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THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

IN FIFTEEN VOLUMES

ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME XIII

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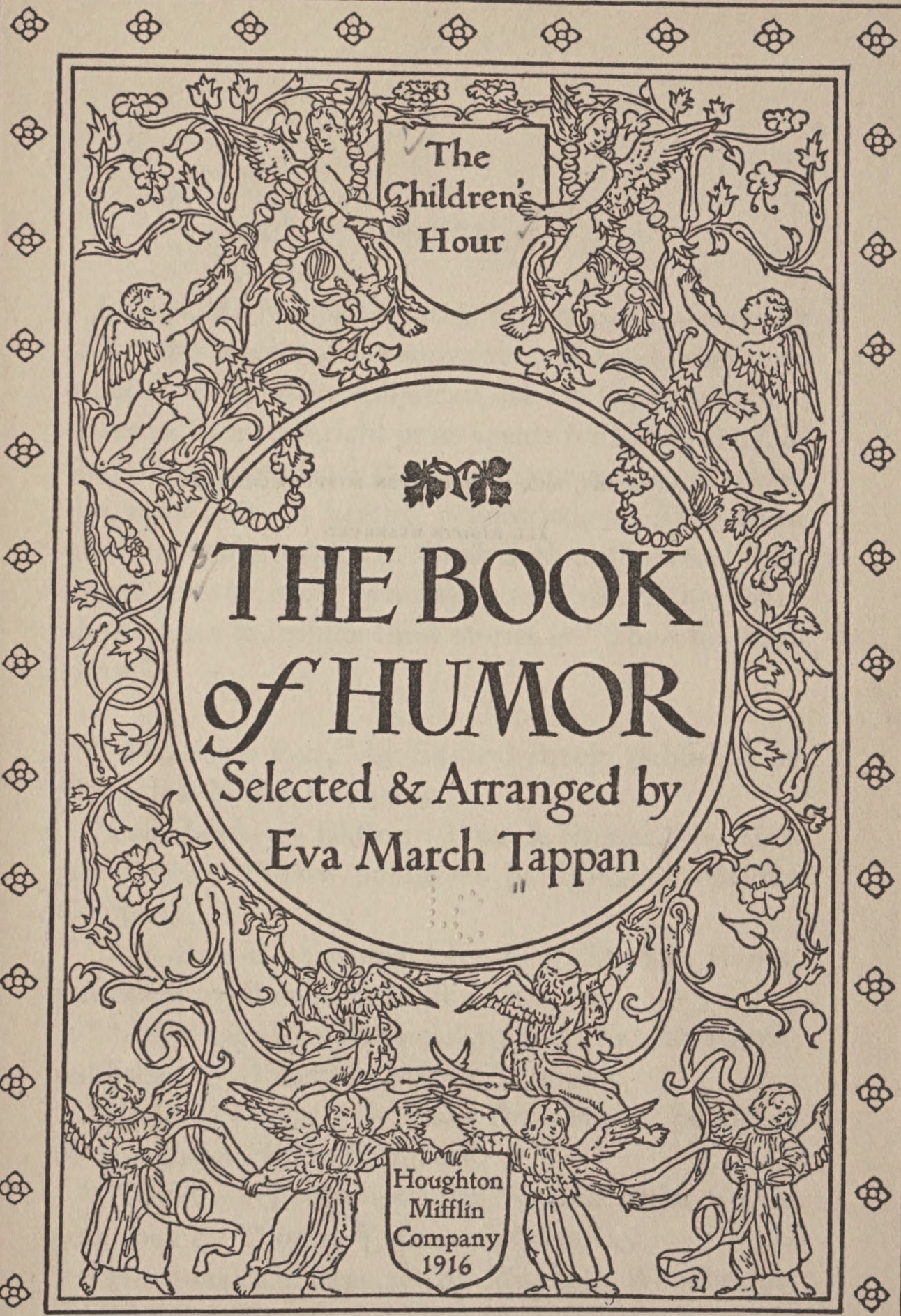

THE BOOK of HUMOR

Selected & Arranged by
Eva March Tappan

Houghton Mifflin Company
1916

Between the dark and the daylight, when the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations, that is known as the Children's Hour.

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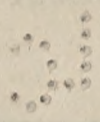

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TO THE CHILDREN

THERE is an old saying, "A little nonsense now and then is relished by the best of men"; and this is perfectly true, but the nonsense ought to be "best" as well as the men. So long as people are not all alike, some folk will always be amused by stories that do not seem at all funny to other folk, but there is plenty of good clean fun to suit every taste, and there are more kinds of fun than you can count. "Epaminondas and his Auntie" is funny because the small boy follows his mother's advice most obediently, but always applies it to the wrong thing. "Woman's Sphere" is funny because "sphere" has two meanings and both of them are brought out most amusingly in the story. "The Travels of the Two Frogs" is funny because, while you know very well that the joke is really on the frogs, they do not know it and are satisfied and happy in their mistake.

In stories as well as in real life, nothing is funny that depends upon any one's unhappiness or misfortune. A boy who torments a helpless little animal or a child smaller than himself is not doing anything funny; he is merely proving himself to be a coward, for he would run as fast as his feet would carry him if the child or the little animal should suddenly become as big and strong as he. So in a story there is no wit in trying to make fun of any one's misfortunes.

TO THE CHILDREN

As a general thing, a funny story must have a surprise of some sort. If the joke has seemed to be played on the wrong person, it is very satisfactory to have it turned upon the right one, as in "The Attack on the Minister's Melon Patch" and "The Comedy of the Herr Professor," for we do like to see justice done, even in a story, especially if it is done in an entertaining fashion.

There is a tale of a little girl who had been carefully taught never to make a remark about any one without first asking herself these three questions: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? She was so obedient that she passed most of her time in silence, considering whether what she had thought of saying would pass the three tests. Now it would not be a remarkably good plan to sit and meditate on a story before you decided whether to laugh at it or not; but it would do no harm to think over once in a while the stories that strike you as most amusing and see what it is that makes them seem funny.

The habit of seeing the funny side of things is a very good one. Like a friend, it "halves our griefs and doubles our joys." Therefore, — cultivate it all you can. A wise man once said that people were known by what they laughed at. Therefore, — be careful.

THE BOOK OF HUMOR

HIGH JINKS OF THE CUBS

By Edward Breck

IT was a very fortunate thing for Uncle Ned that, as an old woodsman, he was accustomed to early rising; otherwise it would have gone hard with his "beauty sleep"; for just above his head, on the roof, roosted Lige, who began walking round the roof at gray dawn, uttering his long-drawn-out "Qua-a-ahk!" which was always a signal for Jim's answering, "Hock! Hock!" or his appealing, "Ah-ah!" In a trice there was a chorus from the veranda of "Kwee-a! kwee-a!" which notified the sleeper that certain gulls were hungry; and a snarl or two from the bear house would cause Yankee, who slept at the foot of Uncle Ned's bed, to rouse herself with a sleepy "Meow!" for a good-morning.

At first Mr. Buckshaw used to harden his heart and take his dip in the lake before attending to the wants of his many pets; but as they grew older they raised such a din that he was afraid the whole village would be awakened, so that all the bird-kind were fed as soon as he got up, the rest being looked out for when he was dressed and before taking his own breakfast.

But early morning did not always pass as peacefully as this. Sukey's proneness to find or make holes in the netting of the bear house has already been mentioned,

and this ingenuity of hers several times caused Uncle Ned to hop out of bed earlier and in a far livelier fashion than usual. The back door always stood ajar, and, though there was a heavy weight against it, Sukey's strength was sufficient to push this aside, and Uncle Ned would be awakened by an angry yell from Yank and a snorting "Woof!" from the cub, or, more likely, the smash of some bowl or platter as it was dashed to pieces on the floor. Finally, a short chain was used to secure the door, and the master of the house felt reasonably secure; but that bear was incorrigible. The very next day she succeeded in scaling the roof by means of a young tree, and Uncle Ned was aroused by a most discordant duet of raven squawks and growls and "woofs." Before he could gather his sleepy senses there was a curious scratching in the chimney, a heavy fall into the fireplace, fortunately without a fire in it, and the next moment a very filthy and frightened bear cub rushed out into the room, made a couple of panicky turns, and, with a jump, landed in Uncle Ned's very bed!

In an instant Yankee threw herself on the cub, and such was the savage and perplexing mixup of claws and teeth for a minute that the poor man could do nothing but pull the clothes over his head and wait for victory to declare itself for one side or the other. This it speedily did, and the battle now turned into an utter rout, with Sukey careering for her life round the cabin and over tables and chairs, and Yank hard on top of her, cuffing her like mad. In despair Uncle Ned rushed to the door and threw it open, and Sukey was quick to take advantage of this avenue of escape. The

cabin looked as if an infant tornado had been amusing itself there. The inkstand was overturned and Uncle Ned's papers all smeared and torn; the breakfast table, with its neat plates and cups all set for breakfast, was a wreck; the big bowl of milk for Yankee and Nigghy and the cubs themselves, lay in pieces on the floor, with its contents trickling about in various directions; and over all was a layer of ashes that reminded one of a house in Pompeii after an eruption of Vesuvius. There is no use recording what Uncle Ned said on this occasion, but he certainly rivaled Lige in eloquence, and his words were easier to understand.

But this was but an incident in Sukey's joyous career. Not long afterwards, when the cabin had been left alone for a couple of hours, both bears succeeded in getting out of the bear house, and an open window in the cabin was more than an invitation. When Uncle Ned and his friends came home they saw one very unkempt-looking bear licking itself on the veranda, and perceived, as it scampered away guiltily, a thin streak of something dark flowing from it as it fled. Upon examination Uncle cried, "Molasses, as I'm a sinner!" The next moment out popped the second bear through the window and scurried under the cabin. With sinking heart Uncle Ned threw open the door, and the full extent of the "Sack of Camp Buckshaw" was exposed to view. Books, papers, pieces of crockery, cartridges, fishing tackle, clothes, firewood, medicine bottles with the corks out, pots and plates, in fact pretty much everything that the cabin held, was strewn upon the floor in disorder, and over all and around all and in all

were jam and molasses, molasses and jam, strawberry jam! On a high shelf Uncle Ned had kept a two-quart bottle of this, his favorite sweet, and those bears — how, goodness knows — had got at it and knocked it to the floor. Then they had pulled the cork out of the molasses jug and overturned that. The result was unique, unspeakable. There was not a chair or a table that was not smeared with the sticky combination; the lounge and all its cushions were covered with it, and those cubs had even wormed their way in between the sheets of Uncle Ned's bed, the sight of which would have sent a neat housewife to the insane asylum.

In the midst of the awful wreck Uncle Ned stood, drawing his breath in gulps. "Great — " he gasped, but the word died on his lips. For what was the use of language? There was none that could do even faint justice either to the appearance of that room or to his own emotions. It was not long, of course, before the sense of humor overmastered all others; but, after the good long laugh with which he and the rest relieved their feelings, Uncle Ned remarked grimly, "I kind o' believe those cubs are gettin' a little too grown-up for this quiet neighborhood!"

A week later, and he was sure of it. For a few days the cubs seemed chastened and contrite, though it was but the calm before the storm. Butter would n't melt in Sukey's mouth as she looked up at her master out of those wicked little bloodshot eyes. She would even try to play with Yankee; but the cat was very much on her dignity, and a quick right and left that made Sukey howl with pain was her reward. One

CAN'T SEE WHAT SHE FINDS IN THAT JUG

morning Yank showed a trait that is common in dogs but very rare in cats, namely, taking the master's part in a scuffle. Sukey had committed some minor sin and Uncle Ned was in full chase of her for purposes of punishment, when out of the shed rushed Yankee, passed her master, caught up with the fleeing cub, which she proceeded to cuff soundly until it ran under the house.

Occasionally the cubs would make expeditions to the neighboring cabins, which often resulted in wild panics on the part of the more timid ladies and the small children, who forgot that the bears were still more terror-struck than they. A scream would send the cubs under some cabin, where their presence would frighten the inmates out of their wits; and it often required a lot of coaxing and show of food before the bears would consent to come out.

One good turn they did the little community, which bore the character rather of a private country club than the usual hotel with cabin annexes. An extremely objectionable lady of very vast proportions and a tendency to gossip had grown to be a nuisance to the other guests, but there seemed to be no way of getting rid of her.

"I'll fix her!" said Uncle Ned; and one day he let the cubs loose about seven o'clock in the morning on the lady's veranda. As the door was ajar, the cubs, always curious by nature, lost no time in entering. The inevitable explosion, awaited by a small but select company concealed near by, soon followed, the shrieks of the affrighted lady reaching to the hotel kitchen, and caus-

ing the maids to rush out to see what the matter was. In the end nobody was hurt, but the fat lady left town two days afterward.

Many of Uncle Ned's pets had their Waterloos. We have seen that, in Pompey's case, it was a squash pie. In that of Rube and Sukey it was education, and religious education at that. You shall see.

About a mile up the road from the hotel stood the little village church, in which, during summer, services were held twice a month by a very good but very old-school clergyman named Mr. Skinner, who took the Scriptures as he found them and made no compromise with what he called the "milk-and-water way of preaching" of some of his sacred calling. His rule over his flock was based more upon threats and awful examples than upon persuasion. One of his physical features was a very bald head, about which some of the younger members of his congregation were wont to crack jokes, several of which, coming to the worthy man's ear, aroused his wrath. One afternoon in late August the Sunday-School class was listening patiently to a discourse by the Rev. Mr. Skinner on the sin of irreverence and disrespect toward one's elders, and the terrible things that were sure to happen to them unless they mended their ways. Even the elder children began to feel rather nervous and uncomfortable, as the direful programme was unrolled, while the eyes of the little girls and boys fairly stuck out of their heads in terror.

"Do you know what once happened to children for mocking a good man who had had the misfortune to lose some of his natural hair?" roared Mr. Skinner.

"Listen, for I tell you it may happen again! Hear what is told of it in the Second Book of Kings! 'And he [that was Elisha] went up from thence unto Bethel: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head. And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the woods, and tare forty and two children of them!' Do you hear what the Good Book says? Two she bears, with open mouths and terrible fangs, fell upon these unregenerate children and tore them limb from limb! And that may happen again, boys and girls! Right here in Milford and now, at this instant! For the ways of the Lord are the same as of old, and bears there are in the woods, yes, and plenty of them, and they are savage and cruel and terrible, and I say unto you —"

Just here a wild scream interrupted the good man, followed by shrieks and cries of terror, the oversetting of benches, and a wild scramble of the panic-stricken children; for down the single center aisle rushed headlong first one bear, a real bear, and then another! Bringing up suddenly against the high platform on which stood Mr. Skinner at the reading desk, Rube and Sukey (for it is needless to say it was they who represented on this occasion the wrath of the Lord) made frantic efforts to scale the platform, and the next moment they were upon it, while the shrieking children made a wild rush for the church door.

Mr. Skinner, who was very near-sighted, was quite bewildered by this extraordinary scene, and his first

intimation of the real state of affairs came with a shock as Sukey made a jump for his legs, possibly, in her fright, taking them for a tree. A second before, at the sight of the commotion and hearing the cries of "Bears! Bears!" the reverend gentleman had entertained a sudden notion that his wonderful eloquence had wrought this apparent miracle; but the moment he felt the well-grown cub's weight on his leg, and the sharpness of her claws through his thin trousers, a cry of agonized fear came from his lips, and, grasping the oak reading desk, he frantically endeavored to climb upon it, at the same time trying to shake off the cub. The suddenness and violence of his movements freed him from the bear, and the next moment he was sitting cross-legged on top of the desk, in which safe but ridiculous position he was found half a minute later by Uncle Ned and the boys, who, having discovered the escape of the cubs, had followed them to the church, arriving just too late to prevent their entrance. In fact, it was probably the closeness of the chase that caused the cubs to run in through the open door.

It took only a short time to corner the bears and secure them with collars and chains, while Mr. Skinner was helped down from his perch on the reading desk and the children assured that there was no danger to be feared from the little animals, who were much more frightened than they. The result was the breaking up of the Sunday-School class for that day, and a grand procession of bears and children back to Camp Buckshaw. Uncle Ned had apologized hastily to Mr. Skinner, but did not wait to hear that gentleman's rejoinder.

The very next day Charlie Munro might have been seen constructing in his barn a large wooden box, divided into two compartments, with stout slats covering one side. It was nothing less than the private car of Reuben and Sukey Buckshaw, in which they were to "go south for the winter," namely, to a certain zoölogical garden in New England, the manager of which was anxious to entertain them.

The morning of their departure the camp was aroused early, for it was thought best to get the cubs past the cabins before the guests were up, as the affair of the church (which the cubs' enemies had described as a "ferocious attack on the minister") and other little incidents had rendered them somewhat unpopular among certain people who, as Uncle Ned said, had been brought up to tremble at the mere word bear, and to believe that they lived mostly on man's flesh.

So it was but little after sunrise that the cubs were carried up to the barn in the arms of Uncle Ned and Jack. The latter had Rube, who was fairly quiet; but Sukey, far more high-strung and powerful, gave the woodsman a hard tussle, for he had neglected to put on his gloves. Frightened at a dog that came bounding out, Sukey struggled with such desperation that she tore herself almost out of her master's arms, and once bit him savagely in the hand. In passing the last private cabin before reaching the barn, she made a great spring, and, before Uncle Ned could prevent, slipped out of his arms and dashed through the cabin door, which was slightly ajar. Uncle Ned made a regular football "flying tackle," and grabbed Miss Sukey on

the very threshold, but not before she had been seen by some of the inmates, causing a great slamming of doors and screams of terror from the little folks.

Five minutes afterwards both cubs were securely fastened in their traveling box, and the last seen of them, as they were driven away, was Sukey, standing up and looking through the slats with what Uncle Ned always declared was an expression of deep sadness.

THE MINISTER'S HORSE

By Harriet Beecher Stowe

"FOLKS will cheat about hosses when they won't about 'most nothin' else." And Sam leaned back on his cold forge, now empty of coal, and seemed to deliver himself to a mournful train of general reflection. "Yes, hosses does seem to be sort o' unregenerate critters," he broke out; "there 's suthin' about hosses that deceives the very elect. The best o' folks gets tripped up when they come to deal in hosses."

"Why, Sam, is there anything bad in horses?" we interjected timidly.

"'T ain't the hosses, boys," said Sam with solemnity. "The hosses is all right enough! Hosses is scriptural animals. Elijah went up to heaven in a chari't with hosses: and then all them lots o' hosses in the Ravelations — black and white and red, and all sorts o' colors. That 'ere shows hosses goes to heaven; but it 's more 'n the folks that hev 'em is likely to, ef they don't look out.

"Ministers, now," continued Sam in a soliloquizing vein — "folks allers thinks it 's suthin' sort o' shaky in a minister to hev hosses — sure to get 'em into trouble. There was old Parson Williams of North Billriky got into a dreadful mess about a hoss. He wa'n't to blame, neither; but he got into the dreffulest scrape you ever heard on — come nigh to unsettlin' him."

"O Sam! tell us all about it," we boys shouted, delighted with the prospect of a story.

"Wal, wait now till I get off this critter's shoes, and we'll take him up to pastur', and then we can kind o' set by the river and fish. Hepsy wanted a mess o' fish for supper, and I was cal'latin' to git some for her. You boys go and be diggin' bait, and git yer lines."

And so, as we were sitting tranquilly beside the Charles River, watching our lines, Sam's narrative began: —

"Ye see, boys, Parson Williams — he's dead now, but when I was a boy he was one of the gret men round here. He writ books. He writ a book on the millennium (I've got that 'ere book now); and he was a smart preacher. Folks said he had invitations to settle in Boston, and there ain't no doubt he might 'a' hed a Boston parish ef he'd ben a mind ter take it; but he's got a good settlement and a handsome farm in North Billriky, and did n't care to move: thought, I s'pose, that 't was better to be number one in a little place than number two in a big un. Anyway, he carried all before him where he was.

"Parson Williams was a tall, straight, personable man; come of good family — father and grand'ther before him all ministers. He was putty up-and-down, and commandin' in his ways, and things had to go putty much as he said. He was a good deal sot by, Parson Williams was, and his wife was a Derby — one o' them rich Salem Derbys — and brought him a lot o' money; and so they lived putty easy and comfortable so fur's this world's goods goes. Wal, now, the

parson wa'n't reely what you call worldly minded; but then he was one o' them folks that *knows what 's good* in temporals as well as sperituals, and allers liked to hev the best that there was goin'; and he allers had an eye to a good hoss.

"Now, there was Parson Adams and Parson Scranton, and most of the other ministers: they did n't know and did n't care what hoss they had; jest jogged round with these 'ere poundin', pot-bellied, sleepy critters that ministers mostly hes — good enough to crawl round to fun'rals and ministers' meetin's and associations and sich; but Parson Williams, he allers would hev a hoss as was a hoss. He looked out for *blood;* and when these 'ere Vermont fellers would come down with a drove, the parson, he hed his eyes open, and knew what was what. Could n't none of 'em cheat him on hoss flesh. And so one time when Zach Buel was down with a drove, the doctor, he bought the best hoss in the lot. Zach said he never see a parson afore that he could n't cheat; but he said the doctor reely knew as much as he did, and got the very one he 'd meant to 'a' kept for himself.

"This 'ere hoss was a peeler, I'll tell you! They 's called him Tamerlane, from some heathen feller or other: the boys called him Tam, for short. Tam was a gret character. All the fellers for miles round knew the doctor's Tam, and used to come clear over from the other parishes to see him.

"Wal, this 'ere sot up Cuff's back high, I tell you! Cuff was the doctor's nigger man, and he was nat'lly a dreffful proud critter. The way he would swell and strut

and brag about the doctor and his folks and his things! The doctor used to give Cuff his cast-off clothes; and Cuff would prance round in 'em, and seem to think he was a doctor of divinity himself, and had the charge of all natur'.

"Wal, Cuff, he reely made an idol o' that 'ere hoss — a reg'lar graven image — and bowed down and worshiped him. He did n't think nothin' was too good for him. He washed and brushed and curried him, and rubbed him down till he shone like a lady's satin dress; and he took pride in ridin' and drivin' him, 'cause it was what the doctor would n't let nobody else do but himself. You see, Tam wa'n't no lady's hoss. Miss Williams was 'fraid as death of him; and the parson, he hed to git her a sort o' low-sperited critter that she could drive herself. But he liked to drive Tam; and he liked to go round the country on his back, and a fine figure of a man he was on him too. He did n't let nobody else back him, or handle the reins, but Cuff; and Cuff was drefful set up about it, and he swelled and bragged about that 'ere hoss all round the country. Nobody could n't put in a word 'bout any other hoss, without Cuff's feathers would be all up, stiff as a tom-turkey's tail; and that's how Cuff got the doctor into trouble.

"Ye see, there nat'lly was others that thought they 'd got horses, and did n't want to be crowed over. There was Bill Atkins out to the west parish, and Ike Sanders, that kep' a stable up to Pequot Holler: they was down a-lookin' at the parson's hoss, and a-bettin' on their'n, and a-darin' Cuff to race with 'em.

"Wal, Cuff, he could n't stan' it, and when the doc-

tor's back was turned, he'd be off on the sly, and they'd hev their race; and Tam, he beat 'em all. Tam, ye see, boys, was a hoss that could n't and would n't hev a hoss ahead of him — he jest *would n't!* Ef he dropped down dead in his tracks the next minit, he *would* be ahead; and he allers got ahead. And so his name got up, and fellers kep' comin' to try their horses; and Cuff 'd take Tam out to race with fust one and then another till this 'ere got to be a reg'lar thing, and begun to be talked about.

"Folks sort o' wondered if the doctor knew; but Cuff was sly as a weasel, and allers had a story ready for every turn. Cuff was one of them fellers that could talk a bird off a bush — master hand he was to slick things over!

"There was folks as said they believed the doctor was knowin' to it, and that he felt a sort o' carnal pride sech as a minister ought n't fer to hev, and so shet his eyes to what was a-goin' on. Aunt Sally Nickerson said she was sure on 't. 'T was all talked over down to old Miss Bummiger's fun'ral, and Aunt Sally, she said the church ought to look into 't. But everybody knew Aunt Sally: she was allers watchin' for folks' haltin's, and settin' on herself to jedge her neighbors.

"Wal, I never believed nothin' agin Parson Williams: it was all Cuff's contrivances. But the fact was, the fellers all got their blood up, and there was hoss-racin' in all the parishes; and it got so they'd even race hosses a Sunday.

"Wal, of course they never got the doctor's hoss out a Sunday. Cuff would n't'a' durst to do that. He was

allers there in church, settin' up in the doctor's clothes, rollin' up his eyes, and lookin' as pious as ef he never thought o' racin' hosses. He was an awful solemn-lookin' nigger in church, Cuff was.

"But there was a lot o' them fellers up to Pequot Holler — Bill Atkins, and Ike Sanders, and Tom Peters, and them Hokum boys—used to go out arter meetin' Sunday arternoon, and race hosses. Ye see, it was jest close to the State-line, and, if the s'lectmen was to come down on 'em, they could jest whip over the line, and they could n't take 'em.

"Wal, it got to be a gret scandal. The fellers talked about it up to the tavern, and the deacons and the tithingman, they took it up and went to Parson Williams about it; and the parson he told 'em jest to keep still, not let the fellers know that they was bein' watched, and next Sunday he and the tithingman and the constable, they'd ride over, and catch 'em in the very act.

"So next Sunday arternoon Parson Williams and Deacon Popkins and Ben Bradley (he was constable that year), they got on their hosses, and rode over to Pequot Holler. The doctor's blood was up, and he meant to come down on 'em strong; for that was his way of doin' in his parish. And they was in a sort o' day-o'-jedgment frame o' mind, and jogged along solemn as a hearse, till, come to rise the hill above the holler, they see three or four fellers with their hosses gittin' ready to race; and the parson, says he, 'Let 's come on quiet, and get behind these bushes, and we'll see what they're up to, and catch 'em in the act.'

"But the mischief on 't was, that Ike Sanders see 'em comin', and he knowed Tam in a minit — Ike knowed Tam of old — and he jest tipped the wink to the rest. 'Wait, boys,' says he: 'let 'em git close up, and then I'll give the word, and the doctor's hoss will be racin' ahead like thunder.'

"Wal, so the doctor and his folks, they drew up behind the bushes, and stood there innocent as could be, and saw 'em gittin' ready to start. Tam, he begun to snuffle and paw; but the doctor never mistrusted what he was up to till Ike sung out, 'Go it, boys!' and the hosses all started, when, sure as you live, boys, Tam gave one fly, and was over the bushes, and in among 'em, goin' it like chain-lightnin' ahead of 'em all.

"Deacon Popkins and Ben Bradley jest stood and held their breath to see 'em all goin' it so like thunder; and the doctor, he was took so sudden it was all he could do to jest hold on anyway: so away he went, and trees and bushes and fences streaked by him like ribbins. His hat flew off behind him, and his wig arter, and got catched in a barberry bush; but he could n't stop to think o' them. He jest leaned down, and caught Tam round the neck, and held on for dear life till they come to the stoppin' place.

"Wal, Tam was ahead of them all, sure enough, and was snortin' and snufflin' as if he'd got the very old boy in him, and was up to racin' some more on the spot.

"That 'ere Ike Sanders was the impudentest feller that ever you see, and he roared and hawhawed at the doctor. 'Good for you, parson!' says he. 'You beat us

all holler,' says he. 'Takes a parson for that, don't it, boys?' he said. And then he and Ike and Tom, and the two Hokum boys, they jest roared and danced round like wild critters. Wal, now, only think on 't, boys, what a situation that 'ere was for a minister — a man that had come out with the best of motives to put a stop to Sabbath-breakin'! There he was all rumpled up and dusty, and his wig hangin' in the bushes, and these 'ere ingodly fellers gettin' the laugh on him, and all acause o' that 'ere hoss. There's times, boys, when ministers must be tempted to swear if there ain't preventin' grace, and this was one o' them times to Parson Williams. They say he got red in the face, and looked as if he should bust, but he did n't say nothin': he scorned to answer. The sons o' Zeruiah was too hard for him, and he let 'em hev their say. But when they'd got through, and Ben had brought him his hat and wig, and brushed and settled him again, the parson, he says, 'Well, boys, ye've had your say and your laugh; but I warn you now I won't have this thing going on here any more,' says he: 'so mind yourselves.'

"Wal, the boys see that the doctor's blood was up, and they rode off pretty quiet; and I believe they never raced no more in that spot.

"But there ain't no tellin' the talk this 'ere thing made. Folks will talk, you know; and there wa'n't a house in all Billricky, nor in the south parish nor center, where it wa'n't had over and discussed. There was the deacon, and Ben Bradley was there, to witness and show jest how the thing was, and that the doctor was jest in the way of his duty; but folks said it made a gret

scandal; that a minister had n't no business to hev that kind o' hoss, and that he'd give the enemy occasion to speak reproachfully. It reely did seem as if Tam's sins was imputed to the doctor; and folks said he ought to sell Tam right away, and get a sober minister's hoss.

"But others said it was Cuff that had got Tam into bad ways, and they do say that Cuff had to catch it pretty lively when the doctor come to settle with him. Cuff thought his time had come, sure enough, and was so scairt that he turned blacker 'n ever: he got enough to cure him of hoss-racin' for one while. But Cuff got over it arter a while, and so did the doctor. There ain't nothin' lasts forever! Wait long enough, and 'most everything blows over. So it turned out about the doctor. There was a rumpus and a fuss, and folks talked and talked, and advised; everybody had their say: but the doctor kep' right straight on, and kep' his hoss all the same.

