was all very well to hide away from his grandmother, but how was he to get anything to eat? [396]

"Run away!" said a voice that spoke inside of him, but so loud and clear that he almost started. "Run away!" repeated the voice. "Grandmother Oram will find you out up here and take you back to school, and Mr. Jonas will switch you half to death."

I wonder who it was that said this, or how a voice could speak inside of Neddy Oram? It was a bad spirit, I think, that wished to do him harm. We may often hear these bad spirits speaking in our thoughts and telling us to do naughty things. Good spirits speak in our thoughts as well as bad ones, and they tell us to do what is right, to be kind and generous and loving and true.

I am sorry to say that Neddy, who was not only angry with his grandmother and the schoolmaster, but on account of his wrong-doings and disobedience afraid of them, listened to this voice, and as he listened the bad spirit made the voice seem so like his own thoughts that he knew not but that all came from himself.

So under this wrong influence he planned an escape from the house, which was to be made as soon as his grandmother went out. For an hour or two he heard her moving around. At last all was still. Then he stole from his hiding-place and listened at the head of the stairs. Not the slightest sound broke the deep silence. Grandmother had gone away. Then he took a loaf of bread, a large slice of cake and some apples, which he tied up in a handkerchief; and stealing out of the back door, he ran through the garden and out of a gate that opened into a lane. At the end of this lane was a piece of woods, and beyond this wood a deep hollow, along which it was easy to go without danger of being seen by any one.

How strangely the little boy's heart beat as he hurried along, going he knew not whither! It was not long before he reached the hollow beyond the woods. After crossing this hollow, he entered

another wood by a narrow path made by the cattle. The trees in this wood were very tall and close together, and the underbrush grew so thick that he could see before him only for a short distance.

The silence and darkness of this heavy forest caused a lonely feeling to come over Neddy. All at once the thought of bears and wolves came into his mind, and with the thought fear crept into his heart. A weakness fell upon him, and he stood still with drops of cold sweat on his forehead. Then he turned and ran back, but in doing so missed the way and took a path that, instead of taking him out of the forest, led him farther into it. He ran and ran, panting for breath, until he was so tired that he had to sit down to rest.

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"What if I am lost?" he said to himself, a cold chill running over him at the thought. Lost! How wildly the poor little boy's heart began to beat! As he sat there, feeling too weak from weariness and fear to arise, he heard not far off the sound of feet cracking the dry sticks and rustling the leaves that lay upon the ground. He held his breath in terror, for he was sure it was a bear or wolf. Nearer and nearer the animal came, passing only a few rods from where he sat motionless.

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed Neddy, in tones of relief, starting to his feet as he saw a young heifer which was astray in the woods.

At sight of the boy the heifer, scared by his sudden appearance, started off at a run and was soon out of sight, leaving Neddy again alone. He tried to follow her, but was not able to get on her track. Oh how he did wish himself at home! How sorry he was that he had played truant on the day before!

In trying to follow the heifer, Neddy left the narrow path along which he had been going, and now he was among the thick undergrowth of the forest, his hands and face scratched with briars. The trees stood so close together that no sunshine came down through their thick branches. All was dim and shadowy.

Poor Neddy! A great fear and loneliness fell on him again; and sitting down on the limb of a fallen tree, he began to cry bitterly. But crying was of no use. It wouldn't get him out of the woods and safely home again. So he dried his tears and started on again, hoping to find the path he had left. But he tried in vain. All at once he noticed that the light was fading rapidly and the air growing cold. The sun had gone down, and night was falling. Neddy's heart began to beat wildly; he could feel the throbs all over him; there was a great pressure as if a hand were laid on his breast; he could scarcely breathe, so strong was the feeling of suffocation that oppressed him. He tried to run, but his foot caught in a vine, and he fell upon the ground, where he lay for a long time before he had strength enough to arise.

In his weakness and exhaustion the poor boy found strength and courage. How! Think, my little reader. What would you have done if lost in the woods as Neddy was lost? Where would you have looked for help? You would have done, I am very sure, just as he did. And what did he do? Why, he put his little hands together, and lifting his tearful eyes upward prayed that God would take care of him, and not let any wild beasts eat him up.