"The ministers, they took it up in the association; but, come to tell the story, it sot 'em all a-laughin', so they could n't be very hard on the doctor.

"The doctor felt sort o' streaked at first when they told the story on him; he did n't jest like it: but he got used to it, and finally, when he was twitted on 't, he'd sort o' smile, and say, 'Anyway, Tam beat 'em; that's one comfort.'"

BROTHER WOLF'S TWO BIG DINNERS

By Joel Chandler Harris

MR. RABBIT closed his eyes and rubbed his nose, and then began: —

"Once upon a time, when Brother Fox and myself were living on pretty good terms with each other, we received an invitation to attend a barbecue that Brother Wolf was going to give on the following Saturday. The next day we received an invitation to a barbecue that Brother Bear was going to give on the same Saturday.

"I made up my mind at once to go to Brother Bear's barbecue, because I knew he would have fresh roasting ears, and if there's anything I like better than another, it is fresh roasting ears. I asked Brother Fox whether he was going to Brother Bear's barbecue or to Brother Wolf's, but he shook his head. He said he had n't made up his mind. I just asked him out of idle curiosity, for I did n't care whether he went or whether he stayed.

"I went about my work as usual. Cold weather was coming on, and I wanted to get my crops in before the big freeze came. But I noticed that Brother Fox was mighty restless in his mind. He did n't do a stroke of work. He'd sit down and then he'd get up; he'd stand still and look up in the tops of the trees, and then he'd

walk back and forth with his hands behind him and look down at the ground.

"I says to him, says I, 'I hope you are not sick, Brother Fox.'

"Says he, 'Oh, no, Brother Rabbit; I never felt better in my life.'

"I says to him, says I, 'I hope money matters are not troubling you.'

"Says he, ' Oh, no, Brother Rabbit, money was never easier with me than it is this season.'

"I says to him, says I, 'I hope I'll have the pleasure of your company to the barbecue to-morrow.'

"Says he, 'I can't tell, Brother Rabbit; I can't tell. I have n't made up my mind. I may go to the one, or I may go to the other; but which it will be, I can't tell you to save my life.'

"As the next day was Saturday, I was up bright and early. I dug my goobers and spread them out to dry in the sun, and then, ten o'clock, as near as I could judge, I started out to the barbecue. Brother Wolf lived near the river, and Brother Bear lived right on the river, a mile or two below Brother Wolf's. The big road, that passed near where Brother Fox and I lived, led in the direction of the river for about three miles, and then it forked, one prong going to Brother Wolf's house, and the other prong going to Brother Bear's house.

"Well, when I came to the forks of the road, who should I see there but old Brother Fox. I stopped before he saw me, and watched him. He went a little way down one road, and licked his chops; then he came back

and went a little way down the other road, and licked his chops.

"Not choosing to be late, I showed myself and passed the time of day with Brother Fox. I said, says I, that if he was going to Brother Bear's barbecue, I'd be glad to have his company. But he said, says he, that he would n't keep me waiting. He had just come down to the forks of the road to see if that would help him to make up his mind. I told him I was mighty sorry to miss his company and his conversation, and then I tipped my hat and took my cane from under my arm and went down the road that led to Brother Bear's house."

Here Mr. Rabbit paused, straightened himself up a little, and looked at the children. Then he continued: —

"I reckon you all never stood on the top of a hill three quarters of a mile from the smoking pits and got a whiff or two of the barbecue?"

"I is! I is!" exclaimed Drusilla. "Don't talk! I wish I had some right now."

"Well," said Mr. Rabbit, "I got a whiff of it and I was truly glad I had come — truly glad. It was a fine barbecue, too. There was lamb, and kid, and shote, all cooked to a turn and well seasoned, and then there was the hash made out of the giblets. I'll not tell you any more about the dinner, except that I'd like to have one like it every Saturday in the year. If I happened to be too sick to eat it, I could sit up and look at it. Anyhow, we all had enough and to spare.

"After we had finished with the barbecue and were sitting in Brother Bear's front porch smoking our

pipes and talking politics, I happened to mention to Brother Bear something about Brother Wolf's barbecue. I said, says I, that I thought I'd go by Brother Wolf's house as I went on home, though it was a right smart step out of the way, just to see how the land lay.

"Says Brother Bear, says he: 'If you'll wait till my company take their leave, I don't mind trotting over to Brother Wolf's with you. The walk will help to settle my dinner.'

"So, about two hours by sun, we started out and went to Brother Wolf's house. Brother Bear knew a short cut through the big canebrake, and it did n't take us more than half an hour to get there. Brother Wolf was just telling his company good-bye: and when they had all gone, he would have us go in and taste his mutton stew, and then he declared he'd think right hard of us if we did n't drink a mug or two of his persimmon beer.

"I said, says I, 'Brother Wolf, have you seen Brother Fox to-day?'

"Brother Wolf said, says he, 'I declare, I have n't seen hair nor hide of Brother Fox. I don't see why he did n't come. He's always keen to go where there's fresh meat a-frying.'

"I said, says I, 'The reason I asked was because I left Brother Fox at the forks of the road trying to make up his mind whether he'd eat at your house or at Brother Bear's.'

"'Well, I'm mighty sorry,' says Brother Wolf, says he; 'Brother Fox never missed a finer chance to pick a bone than he's had to-day. Please tell him so for me.'

"I said I would, and then I told Brother Wolf and Brother Bear good-bye and set out for home. Brother Wolf's persimmon beer had a little age on it, and it made me light-headed and nimble-footed. I went in a gallop, as you may say, and came to the forks of the road before the sun went down.

"You may not believe it, but when I got there Brother Fox was there going through the same motions that made me laugh in the morning — running down one road and licking his chops, and then running down the other and licking his chops.

"Says I, 'I hope you had a good dinner at Brother Wolf's to-day, Brother Fox.'

"Says he, 'I've had no dinner.'

"Says I, 'That's mighty funny. Brother Bear had a famous barbecue, and I thought Brother Wolf was going to have one too.'

"Says Brother Fox, 'Is dinner over? Is it too late to go?'

"Says I, 'Why, Brother Fox, the sun 's nearly down. By the time you get to Brother Bear's house, he'll be gone to bed; and by the time you go across the swamp to Brother Wolf's house, the chickens will be crowing for day.'

"'Well, well, well!' says Brother Fox, 'I've been all day trying to make up my mind which road I'd take, and now it 's too late.'

"And that was the fact," continued Mr. Rabbit. "The poor creature had been all day trying to make up his mind which road he'd take. Now, then, what is the moral?"

Sweetest Susan looked at Mrs. Meadows, but Mrs. Meadows merely smiled. Buster John rattled the marbles in his pocket.

"I know," said Drusilla.

"What?" inquired Mr. Rabbit.

"Go down one road an' git one dinner, den cut 'cross an' git some mo' dinner, an' den go back home down de yuther road."

Mr. Rabbit shook his head.

"Tar Baby, you are wrong," he said.

"If you want anything, go and get it," suggested Buster John.

Mr. Rabbit shook his head and looked at Sweetest Susan, whereupon she said: —

"If you can't make up your mind, you'll have to go hungry."

Mr. Rabbit shook his head.

"Eat a good breakfast," said Mrs. Meadows, "and you won't be worried about your dinner."

"All wrong!" exclaimed Mr. Rabbit, with a chuckle. "The moral is this: He who wants too much is more than likely to get nothing."

"Well," remarked Mrs. Meadows dubiously, "if you have to work out a moral as if it was a sum in arithmetic, I'll thank you not to trouble me with any more morals."

"The motion is seconded and carried," exclaimed Mr. Thimblefinger.

BROTHER RABBIT'S ASTONISHING PRANK

By Joel Chandler Harris

I 'SPECK dat 'uz de reas'n w'at make ole Brer Rabbit git 'long so well, kaze he ain't copy atter none er de yuther creeturs," Uncle Remus continued, after a while. "W'en he make his disappearance 'fo' um, hit 'uz allers in some bran new place. Dey aint know wharbouts fer ter watch out fer 'im. He wuz de funniest creetur er de whole gang. Some folks moughter call him lucky, en yit, w'en he git in bad luck, hit look lak he mos' allers come out on top. Hit look mighty kuse now, but 't wa'n't kuse in dem days, kaze hit 'uz done gun up dat, strike 'im w'en you might en whar you would, Brer Rabbit wuz de soopless creetur gwine.

"One time, he sorter tuck a notion, ole Brer Rabbit did, dat he'd pay Brer B'ar a call, en no sooner do de notion strike 'im dan he pick hisse'f up en put out fer Brer B'ar house."

"Why, I thought they were mad with each other," the little boy exclaimed.

"Brer Rabbit make he call w'en Brer B'ar en his fambly wuz off fum home," Uncle Remus explained, with a chuckle which was in the nature of a hearty tribute to the crafty judgment of Brother Rabbit.

"He sot down by de road, en he see um go by — ole

UNCLE REMUS

Brer B'ar en ole Miss B'ar, en der two twin-chilluns, w'ich one un um wuz name Kubs en de t'er one wuz name Klibs."

The little boy laughed, but the severe seriousness of Uncle Remus would have served for a study, as he continued: —

"Ole Brer B'ar en Miss B'ar, dey went 'long ahead, en Kubs en Klibs, dey come shufflin' en scramblin' 'long behime. W'en Brer Rabbit see dis, he say ter hisse'f dat he 'speck he better go see how Brer B'ar gittin' on; en off he put. En 't wa'n't long n'er 'fo' he wuz ransackin' de premmuses same like he wuz sho' 'nuff patter-roller. W'iles he wuz gwine 'roun' peepin' in yer en pokin' in dar, he got ter foolin' 'mong de shelfs, en a bucket er honey w'at Brer B'ar got hid in de cubbud fall down en spill on top er Brer Rabbit, en little mo'n he'd er bin drown. Fum head ter heels dat creetur wuz kiver'd wid honey; he wa'n't des only bedobble wid it, he wuz des kiver'd. He hatter set dar en let de natal sweetness drip outen he eyeballs 'fo' he kin see he han' befo' 'im, en den, atter he look 'roun' little, he say to hisse'f, sezee: —

"'Heyo, yer! W'at I gwine do now? Ef I go out in de sunshine, de bumly-bees en de flies dey'll swom up'n take me, en if I stay yer, Brer B'ar'll come back en ketch me, en I dunner w'at in de name er gracious I gwine do.'

"Ennyhow, bimeby a notion strike Brer Rabbit, en he tip 'long twel he git in de woods, en w'en he git out dar, w'at do he do but roll in de leafs en trash en try fer ter rub de honey off'n 'im dat a-way. He roll, he did, en de leafs dey stick; Brer Rabbit roll, en de leafs dey

stick, en he keep on rollin' en de leafs keep on stickin', twel atter w'ile Brer Rabbit wuz de mos' owdashus-lookin' creetur w'at you ever sot eyes on. En ef Miss Meadows en de gals could er seed 'im den en dar, dey would n't er bin no mo' Brer Rabbit call at der house; 'deed, en dat dey would n't.

"Brer Rabbit, he jump 'roun', he did, en try ter shake de leafs off'n 'im, but de leafs, dey ain't gwine ter be shuck off. Brer Rabbit, he shake en he shiver, but de leafs dey stick; en de capers dat creetur cut up out dar in de woods by he own-alone se'f wuz scan'lous — dey wuz dat; dey wuz scan'lous.

"Brer Rabbit see dis wa'n't gwine ter do, en he 'low ter hisse'f dat he better be gittin' on todes home, en off he put. I 'speck you done year talk ez deze yer booggers w'at gits ater bad chilluns," continued Uncle Remus, in a tone so seriously confidential as to be altogether depressing; "well, den, des 'zactly dat a-way Brer Rabbit look, en ef you'd er seed 'im you'd er made sho' he de gran'-daddy er all de booggers. Brer Rabbit pace 'long, he did, en ev'y motion he make, de leafs dey'd go *swishy-swushy*, *splushy-splishy*, en, fum de fuss he make en de way he look, you'd er tuck 'im ter be de mos' suvvigus varment w'at disappear fum de face er de yeth sence ole man Noah let down de draw-bars er de ark en tu'n de creeturs loose; en I boun' ef you 'd er struck up long wid 'im, you'd er been mighty good en glad ef you'd er got off wid dat.

"De fus' man w'at Brer Rabbit come up wid wuz ole Sis Cow, en no sooner is she lay eyes on 'im dan she h'ist up 'er tail in de elements, en put out like a pack

er dogs wuz atter 'er. Dis make Brer Rabbit laff, kaze he know dat w'en a ole settle' 'oman like Sis Cow run 'stracted in de broad open day-time, dat dey mus' be sump'n' mighty kuse 'bout dem leafs en dat honey, en he keep on a-rackin' down de road. De nex' man w'at he meet wuz a black gal tollin' a whole passel er plantation shotes, en w'en de gal see Brer Rabbit come prancin' 'long, she fling down 'er basket er corn en des fa'rly fly, en de shotes, dey tuck thoo de woods, en sech n'er racket ez dey kick up wid der runnin', en der snortin', en der squealin' ain't never bin year in dat settlement needer befo' ner since. Hit keep on dis a-way long ez Brer Rabbit meet anybody — dey des broke en run like de Ole Boy wuz atter um.

"C'ose, dis make Brer Rabbit feel monst'us biggity, en he 'low ter hisse'f dat he 'speck he better drap 'roun' en skummish in de neighborhoods er Brer Fox house. En w'iles he wuz stannin' dar runnin' dis 'roun' in he min', yer come ole Brer B'ar en all er he fambly. Brer Rabbit, he git crossways de road, he did, en he sorter sidle todes um. Old Brer B'ar, he stop en look, but Brer Rabbit, he keep on sidlin' todes um. Ole Miss B'ar, she stan' it long ez she kin, en den she fling down 'er parrysol en tuck a tree. Brer B'ar look lak he gwine ter stan' his groun', but Brer Rabbit he jump straight up in de a'r en gin hisse'f a shake, en, bless yo' soul, honey! ole Brer B'ar make a break, en dey tells me he to' down a whole panel er fence gittin' 'way fun dar. En ez ter Kubs en Klibs, dey tuck der hats in der han's, en dey went skaddlin' thoo de bushes des same ez a drove er hosses."

"And then what?" the little boy asked.

"Brer Rabbit p'raded on down de road," continued Uncle Remus, "en bimeby yer come Brer Fox en Brer Wolf, fixin' up a plan fer ter nab Brer Rabbit, en dey wuz so intents on der confab dat dey got right on Brer Rabbit 'fo' dey seed 'im; but, gentermens! w'en dey is ketch a glimpse un 'im, dey gun 'im all de room he want. Brer Wolf, he try ter show off, he did, kase he wanter play big 'fo' Brer Fox, en he stop en ax Brer Rabbit who is he. Brer Rabbit, he jump up en down in de middle er de road, en holler out: —

"'I'm de Wull-er-de-Wust.[1] I'm de Wull-er-de-Wust, en youer de man I'm atter!'

"Den Brer Rabbit jump up en down en make lak he gwine atter Brer Fox en Brer Wolf, en de way dem creeturs lit out fum dar wuz a caution.

"Long time atter dat," continued Uncle Remus, folding his hands placidly in his lap, with the air of one who has performed a pleasant duty — "long time atter dat, Brer Rabbit come up wid Brer Fox en Brer Wolf, en he git behime a stump, Brer Rabbit did, en holler out:

"'I'm de Wull-er-de-Wust, en youer de mens I'm atter!'

"Brer Fox en Brer Wolf, dey broke, but 'fo' dey got outer sight en outer year'n', Brer Rabbit show hisse'f, he did, en laugh fit ter kill hisse'f. Atterwuds, Miss Meadows she year 'bout it, en de nex' time Brer Fox call, de gals dey up en giggle, en ax 'im ef he ain't feard de Wull-er-de-Wust mought drap in."

[1] Or Wull-er-de-Wuts. Probably a fantastic corruption of "will-o'-the-wisp," though this is not by any means certain.

BROTHER RABBIT'S ASTONISHING PRANK

THE TAKING OF THE FURBUSH-TAILBYS

By Eliza Orne White

ONE morning Billy and Tommy went out into the back yard together. This was a rare treat, but they were able to go with easy minds, as Elvira promised to look after Sammy while they were away. When they came home they found their young brother in a state of such excitement that his tail was fairly bristling. He burst out with his news before they were inside the door.

"Miss Winifred came out into the kitchen and told Elvira that a big bird was to come and take us all off to-morrow," was his startling announcement.

"A bird!" cried Billy. "That is impossible! There's no bird on the face of this earth that 's big enough to carry me off." And he drew himself up to his full height.

"You are just haverin', Sam," said Tommy. He had picked up this expression from Miss Stuart, the Scotch trained nurse.

"That's what she said," Sam insisted. "I thought maybe it was some kind of rooster in a very large size. I met the Dunns' rooster in the back yard the other day, and I did n't like the looks of him. He is bigger than me."

"Than I," said Tommy patiently. "Tell us just what she said, Sammy."

"It was this way," said Sam: "Miss Winifred came out into the kitchen, and she said, quite pleased as if it was something she was glad about, 'All the arrangements are made, Elvira. If the weather is good enough, Mr. Bird is coming to-morrow to take the kittens.'"

Horror descended upon the whole group.

"Mr. Bird is a man," said Billy, with conviction, "and he is coming to take us all to some new home."

"I don't want to be took, I don't want to be took!" cried Sam; and his brothers felt too much consternation to stop to correct his grammar.

"We'll consult Joe," said Tommy, who had an intense admiration for his eldest brother.

When Joe came home, he was sure that "kittens" did not mean the entire family. "I am not at all worried about myself," he said; "they could n't keep house without me; but I am very uneasy about the rest of you."

"I can tell you I will never be taken away in anything," said Billy, whose historic ride in the cat basket had been enough for him. "I'll scratch and bite and claw so they'll have to let me stay at home."

"But where will home be," asked Joe gloomily, "if Miss Winifred is tired of you?"

"Home will be wherever Sammy is," said Tommy. "Whatever happens, I'll never desert him. Mother told us always to stick together."

"But I don't want to stick together if you are going

away," said the ungrateful Sammy. "I want to stay right here with Joe and Elvira."

The next morning was a gray one, and there seemed to be some doubt as to whether Mr. Bird would come, for there was considerable telephoning back and forth.

"He must be very old and sick if he minds coming out on a day like this," said Tommy.

At an early hour Elvira sought Joe and locked him up ignominiously in the shed.

His heart was broken, for it was evident that he too was to go to seek his fortune in a new home. Miss Winifred must have determined to make a clean sweep of them all.

The three others had been shut into the sewing room, where they talked over the situation in low tones, as the morning dragged itself away.

When Mr. Bird came at last, he was shown up into the sewing room, where the three frightened kittens were huddled together. He looked neither old nor sick, and strong enough to compel the most determined cat to do his bidding, if he once laid hands on him.

"This one is the handsomest," said Mr. Bird, singling out Billy. "He has a fine tail."

Billy ran into a corner and tried to get his tail out of sight.

"It will be best to take one at a time," said Mr. Bird.

Horrible thought! So they were not even to have the comfort of leaving home together!

"I'll go and get my camera ready," said Mr. Bird.

"What's a camera?" asked Sammy, in awestruck tones.

"It's a kind of cat basket," said Billy, with conviction.

"It must be small, or he could take two of us at a time."

"It is small. It is just a tight fit for a good-sized cat."

Billy had such a vivid imagination that he was never at a loss for an explanation.

And still the agonizing moments passed, and Mr. Bird did not reappear.

"He must have taken Joe away," said Billy; and the three put their ears close to the door in their effort to catch some sound.

Meanwhile Joe had been brought into the Manns' front hall, which looked very unhomelike, for all the plants had been taken from the window sill and were standing on the floor. Joe liked to walk in and out among the flowerpots in this miniature grove, where the loftiest branches were not very much higher than his head. But there was no time for this now. A tall screen that was usually in Mr. Mann's room was placed near the window, and there stood Mr. Bird with a large box and a gloomy black piece of cloth.

Joe was paralyzed with fear. If it had not been that his friend Elvira held him in her arms, he felt that he should have dropped dead with terror. The only other comforting object was the cushion he used to sit on when he was a kittenette. Elvira must have brought it down from the sewing room.

"You will have to hold him until I am ready," said Mr. Bird, in so clear a voice that the three listening kittens heard the ominous words. "That 's right. No, he has moved. Put his tail out, it is the best part of him."

The best part of him! Joe felt the indignity of the remark, for what is the tail of any cat compared to his eyes and mouth? And Joe had always been especially proud of that pink mouth of his. He snuggled up to Elvira, waiting for the awful moment when Mr. Bird should put him in that box, or, worse still, make the piece of black cloth into a bag and dump him in, head first, as Dr. Murray had done when he took him to the hospital.

Suddenly Mr. Bird flung the black cloth over his own head, instead of putting Joe into it.

"Take away your hand now," he said to Elvira.

There was a little click, and Mr. Bird said, "That was very good."

More and more mystified, Joe had to go through the same thing over and over again, until his nerves became calmer, for he saw that he was not to be taken away after all.

"He is going to make a very good photograph," said Mr. Bird, and at last Joe understood. He longed to pass on his encouraging knowledge to his brothers, but he had no chance, for Elvira immediately opened the front door and let him out.

Billy was the next to be brought down, and when he saw the camera he was more sure than ever that it was a new kind of cat basket, and that Mr. Bird was going

to do him up in the black cloth and then put him in the camera and carry him away. Joe, who had dug his claws into Elvira in more than one place, had been gentle and mild compared with Billy. He scratched Elvira's arm until it bled, then he tore her apron. He was sorry to do it, but he wanted to make it clear to her that he had no intention of being taken away in the camera. It seemed so strange she could not understand, for all the time he was saying in his own language, "I won't go! I won't go! Nobody can make me go."

"Nice Billy! This cat has a fine head. He has beautiful eyes and a superb tail. Just look at the markings on it."

Billy was sure that Mr. Bird was trying to put him in a more tolerant frame of mind, but it would not work. Billy had had too much experience in the line of compliments. He remembered the words of the French lady.

"Hold him firmly now. There, that's it. No, he has moved. Put his tail more to the front. That's just right. Now take your hand away."

She did and Billy felt the supreme moment had come. He did not dare to run out past Mr. Bird, for fear of being caught, so he gave a flying leap and landed on top of the screen that was six feet high; then he jumped to the floor, dropping down among the plants, and dashed wildly upstairs. He hoped he had now given a hint sufficiently broad for Mr. Bird to take.

It was of no use, however; Elvira caught him and brought him back, and the whole performance had to

be gone through again and again. When he was put out of doors and set at liberty at the end of his interview with Mr. Bird, instead of being caged in the camera, a more astonished kitten could not have been found.

Tommy was the next subject, and being of a more placid disposition than his elder brothers, he failed to distinguish himself by any violent actions. He merely growled at intervals, like a young lion.

"He looks very like Joe," said Mr. Bird. "If it was not for the black spot on Joe's nose I could hardly tell them apart."

Then Tommy's heart swelled with pride, for he adored his big brother.

Now Sam had been alone in the sewing room for some time, it seemed to him at least a week; so when Elvira came for him he purred and purred, as she was carrying him downstairs, for he was so glad to see her friendly face. He was not frightened until he saw Mr. Bird with the camera and the piece of black cloth. The next thing he noticed was that all the plants had left the window seat. If the trees on the lawn had walked away, Sam could not have been more surprised. What a terror Mr. Bird must be if the very trees on the window seat were trying to get away from him! And what had Mr. Bird done with Sammy's brothers? They had all vanished. There was not a single familiar furry face in sight, nor even the whisking of a tail in the distance.

Mr. Bird began to give a series of catcalls and whistling and barkings to attract Sammy's attention, and

Sammy, instead of being paralyzed by fear, opened his mouth wide and gave a powerful hiss. For, in spite of the care with which his brothers had tried to prevent his learning this accomplishment, he had picked it up. In the midst of the taking of a photograph Sam heard a familiar sound. It was the voice of his idolized brother Joe. Sammy put one paw on the window sill and looked out. Yes, there was Joe, alive and well, coming to show himself like the noble fellow he was, so that Sam might be encouraged.

A little later the three younger Furbush-Tailbys were all in the sewing room together, having a social meal of meat and bread and milk, while Joe was scouring the neighborhood, trying to find Daisy Wilde, to tell her that he had had his photograph taken.

THE TRAVELS OF THE TWO FROGS

By William Elliot Griffis

LONG, long ago, in the good old days before the hairy-faced and pale-cheeked men from over the Seat of Great Peace came to Japan; before the coal-smoke and snorting iron horse scared the white heron from the rice fields; before black crows and fighting sparrows, which fear not man, perched on telegraph wires, or even a railway was thought of, there lived two frogs — one in a well in Kioto, the other in a lotus pond in Osaka, forty miles away.

Now it is a common proverb in the Land of the Gods that "the frog in the well knows not of the great ocean," and the Kioto frog had so often heard this scornful sneer from the maids who came to draw out water with their long bamboo-handled buckets that he resolved to travel abroad and see the world, and especially the great ocean.

"I'll see for myself," said Mr. Frog, as he packed his wallet and wiped his spectacles, "what this great ocean is that they talk so much about. I'll wager it is n't half as deep or wide as my well, where I can see the stars even at daylight."

Now the truth was, a recent earthquake had greatly reduced the depth of the well and the water was get-

ting very shallow. Mr. Frog informed the family of his intentions. Mrs. Frog wept a great deal; but, drying her eyes with her paper handkerchief, she declared she would count the hours on her fingers till he came back, and at every morning and evening meal would set out his table with food on it, just as if he were at home. She tied up a little lacquered box full of boiled rice and snails for his journey, wrapped it around with a silk napkin, and, putting his extra clothes in a bundle, swung it on his back. Tying it over his neck, he seized his staff and was ready to go.

"*Sayonara,*" cried he, as, with a tear in his eye, he walked away; for that is the Japanese word for "good-bye."

"*Sayonara,*" croaked Mrs. Frog and the whole family of young frogs in a chorus.

Two of the tiniest froggies were still babies, that is, they were yet pollywogs, with a half inch of tail still on them; and, of course, were carried about by being strapped on the backs of their older brothers.

Mr. Frog being now on land, out of his well, noticed that the other animals did not leap, but walked upright on their hind legs; and, not wishing to be eccentric, he likewise began briskly walking the same way.

Now it happened that about the same time the Osaka Frog had become restless and dissatisfied with life on the edges of his lotus ditch. He had made up his mind to "cast the lion's cub into the valley."

"Why, that is tall talk for a frog, I must say!" you may exclaim. "What did he mean?"

To see what he meant, we will go back a bit. I must

tell you that the Osaka Frog was a philosopher. Right at the edge of his lotus pond was a monastery, full of Buddhist monks, who every day studied their sacred rolls and droned over the books of the sage, to learn them by heart. Our frog had heard them so often that he could (in frog language, of course) repeat many of their wise sentences and intone responses to their evening prayers put up to the great idol Amida. Indeed, our frog had so often listened to their debates on texts from the classics that he had himself become a sage and a philosopher. Yet, as the proverb says, "the sage is not happy."

Why not? In spite of a soft mud bank, plenty of green scum, stagnant water, and shady lotus leaves, a fat wife, and a numerous family — in short, everything to make a frog happy — his forehead, or rather gullet, was wrinkled with care from long pondering of knotty problems, such as the following: —

The monks often came down to the edge of the pond to look at the pink and white lotus. One summer day as a little frog, hardly out of his tadpole stage, with a small fragment of tail still left, sat basking on a huge round leaf, one monk said to another: —

"Of what does that remind you?"

"The babies of frogs will become but frogs," said one shaven pate, laughing.

"What think you?"

"The white lotus flower springs out of the black mud," said the other, solemnly, as both walked away.

The old frog, sitting near by, overheard them and began to philosophize: "Humph! The babies of frogs

will become but frogs, hey? If mud becomes lotus, why should n't a frog become a man? Why not? If my pet son should travel abroad and see the world — go to Kioto, for instance — why should n't he be as wise as those shining-headed men, I wonder? I shall try it, anyhow. I'll send my son on a journey to Kioto. I'll 'cast the lion's cub into the valley,'" which, you see, meant pretty much the same thing.

Plump! squash! sounded the water, as a pair of webby feet disappeared. The "lion's cub" was soon ready, after much paternal advice, and much counsel to beware of being gobbled up by long-legged storks, and trod on by impolite men, and struck at by bad boys.

"Even in the Capital there are boors," said Father Frog.

Now it so happened that the old frog from Kioto and the "lion's cub" from Osaka started each from his home at the same time. Nothing of importance occurred to either of them until, as luck would have it, they met on a hill near Hashimoto, which is halfway between the two cities. Both were footsore and websore, and very tired, especially about the hips, on account of the unfroglike manner of walking, instead of hopping as they had been used to do.

"*Ohio gozarimasu*," said the "lion's cub" to the old frog, by way of "good-morning," as he fell on all fours and bowed his head to the ground three times, squinting up over his left eye, to see if the other frog was paying equal deference in return.

"Yes, good-day," replied the Kioto Frog.

"It is rather fine weather to-day," said the youngster.

"Yes, it is very fine," replied the old fellow.

"I am Gamataro, from Osaka, the oldest son of Lord Bullfrog, Prince of the Lotus Ditch."

"Your Lordship must be weary of your journey. I am Sir Frog of the Well in Kioto. I started out to see the 'great ocean' from Osaka; but, I declare, my hips are so dreadfully tired that I believe I'll give up my plan and content myself with a look from this hill."

The truth must be owned that the old frog was not only on his hind legs, but also on his last legs, when he stood up to look at Osaka; while the youngster was tired enough to believe anything. The old fellow, wiping his face, spoke up:—

"Suppose we save ourselves the trouble of the journey. I have been told that this hill is halfway between the two cities, and while I see Osaka and the sea, you can get a good look at Kioto."

"Happy thought!" said the Osaka Frog.

Then both reared themselves upon their hind legs, once more, and stretching upon their toes, body to body, and neck to neck, propped each other up, rolled their goggles and looked steadily, as they supposed, on the places which they each wished to see. Now every one knows that a frog has eyes mounted in that part of his head which is *front when he is down and back when he stands* up.

Long and steadily they gazed, until, at last, their toes being tired, they fell down on all fours.

"I declare," said the older frog, "Osaka looks just

like Kioto; and as for the 'great ocean' those stupid maids talked about, I don't see any at all, unless they mean that strip of river that looks for all the world like the Yodo. I don't believe there is any 'great ocean'!"

"As for my part," said the other, "I am satisfied that it's all folly to go farther; for Kioto is as like Osaka as one grain of rice is like another."

Thereupon both congratulated themselves upon the happy labor-saving expedient by which they had spared themselves a long journey, much leg weariness, and some danger. They departed, after exchanging many compliments; and, dropping again into a frog's hop, they leaped back in half the time — the one to his well and the other to his pond. There each told the story of both cities looking exactly alike, thus demonstrating the folly of those foolish folk called Men. As for the old gentleman in the lotus pond, he was so glad to get the "cub" back again that he never again tried to reason out the problems of philosophy.

And so to this day the frog in the well knows not and believes not in the "great ocean." Still do the babies of frogs become but frogs. Still is it vain to teach the reptiles philosophy; for all such labor is "like pouring water in a frog's face."

SUNDAY MORNING AND THE COW

By Elisabeth Woodbridge

IT was a hot, still Sunday in July. The hens sought the shade early, and stood about with their beaks half open and a distant look in their eyes, as if they saw you but chose to look just beyond you. It always irritates me to see the hens do that. It makes me feel hotter. Such a day it was. But things on the farm seemed propitious, and we said at breakfast that we would go.

"I 've just got to take that two-year-old Devon down to the lower pasture," said Jonathan, "and then I'll harness. We ought to start early, because it 's too hot to drive Kit fast."

"Do you think you'd better take the cow down this morning?" I said doubtfully. "Could n't you wait until we come back?"

"No; that upper pasture is getting burned out, and she ought to get into some good grass this morning. I meant to take her down last night."

"Well, do hurry." I still felt dubious.

"Oh, it 's only five minutes' walk down the road," said Jonathan easily. "I'm all ready for church, except for these shoes. I'll have the carriage at the door before you 're dressed."

I said no more, but went upstairs, while Jonathan started for the barnyard. A few minutes later I heard from that direction the sounds of exhortation such as are usually employed toward "critters." They seemed to be coming nearer. I glanced out of a front window, and saw Jonathan and his cow coming up the road past the house.

"Where are you taking her?" I called. "I thought you meant to go the other way."

"So I did," he shouted, in some irritation. "But she swung up to the right as she went out of the gate, and I could n't head her off in time. Oh, there 's Bill Russell. Head her round, will you, Bill? There, now we 're all right."

"I'll be back in ten minutes," he called up at my window as he repassed.

I watched them go back up the road. At the big farm gate the cow made a break for the barnyard again, but the two men managed to turn her. Just beyond, at the fork in the road, I saw Bill turn down toward the cider mill, while Jonathan kept on with his convoy over the hill. I glanced at the clock. It was not yet nine. There was plenty of time, of course.

At half-past nine I went downstairs again, and wandered out toward the big gate. It seemed to me time for Jonathan to be back. In the Sunday hush I thought I heard sounds of distant "hi-ing." They grew louder; yes, surely, there was the cow, just appearing over the hill and trotting briskly along the road toward home. And there was Jonathan, also trotting briskly. He looked red and warm. I stepped out into the road to

keep the cow from going past, but there was no need. She swung cheerfully in at the big gate and fell to cropping the long grass just inside the fence.

Jonathan slowed down beside me, and, pulling out his handkerchief, began flapping the dust off his trousers while he explained: —

"You see, I got her down there all right, but I had to let down the bars, and while I was doing that she went along the road a bit, and when she saw me coming she just kicked up her heels and galloped."

"How did you stop her?" I asked.

"I did n't. The Maxwells were coming along with their team, and they headed her back for me. Then they went on. Only by that time, you see, she was a bit excited, and when we came along back to those bars she shot right past them, and never stopped till she got here."

I looked at her grazing quietly inside the fence. "She does n't look as though she had done so much" — and then, as I glanced at Jonathan, I could not forbear saying — "but you do."

"I suppose I do." He gave his trousers a last flick, and, putting up his handkerchief, shifted his stick to his right hand.

"Well, put her back in the inner yard," I said, "and this afternoon I'll help you."

"Put her back!" said Jonathan. "Not much! You don't think I 'd let a cow beat me that way!"

"But Jonathan, it 's half-past nine!"

"What of it? I'll just work her slowly — she 's quiet now, you see, and the bars are open. There won't be any trouble."

"Oh, I wish you would n't," I said. But, seeing he was firm, "Well, if you *will* go, I 'll harness."

Jonathan looked at me ruefully. "That 's too bad — you 're all dressed." He wavered, but I would take no concessions based on feminine equipment. "Oh, that does n't matter. I 'll get my big apron. First you start her out, and I 'll keep her from going toward the house or down to the mill."

Jonathan sidled cautiously through the gate and around the grazing cow. Then, with a gentle and ingratiating "Hi there, Bossie!" he managed to turn her, still grazing, toward the road. While the grass held out she drifted along easily enough, but when she reached the dirt of the roadway she raised her head, flicked her tail, and gave a little hop with her hind quarters that seemed to me indicative of an unquiet spirit. But I stood firm and Jonathan was gently urgent, and we managed to start her on the right road once more. She was not, however, going as slowly as Jonathan had planned, and it was with some misgivings that I donned my apron and went in to harness Kit. I led her around to the carriage house and put her into the buggy, and still he had not returned. I got out the lap robe, shook it, and folded it neatly on the back of the seat. No Jonathan! There was nothing more for me to do, so I took off my apron and climbed into the carriage to wait. The carriage house was as cool a place as one could have found. Both its big sliding doors were pushed back, one opening out toward the front gate, the other, opposite, opening into the inner barnyard. I sat and looked out over the rolling, sunny

country and felt the breeze, warm, but fresh and sweet, and listened to the barn swallows in the barnyard behind me, and wondered, as I have wondered a thousand times, why in New England the outbuildings always have so much better views than the house.

Ten o'clock! Where *was* Jonathan? The Morehouses drove past, then the Elkinses; they went to the Baptist. Ten minutes past! There went the O'Neils — they belonged to our church — and the Scrantons, and Billy Howard and his sister, driving fast as usual; they were always late. Quarter-past ten! Well, we might as well give up church. I thought of unharnessing, but I was very comfortable where I was, and Kit seemed contented as she stood looking out of the door. Hark! What was that? It sounded like the beat of hoofs in the lane — the cattle would n't come up at this hour! I stood up to see past the inner barnyard and off down the lane. "What on earth!" I said to myself. For — yes — surely — that was the two-year-old Devon coming leisurely up the lane toward the yard. In a few moments Jonathan's head appeared, then his shoulders, then his entire dusty, discouraged self. Yes, somehow or other, they must have made the round trip. As this dawned upon me, I smiled, then I laughed, then I sat down and laughed again till I was weak and tearful. It was cruel, and by the time Jonathan had reached the carriage house and sunk down on its threshold I had recovered enough to be sorry for him. But I was unfortunate in my first remark. "Why, Jonathan," I gasped, "what *have* you been doing with that cow?"

Jonathan mopped his forehead. "Having iced tea under the trees. Could n't you see that to look at me?" he replied, almost savagely.

"You poor thing! I'll make you some when we go in. But do tell me, how did you *ever* get around here again from the back of the farm that way?"

"Easy enough," said Jonathan. "I drove her along to the pasture in great shape, only we were going a little fast. She tried to dodge the bars, but I turned her in through them all right. But some idiot had left the bars down at the other end of the pasture — between that and the back lots, you know — and that blamed cow went for that opening, just as straight —"

I began to shake again. "Oh, that brought you out by the huckleberry knoll, and the ledges! Why, she could go anywhere!"

"She could, and she did," said Jonathan grimly. He leaned back against the doorpost, immersed in bitter reminiscence. "She — certainly — did. I chased her up the ledges and through the sumachs and down through the birches and across the swamp. Oh, we did the farm, the whole blamed farm. What time is it?"

"Half-past ten," I said gently; and added, "What are you going to do with her now?"

His jaw set in a fashion I knew.

"I 'm going to put her in that lower pasture."

I saw it was useless to protest. Church was a vanished dream, but I began to fear that Sunday dinner was also doomed. "Do you want me to help?" I asked.

"Oh, no," said Jonathan. "I 'll put her in the barn till I can get a rope, and then I'll lead her."

However, I did help get her into the barn. Then while he went for his rope I unharnessed. When he came back, he had changed into a flannel shirt and working trousers. He entered the barn and in a few moments emerged, pulling hard on the rope. Nothing happened.

"Go around the other way," he called, "and take a stick, and poke that cow till she starts."

I went in at the back door, slid between the stanchions into the cow stall, and gingerly poked at the animal's hind quarters and said, "Hi!" until at last, with a hunching of hips and tossing of head, she bounded out into the sunny barnyard.

"She 'll be all right now," said Jonathan.

I watched them doubtfully, but they got through the bars and as far as the road without incident. At the road she suddenly balked. She twisted her horns and set her front legs. I hurried down from my post of observation in the carriage-house door, and said "Hi!" again.

"That 's no good," panted Jonathan; "get your stick again. Now, when I pull, you hit her behind, and she 'll come. I guess she has n't been taught to lead yet."

"If she has, she has apparently forgotten," I replied. "Now, then, you pull!"

The creature moved on grudgingly, with curious and unlovely sidewise lunges and much brandishing of horns, where the rope was tied.

"Hit her again, now!" said Jonathan. "Oh, *hit*

her! Hit her harder! She does n't feel that. *Hit* her! There! Now she's coming."

Truly, she did come. But I am ashamed to think how I used that stick. As we progressed up the road, over the hill, and down to the lower pasture, there kept repeating themselves over and over in my head the lines: —

> "The sergeant pushed and the corporal pulled,
> And the three they wagged along."

But I did not quote these to Jonathan until afterwards. There was something else, too, that I did not quote until afterwards. This was the remark of a sailor uncle of mine: "A man never tackled a job yet that he did n't have to have a woman to hold on to the slack."

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

By Charles Lamb

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend N. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cook's holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swineherd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which, kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than

nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from? — not from the burned cottage — he had smelled that smell before — indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burned his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life, indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted — *crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now; still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelled so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the newborn pleasure, he fell

to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hailstones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure which he experienced in his lower regions had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burned me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you, but you must be eating fire, and I know not what — what have you got there, I say?"

"O father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burned pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burned pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, "Eat, eat, eat the burned pig, father, only taste — O Lord," — with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembed in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretense, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had dispatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burned down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever.

At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burned pig, of which the culprits

stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given — to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present — without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and, when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days His Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world.

Thus this custom of firing houses continued till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burned*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manu-

script, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate — *princeps obsoniorum.*

I speak not of your grown porkers — things between pig and pork — those hobbydehoys — but a young and tender suckling — under a moon old — guiltless as yet of the sty — with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*, the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest — his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble and a grumble — the mild forerunner, or *præludium*, of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled — but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavor comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called — the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance — with the adhesive oleaginous — O call it not fat — but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it — the tender blossoming of fat — fat cropped in the bud — taken in the shoot — in the first innocence — the cream and quintessence of the

child-pig's yet pure food — the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna — or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so), so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance.

Behold him, while he is doing — it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string! — Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age, he hath wept out his pretty eyes — radiant jellies — shooting stars —

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth! — wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal — wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation — from these sins he is happily snatched away —

> Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
> Death came with timely care —

his memory is odoriferous — no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon — no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages — he hath a fair sepulcher in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure — and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of Sapors. Pineapple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent — a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause — too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her — like lovers' kisses, she biteth —

she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish — but she stoppeth at the palate — she meddleth not with the appetite — and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig — let me speak his praise — is no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unraveled without hazard, he is — good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbors' fare.

I am one of those, who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barndoor chickens (those "tame villatic fowl"), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavors, to extra-domiciliate, or

send out of the house, slightingly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what), a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate — it argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a gray-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt at this time of day that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, schoolboy like, I made him a present of — the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger, that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I — I myself and not another — would eat her nice cake — and what should I say to her the next time I saw her — how naughty I was to part with her pretty present — and the odor of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I

had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last — and I blamed my impertinent spirit of almsgiving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness, and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old gray impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipped to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have toward intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto —

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavor of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your

whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are — but consider, he is a weakling — a flower.

A FORENOON WITH BUDGE AND TODDIE

(*Abridged*)

By John Habberton

IN the morning I was awakened very early by the light streaming in the window, the blinds of which I had left open the night before. The air was alive with bird song and the eastern sky was flushed with tints which no painter's canvas ever caught. But ante-sunrise skies and songs are not fit subjects for the continued contemplation of men who read until midnight; so I hastily closed the blinds, drew the shade, dropped the curtains, and lay down again, dreamily thanking Heaven that I was to fall asleep to such exquisite music. I am sure that I mentally forgave all my enemies as I dropped off into a most delicious doze, but the sudden realization that a light hand was passing over my cheek roused me to savage anger in an instant. I sprang up, and saw Budge shrink timidly away from my bedside.

"I was only lovin' you, 'cos you was good, and brought us candy. Papa lets us love him whenever we want to — every morning he does."

"As early as this?" demanded I.

"Yes, just as soon as we can see, if we want to."

Poor Tom! I never could comprehend why, with a

good wife, a comfortable income, and a clear conscience, he need always look thin and worn — worse than he ever did in Virginia woods or Louisiana swamps. But now I knew all. And yet, what could one do? That child's eyes and voice, and his expression, which exceeded in sweetness that of any of the angels I had ever imagined — that child could coax a man to do more self-forgetting deeds than the shortening of his precious sleeping hours amounted to. In fact, he was fast divesting me of my rightful sleepiness, so I kissed him and said: —

"Run to bed, now, dear old fellow, and let uncle go to sleep again. After breakfast I 'll make you a whistle."

"Oh! will you?" The angel turned into the boy at once.

"Yes; now run along."

"A *loud* whistle — a real loud one?"

"Yes, but not if you don't go right back to bed."

The sound of little footsteps receded as I turned over and closed my eyes. Speedily the bird song seemed to grow fainter; my thoughts dropped to pieces; I seemed to be floating on fleecy clouds, in company with hundreds of cherubs with Budge's features and night drawers —

"Uncle Harry!"

May the Lord forget the prayer I put up just then!

"I'll discipline you, my fine little boy," thought I. "Perhaps, if I let you shriek your abominable little throat hoarse, you 'll learn better than to torment your uncle, that was just getting ready to love you dearly."

"Uncle Har-*ray!*"

"Howl away, you little imp," thought I. "You've got me wide awake, and your lungs may suffer for it." Suddenly I heard, although in sleepy tones, and with a lazy drawl, some words which appalled me. The murmurer was Toddie: —

"Want — shee — wheels — go — wound."

"Budge!" I shouted, in the desperation of my dread lest Toddie, too, might wake up, "what *do* you want?"

"Uncle Harry!"

"What!"

"Uncle Harry, what kind of wood are you going to make the whistle out of?"

"I won't make any at all — I'll cut a big stick and give you a sound whipping with it, for not keeping quiet, as I told you to."

"Why, Uncle Harry, papa don't whip us with sticks — he spanks us."

Heavens! Papa! papa! papa! Was I never to have done with this eternal quotation of "papa"? I was horrified to find myself gradually conceiving a dire hatred of my excellent brother-in-law. One thing was certain, at any rate: sleep was no longer possible; so I hastily dressed and went into the garden. Among the beauty and the fragrance of the flowers, and in the delicious morning air, I succeeded in regaining my temper, and was delighted, on answering the breakfast bell, two hours later, to have Budge accost me with: —

"Why, Uncle Harry, where was you? We looked all over the house for you, and could n't find a speck of you."

The breakfast was an excellent one. I afterwards learned that Helen, dear old girl, had herself prepared a bill of fare for every meal I should take in the house. As the table talk of myself and nephews was not such as could do harm by being repeated, I requested Maggie, the servant, to wait upon the children, and I accompanied my request with a small treasury note. Relieved thus of all the responsibility for the dreadful appetites of my nephews, I did full justice to the repast, and even regarded with some interest and amusement the industry of Budge and Toddie with their tiny forks and spoons. They ate rapidly for a while, but soon their appetites weakened and their tongues were unloosed.

"Ocken Hawwy," remarked Toddie, "daysh an awfoo funny chunt up 'tairs — awfoo *big* chunt. I show it you after brepspup."

"Toddie's a silly little boy," said Budge; "he always says brepspup for brekpux."

"Oh! What does he mean by 'chunt,' Budge?"

"I *guess* he means trunk," replied my oldest nephew.

Recollections of my childish delight in rummaging an old trunk — it seems a century ago that I did it — caused me to smile sympathetically at Toddie, to his apparent great delight. "How delightful it is to strike a sympathetic chord in child nature," thought I; "how quickly the infant eye comprehends the look which precedes the verbal expression of an idea! Dear Toddie! for years we might sit at one table, careless of each other's words, but the casual mention of one of thy delights has suddenly brought our souls into that

sweetness of all human communions. 'An awfoo funny chunt' seemed to annihilate suddenly all differences of age, condition, and experience between the wee boy and myself, and —"

A direful thought struck me. I dashed upstairs and into my room. Yes, he *did* mean my trunk. *I* could see nothing funny about it — quite the contrary. The bond of sympathy between my nephew and myself was suddenly broken. Looking at the matter from the comparative distance which a few weeks have placed between that day and this, I can see that I was unable to consider the scene before me with a calm and unprejudiced mind. I am now satisfied that the sudden birth and hasty decease of my sympathy with Toddie were striking instances of human inconsistency. My soul had gone out to his because he loved to rummage in trunks, and because I imagined he loved to see the monument of incongruous material which resulted from such an operation; the scene before me showed clearly that I had rightly divined my nephew's nature. And yet my selfish instincts hastened to obscure my soul's vision, and to prevent that joy which should ensue when "faith is lost in full fruition."

My trunk had contained nearly everything, for while a campaigner I had learned to reduce packing to an exact science. Now, had there been an atom of pride in my composition I might have glorified myself, for it certainly seemed as if the heap upon the floor could never have come out of a single trunk. Clearly, Toddie was more of a general connoisseur than an amateur in packing. The method of his work I

quickly discerned, and the discovery threw one light upon the size of the heap in front of my trunk. A dress hat and its case, when their natural relationship is dissolved, occupy nearly twice as much space as before, even if the former contains a blacking box not usually kept in it, and the latter a few cigars soaking in bay rum. The same might be said of a portable dressing case and its contents, bought for me in Vienna by a brother ex-soldier, and designed by an old Continental campaigner to be perfection itself. The straps which prevented the cover from falling entirely back had been cut, broken, or parted in some way, and in its hollow lay my dress coat, tightly rolled up. Snatching it up with a violent exclamation, and unrolling it, there dropped from it — one of those infernal dolls. At the same time a howl was sounded from the doorway.

"You tookted my dolly out of her cradle — I want to wock my dolly — oo — oo —oo — ee — ee — ee —!"

"You young scoundrel!" I screamed — yes, howled, I was so enraged — "I 've a great mind to cut your throat this minute. What do you mean by meddling with my trunk?"

"I — doe — know." Outward turned Toddie's lower lip; I believe the sight of it would move a Bengal tiger to pity, but no such thought occurred to me just then.

"What made you do it?"

"*Be* — cause."

"Because what?"

"I — doe — know."

Just then a terrific roar arose from the garden.

Looking out, I saw Budge with a bleeding finger upon one hand, and my razor in the other; he afterward explained he had been making a boat, and that the knife was bad to him. To apply adhesive plaster to the cut was the work of but a minute, and I had barely completed this surgical operation when Tom's gardener-coachman appeared and handed me a letter. It was addressed in Helen's well-known hand, and read as follows (the passages in brackets were my own comments): —

BLOOMDALE, June 21, 1875.

DEAR HARRY: —

I'm very happy in the thought that you are with my darling children, and, although I'm having a lovely time here, I often wish I was with you. [Ump — so do I.] I want you to know the little treasures real well. [Thank you, but I don't think I care to extend the acquaintanceship further than is absolutely necessary.] It seems to me so unnatural that relatives know so little of those of their own blood, and especially of the innocent little spirits whose existence is almost unheeded. [Not when there's unlocked trunks standing about, sis.]

Now I want to ask a favor of you. When we were boys and girls at home, you used to talk perfect oceans about physiognomy, and phrenology, and unerring signs of character. I thought it was all nonsense then, but if you believe it *now*, I wish you'd study the children, and give me your well-considered opinion of them. [Perfect demons, ma'am; imps, rascals, born to be hung — both of them.]

I can't get over the feeling that dear Budge is born for something grand. [Grand nuisance.] He is sometimes so thoughtful and so absorbed, that I almost fear the result of disturbing him; then, he has that faculty of perseverance which seems to be the only thing some men have lacked to make them great. [He certainly has it; he exemplified it while I was trying to get to sleep this morning.]

Toddie is going to make a poet or a musician or an artist.

[That's so; all abominable scamps take to some artistic pursuit as an excuse for loafing.] His fancies take hold of him very strongly. [They do — they do; "shee wheels go wound," for instance.] He has not Budgie's sublime earnestness but he does n't need it; the irresistible force with which he is drawn toward whatever is beautiful compensates for the lack. [Ah — perhaps that explains his operation with my trunk.] But I want your *own* opinion, for I know you make more careful distinction in character than I do.

Delighting myself with the idea that I deserve most of the credit for the lots of reading you will have done by this time, and hoping I shall soon have a line telling me how my darlings are, I am, as ever,

Your loving sister,
HELEN.

Seldom have I been so roused by a letter as I was by this one, and never did I promise myself more genuine pleasure in writing a reply. I determined that it should be a masterpiece of analysis and of calm yet forcible expression of opinion.

Upon one step, at any rate, I was positively determined. Calling the girl, I asked her where the key was that locked the door between my room and the children.

"Please, sir, Toddie threw it down the well."

"Is there a locksmith in the village?"

"No, sir; the nearest one is at Paterson."

"Is there a screwdriver in the house?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bring it to me, and tell the coachman to get ready at once to drive me to Paterson."

The screwdriver was brought, and with it I removed the lock, got into the carriage, and told the driver to

take me to Paterson by the hill road — one of the most beautiful roads in America.

"Paterson!" exclaimed Budge. "Oh, there 's a candy store in that town; come on, Toddie."

"Will you?" thought I, snatching the whip and giving the horses a cut. "Not if *I* can help it. The idea of having such a drive spoiled by the clatter of *such* a couple!"

Away went the horses, and up went a piercing shriek and a terrible roar. It seemed that both children must have been mortally hurt, and I looked out hastily, only to see Budge and Toddie running after the carriage, and crying pitifully. It was too pitiful — I could not have proceeded without them, even if they had been inflicted with smallpox. The driver stopped of his own accord — he seemed to know the children's ways and their results — and I helped Budge and Toddie in, meekly hoping that the eye of Providence was upon me, and that so self-sacrificing an act would be duly passed to my credit. As we reached the hill road, my kindness to my nephews seemed to assume greater proportions, for the view before me was inexpressibly beautiful. The air was perfectly clear, and across two-score towns I saw the great metropolis itself, the silent city of Greenwood beyond it, the bay, the narrows, the sound, the two silvery rivers lying between me and the Palisades, and even, across and to the south of Brooklyn, the ocean itself. Wonderful effects of light and shadow, picturesque masses, composed of detached buildings, so far distant that they seemed huddled together; grim factories turned to beautiful palaces by

the dazzling reflection of sunlight from their window panes; great ships seeming in the distance to be toy boats floating idly; — with no signs of life perceptible, the whole scene recalled the fairy stories read in my youthful days, of enchanted cities, and the illusion was greatly strengthened by the dragon-like shape of the roof of New York's new post office, lying in the center of everything, and seeming to brood over all.

"Uncle Harry!"

Ah, that was what I expected!

"Uncle Harry!"

"Well, Budge?"

"I always think that looks like heaven."

"What does?"

"Why, all that — from here over to that other sky 'way back there behind everything, I mean. And I think *that* (here he pointed toward what probably was a photographer's roof light) — that place where it's so shiny, is where God stays."

Bless the child! The scent had suggested only elfindom to *me*, and yet I prided myself on my quick sense of artistic effects.

"An' over there where that awful bright *little* speck is," continued Budge, "that 's where dear little brother Phillie is; whenever I look over there, I see him putting his hand out."

"Dee 'ittle Phillie went to s'eep in a box, and de Lord took him to heaven," murmured Toddie, putting together all he had seen and heard of death. Then he raised his voice and exclaimed: —

"Ocken Hawwy, you know what Iz'he goin' do

when I be's big man? Iz'he goin' to have hosses an' tarridge, an' Iz'he goin' to wide over all ze chees an' all ze houses an' all ze world an' evvyfing. An' whole lots of little birdies is comin' in my tarridge an' sing songs to me, an' you can come too if you want to, an' we 'll have *ice*-cream an' 'trawberries, an 'see 'ittle fishes swimmin' down in ze water, an' we 'll get a g'eat big house that 's all p'itty on the outshide an' all p'itty on the inshide, an' it 'll all be ours an' we 'll do just evvyfing we want to."

"Toddie, you 're an idealist."

"*Ain't* a 'dealisht!"

"Toddie 's a goosey-gander," remarked Budge, with great gravity. "Uncle Harry, do you think heaven 's as nice as that place over there?"

"Yes, Budge, a great deal nicer."

"Then why don't we die an' go there? I don't want to go on livin' fo'ever an' ever. I don't see why we don't die right away; I think we 've lived enough of days."

"The Lord wants us to live until we get good and strong and smart, and do a great deal of good before we die, old fellow — that 's why we don't die right away."

"Uncle Harry, did you ever see the Lord? "

"No, Budge; he has been very close to me a good many times, but I never saw him."

"Well, I have; I see him every time I look up in the sky, and there ain't nobody with me."

The driver crossed himself and whispered, "He 's foriver a-sayin' that, an' be the powers, I belave him.

Sometimes ye 'd think that the howly saints themselves was a spakin' whin that bye gits to goin' on that way."

It *was* wonderful, Budge's countenance seemed too pure to be of earth as he continued to express his ideas of the better land and its denizens. As for Toddie, his tongue was going incessantly, although in a tone scarcely audible; but when I chanced to catch his expressions, they were so droll and fanciful that I took him upon my lap that I might hear him more distinctly. I even detected myself in the act of examining the mental draft of my proposed letter to Helen, and of being ashamed of it. But neither Toddie's fancy nor Budge's spirituality caused me to forget the principal object of my ride. I found a locksmith and left the lock to be fitted with a key; then we drove to the falls. Both boys discharged volleys of questions as we stood by the gorge, and the fact that the roar of the falling water prevented me from hearing them did not cause them to relax their efforts in the least. I walked to the hotel for a cigar, taking the children with me. I certainly spent no more than three minutes in selecting and lighting a cigar, and asking the barkeeper a few questions about the falls; but when I turned, the children were missing, nor could I see them in any direction. Suddenly, before my eyes, arose from the nearer brink of the gorge two yellowish discs, which I recognized as the hats of my nephews; then I saw between the discs and me two small figures lying upon the ground. I was afraid to shout, for fear of scaring them if they happened to hear me. I bounded across the grass, industriously raving and praying by turns. They were

lying on their stomachs and looking over the edge of the cliff. I approached them on tiptoe, threw myself upon the ground, and grasped a foot of each child.

"Oh, Uncle Harry!" screamed Budge in my ear, as I dragged him close to me, kissing and shaking him alternately; "I hunged over more than Toddie did."

"Well, I — I — I — I — I — I — hunged over a good deal, anyhow," said Toddie in self-defense.

I BECOME AN R. M. C.

By Thomas Bailey Aldrich

IN August we had two weeks' vacation. It was about this time that I became a member of the Rivermouth Centipedes, a secret society composed of twelve of the Temple Grammar School boys. This was an honor to which I had long aspired, but being a new boy, I was not admitted to the fraternity until my character had fully developed itself.

It was a very select society, the object of which I never fathomed, though I was an active member of the body during the remainder of my residence at Rivermouth, and at one time held the onerous position of F. C. — First Centipede. Each of the elect wore a copper cent (some occult association being established between a cent apiece and a centipede!) suspended by a string around his neck. The medals were worn next the skin, and it was while bathing one day at Grave Point with Jack Harris and Fred Langdon that I had my curiosity roused to the highest pitch by a sight of these singular emblems. As soon as I ascertained the existence of a boys' club, of course I was ready to die to join it. And eventually I was allowed to join.

The initiation ceremony took place in Fred Langdon's barn, where I was submitted to a series of trials not calculated to soothe the nerves of a timorous boy.

Before being led to the Grotto of Enchantment — such was the modest title given to the loft over my friend's woodhouse — my hands were securely pinioned and my eyes covered with a thick silk handkerchief. At the head of the stairs I was told in an unrecognizable, husky voice that it was not yet too late to retreat if I felt myself physically too weak to undergo the necessary tortures. I replied that I was not too weak, in a tone which I intended to be resolute, but which, in spite of me, seemed to come from the pit of my stomach.