As soon as he had done this the dreadful fear from which he was suffering went out of his heart. Just a little way beyond the spot where Neddy had fallen was a small clear place in the forest, where grew a bed of soft green moss. A few rays of light came down through an opening in the trees and showed him this cosy nook. Once in it, there seemed to grow all about him a wall of darkness. So he sat down upon the moss with a strange feeling of peace and security in his heart.

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And now, for the first time, Neddy felt hungry. So he opened the bundle of bread and cake which he had brought with him, and ate with a keen relish. Then he began to feel tired and heavy. The soft moss on which he was resting was just the bed for a poor tired boy like him, and before he had time to think of his loneliness and danger he was fast asleep.

But sleep sometimes gives us frightful dreams, and one of these came to Neddy. He still thought himself a poor lost boy in the woods trying to find his way out. He heard wolves howling, and saw bears and tigers and all kinds of wild beasts. At last a wolf with great red jaws came after him, and he started to run, but his terror was so great that he could scarcely move his feet. A fearful growl ran through the woods, and the dreadful beast came rushing down upon him. At this frightful moment he heard his name called; and turning, he saw Mr. Jonas, the schoolmaster, running toward him with an axe in his hand, with which he struck the wolf just as he was about seizing him. The wolf fell dead, and the schoolmaster, catching Neddy up in his arms, said, tenderly, "My poor, poor boy!" and hugged him tightly to his breast.

Was all this a dream? No, not all, for Neddy awoke and found himself in the schoolmaster's arms, with two or three men around holding lanterns in their hands.

"My poor, poor boy!" said the schoolmaster again, laying his hand tenderly on his recovered scholar; and this time Neddy heard the words in full wakefulness.

He did not stir, but lay with his head close against Mr. Jonas, who, guided by the men with lanterns, walked hurriedly through the forest, and soon came to the road that led to the village.

I was at Grandmother Oram's, waiting anxiously for news of the lost boy, when the schoolmaster came in with Neddy in his arms. I had been talking long and seriously with the frightened old lady about her way of treating Neddy, and she had promised me not to say a hard or angry word to him when he came home, if that ever should be. She was very much softened, and her real love

for Neddy was having its full course.

It was after ten o'clock when we heard the sound of coming feet. The poor old lady started up and stood pale and breathless. The door opened and Mr. Jonas came in, carrying Neddy in his arms. His face was softer in expression than I had ever seen it. He did not say a word until he came close up to Mrs. Oram, when, holding out the boy, he said, in a low voice that was broken and tender, "Be kind to the poor child, Mrs. Oram. I will see you about him in the morning," then merely adding, as he turned to leave, "We found him asleep in the woods," went out hastily.

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There was a new order of things in the village school after that. The rod fell from Mr. Jonas' hand, never to be lifted again, and he soon learned that in kindness was greater power than in fear. Neddy was in his place on the next day, and from that time onward was one of the most obedient and faithful scholars in school. Mr. Jonas' manner toward him was kind and gentle, and Neddy felt drawn toward him by a strange attraction that gave the schoolmaster the power over him of a wise and loving father. No thought of disobedience crossed the boy's mind. It was his delight to obey.

All this happened many years ago, and now the boy Neddy has grown to be a strong, wise, good man, an honor to the position he holds, and one of the best of citizens. He had the opportunity of doing Mr. Jonas many kind acts; and when at last the old man grew too feeble to earn his living, Mr. Oram made his last days comfortable by placing him above the reach of want.



Transcriber's Note

Archaic spelling is preserved as printed. Variable spelling and inconsistent hyphenation is preserved as printed across different pieces, but has been made consistent within pieces if there was a prevalence of one form. Punctuation and printer errors (e.g. omitted or transposed letters) have been repaired.

The following amendments have also been made:

Page 133—omitted word 'the' added—"Tell mother we want to make coffee in the field, too" ..."

Page 341—mud amended to snow, based on the context—"... enable it to wade through the deep snow, ..."

In the story "How a Good Dinner was Lost" the older sister is named as both Rosa and Rosy.

Illustrations have been moved where necessary so that they are not in the middle of a paragraph. Omitted page numbers were the original location of full page illustrations.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HAPPY DAYS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS ***

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