"It is well!" said the husky voice.

I did not feel so sure about that; but having made up my mind to be a Centipede, a Centipede I was bound to be. Other boys had passed through the ordeal and lived; why should not I?

A prolonged silence followed this preliminary examination, and I was wondering what would come next, when a pistol fired off close by my ear deafened me for a moment. The unknown voice then directed me to take ten steps forward and stop at the word halt. I took ten steps, and halted.

"Stricken mortal," said a second husky voice, more husky, if possible, than the first; "if you had advanced another inch you would have disappeared down an abyss three thousand feet deep!"

I naturally shrunk back at this friendly piece of information. A prick from some two-pronged instrument, evidently a pitchfork, gently checked my retreat. I was then conducted to the brink of several other precipices and ordered to step over many dan-

gerous chasms, where the result would have been instant death if I had committed the least mistake. I have neglected to say that my movements were accompanied by dismal groans from different parts of the grotto.

Finally I was led up a steep plank to what appeared to me an incalculable height. Here I stood breathless while the by-laws were read aloud. A more extraordinary code of laws never came from the brain of man. The penalties attached to the abject being who should reveal any of the secrets of the society were enough to make the blood run cold. A second pistol-shot was heard, the something I stood on sank with a crash beneath my feet, and I fell two miles, as nearly as I could compute it. At the same instant the handkerchief was whisked from my eyes, and I found myself standing in an empty hogshead surrounded by twelve masked figures fantastically dressed. One of the conspirators was really appalling with a tin saucepan on his head and a tiger-skin sleigh robe thrown over his shoulders. I scarcely need say that there were no vestiges to be seen of the fearful gulfs over which I had passed so cautiously. My ascent had been to the top of the hogshead and my descent to the bottom thereof. Holding one another by the hand and chanting a low dirge, the Mystic Twelve revolved about me. This concluded the ceremony. With a merry shout the boys threw off their masks, and I was declared a regularly installed member of the R. M. C.

I afterwards had a good deal of sport out of the club, for these initiations, as you may imagine, were some-

times very comical spectacles, especially when the aspirant for centipedal honors happened to be of a timid disposition. If he showed the slightest terror he was certain to be tricked unmercifully. One of our subsequent devices — a humble invention of my own — was to request the blindfolded candidate to put out his tongue, whereupon the First Centipede would say, in a low tone, as if not intended for the ear of the victim, "Diabolus, fetch me the red-hot iron!" The expedition with which that tongue would disappear was simply ridiculous.

Our meetings were held in various barns, at no stated periods, but as circumstances suggested. Any member had a right to call a meeting. Each boy who failed to report himself was fined one cent. Whenever a member had reasons for thinking that another member would be unable to attend, he called a meeting. For instance, immediately on learning the death of Harry Blake's great-grandfather, I issued a call. By these simple and ingenious measures we kept our treasury in a flourishing condition, sometimes having on hand as much as a dollar and a quarter.

I have said that the society had no especial object. It is true there was a tacit understanding among us that the Centipedes were to stand by one another on all occasions, though I don't remember that they did; but further than this we had no purpose, unless it was to accomplish as a body the same amount of mischief which we were sure to do as individuals. To mystify the staid and slow-going Rivermouthians was our frequent pleasure. Several of our pranks won us such a

THE INITIATION

reputation among the townsfolk that we were credited with having a large finger in whatever went amiss in the place.

One morning, about a week after my admission into the secret order, the quiet citizens awoke to find that the signboards of all the principal streets had changed places during the night. People who went trustfully to sleep in Currant Square opened their eyes in Honeysuckle Terrace. Jones's Avenue at the north end had suddenly become Walnut Street, and Peanut Street was nowhere to be found. Confusion reigned. The town authorities took the matter in hand without delay, and six of the Temple Grammar School boys were summoned to appear before Justice Clapham.

Having tearfully disclaimed to my grandfather all knowledge of the transaction, I disappeared from the family circle, and was not apprehended until late in the afternoon, when the Captain dragged me ignominiously from the haymow and conducted me, more dead than alive, to the office of Justice Clapham. Here I encountered five other pallid culprits, who had been fished out of divers coalbins, garrets, and chicken coops, to answer the demands of the outraged laws. (Charley Marden had hidden himself in a pile of gravel behind his father's house, and looked like a recently exhumed mummy.)

There was not the least evidence against us, and, indeed, we were wholly innocent of the offense. The trick, as was afterwards proved, had been played by a party of soldiers stationed at the fort in the harbor. We were indebted for our arrest to Master Conway,

who had slyly dropped a hint, within the hearing of Selectman Mudge, to the effect that "young Bailey and his five cronies could tell something about them signs." When he was called upon to make good his assertion, he was considerably more terrified than the Centipedes, though *they* were ready to sink into their shoes.

At our next meeting it was unanimously resolved that Conway's animosity should not be quietly submitted to. He had sought to inform against us in the stagecoach business; he had volunteered to carry Pettingil's "little bill" for twenty-four ice creams to Charley Marden's father; and now he had caused us to be arraigned before Justice Clapham on a charge equally groundless and painful. After much noisy discussion a plan of retaliation was agreed upon.

There was a certain slim, mild apothecary in the town by the name of Meeks. It was generally given out that Mr. Meeks had a vague desire to get married, but, being a shy and timorous youth, lacked the moral courage to do so. It was also well known that the Widow Conway had not buried her heart with the late lamented. As to her shyness, that was not so clear. Indeed, her attentions to Mr. Meeks, whose mother she might have been, were of a nature not to be misunderstood, and were not misunderstood by anyone but Mr. Meeks himself.

The widow carried on a dressmaking establishment at her residence on the corner opposite Meeks's drug store, and kept a wary eye on all the young ladies from Miss Dorothy Gibbs's Female Institute who

patronized the shop for soda water, acid drops, and slate pencils. In the afternoon the widow was usually seen seated, smartly dressed, at her window upstairs, casting destructive glances across the street — the artificial roses in her cap and her whole languishing manner saying as plainly as a label on a prescription, "To be Taken Immediately!"

But Mr. Meeks did n't take.

The lady's fondness and the gentleman's blindness were topics ably handled at every sewing circle in the town. It was through these two luckless individuals that we proposed to strike a blow at the common enemy. To kill less than three birds with one stone did not suit our sanguinary purpose. We disliked the widow, not so much for her sentimentality as for being the mother of Bill Conway; we disliked Mr. Meeks, not because he was insipid, like his own sirups, but because the widow loved him; Bill Conway we hated for himself.

Late one dark Saturday night in September we carried our plan into effect. On the following morning, as the orderly citizens wended their way to church past the widow's abode, their sober faces relaxed at beholding over her front door the well-known gilt Mortar and Pestle which usually stood on the top of a pole on the opposite corner; while the passers on that side of the street were equally amused and scandalized at seeing a placard bearing the following announcement tacked to the druggist's window shutters: —

Wanted a Sempstress!

The naughty cleverness of the joke (which I should be sorry to defend) was recognized at once. It spread like wildfire over the town, and, though the mortar and the placard were speedily removed, our triumph was complete. The whole community was on the broad grin, and our participation in the affair seemingly unsuspected.

It was those wicked soldiers at the fort!

HOW WE ASTONISHED THE RIVER MOUTHIANS

By Thomas Bailey Aldrich

AMONG the few changes that have taken place in Rivermouth during the past twenty years there is one which I regret. I lament the removal of all those varnished iron cannon which used to do duty as posts at the corners of streets leading from the river. They were quaintly ornamental, each set upon end with a solid shot soldered into its mouth, and gave to that part of the town a picturesqueness very poorly atoned for by the conventional wooden stakes that have deposed them.

These guns ("old sogers," the boys called them) had their story, like everything else in Rivermouth. When that everlasting last war — the war of 1812, I mean — came to an end, all the brigs, schooners, and barks fitted out at this port as privateers were as eager to get rid of their useless twelve-pounders and swivels as they had previously been to obtain them. Many of the pieces had cost large sums; and now they were little better than so much crude iron — not so good, in fact, for they were clumsy things to break up and melt over. The government did n't want them; private citizens did n't want them; they were a drug in the market.

But there was one man, ridiculous beyond his generation, who got it into his head that a fortune was to be made out of these same guns. To buy them all, to hold on to them until war was declared again (as he had no doubt it would be in a few months), and then sell out at fabulous prices — this was the daring idea that addled the pate of Silas Trefethen, "Dealer in E. & W. I. Goods and Groceries," as the faded sign over his shop door informed the public.

Silas went shrewdly to work buying up every old cannon he could lay hands on. His back yard was soon crowded with broken-down gun carriages, and his barn with guns, like an arsenal. When Silas's purpose got wind it was astonishing how valuable that thing became which just now was worth nothing at all.

"Ha, ha!" thought Silas; "somebody else is tryin' tu git control of the market. But I guess I 've got the start of *him*."

So he went on buying and buying, oftentimes paying double the original price of the article. People in the neighboring towns collected all the worthless ordnance they could find, and sent it by the cartload to Rivermouth.

When his barn was full, Silas began piling the rubbish in his cellar, then in his parlor. He mortgaged the stock of his grocery store, mortgaged his house, his barn, his horse, and would have mortgaged himself, if anyone would have taken him as security, in order to carry on the grand speculation. He was a ruined man, and as happy as a lark.

Surely poor Silas was cracked, like the majority of

his own cannon. More or less crazy he must have been always. Years before this he purchased an elegant rosewood coffin, and kept it in one of the spare rooms in his residence. He even had his name engraved on the silver plate, leaving a blank after the word "Died."

The blank was filled up in due time, and well it was for Silas that he secured so stylish a coffin in his opulent days, for when he died his worldly wealth would not have bought him a pine box, to say nothing of rosewood. He never gave up expecting a war with Great Britain. Hopeful and radiant to the last, his dying words were, *England — war — few days — great profits!*

It was that sweet old lady, Dame Jocelyn, who told me the story of Silas Trefethen; for these things happened long before my day. Silas died in 1817.

At Trefethen's death his unique collection came under the auctioneer's hammer. Some of the larger guns were sold to the town, and planted at the corners of divers streets; others went off to the iron foundry; the balance, numbering twelve, were dumped down on a deserted wharf at the foot of Anchor Lane, where, summer after summer, they rested at their ease in the grass and fungi, pelted in autumn by the rain and annually buried by the winter snow. It is with these twelve guns that our story has to deal.

The wharf where they reposed was shut off from the street by a high fence — a silent, dreamy old wharf, covered with strange weeds and mosses. On account of its seclusion and the good fishing it afforded, it was much frequented by us boys.

There we met many an afternoon to throw out our

lines, or play leap-frog among the rusty cannon. They were famous fellows in our eyes. What a racket they had made in the heyday of their unchastened youth! What stories they might tell now, if their puffy metallic lips could only speak! Once they were lively talkers enough; but there the grim sea dogs lay, silent and forlorn in spite of all their former growlings.

They always seemed to me like a lot of venerable disabled tars, stretched out on a lawn in front of a hospital, gazing seaward, and mutely lamenting their lost youth.

But once more they were destined to lift up their dolorous voices — once more ere they keeled over and lay speechless for all time. And this is how it befell.

Jack Harris, Charley Marden, Harry Blake, and myself were fishing off the wharf one afternoon, when a thought flashed upon me like an inspiration.

"I say, boys!" I cried, hauling in my line hand over hand, "I 've got something!"

"What does it pull like, youngster?" asked Harris, looking down at the taut line and expecting to see a big perch at least.

"Oh, nothing in the fish way," I returned, laughing; "it's about the old guns."

"What about them?"

"I was thinking what jolly fun it would be to set one of the old sogers on his legs and serve him out a ration of gunpowder."

Up came the three lines in a jiffy. An enterprise better suited to the disposition of my companions could not have been proposed.

SAILOR BEN'S CABIN

In a short time we had one of the smaller cannon over on its back, and were busy scraping the green rust from the touch-hole. The mold had spiked the gun so effectually, that for a while we fancied we should have to give up our attempt to resuscitate the old soger.

"A long gimlet would clear it out," said Charley Marden, "if we only had one."

I looked to see if Sailor Ben's flag was flying at the cabin door, for he always took in the colors when he went off fishing.

"When you want to know if the Admiral 's aboard, jest cast an eye to the buntin', my hearties," says Sailor Ben.

Sometimes in a jocose mood he called himself the Admiral, and I am sure he deserved to be one. The Admiral's flag was flying, and I soon procured a gimlet from his carefully kept tool chest.

Before long we had the gun in working order. A newspaper lashed to the end of a lath served as a swab to dust out the bore. Jack Harris blew through the touch-hole and pronounced all clear.

Seeing our task accomplished so easily, we turned our attention to the other guns, which lay in all sorts of postures in the rank grass. Borrowing a rope from Sailor Ben, we managed with immense labor to drag the heavy pieces into position and place a brick under each muzzle to give it the proper elevation. When we beheld them all in a row, like a regular battery, we simultaneously conceived an idea, the magnitude of which struck us dumb for a moment.

Our first intention was to load and fire a single gun. How feeble and insignificant was such a plan compared to that which now sent the light dancing into our eyes!

"What could we have been thinking of?" cried Jack Harris. "We'll give 'em a broadside, to be sure, if we die for it!"

We turned to with a will, and before nightfall had nearly half the battery overhauled and ready for service. To keep the artillery dry we stuffed wads of loose hemp into the muzzles, and fitted wooden pegs to the touch-holes.

At recess the next noon the Centipedes met in a corner of the schoolyard to talk over the proposed lark. The original projectors, though they would have liked to keep the thing secret, were obliged to make a club matter of it, inasmuch as funds were required for ammunition. There had been no recent drain on the treasury, and the society could well afford to spend a few dollars in so notable an undertaking.

It was unanimously agreed that the plan should be carried out in the handsomest manner, and a subscription to that end was taken on the spot. Several of the Centipedes had n't a cent, excepting the one strung around their necks; others, however, were richer. I chanced to have a dollar, and it went into the cap quicker than lightning. When the club, in view of my munificence, voted to name the guns Bailey's Battery I was prouder than I have ever been since over anything.

The money thus raised, added to that already in the treasury, amounted to nine dollars — a fortune in

those days; but not more than we had use for. This sum was divided into twelve parts, for it would not do for one boy to buy all the powder, nor even for us all to make our purchases at the same place. That would excite suspicion at any time, particularly at a period so remote from the Fourth of July.

There were only three stores in town licensed to sell powder; that gave each store four customers. Not to run the slightest risk of remark, one boy bought his powder on Monday, the next boy on Tuesday, and so on until the requisite quantity was in our possession. This we put into a keg and carefully hid in a dry spot on the wharf.

Our next step was to finish cleaning the guns, which occupied two afternoons, for several of the old sogers were in a very congested state indeed. Having completed the task, we came upon a difficulty. To set off the battery by daylight was out of the question; it must be done at night; it must be done with fuses, for no doubt the neighbors would turn out after the first two or three shots, and it would not pay to be caught in the vicinity.

Who knew anything about fuses? Who could arrange it so the guns would go off one after the other, with an interval of a minute or so between?

Theoretically we knew that a minute fuse lasted a minute; double the quantity, two minutes; but practically we were at a standstill. There was but one person who could help us in this extremity — Sailor Ben. To me was assigned the duty of obtaining what information I could from the ex-gunner, it being left

to my discretion whether or not to intrust him with our secret.

So one evening I dropped into the cabin and artfully turned the conversation to fuses in general, and then to particular fuses, but without getting much out of the old boy, who was busy making a twine hammock. Finally, I was forced to divulge the whole plot.

The Admiral had a sailor's love for a joke, and entered at once, and heartily, into our scheme. He volunteered to prepare the fuses himself, and I left the labor in his hands, having bound him by several extraordinary oaths — such as "Hope-I-may-die" and "Shiver-my-timbers" — not to betray us, come what would.

This was Monday evening. On Wednesday the fuses were ready. That night we were to unmuzzle Bailey's Battery. Mr. Grimshaw saw that something was wrong somewhere, for we were restless and absent-minded in the classes, and the best of us came to grief before the morning session was over. When Mr. Grimshaw announced "Guy Fawkes" as the subject for our next composition, you might have knocked down the Mystic Twelve with a feather.

The coincidence was certainly curious, but when a man has committed or is about to commit an offense, a hundred trifles, which would pass unnoticed at another time, seem to point at him with convincing fingers. No doubt Guy Fawkes himself received many a start after he had got his wicked kegs of gunpowder neatly piled up under the House of Lords.

Wednesday, as I have mentioned, was a half holiday,

and the Centipedes assembled in my barn to decide on the final arrangements. These were as simple as could be. As the fuses were connected, it needed but one person to fire the train. Hereupon arose a discussion as to who was the proper person. Some argued that I ought to apply the match, the battery being christened after me, and the main idea, moreover, being mine. Others advocated the claim of Phil Adams as the oldest boy. At last we drew lots for the post of honor.

Twelve slips of folded paper, upon one of which was written "Thou art the man," were placed in a quart measure, and thoroughly shaked; then each member stepped up and lifted out his destiny. At a given signal we opened our billets. "Thou art the man," said the slip of paper trembling in my fingers. The sweets and anxieties of a leader were mine the rest of the afternoon.

Directly after twilight set in Phil Adams stole down to the wharf and fixed the fuses to the guns, laying a train of powder from the principal fuse to the fence, through a chink of which I was to drop the match at midnight.

At ten o'clock Rivermouth goes to bed. At eleven o'clock Rivermouth is as quiet as a country churchyard. At twelve o'clock there is nothing left with which to compare the stillness that broods over the little seaport. In the midst of this stillness I arose and glided out of the house like a phantom bent on an evil errand; like a phantom I flitted through the silent street, hardly drawing breath until I knelt down beside the fence at the appointed place.

Pausing a moment for my heart to stop thumping, I lighted the match and shielded it with both hands until it was well under way, and then dropped the blazing splinter on the slender thread of gunpowder.

A noiseless flash instantly followed, and all was dark again. I peeped through the crevice in the fence, and saw the main fuse spitting out sparks like a conjurer. Assured that the train had not failed, I took to my heels, fearful lest the fuse might burn more rapidly than we calculated, and cause an explosion before I could get home. This, luckily, did not happen. There's a special Providence that watches over idiots, drunken men, and boys.

I dodged the ceremony of undressing by plunging into bed, jacket, boots, and all. I am not sure I took off my cap; but I know that I had hardly pulled the coverlid over me, when "BOOM!" sounded the first gun of Bailey's Battery.

I lay as still as a mouse. In less than two minutes there was another burst of thunder, and then another. The third gun was a tremendous fellow and fairly shook the house.

The town was waking up. Windows were thrown open here and there and people called to each other across the streets asking what that firing was for.

"BOOM!" went gun number four.

I sprung out of bed and tore off my jacket, for I heard the Captain feeling his way along the wall to my chamber. I was half undressed by the time he found the knob of the door.

"I say, sir," I cried, "do you hear those guns?"

"Not being deaf, I do," said the Captain, a little tartly — any reflection on his hearing always nettled him; "but what on earth they are for I can't conceive. You had better get up and dress yourself."

"I'm nearly dressed, sir."

"BOOM! BOOM!" — two of the guns had gone off together.

The door of Miss Abigail's bedroom opened hastily, and that pink of maidenly propriety stepped out into the hall in her nightgown — the only indecorous thing I ever knew her to do. She held a lighted candle in her hand and looked like a very aged Lady Macbeth.

"O Dan'el, this is dreadful! What do you suppose it means?"

"I really can't suppose," said the Captain, rubbing his ear; "but I guess it's over now."

"BOOM!" said Bailey's Battery.

Rivermouth was wide awake now, and half the male population were in the streets, running different ways, for the firing seemed to proceed from opposite points of the town. Everybody waylaid everybody else with questions; but as no one knew what was the occasion of the tumult, people who were not usually nervous began to be oppressed by the mystery.

Some thought the town was being bombarded; some thought the world was coming to an end, as the pious and ingenious Mr. Miller had predicted it would; but those who could n't form any theory whatever were the most perplexed.

In the meanwhile Bailey's Battery bellowed away

at regular intervals. The greatest confusion reigned everywhere by this time. People with lanterns rushed hither and thither. The town watch had turned out to a man, and marched off, in admirable order, in the wrong direction. Discovering their mistake, they retraced their steps, and got down to the wharf just as the last cannon belched forth its lightning.

A dense cloud of sulphurous smoke floated over Anchor Lane, obscuring the starlight. Two or three hundred people, in various stages of excitement, crowded about the upper end of the wharf, not liking to advance farther until they were satisfied that the explosions were over. A board was here and there blown from the fence, and through the openings thus afforded a few of the more daring spirits at length ventured to crawl.

The cause of the racket soon transpired. A suspicion that they had been sold gradually dawned on the Rivermouthians. Many were exceedingly indignant, and declared that no penalty was severe enough for those concerned in such a prank; others — and these were the very people who had been terrified nearly out of their wits — had the assurance to laugh, saying that they knew all along it was only a trick.

The town watch boldly took possession of the ground, and the crowd began to disperse. Knots of gossips lingered here and there near the place, indulging in vain surmises as to who the invisible gunners could be.

There was no more noise that night, but many a timid person lay awake expecting a renewal of the mysterious cannonading. The Oldest Inhabitant re-

fused to go to bed on any terms, but persisted in sitting up in a rocking chair, with his hat and mittens on, until daybreak.

I thought I should never get to sleep. The moment I drifted off in a doze I fell to laughing and woke myself up. But toward morning slumber overtook me, and I had a series of disagreeable dreams, in one of which I was waited upon by the ghost of Silas Trefethen with an exorbitant bill for the use of his guns. In another, I was dragged before a court-martial and sentenced by Sailor Ben, in a frizzled wig and three-cornered cocked hat, to be shot to death by Bailey's Battery — a sentence which Sailor Ben was about to execute with his own hand, when I suddenly opened my eyes and found the sunshine lying pleasantly across my face. I tell you I was glad!

That unaccountable fascination which leads the guilty to hover about the spot where his crime was committed drew me down to the wharf as soon as I was dressed. Phil Adams, Jack Harris, and others of the conspirators were already there, examining with a mingled feeling of curiosity and apprehension the havoc accomplished by the battery.

The fence was badly shattered and the ground plowed up for several yards around the place where the guns formerly lay — formerly lay, for now they were scattered every which way. There was scarcely a gun that had n't burst. Here was one ripped open from muzzle to breech, and there was another with its mouth blown into the shape of a trumpet. Three of the guns had disappeared bodily, but on looking over

the edge of the wharf we saw them standing on end in the tide mud. They had popped overboard in their excitement.

"I tell you what, fellows," whispered Phil Adams, "it is lucky we did n't try to touch 'em off with punk. They 'd have blown us all to flinders."

The destruction of Bailey's Battery was not, unfortunately, the only catastrophe. A fragment of one of the cannon had carried away the chimney of Sailor Ben's cabin. He was very mad at first, but having prepared the fuse himself he did n't dare complain openly.

"I'd have taken a reef in the blessed stovepipe," said the Admiral, gazing ruefully at the smashed chimney, "if I had known as how the Flagship was agoin' to be under fire."

The next day he rigged out an iron funnel, which, being in sections, could be detached and taken in at a moment's notice. On the whole, I think he was resigned to the demolition of his brick chimney. The stovepipe was a great deal more shipshape.

The town was not so easily appeased. The selectmen determined to make an example of the guilty parties, and offered a reward for their arrest, holding out a promise of pardon to any one of the offenders who would furnish information against the rest. But there were no faint hearts among the Centipedes. Suspicion rested for a while on several persons — on the soldiers at the fort; on a crazy fellow, known about town as "Bottle-Nose"; and at last on Sailor Ben.

"Shiver my timbers!" cried that deeply injured in-

dividual. "Do you suppose, sir, as I have lived to sixty year, an' ain't got no more sense than to go for to blaze away at my own upper riggin'? It does n't stand to reason."

It certainly did not seem probable that Mr. Watson would maliciously knock over his own chimney, and Lawyer Hackett, who had the case in hand, bowed himself out of the Admiral's cabin convinced that the right man had not been discovered.

People living by the sea are always more or less superstitious. Stories of spectre ships and mysterious beacons, that lure vessels out of their course and wreck them on unknown reefs, were among the stock legends of Rivermouth; and not a few people in the town were ready to attribute the firing of those guns to some supernatural agency. The Oldest Inhabitant remembered that when he was a boy a dim-looking sort of schooner hove to in the offing one foggy afternoon, fired off a single gun that did n't make any report, and then crumbled to nothing, spar, mast, and hulk, like a piece of burnt paper.

The authorities, however, were of the opinion that human hands had something to do with the explosions, and they resorted to deep-laid stratagems to get hold of the said hands. One of their traps came very near catching us. They artfully caused an old brass fieldpiece to be left on a wharf near the scene of our late operations. Nothing in the world but the lack of money to buy powder saved us from falling into the clutches of the two watchmen who lay secreted for a week in a neighboring sail loft.

It was many a day before the midnight bombardment ceased to be the town talk. The trick was so audacious and on so grand a scale that nobody thought for an instant of connecting us lads with it. Suspicion at length grew weary of lighting on the wrong person, and as conjecture — like the physicians in the epitaph — was in vain, the Rivermouthians gave up the idea of finding out who had astonished them.

They never did find out, and never will, unless they read this veracious history. If the selectmen are still disposed to punish the malefactors, I can supply Lawyer Hackett with evidence enough to convict Pepper Whitcomb, Phil Adams, Charley Marden, and the other honorable members of the Centipede Club. But really I don't think it would pay now.

THE BARRING OF THE DOOR

By Eva March Tappan

"HAVE you gone clean daft, goodwife?"

"I've been a-thinking, goodman."

"I never do that, and there was none of our folks that ever got up in the night to think. And what are you stirring the fire for, goodwife?"

"To make it burn, goodman."

"Our folks never stirred the fire in the night. What are you going to do, goodwife?"

"I'm going to make a white pudding, goodman."

"Our folks never made white puddings in the night. And what'll you do then, goodwife?"

"Then I'll make a black pudding, goodman."

"Did ever a man have such a wife!" exclaimed her goodman. "What are you making it for, goodwife?"

"For people to eat, goodman."

"Our folks did n't eat in the night, goodwife," said her puzzled goodman.

"No, but there may be those a-coming that will eat by day, and what should I do if I had n't any white puddings and if I had n't any black puddings, goodman?"

"People did n't come to see our folks when we did n't have any puddings, goodwife."

"That 's because you always had them, goodman."

"I never thought of that, goodwife. I could n't think like that by daylight."

And so the goodwife raked away the ashes and blew the fire and pulled the crane forward and hung a heavy iron pot on it that was full of water fresh from the well; and then she brought out a great wooden bowl, and into it she put more different things than one could dream of in a month of Saturday mornings. She stirred them and rolled them and twisted them and pulled them and mixed them and seasoned them and pounded them and kneaded them and shook them, until they were so confused that they did not know whether they were several things or one thing. But the goodwife was a wise woman and she knew. She gave a little pat and then a little toss, and there was the pudding round as a ball, and she tied it into a cloth and put it into the iron pot to boil.

This was the white pudding. Then came the black, and that was much larger than the white, because black flour did not cost so much as white flour. The water in the iron pot was boiling out, and the goodwife went to the well for more.

"Bar the door, goodwife; you've left it open," said her goodman.

"That's because I did not shut it," retorted the goodwife.

"Our folks always shut the door when the wind blew cold from the north and the east.'

"Well, there 's one of your folks here now," said his goodwife. "You would n't ask a woman with her hands

in a pudding to go and shut the door, now would you really, goodman?"

"But you left it open," said her goodman. "Our folks always shut the door when they left it open."

"I don't," said his goodwife. "When I leave it open, it is open; and it'll be open for this hundred years if you wait for me to shut it. And I won't say another word," she added, "till you get up and bar the door, and not let your goodwife stand and make a pudding all a-shiver."

"And I won't say another word till you get up and bar the door and not let your goodman lie in bed all a-shiver."

"You'll have to ask for some of my pudding in the morning."

"And you'll have to ask me to split some more wood to-night, or your pudding won't be done."

"Then I'll eat pudding and you may eat wood," said his goodwife, "and the one that speaks first shall get up and bar the door."

Away down the lane were two gentlemen thieves who had been robbing a rich man's house.

"Pretty heavy lugging, this great bag of silver," said one.

"Heavier lugging, this great bag of gold," said the other.

"I'll ease you of it," said the first. "We'll make a bet and I'll win. There's a light up the lane. If it is a poor man's house, I'll give you my bag; and if it's a rich man's house, you give me yours." So they crept softly up to the cottage and peeped in at the door.

"There's no one there but a sick man in bed and a woman boiling a pudding," said one.

"I like the smell of that pudding. Let's leave our bags under the hedge and go in and ask for some," whispered the other.

"We'll ask first whether they are rich or poor," said the first, "and then we'll know who'll have to carry the bags. I think they're poor, for they have to work by day and cook by night."

"And I think they're rich, or else they would n't have puddings enough to cook all day and all night too," rejoined the other. So the two gentlemen thieves crept nearer and nearer to the house. They laid their bags down softly under the hedge and then walked boldly up to the door.

"Is this a rich man's house or is it a poor?" they asked. The goodman frowned at them and the goodwife smiled at them, but neither of them spoke a word for the barring of the door.

"It's a rich man's house," said one of the gentlemen thieves. "See all the good things she's been putting into the pudding!"

"It's a poor man's house," retorted the other. "Look at the old man's beard! He's not been shaved for a good twelvemonth." Then, for the pudding kept on smelling better and better, one of the gentlemen thieves pleaded: —

"Goodwife, we be two poor travelers. Could you give us a bit of your pudding? It's we that have been hard at work this night."

What the goodwife would have said, if she had said

anything, no one knows, but she dared not speak at all, for her goodman was grinning at her and pointing to the door. The two gentlemen thieves went to the great iron pot and took out the puddings on the points of their swords, and held them up over the white scoured floor to drain. Then they sat down to the table and cut off great pieces of them. First they ate the white pudding and then they ate the black, though that was not very well done, for the fire had given out because there was no more wood. The goodman smiled and said to himself: —

"That's what she has for getting up to think in the night after the moon has gone down over the poplar tree behind the well. Our folks never got up in the night to think." The goodwife sat on a bench in the corner of the fireplace watching the two gentlemen thieves devouring her nice puddings.

"And if my sister and my sister's goodman and the eleven children should come to-morrow, there would n't be bite or sup for them," she said to herself.

At last the two gentlemen thieves had finished eating the puddings. "Hark!" whispered one. "Is n't that the sound of a horse's hoofs? We'd better be going."

"I'll go after I've kissed the goodwife," said the other. "And do you shave off the goodman's beard."

"There's no hot water," objected the first.

"Take the pudding broth," said the other.

Then the goodman jumped out of bed, seized the iron pot, and flung the hot broth into the faces of the two gentlemen thieves.

"You would kiss my wife before my eyes, would

you?" he cried, "and scald me with pudding broth!" But the goodwife sprang up from the chimney corner and clapped her hands and gave three skips on the floor.

"Goodman, you've said the first word! Now go and bar the door."

As for the two gentlemen thieves, they thought that the goodman and the goodwife had suddenly gone crazy, and they ran for their lives, slamming the door behind them, a thing which neither thieves nor gentlemen are accustomed to do. They ran down the lane, over the hedge, into the briers, across the meadow, over a brook, through the high grass, until the first thing that they knew, they were in the middle of a pond, and they had to scramble out as best they could, for they did not dare to call to anyone to help them.

The next morning when the goodwife threw open the door and went to get a pail of fresh water, she saw down under the hedge two loaded bags, one full of silver and the other full of gold.

"Goodman, come out here!" she cried. "There's a bag of gold for the white pudding, and there's a bag of silver for the black; and I'm going to make a pudding every night of my life."

"None of our folks ever did," said her goodman.

THE KING AND THE MILLER OF MANSFIELD

By Eva March Tappan

PART I

THE young hunter had lost his way. The courtiers were out of sight; not a sound of their horns could be heard, and every minute the forest grew darker and darker. Up and down he wandered till it was far into the night. The owl called lonesomely from the top of the blasted pine, and in the pale, silver rays of the moonlight the young hunter fancied that he could see all kinds of strange creatures mocking him, and he heard strange sounds that he had never heard by day or when his friends were around him. At last there was one sound that he knew. It was the beat of a horse's hoofs on the forest path, as some rider jogged along on a belated errand. The young hunter called out gladly to the unknown horseman: —

"Pray tell me, sir, what is the nearest way to Nottingham?"

"What do such as you want at Nottingham?" demanded the rider. "The king's court is at Nottingham, and I'll bet the bag pudding that my dame will give me for supper this night that you would no more venture to go to Nottingham than I would to ask the king to eat supper with me."

"Nevertheless, I do want to go to Nottingham," said the young hunter, "and I was on my way there when I lost my road."

"I'm not the man to think that you lost your way for nothing," growled the rider.

"And what do you take me for?" asked the young hunter lightly, for his spirits were rising now that he had even so surly a companion as this. "You have n't had a glimpse of me. Wait and I'll come out farther into the moonlight."

"You stand back there in the shadow," ordered the countryman. "You talk of going to the king's court, you do, but you'll never go there unless the sheriff takes you. I know what you are; you're a gentleman thief, and if you come one step nearer, I'll crack your crown for you. I'm the miller of Mansfield, I am, and I know good corn from poor."

"You're half in the right," said the young hunter, "when you call me a gentleman thief, for I'm not a thief, but I'm a gentleman, and will you not give a gentleman a night's lodging?"

"I'll warrant you have fine clothes," admitted the miller, "and a sword, but I doubt if you have one groat in your purse. I've been to London town, I have, and I've seen young fellows before that wore all their fortune on their back."

"But I have gold enough to pay for all I ask," declared the young hunter. "Even if it was as much as forty pence, I could pay it," and he softly jingled the golden coins in his pocket. The miller hesitated, for the sound of the coins was music to him.

"Maybe you stole the money," said he, "but that's the king's business, not mine. A little bad corn does not always show in the grist."

"I swear to you by the king's crown that I'm a true man, and here's my hand on it."

"Nay, not so fast," said the miller of Mansfield. "I'll not take your hand yet a while. You may be a wood fiend, after all. My wife's cousin's goodman saw one once, or he would if he had n't shut his eyes because he knew by the itching of his great toe that something uncanny was coming."

They went along together to the miller's house; and when the door was opened, there came out such a smell of good things a-cooking that the young hunter was more hungry than ever.

"Pray, my good host, let us have some of your goodwife's supper," said he.

"Where are your manners?" demanded the miller. "Did n't you ever have any bringing up? If you'd been to London town even once, you would know that you must wait till the goodman of the house bids you fall to. I have n't had a look at you yet. Stand up here and let me see what kind of fellow you are. Dick, do you light a pine knot, and hold it up close."

"Look your fill," said the young hunter good-naturedly, "but see to it you singe not a hair of my mustache, or the king will be after you."

"Ha, ha, but you're a droll fellow," laughed the miller. "You've an honest face, and I know good corn from bad, I do. You may stay with us the night,

and I'll give you no worse bedfellow than my son Dick here."

"Your mill is turning too fast, goodman," interrupted his wife. "He's a handsome youth, but who knows but he's a vagabond, and we'll get ourselves into trouble by harboring him? Show me your passport, young man," she added, "and we'll know that you're no runaway servant."

Then the young hunter, with his hat in his hand, made so low a bow that the long white plume swept the earthen floor, and he said: —

"I have no passport, and indeed I am afraid that I never earned a penny in my life. I'm only a courtier, but my gold 's my own; my father left it me."

Then the miller's wife beckoned her husband to a dark corner, and whispered: —

"Indeed, goodman, you must n't be hard on him. He's one of those helpless younkers that have to live on what their fathers earned; not like our own Dick here, who can run a mill as well as yourself. He belongs to good people; you can see that by his fine clothes. Don't you be hard on him."

"Who but you ever thought of being hard on him?" retorted the miller of Mansfield. "It takes a woman to judge a man by his dress. You can't always tell the taste of corn by its color. Now I can see he 's of good kin, for he knows how to behave to his betters."

The goodwife turned to the young hunter.

"Young man," said she, "you're welcome here, and though I say it as should n't, you'll be as well lodged as if you were in the king's palace. I know what I'm

telling you, for my goodman, he saw it once when he happened to be in London town. I'll lay fresh straw on the bed with my own hands, and I'll put on good brown hempen sheets, and they're much finer than any other sheets in the whole village. Mayhap you're not used to such fine weaving, and you'll have to be careful not to kick them out. You don't wear your sword to bed, do you?"

The young hunter laughed, and said he would n't this time, anyway, and then they sat down to their supper.

Such a supper had the hungry young fellow never tasted in all his life. There was hot bag pudding, and good apple pie, and fine strong ale in a brown wooden bowl that passed around the table from one to another.

"And so you're a courtier, are you?" said the miller. "Now courtiers wear satin clothes; and when they walk about, the pearls drop out of the folds; and they wear around their necks gold chains big enough to hold an ox; and the buckles on their shoes are all covered with rubies; and they wear crowns like the king's, only they're not quite half so high. I know, for a man in London town told me so."

Dick sat staring with his mouth wide open, but the goodwife nodded wisely: —

"Yes, he knows. It is n't everybody that has been to London town."

"I've nothing against courtiers, though," said the miller, "so here's to your health and to all the courtiers that you ever saw."

"I thank you in faith," responded the young man. "I pledge you in your own good nut-brown ale, and I am heartily grateful to you for my welcome."

"Now that we're all good friends," said the miller, "goodwife, bring on lightfoot." So the goodwife went to a little pantry, and pushed away a tiny slide that was hidden in the wall, and brought forth a venison pasty.

"Eat all you will," quoth the miller, "but make no waste. You'll not find this in many houses."

"In truth," said the courtier, "I never ate so dainty a thing before."

"You may well say that," declared Dick, "but it's no dainty to us; we have it every day."

"And where do you buy such fare as this?" asked the guest.

"Buy it!" said the miller, "never a penny do we pay for it; we — well, just now and then we make free with the king's deer over there in Sherwood Forest."

"This must be venison, then."

"Any fool would know that," said Dick. "We're never without two or three good fat ones hung up in the roof; but don't you ever say a word of it, wherever you go, for we should all be hanged if the king should hear of it."

"Never a bit more than he knows now shall he ever know from me," promised the stranger; and after they had each drunk a great cup of ale with baked apples in it, they went to bed, and a sounder sleep had the young courtier than ever before in all his life.

Next morning, as the stranger was mounting his

fine gray horse, a great party of nobles came riding by.

"We've found the king!" they cried, and then, one and all, they flung themselves down on their knees before the young man and asked pardon that they had lost him the night before in the forest.

As to the miller and his goodwife and their son Dick, they were frightened almost to death lest they should be hanged for killing the king's deer. The miller stood with his hands close to his sides, shaking and quaking; and his goodwife was wringing her hands and giving forth such shrieks that the courtiers forgot court etiquette and put their fingers in their ears. As for Dick, he was too amazed at all the wonderful happenings to be afraid, and he stood with his toes turned in and his tongue hung out, waiting to see what would come next.

The king gravely drew his sword and looked at the miller.

Then the miller fell upon his knees, and put his hand over his eyes, and began to shriek louder than his wife, and Dick turned his toes in till they touched. His tongue hung down to the end of his chin, and he opened his mouth so wide that you could not see his forehead, and he, too, began to howl. The king raised his sword, but when it came down it touched the miller lightly on the shoulder, and the king said: —

"I here dub thee knight. Rise, Sir John of Mansfield."

PART II

"That was a fine progress, Your Majesty," said the Prime Minister.

"Yes," said the king wearily.

"Your Majesty held a brilliant court at Nottingham," said the Lord Chamberlain.

"Yes," said the king.

"What an original idea it was to present Your Majesty with that cheese as big as a cartwheel," said the Lord Steward.

"Yes," said the king.

"The hunting was much better about Nottingham than it is around Westminster," said the Master of the Horse.

"Yes," said the king.

"The people all along the way were so happy in seeing Your Majesty," said the Grand Falconer.

"Yes," said the king.

"What shall we say next?" whispered the Prime Minister to the Lord Chamberlain; and the Lord Chamberlain whispered it to the Lord Steward; and the Lord Steward whispered it to the Master of the Horse; and the Master of the Horse whispered it to the Grand Falconer; and the Grand Falconer whispered it to the First Cupbearer; and the First Cupbearer whispered it to the Page of Honor; and the Page of Honor whispered it to the Cook; and the Cook whispered it to the Scullion.

"The king wants something to do," said the Scullion;

and this answer was whispered halfway back to the Prime Minister. It did not go any farther because the king suddenly turned upon them and demanded: —

"What are you all about? I never saw such stupid people. Why don't you amuse me?" And he frowned at the Prime Minister.

"Stupid!" whispered the Prime Minister over his shoulder to the Lord Chamberlain; and the Lord Chamberlain, under pretense of an especially profound obeisance to the king, took the opportunity to kick the Lord Steward slyly. The Lord Steward pinched the Master of the Horse; and the Master of the Horse stuck a pin into the Grand Falconer; and the Grand Falconer stepped on the toes of the First Cupbearer; and the First Cupbearer pulled a stray lock of hair of the Page of Honor; and the Page of Honor slipped out to the kitchen and dropped a pinch of salt into the Cook's jelly; and the Cook boxed the Scullion's ears.

"Ow!" cried the Scullion, and his voice rang out all the way from the kitchen to the king's hall.

"What's that?" asked the king. "That's the first sensible remark I've heard to-day. Go and bring him in."

So the Scullion, still rubbing his red ear, was brought in and made a bow before the king.

"Say something," said the king. "These people can't converse."

And the Scullion, trembling with anger at the Cook and with fear of the king, managed to stammer out: —

"Which part of Your Majesty's progress did Your Majesty enjoy most?"

The king burst out laughing. "You're a brave fellow," said he. "These simpletons did n't make a remark that I could n't answer with 'Yes,' and a king ought to have a chance to talk. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, Your Majesty," said the boy, with a low bow, more graceful than the first, for his ear had stopped smarting, and he did not have to rub it any longer.

"I suppose the Prime Minister and the Lord Chamberlain and all the rest of them are thinking that a scullion ought not to enter their company," said the king, "and probably they are right; so I'll make you my own Royal Messenger. You're a good-looking fellow, and I rather think you can talk the court chatter, can't you?"

"I will strive to do what Your Majesty bids me," said the Royal Messenger discreetly.

"Well," said the king, "go to the court tailor and get a suit of blue velvet and silver lace, and have your hair curled, and be here before the wind changes."

The boy was off in a moment, and the king turned to the Prime Minister and the rest of them, his ill humor all gone, and said: —

"That boy has put something into my head, and we're going to have the merriest jest you ever heard of. To-morrow is St. George's day, and we'll invite our new knight, Sir John of Mansfield, to the feast, and he shall bring with him my bedfellow, his son Dick."

Soon the new Royal Messenger returned in his blue velvet suit all shining with silver lace. His hair had been curled and brushed till it shone like a duck's wing.

"Would Your Majesty be graciously pleased to favor me with any commissions?" asked the lad.

The King laughed aloud: —

"You've caught it," said he, with tears of merriment in his eyes. "You can talk it as well as the best of them. You're an honor to your velvet. Now go to Mansfield and invite the miller, Sir John, and his wife and son to dine at court to-morrow."

It did not take the Royal Messenger long to find the miller. He dropped on one knee before Sir John, and began the speech that he had made up on the way: —

"God save Your Worship and grant your lady whatever her heart does most desire, and give the young gentleman, your son Richard, that sweet, gentle, and gallant young squire, good fortune and happiness all the days of his life. Our gracious king sends you greeting, and bids you come to his court to-morrow, St. George's day, to dine with him."

"Whatever shall we do?" cried the miller in alarm.

"Why, thank the young man kindly," said his wife, "and say that we will go if there's not too much corn comes in to be ground."

"You'd better not fail," said the Royal Messenger. "I tell you there's the biggest kind of a feast, and I know, for I've been in the kitchen and seen it. The Cook's uncommon good to me now, he is."

"I'm afraid the king remembers — is angry," stammered the miller.

"Yes, I know he'll hang us," said Dick.

"And I don't know how one should behave at court," muttered the miller.

"Well, there, I would n't own it if I did n't," said his goodwife. " A man that's had the advantages that you have. A man that's been to London twice ought to know how to eat dinner. My goodman — I mean Sir John — has eaten with a king before now," she announced proudly to the young fellow.

Then the miller remembered that he was a great man and need not be afraid of anybody. He straightened himself up, with his chin so high in the air that he could hardly see the Royal Messenger, and made a fine speech.

"In truth, young man, you have contented My Worship right well, and here are three farthings to reward you. See to it that you do not spend them foolishly on your way home, but show them to the king. I want the king to see that I am not stingy with my money," he whispered to his goodwife.

"And what shall I say to the king?" asked the messenger.

"Say to him — well, let me see — tell him that My Worship and My Ladyship and My Worship's son Richard will be pleased to come to dinner, and that we 'll bring good appetites with us."

Then the young man rode away, and the miller turned to his goodwife and grumbled: —

"That's only the beginning of it; first, the three farthings, and now we must buy new clothes, and we ought to have riding horses, and servants, and fine bridles and saddles, and twenty other things besides; and mayhap they 'll want Dick here to marry one of the king's princesses, and then we'd have to buy cakes

and ale for the wedding, and set him up in a cottage of his own. There's no end to it when a man once becomes great," and the miller heaved a deep sigh.

"Now you just cheer up," said his goodwife. "Our Dick would n't take any woman that could n't make a bag pudding, and like as not those princesses never saw a bag pudding in their lives. I remember one day when the king chanced to sup with us," she added loftily, "that he said he had never seen one before. You need n't worry. I'll brush up your coat, and I'll turn my russet gown, and we'll put a pillion on one of the mill horses, and Dick can take the other, and we'll ride off as fine as a rooster on a fence."

So early the next morning they set out in stately array for the king's palace. Dick rode first. He had put a cock's feather in his cap for luck, for he was still a little fearful of what might happen. Behind him came the miller and his goodwife on a stout mill horse, the miller just a little timid, but his goodwife quite at her ease, and convinced of her own elegance, for she had turned her russet gown fully two years sooner than she had intended, and if that did not make her elegant, I don't know what would. The king and his nobles all came out to meet them.

"Welcome, Sir Knight," cried the king, "and welcome to your lady fair in all her fine array! Welcome, too, to the brave young squire!"

"And so you have n't forgotten me," said Dick, put quite at his ease by the king's hearty greeting.

"How could I forget my own bedfellow?" asked the king, laughing.

"I remember you took more than your half of the bed," said Dick.

The king and the courtiers laughed, and then the king gave one hand to the miller and the other to his wife, and with Dick following after, they all went to the banquet hall; and whenever the king spoke to the goodwife, she would let go his hand and make a curtsy, and then give the court ladies around her a look that said as plainly as words: —

"I know how to behave to a king."

Down to the table they all sat, and many a dish of dainties was brought on. The feast lasted so long that once the miller actually went to sleep for a moment, but his wife sat up stiff and straight and ate whatever was given to her. Dick sat back in his chair, looking crosser and crosser, and saying, "No, I won't" to almost every dish. There was wine and ale and beer, and by and by the king lifted a bowl of wine and said: —

"Here's to your health, Sir John, and your kind lady, and your son Dick, and I thank you heartily for the good cheer that you gave me"; and he added slyly, "I wish that we had some of your lightfoot here."

Then Dick blustered out: —

"That's what I call downright knavery, to eat it and then go away and tell."

"Oh, don't be angry," pleaded the king, laughing. "I thought you would take it in jest. Are n't you going to drink my health in some wine or some ale?"

"Not till I've had my dinner," growled Dick sulkily. "You give us such a mess of silly little dishes. There's

nothing to them, and one good bag pudding is worth them all."

"That bag pudding was good," said the king, "and I wish I had one now."

"'T is n't everybody that has his wits about him," said Dick, "but I have." And while the miller looked anxious, and the miller's wife looked proud at seeing her son and the king talking together so familiarly, and while the court ladies laughed till their lofty head-dresses shook most alarmingly, and the nobles almost rolled from their chairs, Dick pulled out a great bag pudding from his pocket. The king pretended to snatch at it, but Dick was ready.

"No, sir," said he; "you may have all your stuff in the little dishes; this is meat for your betters."

After the feast came the dancing, and nothing would do but Sir John and Dick must dance with all the court ladies. When the dancing had come to an end, because the harpers and the dancers were every one of them so overcome with laughter that they could only sit and hold their sides, the king suddenly called for silence. Then he turned to Dick and asked gravely: —

"Now that you have seen all these ladies, which one will you select as a wife? Look well, and choose so that you will not repent."

"Just what I was afraid of," groaned the miller. "Oh, the cakes and the ale!"

His wife said nothing, but looked anxiously at her son.

"That is carrying a jest too far," whispered the nobles angrily, and the court ladies began to look pale

and to turn their faces toward the wall lest their beauty should make them the choice of Squire Richard. They need not have been troubled, for Dick did not even glance at one of them, but declared stoutly: —

"I don't want any of your court ladies, King. I want a woman that can make a bag pudding. There's a wench at home that's worth them all. She's Jugg Grumball, and she's the one that I'll marry."

"Thank the king kindly," said his mother a little reprovingly, "and tell him that if it was n't for Jugg you'd be pleased to pick out one of the ladies."

"But I would n't," declared Dick bluntly; "I'd have Jugg or nobody." Then the nobles laughed, but the ladies did not know whether to be pleased or angry.

"Well, Sir John, I suppose I could n't induce you to exchange your wife for any one of them," said the king, "but I'll tell you what I can do. I'll make you overseer of merry Sherwood Forest, and I'll give you three hundred pounds a year — but see to it that you steal no more of my deer," he added in a loud whisper that set the court off into roars of laughter, "and be sure that you come to court as often as once a quarter"; and so they mounted the mill horses again and went home; and every afternoon, when the dishes have been washed, the miller's wife takes her mending and goes to visit some of her neighbors to tell them what happened "one morning when I was at court."

THE FALSE KNIGHT

By Eva March Tappan

GOODMAN," said his goodwife, "our wee laddie wants to go to the school."

"And what does he want to go to the school for?" asked the goodman. "When I sell a sheep on a market day, can't he count the silver shillings as well as I can?"

"But he wants to go."

"It's only great folks' sons that go to the school," objected the goodman.

"And you'd be as fine a knight as any of them," said his goodwife shrewdly, "if only you had a helmet and a sword and a shield." Then the goodman had a thought, but all he said was: —

"Well, goodwife, if he goes to school, he shall drive a flock of sheep with him, for they'd be as good at the learning as he."

"So he shall," thought the goodwife, "and he shall sell one of them by the way and buy him some books, and he shall have just as many as if he was a knight's son."

So the wee laddie set out for school with a whip and a flock of sheep; and on the way he sold a sheep, and he bought a great pack of books that he carried on his back, all but one, and that was wide open in his left

hand, while his whip was in his right; and as he went along, he drove the sheep with the whip, and he studied from his book, and said aloud: —

"B-a, ba; b-a, ba."

He went down the lane and on the road through the woods, and at last he was in the king's highway, and when he came to the crossroads, there was a knight on horseback. He had a helmet and a sword and a lance and a shield; and as the wee laddie came up, saying at the top of his voice, "B-a, ba; b-a, ba," the knight held his lance across the road and said: —

"Stop, and tell me where you are going."

"I'm going to the school, and I'm studying my lesson. B-a, ba; b-a, ba," said the wee laddie.

"What's that on your back?" asked the knight.

"It's my books," said the wee laddie, and he went on, "B-a, ba; b-e, be."

"And what have you on your arm?" asked the knight.

"It's my whip," said the wee laddie; but he did not stop his "B-a, ba; b-e, be."

"Whose sheep are those?" asked the knight.

"Mine and my mother's," said the wee laddie. "B-a, ba; b-e, be; b-i, bi."

"How many of them are mine?" asked the knight.

"Every one that has a blue tail," said the wee laddie. "B-a, ba; b-e, be; b-i, bi; ba, be, bi."

Then the knight pretended to be angry that so wee a laddie should get the better of him, and he said: —

"I wish you were up in yonder tree."

"With a good ladder under me," retorted the wee laddie, and he called louder than ever: —

"B-a, ba; b-e, be;
B-i, bi; and a ba, be, bi;
B-o, bo" —

But the knight broke in upon him and said: —

"Then I wish that the ladder would break."

"And you'd have a fall. B-o, bo, and a ba, be, bi, bo."

"I wish you were in the sea," said the knight.

"With a good strong boat under me. B-u, bu," called the wee laddie.

"Then I'll wish that the boat would break in two," cried the knight.

"And you'd be drowned. Ba, be, bi, bo, bu," said the boy.

"You're clean daft," said the knight. "Get along to your school, and I'll drive the sheep myself."

So the wee laddie let the stranger knight have the sheep, and he went on happily to school. When he came home, his mother said: —

"Now, wee laddie, tell us what you have learned at school"; and the wee laddie stood up before the fireplace and put his hands behind his back and repeated: —

"B-a, ba; b-e, be;
B-i, bi; and a ba, be, bi;
B-o, bo; and a ba, be, bi, bo;
B-u, bu; and a ba, be, bi, bo, bu."

"There's many a fine gentleman's son that could n't do that," said the goodwife proudly; but the goodman asked: —

"Laddie, where are the sheep?" and the wee laddie answered: —

"A stranger knight came along the way, and I let him have them to drive home."

Then the goodwife threw her apron over her head and sobbed: —

"And he's only a stupid for all he's been to school."

"How did the stranger knight look?" asked the goodman.

"He had an ox goad for a lance, and a pig knife for a sword, and an old cow skin tied over a tin pan for a shield, and he wore a brass kettle on his head."

"And you'd give the sheep to a fool like that!" exclaimed the goodman.

"But I knew it was my own father the first look I had at him," said the wee laddie.

The goodwife threw off her apron and danced for joy and cried: —

"And will you tell me who's the stupid now, goodman?"

HANS THE OTHERWISE

By John Bennett

VERY old people may remember hearing their grandfathers say that a great many years ago the Baron of the Land of Nod asked two questions of his three wise men which none of them could answer. If they do not remember, it will not matter at all: a great many things have happened that history has found it convenient to forget.

But that is neither here nor there. The baron offered great rewards for any answer to his questions; but although all the wisest men in the world tried, no one succeeded; and the questions remained unanswered year after year, until "to answer the Baron of Nod" became a common saying among the people, meaning simply neither more nor less than to do the impossible.

And, what was more, the whole story had grown so old that it had been made over into a popular song, so that it must have been very old indeed; and this was the song: —

If you seek to find a fortune
  By your wit, do not delay:
To the Land of Nod betake you —
  If your wit can find the way.
There's a rosebush by the roadside,
  And two shrubs beside the stream,
With three little hills behind them,
  And a castle white as cream,

Where, if you can answer questions
At the hazard of your neck,
You will find both fame and fortune,
And have money by the peck!

Now it so happened that in the little village of Narrheit there lived a lad whose name nobody knew. The floods had left him in the rye field when he was but a baby, and his parents were past all finding out. Johann Barthel, the woodman, found him, and took him home to grow up with the little Barthels. Johann's wife cut down her husband's old clothes to fit the little fellow; and Johann himself cut down his grown-up name from Johann to "Hans" to give to the youngster who had lost his own.

As the lad grew up, he was not at all like the small Barthels, whose noses all turned up like little red buttons, for his turned down like a hawk's beak; and while they were one and all as stumpy as their noses, he shot up like a young tree. And, too, while the little Barthels chattered all day long without ever saying a thing worth listening to, Hans, when not at work, sat still in the corner, thinking; and when questioned as to his thoughts by the meddlesome villagers, always gave answers that left them even more puzzled than they were before.

This was something that the good, thick-headed people of Narrheit could not understand; and like all such good, thick-headed people the world over, they believed that there could be nothing worth understanding in what they could not understand themselves. So, like all good, thick-headed folk, the dull

villagers, believing themselves to be most undoubtedly wise, called the lad, not "Hans the Wise," but "Hans the Otherwise," and thought him neither more nor less than a blockhead.

Hans cared little for that, and, bearing no grudge, went quietly about his business, helping Johann with the fagots, saying little, and thinking much — which was more than all the rest of the villagers could have done together.

At last, however, the bench beside the Barthel family porridge pot grew overcrowded; and one day, when Hans came home from the forest, there was not an inch left at his end.

"Why don't you sit down?" growled Johann, his heavy voice making little waves dance all around the rim of the big blue bowl.

"There is no room," faltered Hans, hanging his head.

"What! No room?" cried the father, counting upon his thick red fingers: "One, two, three, four — four on the bench, and there is no room? Elsa, Elsa!" he called to his wife, who was frying the sausages out in the kitchen, "there are only four boys sitting down; yet there is no room for Hans the Otherwise."

"Then Hans the Otherwise must find room for himself somewhere else!" replied the shrill voice of the mother.

There was no help for it.

Hans turned away without a word, and went from house to house through the village, seeking shelter. The butcher gave him to eat, the baker gave him to

drink, and the candlestick-maker gave him five farthings for good luck; but, "There is no room!" said all the rest, and closed the door in his face — so that he came to the end of the village homeless and hopeless. And there the idlers mocked him as he leaned against the post by the way.

"Oho, Hans the Otherwise," cried one, "go think for a living!"

"Oho!" jeered another. "Go set the river on fire with your answers that nobody understands!"

And "Oho!" sneered another. "Go answer the Baron of Nod!"

At this the crowd shouted with laughter. But Hans pulled his belt tighter about his faded gabardine; and "Thank you for nothing," said he curtly. "I will take your advice. Answering questions is not so hard when one knows how; and a fool may know what the wise men have n't found out. Perhaps I *can* answer the baron."

At this the loafers laughed so hard that the tears rolled down their cheeks. But Hans turned his back on the village and all, and struck out sturdily down the highway. When he came to the crossroads he buried his five farthings under the old oak there, and set out in earnest on his journey.

He wandered over land and sea, through strange countries and among strange people; and it was a long, long while before he found the Land of Nod. And when he did come to it at last, he did not know it at all. For so many years had passed that the two little shrubs beside the stream had sprung up into a great forest, in

which the trees stood so close together that the birds had to turn their mouths edgewise to sing; the rosebush had become a vast jungle of briers under which the road was lost to sight; and the three little hills had grown into huge mountains so black and so high that even on the brightest summer mornings the sun never rose above them until eleven o'clock next day.

"Well," said Hans, as he drew a long breath, "I don't know where in the world I am, but Get-There never sits down!" So he fell upon his hands and knees to follow the road under the rosebush.

He had crawled only a little way, however, when he was challenged by the guard.

"Here, my fine fellow," cried the captain, "where are you going so fast?"

Hans rubbed his knees. "You don't call this fast, do you?" said he.

"Well, so slow, then," bellowed the captain. "Where are you going?"

"I wish I knew," replied Hans.

"Oh, pshaw! let him go," cried one. "He is a fool."

"Not so," interposed another. "Not so; for any fool would know where he was going. Where do you come from?"

"From Narrheit," said Hans.

"What did I tell you?" cried the first. "He *is* a fool, for they are all fools at Narrheit."

"Well, then," exclaimed the captain, "he is certainly a wise man for coming away! We must take him to the baron, or we are all dead men!"

So they led him over the moss-grown drawbridge

and up dark stone stairways into the great hall, where the dust lay on the floor as thick as a Brussels carpet. Moth-eaten tapestries flapped upon the moldy walls; the tall wax candles had all burned down so low that they had turned them upside down and were burning them the other way; while the very air itself had not been out in the sun for so long that it had turned yellow as saffron. Down in one cobwebby corner the Three Wise Men sat, hunting desperately through all the realms of science and philosophy for an answer. The walls were chalked full of mathematical problems so abstruse that it made Hans's head ache to look at them; and perched high upon his mildewed throne, the baron frowned down with dust inch-deep upon his bristling brows, and his clothes so old-fashioned that they were just coming back into style.

"Gr-r-r!" he growled, impatiently pulling his musty mustaches. "Have you found those answers yet?"

"Oh, Your Grace," gasped the first, as he fell on his knees, "I have gone through the arithmetic from fractions to cube root, and if — if —"

"And I," stammered the second, "have worked the whole algebra from theorems to quadratics, but — but —"

"And I," faltered the third, "have demonstrated every proposition in the geometry, and — and —"

The baron gritted his teeth like a gross of slate pencils. "I am tired of your arithmetical 'ifs,' your geometrical 'ands,' and your algebraical 'buts'!" he roared in a fury. "If you don't answer those questions in so many words by suppertime, I'll — I'll —"

Indeed, there is no telling what he might not have done, but just then he spied Hans. "Hullo!" he cried. "What's this? Another wise man? Gr-r-r! What do *you* know, sir?"

"I know that I am not a wise man," replied Hans calmly.

The baron stared, surprised. "Well, I vow," he exclaimed; "*that* is more, to begin with, than any of the others knew! But can you answer questions?"

Hans rubbed his head. "I cannot say that I cannot," said he.

"Why not?" demanded the baron, astonished.

"Why, because," said Hans, "if I say that I *cannot* answer a question, it will prove that I *can*, for then I shall have answered the one you have just asked me."

"That's so," mused the baron, twisting his mustache; "I had n't thought of that! Perhaps I would better ask the questions, and see."

Hans bowed, and the baron began.

"The king has forbidden my joking," said he, "because my jokes are too broad. Now, sir, tell me, how broad may a good joke be?"

"A good joke," replied Hans slowly — "a *very* good joke may be just as broad as its wit is deep."

The baron looked puzzled. "And pray," said he, "what is the depth of wit?"

"The depth of wit," returned Hans quickly, "is precisely the same as the height of the ridiculous."

The baron looked more puzzled than ever. "Oh, come," said he, with a frown (for barons do not like to be trifled with), "that is all true enough, no doubt;

but tell me now, with no more trifling, what is the height of the ridiculous to a hair's breadth?"

"Five feet nine inches," said Hans, with a smile.

"Oh, stuff and nonsense!" ejaculated the baron. "How do you make that out?"

"Why," replied Hans, bowing modestly, "you think *me* ridiculous for giving such an answer — and five feet nine inches is just my height!"

The baron looked up at the ceiling, and then he looked down at the floor, perplexed. "We-e-ell," said he slowly, rubbing his chin, "that may be so, too; but — I don't see — what that has to do with the matter."

"Neither do I," said Hans; "that is for you to decide. I only give answers to the questions."

"That 's so," assented the baron; "I had n't thought of that." And he scratched his head. "You do answer them; and all your answers certainly seem fair, and plain enough, and easy to understand, so far as they go; yet I don't seem to have gotten to where I want to get. I suppose it must be the fault of the questions."

"You might ask something more," suggested Hans.

"But I can't think of anything more to ask," snapped the baron. "We seem to have come to a sort of stopping place."

"I am ready to go on," said Hans accommodatingly.

"But I don't know how to go on," roared the baron. "I don't know where we are, nor how we got here, and I can't see how to get to anywhere else!"

"Well, you need n't shake your fist at me!" protested Hans. "It is not my fault."

"That 's so," apologized the baron crossly; "I had n't thought of that. I suppose I may as well give up and take that for an answer; though I don't know any more about how broad a joke may be than I did before."

"I 'm sorry," said Hans; "I did the best I could for you. But let 's go on with the second question!"

"All right," said the baron, brightening up. "Where can I find a buried treasure? "

For a moment Hans stood dumfounded. Then he suddenly remembered his five farthings. "Oh, that is easy enough," said he; "just dig under the old oak at the crossroads."

Two regiments of soldiers and five huge wagons were sent galloping away in mad haste to the spot. In a short time they returned with the five farthings — one in each wagon.

"*Donnerschlag und Dunkelheit!*" sputtered the baron, when he saw the five poor little rusty farthings. "Throw the rascal into prison!"

"Oh, come, that is n't fair!" cried Hans indignantly. "Did they not find the treasure buried just where I said they would?"

"Oh, yes," stuttered the baron; "but it is such a small treasure!"

"To be sure," said Hans frankly, "it *is* small. But you did n't ask *how large* it was; you asked only *where* it was buried."

"That 's so," acknowledged the baron, chagrined; "I had n't thought of that. It 's just my luck!" said he disgustedly. "I might just as well have asked for

a large treasure as not, while we were at it"; and he chewed his mustache ruefully. "Well," said he at length, grinning gloomily, "you 've answered my questions, and I am neither the wiser nor the wealthier for being answered. But I 'm a man of my word, and you shall have a heaping peck of gold. But as for those wise men," he stormed, seeking a vent for his rage somewhere, "I shall discharge them and give their back pay all to you, together with their places."

Then the three wise men were furious. It was bad enough to lose a good job in hard times, let alone losing their back pay too.

So they conspired together against Hans, saying to the baron: —

"If this fellow is wiser than we are, Sire, he can, no doubt, answer all questions we can ask him."

"To be sure," nodded the baron.

"And if he cannot," said they craftily, "he is not so wise as we are, and you ought not to keep him in our places."

"That 's so," mused the baron; "I had n't thought of that. Perhaps you would better ask him a question apiece — that would be a fair test."

Then the Three Wise Men took counsel together. "Now," said the first, "if we succeed in sending this fellow away, the first thing the baron will ask, after he is gone, will be where to find another and a larger buried treasure — I know these barons!"

"And then — pop! — off will go our heads!" groaned the second.

"Oh, dear, that will never do!" cried the third.

"We can't be wise men without our heads! We must ask him how to find a buried treasure."

"What good will that do?" objected the first. "If he *does* tell us, it will be answering our question, so we shall all lose our places."

"And if he *does n't* tell us," continued the second, "we shall keep our places — but we shan't know how to find a buried treasure when he is gone."

"Come, come," called the baron, growing impatient; "hurry up your questions!"

It was Hobson's choice with the wise men.

So the first turned to Hans, and asked: —

"Can you find a buried treasure whenever you wish?"

"Yes," said Hans.

"How?" asked the wise man.

"Hold on," cried Hans, "you can't have two questions!" and the wise man sat down, biting his lips.

Then the second advanced, and asked: —

"How can you find a buried treasure whenever you wish?"

"By not wishing to find one," said Hans, "until I know where one is to be found."

"Oh, dear me!" protested the wise man. "That is no answer!"

"Indeed," said the baron, "I think it is a very sensible one. It could have saved me lots of disappointment if I had followed that plan at first."

They had just one more chance left. So the three put their heads together to find a question from which there could be no possible escape. And then the third arose, with a look of malicious triumph, and asked: —

"How did you know that a treasure was buried under the oak at the crossroads?"

"Why," said Hans, laughing merrily, "I knew that a treasure was buried under the oak because I buried it there myself."

The baron threw himself back with a roar of laughter, for he dearly relished a joke — when it was on some one else. "Good!" he shouted. "Good enough! If you want to find a buried treasure, go bury it yourself! Ho, ho, ho! Why, you have outwitted the wits at their own game!" he cried in high glee. "I could n't have done it any better myself!" which was a great deal for a baron to admit. And then said he to Hans: "Whatever you wish, sir, speak, and it shall be yours!"

"Then please let me go back to Narrheit," cried Hans quickly. "I should rather be a fool in peace than a wise man in peril."

Then the baron gave Hans a sack of gold, and sent him back to Narrheit in his own coach.

"Now, Johann Barthel," said Hans, as he stood in the door, "I have came back to stay."

"But there is no room!" cried Johann.

Hans threw his bag of gold on the floor. "Don't say there is no room," laughed he. "Just make the bench a little longer!"

And that is a saying in Narrheit to this day.

THE THREE REMARKS[1]

By Laura E. Richards

THERE was once a princess, the most beautiful princess that ever was seen. Her hair was black and soft as the raven's wing; her eyes were like stars dropped in a pool of clear water, and her speech like the first tinkling cascade of the baby Nile. She was also wise, graceful, and gentle, so that one would have thought she must be the happiest princess in the world.

But alas! there was one terrible drawback to her happiness. She could make only three remarks. No one knew whether it was the fault of her nurse, or a peculiarity born with her; but the sad fact remained, that no matter what was said to her, she could only reply in one of the phrases. The first was — "What is the price of butter?"

The second, "Has your grandmother sold her mangle yet?"

And the third, "With all my heart!"

You may well imagine what a great misfortune this was to a young and lively princess. How could she join in the sports and dances of the noble youths and maidens of the court? She could not always be silent, neither could she always say, "With all my heart!" though this was her favorite phrase, and she used it

[1] From *The Pig Brother, and Other Fables*, published by Little, Brown & Company. Copyright, 1881, by Roberts Brothers.

whenever she possibly could; and it was not at all pleasant, when some gallant knight asked her whether she would rather play croquet or Aunt Sally, to be obliged to reply, "What is the price of butter?"

On certain occasions, however, the princess actually found her infirmity of service to her. She could always put an end suddenly to any conversation that did not please her, by interposing with her first or second remark; and they were also a very great assistance to her when, as happened nearly every day, she received an offer of marriage. Emperors, kings, princes, dukes, earls, marquises, viscounts, baronets, and many other lofty personages knelt at her feet, and offered her their hands, hearts, and other possessions of greater or less value. But for all her suitors the princess had but one answer. Fixing her deep, radiant eyes on them, she would reply with thrilling earnestness, "*Has* your grandmother sold her mangle yet?" and this always impressed the suitors so deeply that they retired, weeping, to a neighboring monastery, where they hung up their armor in the chapel, and taking the vows, passed the remainder of their lives mostly in flogging themselves, wearing hair shirts, and putting dry toast crumbs in their beds.

Now, when the king found that all his best nobles were turning into monks, he was greatly displeased, and said to the princess: —

"My daughter, it is time that all this nonsense came to an end. The next time a respectable person asks you to marry him, you will say, 'With all my heart!' or I will know the reason why."

But this the princess could not endure, for she had never yet seen a man whom she was willing to marry. Nevertheless, she feared her father's anger, for she knew that he always kept his word; so that very night she slipped down the back stairs of the palace, opened the back door, and ran away out into the wide world.

She wandered for many days, over mountain and moor, through fen and through forest, until she came to a fair city. Here all the bells were ringing, and the people shouting and flinging caps into the air; for their old king was dead, and they were just about to crown a new one. The new king was a stranger, who had come to the town only the day before; but as soon as he heard of the old monarch's death, he told the people that he was a king himself, and as he happened to be without a kingdom at that moment, he would be willing to rule over them. The people joyfully assented, for the late king had left no heir; and now all the preparations had been completed. The crown had been polished up, and a new tip put on the sceptre, as the old king had quite spoiled it by poking the fire with it for upward of forty years.

When the people saw the beautiful princess, they welcomed her with many bows, and insisted on leading her before the new king.

"Who knows but they may be related?" said everybody. "They both came from the same direction, and both are strangers."

Accordingly the princess was led to the market place, where the king was sitting in royal state. He had a fat, red, shining face, and did not look like the

kings whom she had been in the habit of seeing; but nevertheless the princess made a graceful curtsy, and then waited to hear what he would say.

The new king seemed rather embarrassed when he saw that it was a princess who appeared before him; but he smiled graciously, and said, in a smooth, oily voice: —

"I trust your 'Ighness is quite well. And 'ow did yer 'Ighness leave yer pa and ma?"

At these words the princess raised her head and looked fixedly at the red-faced king; then she replied, with scornful distinctness: —

"What is the price of butter?"

At these words an alarming change came over the king's face. The red faded from it, and left it a livid green; his teeth chattered; his eyes stared, and rolled in their sockets; while the sceptre dropped from his trembling hand and fell at the princess's feet. For the truth was, this was no king at all, but a retired butter man, who had laid by a little money at his trade, and had thought of setting up a public house, but chancing to pass through this city at the very time when they were looking for a king, it struck him that he might just as well fill the vacant place as anyone else. No one had thought of his being an impostor; but when the princess fixed her clear eyes on him and asked him that familiar question, which he had been in the habit of hearing many times a day for a great part of his life, the guilty butter man thought himself detected, and shook in his guilty shoes. Hastily descending from his throne, he beckoned the princess into a side chamber,

and, closing the door, besought her in moving terms not to betray him.

"Here," he said, "is a bag of rubies as big as pigeons' eggs. There are six thousand of them, and I 'umbly beg your 'Ighness to haccept them as a slight token of my hesteem, if your 'Ighness will kindly consent to spare a respectable tradesman the disgrace of being hexposed."

The princess reflected, and came to the conclusion that, after all, a butter man might make as good a king as anyone else; so she took the rubies with a gracious little nod, and departed, while all the people shouted, "Hooray!" and followed her, waving their hats and kerchiefs, to the gates of the city.

With her bag of rubies over her shoulder, the fair princess now pursued her journey, and fared forward over heath and hill, through brake and through brier. After several days she came to a deep forest, which she entered without hesitation, for she knew no fear. She had not gone a hundred paces under the arching limes, when she was met by a band of robbers, who stopped her and asked what she did in their forest, and what she carried in her bag. They were fierce, black-bearded men, armed to the teeth with daggers, cutlasses, pistols, dirks, hangers, blunderbusses, and other defensive weapons; but the princess gazed calmly on them, and said haughtily:—

"Has your grandmother sold her mangle yet?"

The effect was magical. The robbers started back in dismay, crying, "The countersign!" Then they hastily lowered their weapons, and assuming attitudes

of abject humility, besought the princess graciously to accompany them to their master's presence. With a lofty gesture she signified assent, and the cringing, trembling bandits led her on through the forest till they reached an open glade, into which the sunbeams glanced right merrily. Here, under a broad oak tree which stood in the center of the glade, reclined a man of gigantic stature and commanding mien, with a whole armory of weapons displayed upon his person. Hastening to their chief, the robbers conveyed to him, in agitated whispers, the circumstances of their meeting the princess, and of her unexpected reply to their questions. Hardly seeming to credit their statement, the gigantic chieftain sprang to his feet, and advancing toward the princess with a respectful reverence, begged her to repeat the remark which had so disturbed his men. With a royal air, and in clear and ringing tones, the princess repeated: —

"*Has* your grandmother sold her mangle yet?" and gazed steadfastly at the robber chief.

He turned deadly pale, and staggered against a tree, which alone prevented him from falling.

"It is true!" he gasped. "We are undone! The enemy is without doubt close at hand, and all is over. Yet," he added with more firmness, and with an appealing glance at the princess, "yet there may be one chance left for us. If this gracious lady will consent to go forward, instead of returning through the wood, we may yet escape with our lives. Noble princess!" and here he and the whole band assumed attitudes of supplication, "consider, I pray you, whether it would really add to

your happiness to betray to the advancing army a few poor foresters, who earn their bread by the sweat of their brows. Here," he continued, hastily drawing something from a hole in the oak tree, "is a bag containing ten thousand sapphires, each as large as a pullet's egg. If you will graciously deign to accept them, and to pursue your journey in the direction I shall indicate, the Red Chief of the Rustywhanger will be your slave forever."

The princess, who of course knew that there was no army in the neighborhood, and who moreover did not in the least care which way she went, assented to the Red Chief's proposition, and taking the bag of sapphires, bowed her farewell to the grateful robbers, and followed their leader down a ferny path which led to the farther end of the forest. When they came to the open country, the robber chieftain took his leave of the princess, with profound bows and many protestations of devotion, and returned to the band, who were already preparing to plunge into the impenetrable thickets of the midforest.

The princess, meantime, with her two bags of gems on her shoulders, fared forward with a light heart, by dale and by down, through moss and through meadow. By and by she came to a fair, high palace, built all of marble and shining jasper, with smooth lawns about it, and sunny gardens of roses and gillyflowers, from which the air blew so sweet that it was a pleasure to breathe it. The princess stood still for a moment, to taste the sweetness of this air, and to look her fill at so fair a spot; and as she stood there, it chanced that the palace

gates opened, and the young king rode out with his court, to go a-catching of nighthawks.

Now when the king saw a right fair young princess standing alone at his palace gate, her rich garments dusty and travel-stained, and two heavy sacks hung upon her shoulders, he was filled with amazement; and leaping from his steed, like the gallant knight that he was, he besought her to tell him whence she came and whither she was going, and in what way he might be of service to her.

But the princess looked down at her dusty shoes, and answered never a word; for she had seen at the first glance how fair and goodly a king this was, and she would not ask him the price of butter, nor whether his grandmother had sold her mangle yet. But she thought in her heart, "Now I have never, in all my life, seen a man to whom I would so willingly say, 'With all my heart!' if he should ask me to marry him."

The king marveled much at her silence, and presently repeated his questions, adding, "And what do you carry so carefully in those two sacks, which seem overheavy for your delicate shoulders?"

Still holding her eyes downcast, the princess took a ruby from one bag, and a sapphire from the other, and in silence handed them to the king, for she willed that he should know she was no beggar, even though her shoes were dusty. Thereat all the nobles were filled with amazement, for no such gems had ever been seen in that country.

But the king looked steadfastly at the princess, and said, "Rubies are fine, and sapphires are fair; but,

maiden, if I could but see those eyes of yours, I warrant that the gems would look pale and dull beside them."

At that the princess raised her clear, dark eyes, and looked at the king and smiled; and the glance of her eyes pierced straight to his heart, so that he fell on his knees and cried: —

"Ah! sweet princess, now do I know that thou art the love for whom I have waited so long, and whom I have sought through so many lands. Give me thy white hand, and tell me, either by word or by sign, that thou wilt be my queen and my bride!"

And the princess, like a right royal maiden as she was, looked him straight in the eyes, and giving him her little white hand, answered bravely, "*With all my heart!*"

EPAMINONDAS AND HIS AUNTIE

By Sara Cone Bryant

EPAMINONDAS used to go to see his auntie 'most every day, and she nearly always gave him something to take home to his mammy.

One day she gave him a big piece of cake; nice, yellow, rich gold cake.

Epaminondas took it in his fist, and held it all scrunched up tight and came along home. By the time he got home there was n't anything left but a fistful of crumbs. His mammy said: —

"What you got there, Epaminondas?"

"Cake, mammy," said Epaminondas.

"Cake!" said his mammy. "Epaminondas, you ain't got the sense you was born with! That's no way to carry cake. The way to carry cake is to wrap it all up nice in some leaves and put it in your hat, and put your hat on your head, and come along home. You hear me, Epaminondas?"

"Yes, mammy," said Epaminondas.

Next day Epaminondas went to see his auntie, and she gave him a pound of butter for his mammy; fine, fresh, sweet butter.

Epaminondas wrapped it up in leaves and put it in his hat, and put his hat on his head, and came along

home. It was a very hot day. Pretty soon the butter began to melt. It melted, and melted, and as it melted it ran down Epaminondas's forehead; then it ran over his face, and in his ears, and down his neck. When he got home, all the butter Epaminondas had was *on him.* His mammy looked at him, and then she said: —

"Law's sake! Epaminondas, what you got in your hat?"

"Butter, mammy," said Epaminondas; "auntie gave it to me."

"Butter!" said his mammy. "Epaminondas, you ain't got the sense you was born with! Don't you know that 's no way to carry butter? The way to carry butter is to wrap it up in some leaves and take it down to the brook, and cool it in the water, and cool it in the water, and cool it in the water, and then take it in your hands, careful, and bring it along home."

"Yes, mammy," said Epaminondas.

By and by, another day, Epaminondas went to see his auntie again, and this time she gave him a little new puppy-dog to take home.

Epaminondas put it in some leaves and took it down to the brook; and there he cooled it in the water, and cooled it in the water, and cooled it in the water; then he took it in his hands and came along home. When he got home, the puppy-dog was dead. His mammy looked at it, and she said: —

"Law's sake! Epaminondas, what you got there?"

"A puppy-dog, mammy," said Epaminondas.

"A puppy-dog!" said his mammy. "My gracious sakes alive, Epaminondas, you ain't got the sense you

was born with! That ain't the way to carry a puppy-dog! The way to carry a puppy-dog is to take a long piece of string and tie one end of it around the puppy-dog's neck and put the puppy-dog on the ground, and take hold of the other end of the string and come along home."

"All right, mammy," said Epaminondas.

Next day Epaminondas went to see his auntie again, and when the time came to go home she gave him a loaf of bread to carry to his mammy; a brown, fresh, crusty loaf of bread.

So Epaminondas tied a string around the end of the loaf and took hold of the end of the string and came along home. When he got home his mammy looked at the thing on the end of the string, and she said: —

"My laws a massy! Epaminondas, what you got on the end of that string?"

"Bread, mammy," said Epaminondas; "auntie gave it to me."

"Bread!!!" said his mammy. "O Epaminondas, Epaminondas, you ain't got the sense you was born with; you never did have the sense you was born with; you never will have the sense you was born with! Now I ain't gwine tell you any more ways to bring truck home. And don't you go see your auntie, neither. I 'll go see her my own self. But I 'll just tell you one thing, Epaminondas! You see these here six mince pies I done make? You see how I done set 'em on the door-step to cool? Well, now, you hear me, Epaminondas, *you be careful how you step on those pies!*"

"Yes, mammy," said Epaminondas.

Then Epaminondas's mammy put on her bonnet and her shawl and took a basket in her hand and went away to see auntie. The six mince pies sat cooling in a row on the doorstep.

And then — and then — Epaminondas *was* careful how he stepped on those pies!

He stepped — right — in — the — middle — of — every — one.

Nobody knows what happened next. But you can guess.

THE LADY WHO PUT SALT IN HER COFFEE

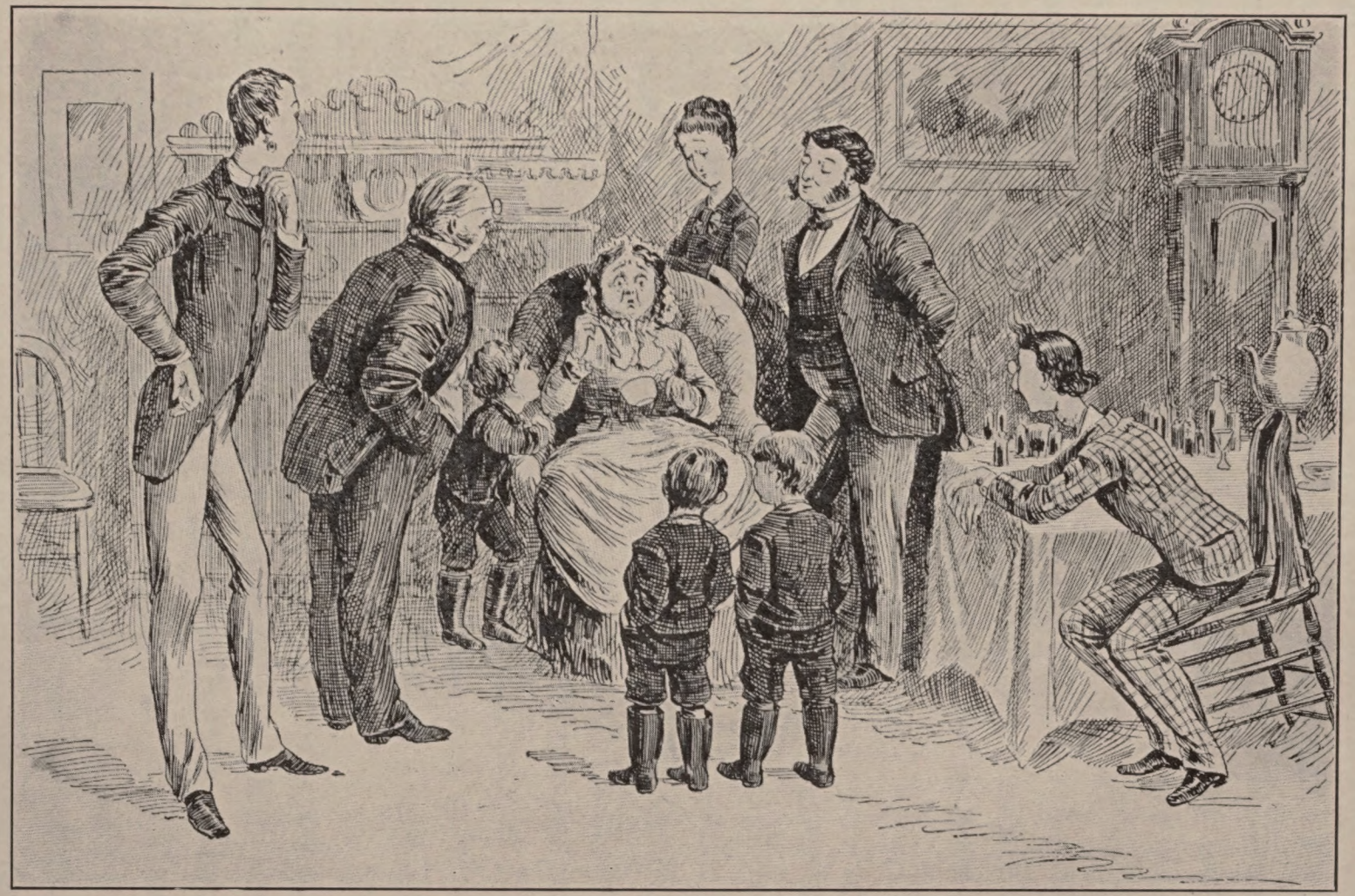
By Lucretia P. Hale

THIS was Mrs. Peterkin. It was a mistake. She had poured out a delicious cup of coffee, and, just as she was helping herself to cream, she found she had put in salt instead of sugar! It tasted bad. What should she do? Of course she could n't drink the coffee; so she called in the family, for she was sitting at a late breakfast all alone. The family came in; they all tasted and looked, and wondered what should be done, and all sat down to think.

At last Agamemnon, who had been to college, said, "Why don't we go over and ask the advice of the chemist?" (For the chemist lived over the way, and was a very wise man.)

Mrs. Peterkin said, "Yes," and Mr. Peterkin said, "Very well," and all the children said they would go too. So the little boys put on their india-rubber boots, and over they went.

Now the chemist was just trying to find out something which should turn everything it touched into gold; and he had a large glass bottle into which he put all kinds of gold and silver, and many other valuable things, and melted them all up over the fire, till he had almost found what he wanted. He could turn things into almost gold. But just now he had used up



THE PETERKINS

all the gold that he had around the house, and gold was high. He had used up his wife's gold thimble and his great-grandfather's gold-bowed spectacles; and he had melted up the gold head of his great-great-grandfather's cane; and, just as the Peterkin family came in, he was down on his knees before his wife, asking her to let him have her wedding ring to melt up with all the rest, because this time he knew he should succeed, and should be able to turn everything into gold; and then she could have a new wedding ring of diamonds, all set in emeralds and rubies and topazes, and all the furniture could be turned into the finest of gold.

Now his wife was just consenting when the Peterkin family burst in. You can imagine how mad the chemist was! He came near throwing his crucible — that was the name of the melting pot — at their heads. But he did n't. He listened as calmly as he could to the story of how Mrs. Peterkin had put salt in her coffee.

At first he said he could n't do anything about it; but when Agamemnon said they would pay in gold if he would only go, he packed up his bottles in a leather case, and went back with them all.

First he looked at the coffee, and then stirred it. Then he put in a little chlorate of potassium, and the family tried it all around; but it tasted no better. Then he stirred in a little bichlorate of magnesia. But Mrs. Peterkin did n't like that. Then he added some tartaric acid and some hypersulphate of lime. But no; it was no better. "I have it!" exclaimed the chemist — "a little ammonia is just the thing!" No, it was n't the thing at all.

Then he tried, each in turn, some oxalic, cyanic, acetic, phosphoric, chloric, hyperchloric, sulphuric, boracic, silicic, nitric, formic, nitrous nitric, and carbonic acids. Mrs. Peterkin tasted each, and said the flavor was pleasant, but not precisely that of coffee. So then he tried a little calcium, aluminum, barium, and strontium, a little clear bitumen, and a half of a third of a sixteenth of a grain of arsenic. This gave rather a pretty color; but still Mrs. Peterkin ungratefully said it tasted of anything but coffee. The chemist was not discouraged. He put in a little belladonna and atropine, some granulated hydrogen, some potash, and a very little antimony, finishing off with a little pure carbon. But still Mrs. Peterkin was not satisfied.

The chemist said that all he had done ought to have taken out the salt. The theory remained the same, although the experiment had failed. Perhaps a little starch would have some effect. If not, that was all the time he could give. He should like to be paid, and go. They were all much obliged to him, and willing to give him $1.37½ in gold. Gold was now 2.69¾, so Mr. Peterkin found in the newspaper. This gave Agamemnon a pretty little sum. He set himself down to do it. But there was the coffee! All sat and thought a while, till Elizabeth Eliza said, "Why don't we go to the herb-woman?" Elizabeth Eliza was the only daughter. She was named after her two aunts — Elizabeth, from the sister of her father; Eliza, from her mother's sister. Now the herb-woman was an old woman who came around to sell herbs, and knew a great deal. They all shouted with joy at the idea of asking

her, and Solomon John and the younger children agreed to go and find her too. The herb-woman lived down at the very end of the street; so the boys put on their india-rubber boots again, and they set off. It was a long walk through the village, but they came at last to the herb-woman's house, at the foot of a high hill. They went through her little garden. Here she had marigolds and hollyhocks, and old maids and tall sunflowers, and all kinds of sweet-smelling herbs, so that the air was full of tansy tea and elderblow. Over the porch grew a hop vine, and a brandy cherry tree shaded the door, and a luxuriant cranberry vine flung its delicious fruit across the window. They went into a small parlor, which smelt very spicy. All around hung little bags full of catnip, and peppermint, and all kinds of herbs; and dried stalks hung from the ceiling; and on the shelves were jars of rhubarb, senna, manna, and the like.

But there was no little old woman. She had gone up into the woods to get some more wild herbs, so they all thought they would follow her — Elizabeth Eliza, Solomon John, and the little boys. They had to climb up over high rocks, and in among huckleberry bushes and blackberry vines. But the little boys had their india-rubber boots. At last they discovered the little old woman. They knew her by her hat. It was steeple-crowned, without any vane. They saw her digging with her trowel around a sassafras bush. They told her their story — how their mother had put salt in her coffee, and how the chemist had made it worse instead of better, and how their mother could n't drink

it, and would n't she come and see what she could do? And she said she would, and took up her little old apron, with pockets all around, all filled with everlasting and pennyroyal, and went back to her house.

There she stopped, and stuffed her huge pockets with some of all the kinds of herbs. She took some tansy and peppermint, and caraway seed and dill, spearmint and cloves, pennyroyal and sweet marjoram, basil and rosemary, wild thyme and some of the other time — such as you have in clocks — sappermint and oppermint, catnip, valerian, and hop; indeed, there is n't a kind of herb you can think of that the little old woman did n't have done up in her little paper bags, that had all been dried in her little Dutch oven. She packed these all up, and then went back with the children, taking her stick.

Meanwhile Mrs. Peterkin was getting quite impatient for her coffee.

As soon as the little old woman came she had it set over the fire, and began to stir in the different herbs. First she put in a little hop for the bitter. Mrs. Peterkin said it tasted like hop tea, and not at all like coffee. Then she tried a little flagroot and snakeroot, then some spruce gum, and some caraway and some dill, some rue and rosemary, some sweet marjoram and sour, some oppermint and sappermint, a little spearmint and peppermint, some wild thyme, and some of the other tame time, some tansy and basil, and catnip and valerian, and sassafras, ginger, and pennyroyal. The children tasted after each mixture, but made up dreadful faces. Mrs. Peterkin tasted, and did the same.

The more the old woman stirred, and the more she put in, the worse it all seemed to taste.

So the old woman shook her head, and muttered a few words, and said she must go. She believed the coffee was bewitched. She bundled up her packets of herbs, and took her trowel, and her basket, and her stick, and went back to her root of sassafras, that she had left half in the air and half out. And all she would take for pay was five cents in currency.

Then the family were in despair, and all sat and thought a great while. It was growing late in the day, and Mrs. Peterkin had n't had her cup of coffee. At last Elizabeth Eliza said, "They say that the lady from Philadelphia, who is staying in town, is very wise. Suppose I go and ask her what is best to be done." To this they all agreed, it was a great thought, and off Elizabeth Eliza went.

She told the lady from Philadelphia the whole story — how her mother had put salt in the coffee; how the chemist had been called in; how he tried everything but could make it no better; and how they went for the little old herb-woman, and how she had tried in vain, for her mother could n't drink the coffee. The lady from Philadelphia listened very attentively, and then said, "Why does n't your mother make a fresh cup of coffee?" Elizabeth Eliza started with surprise. Solomon John shouted with joy; so did Agamemnon, who had just finished his sum; so did the little boys, who had followed on. "Why did n't we think of that?" said Elizabeth Eliza; and they all went back to their mother, and she had her cup of coffee.

MR. PARTRIDGE SEES "HAMLET"

By Henry Fielding

MR. JONES agreed to carry an appointment, which he had before made, into execution. This was, to attend Mrs. Miller and her younger daughter into the gallery at the playhouse, and to admit Mr. Partridge as one of the company. For as Jones had really that taste for humor which many affect, he expected to enjoy much entertainment in the criticisms of Partridge, from whom he expected the simple dictates of nature, unimproved, indeed, but likewise unadulterated, by art.

In the first row, then, of the first gallery did Mr. Jones, Mrs. Miller, her youngest daughter, and Partridge take their places. Partridge immediately declared it was the finest place he had ever been in. When the first music was played, he said, "It was a wonder how so many fiddlers could play at one time, without putting one another out." While the fellow was lighting the upper candles, he cried out to Mrs. Miller, "Look, look, madam, the very picture of the man in the end of the common-prayer book before the gunpowder-treason service." Nor could he help observing, with a sigh, when all the candles were lighted, "That here were candles enough burned in one night,

to keep an honest poor family for a whole twelvemonth."

As soon as the play, which was "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," began, Partridge was all attention, nor did he break silence till the entrance of the ghost; upon which he asked Jones, "What man that was in the strange dress; something," said he, "like what I have seen in a picture. Sure it is not armor, is it?" Jones answered, "That is the ghost." To which Partridge replied with a smile, "Persuade me to that, sir, if you can. Though I can't say I ever actually saw a ghost in my life, yet I am certain I should know one, if I saw him, better than that comes to. No, no, sir, ghosts don't appear in such dresses as that, neither." In this mistake, which caused much laughter in the neighborhood of Partridge, he was suffered to continue, till the scene between the ghost and Hamlet, when Partridge gave that credit to Mr. Garrick which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a trembling, that his knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage. "O la, sir," said he, "I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything; for I know it is but a play. And if it was really a ghost, it could do one no harm at such a distance, and in so much company; and yet if I was frightened, I am not the only person." "Why, who," cries Jones, "dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?" "Nay, you may call me a coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened

in my life. Aye, aye: go along with you; aye, to be sure! Who 's fool then? Will you? Lud have mercy upon such foolhardiness! —Whatever happens, it is good enough for you. — Follow you? I 'd follow the devil as soon. Nay, perhaps it is the devil — for they say he can put on what likeness he pleases. — Oh! here he is again. — No farther! No, you have gone far enough already; farther than I 'd have gone for all the king's dominions." Jones offered to speak, but Partridge cried, "Hush, hush! dear sir, don't you hear him?" And during the whole speech of the ghost, he sat with his eyes fixed partly on the ghost and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open; the same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet succeeding likewise in him.

When the scene was over Jones said, "Why, Partridge, you exceed my expectations. You enjoy the play more than I conceived possible." "Nay, sir," answered Partridge, "if you are not afraid of the devil, I can't help you; but, to be sure, it is natural to be surprised at such things, though I know there is nothing in them: not that it was the ghost that surprised me, neither; for I should have known that to have been only a man in a strange dress; but when I saw the little man so frightened himself, it was that which took hold of me." "And dost thou imagine, then, Partridge," cries Jones, "that he was really frightened?" "Nay, sir," said Partridge, "did not you yourself observe afterwards, when he found it was his own father's spirit, and how he was murdered in the garden, how his fear forsook him by degrees, and he was struck

dumb with sorrow, as it were, just as I should have been, had it been my own case? — But hush! O la! what noise is that? There he is again. — Well, to be certain, though I know there is nothing at all in it, I am glad I am not down yonder, where those men are." Then turning his eyes again upon Hamlet, "Aye, you may draw your sword; what signifies a sword against the power of the devil?"

During the second act, Partridge made very few remarks. He greatly admired the fineness of the dresses; nor could he help observing upon the king's countenance. "Well," said he, "how people may be deceived by faces! *Nulla fides fronti* is, I find, a true saying. Who would think, by looking in the king's face, that he had ever committed a murder?" He then inquired after the ghost; but Jones, who intended he should be surprised, gave him no other satisfaction than "that he might possibly see him again soon, and in a flash of fire."

Partridge sat in a fearful expectation of this; and now, when the ghost made his next appearance, Partridge cried out, "There, sir, now; what say you now? is he frightened now or no? As much frightened as you think me, and, to be sure, nobody can help some fears. I would not be in so bad a condition as what 's his name, squire Hamlet, is there, for all the world. Bless me! what 's become of the spirit? As I am a living soul, I thought I saw him sink into the earth." "Indeed, you saw right," answered Jones. "Well, well," cries Partridge, "I know it is only a play; and besides, if there was anything in all this, Madam Miller

would not laugh so; for, as to you, sir, you would not be afraid, I believe, if the devil was here in person. — There, there — aye, no wonder you are in such a passion; shake the vile, wicked wretch to pieces. If she was my own mother, I would serve her so. To be sure, all duty to a mother is forfeited by such wicked doings, — aye, go about your business, I hate the sight of you."

Our critic was now pretty silent till the play which Hamlet introduces before the king. This he did not at first understand, till Jones explained it to him; but he no sooner entered into the spirit of it than he began to bless himself that he had never committed murder. Then turning to Mrs. Miller, he asked her, "If she did not imagine the king looked as if he was touched; though he is," said he, "a good actor, and doth all he can to hide it. Well, I would not have so much to answer for as that wicked man there hath, to sit upon a much higher chair than he sits upon. No wonder he ran away; for your sake I 'll never trust an innocent face again."

The grave-digging scene next engaged the attention of Partridge, who expressed much surprise at the number of skulls thrown upon the stage. To which Jones answered, "That it was one of the most famous burial-places about town." "No wonder, then," cries Partridge, "that the place is haunted. But I never saw in my life a worse gravedigger. I had a sexton, when I was clerk, that should have dug three graves while he is digging one. The fellow handles a spade as if it was the first time he had ever had one in his hand.

Aye, aye, you may sing. You had rather sing than work, I believe." Upon Hamlet's taking up the skull, he cried out, "Well! it is strange to see how fearless some men are: I never could bring myself to touch anything belonging to a dead man, on any account. — He seemed frightened enough too at the ghost, I thought. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*"

Little more worth remembering occurred during the play, at the end of which Jones asked him, "Which of the players he had liked best?" To this he answered with some appearance of indignation at the question, "The king without doubt." "Indeed, Mr. Partridge," says Mrs. Miller. "You are not of the same opinion with the town; for they are all agreed that Hamlet is acted by the best player who ever was on the stage." "He the best player!" cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer; "why I could act as well as he myself. I am sure, if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did. And then, to be sure, in that scene, as you called it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why, any man, that is, any good man, that had such a mother, would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me; but indeed, madam, though I was never at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country: and the king for my money; he speaks all his words distinctly, half as loud again as the other — anybody may see he is an actor."

Thus ended the adventure at the playhouse, where Partridge had afforded great mirth, not only to Jones

and Mrs. Miller, but to all who sat within hearing, who were more attentive to what he said than to anything that passed on the stage.

He durst not go to bed all that night, for fear of the ghost; and for many nights after sweated two or three hours before he went to sleep, with the same apprehensions, and waked several times in great horrors, crying out, "Lord have mercy upon us! there it is."

HOW KITTIE HELPED GEORGE

(Slightly abridged)

By Elizabeth Jordan

ONE night Mrs. James gave a large party for Josephine, and of course Mabel and Kittie, being thirteen and fourteen, had to go to bed. It is such things as this that embitter the lives of schoolgirls. But they were allowed to go down and see all the lights and flowers and decorations before the people began to come, and they went into the conservatory because that was fixed with little nooks and things. They got away in and off in a kind of wing of it, and they talked and pretended they were *débutantes* at the ball, so they stayed longer than they knew. Then they heard voices, and they looked and saw Josephine and Mr. Morgan sitting by the fountain. Before they could move or say they were there, they heard him say this — Kittie remembered just what it was: —

"I have spent six years following you, and you 've treated me as if I were a dog at the end of a string. This thing must end. I must have you, or I must learn to live without you, and I must know now which it is to be. Josephine, you must give me my final answer to-night."

Was n't it embarrassing for Kittie and Mabel? They did not want to listen, but some instinct told

them Josephine and George might not be glad to see them then, so they crept behind a lot of tall palms and Mabel put her fingers in her ears so she would n't hear. Kittie did n't. She explained to me afterwards that she thought it being her sister made things kind of different. It was all in the family, anyhow. So Kittie heard Josephine tell Mr. Morgan that the reason she did not marry him was because he was an idler and without an ambition or a purpose in life. And she said she must respect the man she married as well as love him. Then George jumped up quickly and asked if she loved him, and she cried and said she did, but that she would never, never marry him until he did something to win her admiration and prove he was a man. You can imagine how exciting it was for Kittie to see with her own innocent eyes how grown-up people manage such things. She said she was so afraid she 'd miss something that she opened them so wide they hurt her afterwards. But she did n't miss anything. She saw him kiss Josephine, too, and then Josephine got up, and he argued and tried to make her change her mind, and she would n't, and finally they left the conservatory. After that, Kittie and Mabel crept out and rushed upstairs; it was time, for people were beginning to come.

The next morning Kittie turned to Mabel with a look on her face which Mabel had never seen there before. It was grim and determined. She said she had a plan and wanted Mabel to help her, and not ask any questions, but get her skates and come out. Mabel did, and they went straight to George Morgan's

house, which was only a few blocks away. He was very rich and had a beautiful house. An English butler came to the door. Mabel said she was so frightened her teeth chattered, but he smiled when he saw Kittie, and said, yes, Mr. Morgan was at home, and at breakfast, and invited them in. When George came in, he had a smoking jacket on, and looked very pale and sad and romantic, Mabel thought, but he smiled, too, when he saw them, and shook hands and asked them if they had breakfasted.

Kittie said yes, but they had come to ask him to take them skating, and they were all ready and had brought their skates. His face fell, as real writers say, and he hesitated a little, but at last he said he 'd go, and he excused himself, just as if they had been grown up, and went off to get ready.

When they were left alone a terrible doubt assailed Mabel, and she asked Kittie if she was going to ask George again to marry her. Kittie blushed and said she was not, of course, and that she knew better now.

Kittie said she had a plan to help George, and all Mabel had to do was to watch and keep on breathing. Mabel felt better then, and said she guessed she could do that. George came back all ready, and they started off. Kittie acted rather dark and mysterious, but Mabel conversed with George in the easy and pleasant fashion young men love. She told him all about school and how bad she was in algebra; and he said he had been a duffer at it, too, but that he had learned to shun it while there was yet time. And he advised her very

earnestly to have nothing to do with it. Mabel did n't either, after she came back to St. Catharine's; and when Sister Irmingarde reproached her, Mabel said she was leaning on the judgment of a strong man, as women should do. But Sister Irmingarde made her go on with the algebra just the same.

By and by they came to the river, and it was so early that not many people were skating there. When George had fastened on their skates — he did it in the nicest way, exactly as if they were grown up — Kittie looked more mysterious than ever, and she started off as fast as she could skate toward a little inlet where there was no one at all. George and Mabel followed her. George said he did n't know whether the ice was smooth in there, but Kittie kept right on, and George did not say any more. I guess he did not care much where he went. I suppose it disappoints a man when he wants to marry a woman and she won't.

Kittie kept far ahead, and all of a sudden Mabel saw that a little distance farther on there was a big, black hole in the ice, and Kittie was skating straight toward it. Mabel tried to scream, but she says the sound froze on her pallid lips. Then George saw the hole, too, and rushed toward Kittie, and quicker than I can write it Kittie went in that hole and down.

Mabel says George was there almost as soon, calling to Mabel to keep back out of danger. Usually when people have to rescue others, especially in stories, they call to someone to bring a board, and someone does, and it is easy. But very often in real life there is n't any board or anyone to bring it, and this was, indeed,

the desperate situation that confronted my hero. There was nothing to do but plunge in after Kittie, and he plunged, skates and all. Then Mabel heard him gasp and laugh a little, and he called out: "It 's all right! The water is n't much above my knees." And even as he spoke Mabel saw Kittie rise in the water and sort of hurl herself at him and pull him down into the water, head and all. When they came up they were both half strangled, and Mabel was terribly frightened; for she thought George was mistaken about the depth, and they would both drown before her eyes; and then she would see that picture all her life, as they do in stories, and her hair would turn gray. She began to run up and down on the ice and scream; but even as she did so she heard these extraordinary words come from between Kittie James's chattering teeth: —

"*Now you are good and wet!*"

George did not say a word. He confessed to Mabel afterwards that he thought poor Kittie had lost her mind through fear. But he tried the ice till he found a place that would hold him, and he got out and pulled Kittie out. As soon as Kittie was out she opened her mouth and uttered more remarkable words.

"Now," she said, "I 'll skate till we get near the club house. Then you must pick me up and carry me, and I 'll shut my eyes and let my head hang down. And Mabel must cry — good and hard. Then you must send for Josephine and let her see how you 've saved the life of her precious little sister."

Mabel said she was sure that Kittie was crazy, and next she thought George was crazy, too. For he bent

and stared hard into Kittie's eyes for a minute, and then he began to laugh, and he laughed till he cried. He tried to speak, but he could n't at first; and when he did the words came out between his shouts of glee.

"Do you mean to say, you young monkey," he said, "that this is a put-up job?"

Kittie nodded as solemnly as a fair young girl can nod when her clothes are dripping and her nose is blue with cold. When she did that, George roared again; then, as if he had remembered something, he caught her hands and began to skate very fast toward the club house. He was a thoughtful young man, you see, and he wanted her to get warm. Anyhow, they started off, and as they went, Kittie opened still farther the closed flower of her girlish heart. I heard that expression once, and I 've always wanted to get it into my book. I think this is a good place.

She told George she knew the hole in the ice, and that it was n't deep; and she said she had done it all to make Josephine admire him and marry him.

"She will, too," she said. "Her dear little sister — the only one she 's got." And Kittie went on to say what a terrible thing it would have been if she had died in the promise of her young life, till Mabel said she almost felt sure herself that George had saved her. But George hesitated. He said it was n't "a square deal," whatever that means, but Kittie said no one need tell any lies. She had gone into the hole, and George had pulled her out. She thought they need n't explain how deep it was, and George admitted, thoughtfully, that "no truly loving family should hunger for

figures at such a moment." Finally he said, "I'll do it. All 's fair in love and war." Then he asked Mabel if she thought she could "lend intelligent support to the star performers," and she said she could. So George picked Kittie up in his arms, and Mabel cried — she was so excited it was easy, and she wanted to do it all the time — and the sad little procession "homeward wended its weary way," as the poet says.

Mabel told me Kittie did her part like a real actress. She shut her eyes and her head hung over George's arm, and her long, wet braid dripped as it trailed behind them. George laughed to himself every few minutes till they got near the club house. Then he looked very sober, and Mabel Blossom knew her cue had come the way it does to actresses, and she let out a wail that almost made Kittie sit up. It was 'most too much of a one, and Mr. Morgan advised her to "tone it down a little," because, he said, if she did n't they 'd probably have Kittie buried before she could explain. But of course Mabel had not been prepared, and had not had any practice. She muffled her sobs after that, and they sounded lots better. People began to rush from the club house, and get blankets and whisky, and telephone for doctors and for Kittie's family, and things got so exciting that nobody paid any attention to Mabel. All she had to do was to mop her eyes occasionally and keep a sharp lookout for Josephine; for, of course, she did not want to miss what came next.

Pretty soon a horse galloped up, foaming at the mouth, and he was pulled back on his haunches, and

Josephine and Mr. James jumped out of the buggy and rushed in, and there was more excitement. When George saw them coming he turned pale, Mabel said, and hurried off to change his clothes. One woman looked after him and said, "As modest as he is brave," and cried over it. When Josephine and Mr. James came in there was more excitement, and Kittie opened one eye and shut it again, right off, and the doctor said she was all right, except for the shock, and her father and Josephine cried, so Mabel did n't have to any more. She was glad, too, I can tell you.

They put Kittie to bed in a room at the club, for the doctor said she was such a high-strung child it would be wise to keep her perfectly quiet for a few hours and take precautions against pneumonia. Then Josephine went around asking for Mr. Morgan.

By and by he came down in dry clothes, but looking dreadfully uncomfortable. Mabel said she could imagine how he felt. Josephine was standing by the open fire when he entered the room, and no one else was there but Mabel. Josephine went right to him and put her arms around his neck.

"Dearest, dearest!" she said. "How can I ever thank you?" Her voice was very low, but Mabel heard it. George said right off, "There is a way." That shows how quick and clever he is, for some men might not think of it. Then Mabel Blossom left the room with slow, reluctant feet, and went upstairs to Kittie.

That 's why Mabel has just gone to Kittie's home for a few days. She and Kittie are to be flower maids at Josephine's wedding. I hope it is not necessary for me

to explain to my intelligent readers that her husband will be George Morgan. Kittie says he confessed the whole thing to Josephine, and she forgave him, and said she would marry him anyhow, but she explained that she only did it on Kittie's account. She said she did not know to what lengths the child might go next.

THE ANTI-BURGLARS

By E. V. Lucas

I

THE letter was addressed to Miss Mary Stavely. It ran: —

My Dear Mary, —

I have just received five pounds that I had given up for lost, and, remembering what you told me at Easter of the importance of distributing a little money in the village, I think you had better have it and become my almoner. An almoner is one who gives away money for another. I shall be interested in hearing how you get on.

Your affectionate

Uncle Herbert.

Inside the letter was a five-pound note.

Mary read the letter for the twentieth time, and for the twentieth time unfolded the crackling five-pound note — more money than she had ever seen before. She was thirteen.

"But what shall I do with it?" she asked. "So many people want things."

"Oh, you must n't ask me," said her mother. "Uncle Herbert wants you to decide entirely for yourself. You must make a list of everyone in the village who wants help, and then look into each case very carefully."

"Yes," said Harry, Mary's brother, as he finished breakfast, "and don't forget me. My bicycle ought

to be put right, for one thing, and, for another, I haven't any more films for my camera. If that isn't a deserving case, I 'd like to know what is."

II

In a few days' time the list was ready. It ran like this: —

	£	*s.*	*d.*
Mrs. Meadows' false teeth want mending. It can be done for	0	12	6
Tommy Pringle ought to go to a Nursing Home by the sea for three weeks. This costs 7*s.* a week and 5*s.* 4*d.* return fare	1	6	4
Old Mrs. Wigram really must have a new bonnet	0	4	6
Mrs. Ryan has been saving up for months to buy a sewing machine. She had it all ready, but Sarah's illness has taken away 10*s.* I should like to make that up	0	10	0
The little Barretts ought to have a real ball. It isn't any fun playing with a bit of wood	0	1	0
Mr. Eyles has broken his spectacles again	0	2	6
Old Mr. and Mrs. Snelling have never been in London, and they 're both nearly eighty. I 'm sure they ought to go. There is an excursion on the first of the month at 3*s.* return each, and their grandson's wife would look after them there. Fraser's cart to the station and back would be 4*s.*	0	10	0
Mrs. Callow will lose all her peas and currants again if she does n't have a net	0	3	0
The schoolmaster says that the one thing that would get the boys to the village room is a gramaphone like the one at the public house. This is 15*s.*, and twelve tunes for 9*s.*	1	4	0
Mrs. Carter's mangle will cost 8*s.* to be mended, but it must be done	0	8	0
Thomas Barnes' truck is no good any more, and his illness took away all the money he had; but he will never take it if he knows it comes from us	1	10	0

Mary read through her list and once more added up the figures. They came to £6 11*s.* 10*d.*

"Dear me!" she said, "I had n't any idea it was so difficult to be an almoner."

She went through the list again, and brought it down to £5 0*s.* 10*d.* by knocking off one week of Tommy Pringle's seaside holiday and depriving the village room of its gramaphone.

"I suppose I must make up the tenpence myself," she said.

III

That afternoon Mary went to call on Mr. Verney. Mr. Verney was an artist who lived at the forge cottage. He and Mary were great friends. She used to sit by him while he painted, and he played cricket with her and Harry and was very useful with a pocket knife.

"No one," she said to herself, "can help me so well as Mr. Verney, and if I decide myself on how the money is to be spent, it will be all right to get some help in spending it."

Mr. Verney liked the scheme immensely. "But I don't see that you want any help," he said. "You have done it so far as well as possible."

"Well," said Mary, "there 's one great difficulty: Thomas Barnes would never take anything from our house. You see, we once had his son for a gardener, and father had to send him away because of something he did; but though it was altogether his son's fault, Thomas Barnes has never spoken to father since, or even looked at him. But he 's very old and poorly, and very lonely, and it 's most important he should have a new hand truck, because all his living depends on it; but it 's frightfully important that he should n't know who gave it to him."

"Would n't he guess?" Mr. Verney said.

"Not if nobody knew."

"Oh, I see: no one is to know. That makes it much more fun."

"But how are we to do it?" Mary asked. "That 's why I want you to help. Of course, we can post most of the money, but we can't post a truck. If Thomas Barnes knew, he 'd send it back directly."

"Well," said Mr. Verney, after thinking for some time, "there 's only one way: we shall have to be anti-burglars."

"Anti-burglars!" cried Mary. "What 's that?"

"Well, a burglar is someone who breaks into a house and takes things away; an anti-burglar is someone who breaks into a house and leaves things there. Just the opposite, you see."

"But suppose we are caught?"

"That would be funny. I don't know what the punishment for anti-burgling is. I think perhaps the owner of the house ought to be punished for being so foolish as to interrupt. But tell me more about Thomas Barnes."

"Thomas Barnes," said Mary, "lives in a cottage by the crossroads all alone."

"What does he do?"

"He fetches things from the station for people; he carries the washing home from Mrs. Carter's; he runs errands — at least, he does n't run them: people wish he would; he sometimes does a day's work in a garden. But he really must have a new barrow, and his illness took all his money away, because he would n't belong

to a club. He 's quite the most obstinate man in this part of the country. But he 's so lonely, you know."

"Then," said Mr. Verney, "we must wait till he goes away on an errand."

"But he locks his shed."

"Then we must break in."

"But if people saw us taking the barrow there?"

"Then we must go in the night. I 'll send him to Westerfield suddenly for something quite late — some medicine, and then he 'll think I 'm ill — on a Thursday, when there 's the midnight train, and we 'll pop down to his place at about eleven with a screwdriver and things."

After arranging to go to Westerfield as soon as possible to spend their money, Mary ran home.

Being an almoner was becoming much more interesting.

IV

Mr. Verney and Mary went to Westerfield the next day, leaving a very sulky Harry behind.

"I can't think why Uncle Herbert didn't send that money to me," he grumbled. "Why should a girl like Mary have all this almoning fun? I could almon as well as she."

As a matter of fact, Uncle Herbert had made a very wise choice. Harry had none of Mary's interest in the village, nor had he any of her patience. But in his own way he was a very clever boy. He bowled straight, and knew a linnet's egg from a greenfinch's.

Mr. Verney and Mary's first visit was to the bank, where Mary handed her five-pound note through the

bars, and the clerk scooped up four sovereigns and two half-sovereigns in his little copper shovel and poured them into her hand.

Then they bought a penny account book and went on to Mr. Flower, the ironmonger, to see about Thomas Barnes' truck. Mr. Flower had a second-hand one for twenty-five shillings, and he promised to touch it up for two shillings more; and he promised also that neither he nor his man should ever say anything about it. It was arranged that the barrow should be wrapped up in sacking and taken to Mr. Verney's, inside the wagon, and be delivered after dark.

"Why do *you* want it?" Mary asked him.

"That 's a secret," he said; "you 'll know later."

Mr. Flower also undertook to send three shillings' worth of netting to Mrs. Callow, asking her to do him the favor of trying it to see if it were a good strong kind.

Mary and Mr. Verney then walked on to Mr. Costall, the dentist, who was in Westerfield only on Thursdays between ten and four. It was the first time that Mary had ever stood on his doorstep without feeling her heart sink. Mr. Costall, although a dentist, was a smiling, happy man, and he entered into the scheme directly. He said he would write to Mrs. Meadows and ask her to call, saying that someone whom he would not mention had arranged the matter with him. And when Mary asked him how much she should pay him, he said that ten shillings would do. This meant a saving of half a crown.

"How nice it would be always to visit Mr. Costall," Mary said, with a sigh, "if he did not pull our teeth."

Mary and Mr. Verney then chose Mrs. Wigram's new bonnet, which they posted to her at once. Mr. Verney liked one with red roses, but Mary told him that nothing would ever induce Mrs. Wigram to wear anything but black. The girl in the shop recommended another kind, trimmed with a very blue bird; but Mary had her own way.

Afterwards they bought a ball for the Barretts; and then they bought a postal order for eight shillings for Mrs. Carter, and half a crown for Mr. Eyles, and ten shillings for Mrs. Ryan, and fourteen shillings for Mrs. Pringle. It was most melancholy to see the beautiful sovereigns dropping into other people's tills. Mary put all these amounts down in her penny account book. She also put down the cost of her return ticket.

When they got back to the village they saw Mr. Ward, the stationmaster. After telling him how important it was to keep the secret, Mary bought a return ticket to the sea for Tommy Pringle, without any date on it, and two excursion tickets for old Mr. and Mrs. Snelling for the first of next month. Mr. Ward did not have many secrets in his life, and he was delighted to keep these.

While they were talking to him a curious and exciting thing happened. A message began to tick off on the telegraph machine. Mr. Verney was just turning to go away when Mr. Ward called out, "Stop a minute, please! This message is for Miss Stavely."

Mary ran over to the machine and stood by Mr. Ward while he wrote down the message which the little needle ticked out. She had never had a telegram be-

fore, and to have one like this — "warm from the cow," as Mr. Ward said — was splendid. Mr. Ward handed it to her at last.

MARY STAVELY, *Mercombe.*

How is the almoning? I want to pay all extra expenses.

UNCLE HERBERT.

The reply was paid; but Mary had to write it out several times before it satisfied her and came within the sixpence. This was what she said: —

STAVELEY, *Reform Club, London.*

All right. Will send accounts. Expenses small.

MARY.

On the way home they spoke to Fraser, who let out carriages and carts. Fraser liked the plan as much as everyone else did. He promised to call in on the Snellings in a casual way, on the morning on which they would receive their tickets, and suggest to them that they should let him drive them to the station and bring them home again. When Mary offered to pay him, Mr. Fraser said no, certainly not; he would like to help her. He had n't done anything for anybody for so long that he should be interested in seeing what it felt like. This meant a saving of four shillings.

Mary went to tea at Mr. Verney's. After tea he printed addresses on a number of envelopes, and put the postal orders inside, with a little card in each, on which he printed the words, "From a friend, for Tommy to go to the seaside home for a fortnight"; "From a friend, for Mr. and Mrs. Snelling to go to London"; "From a friend, for Mr. Eyles' spectacles";

and so forth; and then he stamped them and stuck them down, and put them all into a big envelope, which he posted to his sister in Ireland, so that when they came back they all had the Dublin postmark, and no one ever saw such puzzled and happy people as the recipients were.

"Has your mother any friends in Dublin, Miss Mary?" Mrs. Snelling asked a day or so later, in the midst of a conversation about sweet peas.

"No," said Mary. It was not until afterwards that she saw what Mrs. Snelling meant.

V

Next Thursday came at last, the day on which Thomas Barnes' shed was to be anti-burgled. At ten o'clock, having had leave to stay up late on this great occasion, Mary put on her things, and Mr. Verney, who had come to dinner, took her to his rooms. There, in the outhouse which he used for a studio, he showed her the truck.

"And here," he said, "is my secret," pointing out the words: —

THOMAS BARNES

PORTER, MERCOMBE

which he had painted in white letters on the side.

"He 's bound to keep it now, whatever happens," Mr. Verney said. "In order to make as little noise as possible to-night," he added, "I have wrapped felt around the tires."

He then took a bag from the shelf, placed it on the barrow, and they stole out. Mr. Verney's landlady

had gone to bed, and there was no sound of anyone in the village. The truck made no noise.

After half a mile they came to the crossroads where Thomas Barnes' cottage stood, and Mr. Verney walked to the house and knocked loudly.

There was no answer. Indeed, he had not expected one, but he wished to make sure that Thomas had not returned from Westerfield sooner than he should.

"It 's all right," he whispered. "Now for the anti-burgling."

He wheeled the truck to the side of the gate leading to the shed, and, taking the bag, they passed through. Mr. Verney opened the bag and took out a lantern, a hammer, and a screwdriver.

"We must get this padlock off," he said, and while Mary held the lantern he worked away at the fastenings. It was more difficult than he expected, especially as he did not want to break anything, but to put it back exactly as it had been. Several minutes passed.

"There," he cried, "that 's it."

At the same moment a sound of heavy footsteps was heard, and Mary gave a little scream and dropped the lantern.

A strong hand gripped her arm.

"Hullo! Hullo!" said a gruff voice. "What 's this? Housebreaking, indeed!"

Mr. Verney had stooped for the lantern, and as he rose, the policeman — for he it was — seized him also.

"You 'd better come along with me," the policeman said, "and make no trouble about it. The less trouble

you make, the easier it 'll be for you before the magistrates."

"But look here," Mr. Verney said, "you 're making a mistake. We 're not housebreaking."

The policeman laughed. "Now, that's a good 'un," he said. "Dark lantern, screwdriver, hammer, eleven o'clock at night, Thomas Barnes' shed — and you 're not housebreaking. Perhaps you'll tell me what you *are* doing, you and your audacious female accomplice here. Playing hide-and-seek, I suppose?"

"Well," said Mr. Verney, suddenly striking a match with his free hand and holding it up so that the light fell full on his own and on Mary's face, "we'll tell you the whole story."

"Miss Stavely!" cried the policeman, "and Mr. Verney. Well, this is a start. But what does it all mean?"

Then Mr. Verney told the story, first making Dobbs promise not to tell it again.

The policeman grew more and more interested as it went on. Finally he exclaimed: "You get the door open, sir, and I'll fetch the truck through. Time 's getting along."

He hurried out of the yard and returned carrying the truck on his shoulders. Then he stripped off the felt with his knife and ran it into the shed, beside the old broken-down barrow that had done service for so many years.

Mr. Verney soon had the padlock back in its place as if nothing had happened, and after carefully gathering up the felt they hurried off, in order to get home

before Thomas Barnes should call with the medicine that he had been sent to buy.

"Let me carry the bag, sir," the policeman said.

"What, full of burgling tools!" said Mr. Verney.

"Mum 's the word," the policeman replied, "mum 's the word."

At the forge cottage he wished them good-night.

"Then you don't want us in court to-morrow?" Mr. Verney asked.

"Mum 's the word," was all that Dobbs replied, with a chuckle.

Thomas Barnes' train being late, Mary did not get to bed until after twelve that night. She laid her head on the pillow with particular satisfaction, for the last and most difficult part of the distribution of Uncle Herbert's money was over.

VI

The next day Mary sent Uncle Herbert a long description of her duties as almoner, and inclosed the account. What with postages and her railway fare, she had spent altogether £4, 18*s.* 11*d.*

Two days later this letter came back from Uncle Herbert: —

DEAR MARY, —

You are as good an almoner as I could wish, and I hope that another chance of setting you to work will come. Put the thirteen pence that are over into a box labeled "The Almoner's Fund." Then take the inclosed postal order for a pound and get it cashed, and the next time you are in Westerfield buy Mr. Verney a box of cigarettes, but be sure to find out first what kind he likes. Also give Harry six shillings. I dare say he has broken his bicycle or wants some

more films: at any rate, he will not say no. The rest is for yourself to buy something purely for yourself with. Please tell your mother that I am coming on Saturday by the train reaching you at 5.08. I shall walk from the station, but I want Thomas Barnes to fetch my bag.

Your affectionate

UNCLE HERBERT.

Whether or no Thomas Barnes knew where the truck came from we never found out; but at Christmas time he was discovered among the waits who sang carols on the Stavelys' lawn.

THE PICKWICK CLUB GO SHOOTING

By Charles Dickens

THE sky was cloudless; the sun shone out bright and warm; the songs of birds, and hum of myriads of summer insects, filled the air; and the cottage gardens, crowded with flowers of every rich and beautiful tint, sparkled in the heavy dew, like beds of glittering jewels. Everything bore the stamp of summer, and none of its beautiful colors had yet faded from the die.

Such was the morning when an open carriage, in which were three Pickwickians (Mr. Snodgrass having preferred to remain at home), Mr. Wardle, and Mr. Trundle, with Sam Weller on the box beside the driver, pulled up by a gate at the roadside, before which stood a tall, raw-boned gamekeeper and a half-booted, leather-legginged boy: each bearing a bag of capacious dimensions, and accompanied by a brace of pointers.

"I say," whispered Mr. Winkle to Wardle, as the man let down the steps, "they don't suppose we 're going to kill game enough to fill those bags, do they?"

"Fill them!" exclaimed old Wardle. "Bless you yes! you shall fill one, and I the other; and when we've done with them, the pockets of our shooting jackets will hold as much more."

Mr. Winkle dismounted without saying anything in reply to this observation; but he thought within himself, that if the party remained in the open air until he had filled one of the bags, they stood a considerable chance of catching colds in their heads.

"Hi, June, lass — hi, old girl; down, Daph, down," said Wardle, caressing the dogs. "Sir Geoffrey still in Scotland, of course, Martin?"

The tall gamekeeper replied in the affirmative, and looked with some surprise from Mr. Winkle, who was holding his gun as if he wished his coat pocket to save him the trouble of pulling the trigger, to Mr. Tupman, who was holding his as if he were afraid of it — as there is no earthly reason to doubt he really was.

"My friends are not much in the way of this sort of thing yet, Martin," said Wardle, noticing the look. "Live and learn, you know. They'll be good shots one of these days. I beg my friend Winkle's pardon, though; he has had some practice."

Mr. Winkle smiled feebly over his blue neckerchief in acknowledgment of the compliment, and got himself so mysteriously entangled with his gun in his modest confusion, that if the piece had been loaded, he must inevitably have shot himself dead upon the spot.

"You must n't handle your piece in that 'ere way when you come to have the charge in it, sir," said the tall gamekeeper, gruffly, "or you will make cold meat of some of us."

Mr. Winkle, thus admonished, abruptly altered its position, and in so doing contrived to bring the barrel into pretty smart contact with Mr. Weller's head.

"Hallo!" said Sam, picking up his hat, which had been knocked off, and rubbing his temple. "Hallo, sir! If you comes it this vay, you 'll fill one o' them bags, and something to spare, at one fire."

Here the leather-legginged boy laughed very heartily, and then tried to look as if it was somebody else, whereat Mr. Winkle frowned majestically.

"Where did you tell the boy to meet us with the snack, Martin?" inquired Wardle.

"Side of One-tree Hill, at twelve o'clock, sir."

"That 's not Sir Geoffrey's land, is it?"

"No, sir, but it 's close by it. It 's Captain Boldwig's land; but there 'll be nobody to interrupt us, and there 's a fine bit of turf there."

"Very well," said old Wardle. "Now the sooner we 're off the better. Will you join us at twelve, then, Pickwick?"

Mr. Pickwick was particularly desirous to view sport, the more especially as he was rather anxious in respect of Mr. Winkle's life and limbs. On so inviting a morning, too, it was very tantalizing to turn back, and leave his friends to enjoy themselves. It was, therefore, with a very rueful air that he replied: —

"Why, I suppose I must."

"Ain't the gentleman a shot, sir?" inquired the long gamekeeper.

"No," replied Wardle, "and he 's lame besides."

"I should like very much to go," said Mr. Pickwick, "very much."

There was a short pause of consideration.

"There 's a barrow t 'other side the hedge," said the

boy. "If the gentleman's servant would wheel along the paths, he could keep nigh us, and we could lift it over the stiles and that."

"The wery thing," said Mr. Weller, who was a party interested, inasmuch as he ardently longed to see the sport. "The wery thing. Well said, Smallcheck; I'll have it out in a minute."

But here a difficulty arose.

The long gamekeeper resolutely protested against the introduction into a shooting party of a gentleman in a barrow, as a gross violation of all established rules and precedents.

It was a great objection, but not an unsurmountable one.

The gamekeeper having been coaxed and feed, and having, moreover, eased his mind by punching the head of the inventive youth who had first suggested the use of the machine, Mr. Pickwick was placed in it, and off the party set; Wardle and the long gamekeeper leading the way, and Mr. Pickwick in the barrow, propelled by Sam, bringing up the rear.

"Stop, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, when they had got half across the first field.

"What 's the matter now?" said Wardle.

"I won't suffer this barrow to be moved another step," said Mr. Pickwick resolutely, "unless Winkle carries that gun of his in a different manner."

"How *am* I to carry it?" said the wretched Winkle.

"Carry it with the muzzle to the ground," replied Mr. Pickwick.

"It 's so unsportsmanlike," reasoned Winkle.

"I don't care whether it's unsportsmanlike or not, replied Mr. Pickwick; "I'm not going to be shot in a wheelbarrow for the sake of appearances, to please anybody."

"I know the gentleman'll put that 'ere charge into somebody afore he 's done," growled the long man.

"Well, well — I don't mind," said poor Mr. Winkle, turning his gunstock uppermost; — "there."

"Anythin' for a quiet life," said Mr. Weller. And on they went again.

"Stop!" said Mr. Pickwick, after they had gone a few yards farther.

"What now?" said Wardle.

"That gun of Tupman's is not safe: I know it is n't," said Mr. Pickwick.

"Eh? What! not safe?" said Mr. Tupman in a tone of great alarm.

"Not as you are carrying it," said Mr. Pickwick. "I am very sorry to make any further objection, but I cannot consent to go on, unless you carry it as Winkle does his."

"I think you had better, sir," said the long gamekeeper, "or you're quite as likely to lodge the charge in yourself as in anything else."

Mr. Tupman, with the most obliging haste, placed his piece in the position required, and the party moved on again, the two amateurs marching with reversed arms, like a couple of privates at a royal funeral.

The dogs suddenly came to a dead stop, and the party, advancing stealthily a single pace, stopped too.

"What's the matter with the dogs' legs?" whispered Mr. Winkle. "How queer they're standing."

"Hush, can't you?" replied Wardle softly. "Don't you see, they're making a point?"

"Making a point!" said Mr. Winkle, staring about him, as if he expected to discover some particular beauty in the landscape, which the sagacious animals were calling special attention to. "Making a point! What are they pointing at?"

"Keep your eyes open," said Wardle, not heeding the question in the excitement of the moment. "Now, then."

There was a sharp whirring noise, that made Mr. Winkle start back as if he had been shot himself. *Bang, bang*, went a couple of guns; the smoke swept quickly away over the field and curled into the air.

"Where are they?" said Mr. Winkle, in a state of the highest excitement, turning around and around in all directions. "Where are they? Tell me when to fire. Where are they — where are they?"

"Where are they?" said Wardle, taking up a brace of birds which the dogs had deposited at his feet. "Where are they! Why, here they are."

"No, no; I mean the others," said the bewildered Winkle.

"Far enough off by this time," replied Wardle, coolly reloading his gun.

"We shall very likely be up with another covey in five minutes," said the long gamekeeper. "If the gentleman begins to fire now, perhaps he'll just get the shot out of the barrel by the time they rise."

"WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE DOGS' LEGS?"
WHISPERED MR. WINKLE

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared Mr. Weller.

"Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, compassionating his follower's confusion and embarrassment.

"Sir."

"Don't laugh."

"Certainly not, sir." So, by way of indemnification, Mr. Weller contorted his features from behind the wheelbarrow, for the exclusive amusement of the boy with the leggings, who thereupon burst into a boisterous laugh, and was summarily cuffed by the long gamekeeper, who wanted a pretext for turning around, to hide his own merriment.

"Bravo, old fellow!" said Wardle to Mr. Tupman; "you fired that time, at all events."

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. Tupman, with conscious pride, "I let it off."

"Well done. You'll hit something next time, if you look sharp. Very easy, ain't it?"

"Yes, it's very easy," said Mr. Tupman. "How it hurts one's shoulder, though. It nearly knocked me backward. I had no idea these small firearms kicked so."

"Ah," said the old gentleman, smiling. "You'll get used to it in time. Now, then — ready — all right with the barrow there?"

"All right, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Come along, then."

"Hold hard, sir," said Sam, raising the barrow.

"Aye, aye," replied Mr. Pickwick. And on they went, as briskly as need be.

"Keep that barrow back now," cried Wardle, when

it had been hoisted over a stile into another field and Mr. Pickwick had been deposited in it once more.

"All right, sir," replied Mr. Weller, pausing.

"Now, Winkle," said the old gentleman, "follow me softly, and don't be too late this time."

"Never fear," said Winkle. "Are they pointing?"

"No, no; not now. Quietly, now, quietly."

On they crept, and very quietly they would have advanced, if Mr. Winkle, in the performance of some very intricate evolutions with his gun, had not accidentally fired, at the most critical moment, over the boy's head, exactly in the very spot where the tall man's brains would have been, had he been there instead.

"Why, what on earth did you do that for?" said old Wardle, as the birds flew unharmed away.

"I never saw such a gun in my life," replied poor Winkle, looking at the lock, as if that would do any good. "It goes off of its own accord. It *will* do it."

"Will do it!" echoed Wardle, with something of irritation in his manner. "I wish it would kill something of its own accord."

"It'll do that afore long, sir," observed the tall man in a low, prophetic voice.

"What do you mean by that observation, sir?" inquired Mr. Winkle, angrily.

"Never mind, sir, never mind," replied the long gamekeeper; "I've no family myself, sir; and this here boy's mother will get something handsome from Sir Geoffrey if he's killed on his land. Load again, sir, load again."

"Take away his gun," cried Mr. Pickwick from the barrow, horror-stricken at the long man's dark insinuations. "Take away his gun, do you hear, somebody?"

Nobody, however, volunteered to obey the command; and Mr. Winkle, after darting a rebellious glance at Mr. Pickwick, reloaded his gun and proceeded onward with the rest.

We are bound, on the authority of Mr. Pickwick, to state that Mr. Tupman's mode of proceeding evinced far more of prudence and deliberation than that adopted by Mr. Winkle. Still, this by no means detracts from the great authority of the latter gentleman on all matters connected with the field; because, as Mr. Pickwick beautifully observes, it has somehow or other happened, from time immemorial, that many of the best and ablest philosophers, who have been perfect lights of science in matters of theory, have been wholly unable to reduce them to practice.

Mr. Tupman's process, like many of our most sublime discoveries, was extremely simple. With the quickness and penetration of a man of genius, he had at once observed that the two great points to be attained were — first, to discharge his piece without injury to himself, and, secondly, to do so without danger to the bystanders; obviously the best thing to do, after surmounting the difficulty of firing at all, was to shut his eyes firmly, and fire into the air.

On one occasion, after performing this feat, Mr. Tupman, on opening his eyes, beheld a plump partridge in the very act of falling wounded to the ground. He

was on the point of congratulating Mr. Wardle on his invariable success, when that gentleman advanced toward him and grasped him warmly by the hand.

"Tupman," said the old gentleman, "you singled out that particular bird."

"No," said Mr. Tupman — "no."

"You did," said Wardle. "I saw you do it — I observed you pick him out — I noticed you as you raised your piece to take aim; and I will say this that the best shot in existence could not have done it more beautifully. You are an older hand at this than I thought you, Tupman; you have been out before."

It was in vain for Mr. Tupman to protest, with a smile of self-denial, that he never had. The very smile was taken as evidence to the contrary; and from that time forth his reputation was established. It is not the only reputation that has been acquired as easily, nor are such fortunate circumstances confined to partridge shooting.

THE PICKWICK CLUB ON THE ICE

By Charles Dickens

"WELL, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, as that favored servitor entered his bedchamber with his warm water, on the morning of Christmas day, "still frosty?"

"Water in the wash-hand basin 's a mask o' ice, sir," responded Sam.

"Severe weather, Sam," observed Mr. Pickwick.

"Fine time for them as is well wropped up, as the Polar Bear said to himself, ven he was practicing his skating," replied Mr. Weller.

"I shall be down in a quarter of an hour, Sam," said Mr. Pickwick, untying his nightcap.

"Wery good, sir," replied Sam. . . .

"Now," said Wardle, after a substantial lunch, when the agreeable items of strong beer and cherry brandy had been done ample justice to, "what say you to an hour on the ice? We shall have plenty of time."

"Capital!" said Mr. Benjamin Allen.

"Prime!" ejaculated Mr. Bob Sawyer.

"You skate, of course, Winkle?" said Wardle.

"Ye — yes; oh, yes"; replied Mr. Winkle. "I — I — am *rather* out of practice."

"Oh, *do* skate, Mr. Winkle," said Arabella. "I like to see it so much."

"Oh, it is *so* graceful," said another young lady.

A third young lady said it was elegant, and a fourth expressed her opinion that it was "swanlike."

"I should be very happy, I am sure," said Mr. Winkle, reddening; "but I have no skates."

This objection was at once overruled. Trundle had got a couple of pair, and the fat boy announced that there were half a dozen more downstairs! whereat Mr. Winkle expressed exquisite delight, and looked exquisitely uncomfortable.

Old Wardle led the way to a pretty large sheet of ice; and the fat boy and Mr. Weller, having shoveled and swept away the snow which had fallen on it during the night, Mr. Bob Sawyer adjusted his skates with a dexterity which to Mr. Winkle was perfectly marvelous, and described circles with his left leg, and cut figures of eight; and inscribed upon the ice, without once stopping for breath, a great many other pleasant and astonishing devices, to the excessive satisfaction of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, and the ladies; which reached a pitch of positive enthusiasm when old Wardle and Benjamin Allen, assisted by the aforesaid Bob Sawyer, performed some mystic evolutions which they called a reel.

All this time Mr. Winkle, with his face and hands blue with the cold, had been forcing a gimlet into the soles of his feet, and putting his skates on, with the points behind, and getting the straps into a very complicated and entangled state, with the assistance of Mr. Snodgrass, who knew rather less about skates than a Hindoo. At length, however, with the assistance of

Mr. Weller, the unfortunate skates were firmly screwed and buckled on, and Mr. Winkle was raised to his feet.

"Now, then, sir," said Sam, in an encouraging tone, "off with you, and show 'em how to do it."

"Stop, Sam, stop!" said Mr. Winkle, trembling violently, and clutching hold of Sam's arms with the grasp of a drowning man. "How slippery it is, Sam!"

"Not an uncommon thing upon ice, sir," replied Mr. Weller. "Hold up, sir!"

This last observation of Mr. Weller's bore reference to a demonstration Mr. Winkle made at the instant of a frantic desire to throw his feet in the air and dash the back of his head on the ice.

"These — these — are very awkward skates; ain't they, Sam?" inquired Mr. Winkle, staggering.

"I'm afeerd there's an orkard gen'l'm'n in 'em, sir," replied Sam.

"Now, Winkle," cried Mr. Pickwick, quite unconscious that there was anything the matter. "Come; the ladies are all anxiety."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Winkle, with a ghastly smile. "I'm coming."

"Just a-goin' to begin," said Sam, endeavoring to disengage himself. "Now, sir, start off!"

"Stop an instant, Sam," gasped Mr. Winkle, clinging most affectionately to Mr. Weller. "I find I've got a couple of coats at home that I don't want, Sam. You may have them, Sam."

"Thank'ee, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Never mind touching your hat, Sam," said Mr. Winkle, hastily. "You need n't take your hand away

to do that. I meant to have given you five shillings this morning for a Christmas box, Sam. I'll give it you this afternoon, Sam."

"You're wery good, sir," replied Mr. Weller.

"Just hold me at first, Sam; will you?" said Mr. Winkle. "There — that's right. I shall soon get in the way of it, Sam. Not too fast, Sam; not too fast."

Mr. Winkle, stooping forward with his body half doubled up, was being assisted over the ice by Mr. Weller, in a very singular and un-swanlike manner, when Mr. Pickwick most innocently shouted from the opposite bank:—

"Sam!"

"Sir?" said Mr. Weller.

"Here. I want you."

"Let go, sir," said Sam. "Don't you hear the governor a-callin'? Let go, sir."

With a violent effort, Mr. Weller disengaged himself from the grasp of the agonized Pickwickian; and, in so doing, administered a considerable impetus to the unhappy Mr. Winkle. With an accuracy which no degree of dexterity or practice could have insured, that unfortunate gentleman bore swiftly down into the center of the reel at the very moment when Mr. Bob Sawyer was performing a flourish of unparalleled beauty. Mr. Winkle struck wildly against him, and with a loud crash they both fell heavily down. Mr. Pickwick ran to the spot. Bob Sawyer had risen to his feet, but Mr. Winkle was far too wise to do anything of the kind, in skates. He was seated on the ice,

making spasmodic efforts to smile; but anguish was depicted on every lineament of his countenance.

"Are you hurt?" inquired Mr. Benjamin Allen, with great anxiety.

"Not much," said Mr. Winkle, rubbing his back very hard.

Mr. Pickwick was excited and indignant. He beckoned to Mr. Weller, and said in a stern voice, "Take his skates off."

"No; but really I had scarcely begun," remonstrated Mr. Winkle.

"Take his skates off," repeated Mr. Pickwick firmly.

The command was not to be resisted. Mr. Winkle allowed Sam to obey it in silence.

"Lift him up," said Mr. Pickwick. Sam assisted him to rise.

Mr. Pickwick retired a few paces from the bystanders; and, beckoning his friend to approach, fixed a searching look upon him, and uttered in a low but distinct and emphatic tone these remarkable words: —

"You're a humbug, sir."

"A what?" said Mr. Winkle, starting.

"A humbug, sir. I will speak plainer, if you wish it. An impostor, sir."

With these words Mr. Pickwick turned slowly on his heel and rejoined his friends.

While Mr. Pickwick was delivering himself of the sentiment just recorded, Mr. Weller and the fat boy, having by their joint endeavors cut out a slide, were exercising themselves thereupon, in a very masterly and brilliant manner. Sam Weller, in particular, was

displaying that beautiful feat of fancy sliding which is currently denominated "knocking at the cobbler's door," and which is achieved by skimming over the ice on one foot, and occasionally giving a twopenny postman's knock upon it with the other. It was a good long slide, and there was something in the motion which Mr. Pickwick, who was very cold with standing still, could not help envying.

"It looks a nice warm exercise that, does n't it?" he inquired of Wardle, when that gentleman was thoroughly out of breath, by reason of the indefatigable manner in which he had converted his legs into a pair of compasses and drawn complicated problems on the ice.

"Ah, it does, indeed," replied Wardle. "Do you slide?"

"I used to do so, on the gutters, when I was a boy," replied Mr. Pickwick.

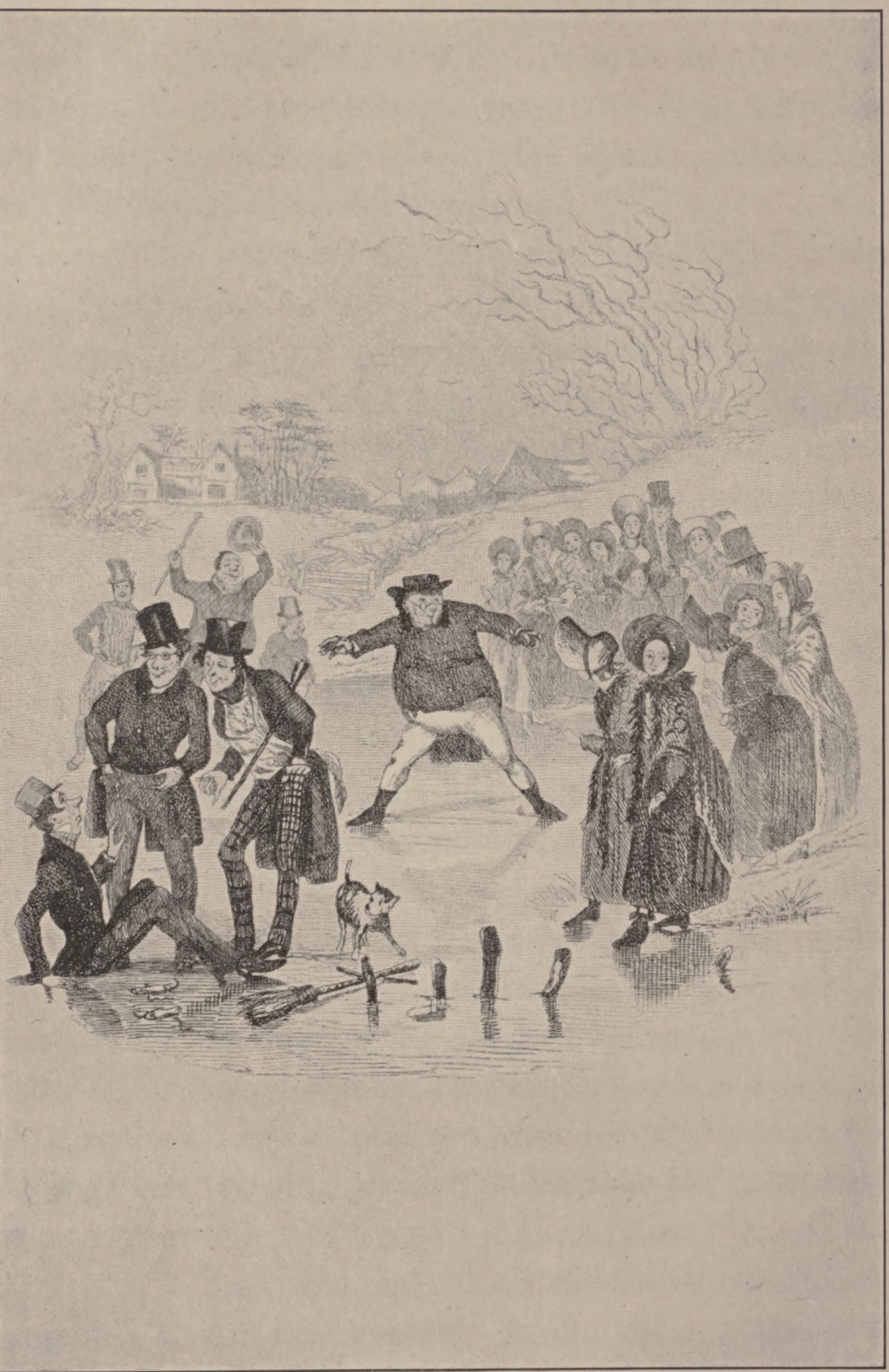
"Try it now," said Wardle.

"Oh, do, please, Mr. Pickwick," cried all the ladies.

"I should be very happy to afford you any amusement," replied Mr. Pickwick, "but I have n't done such a thing these thirty years."

"Pooh! pooh! nonsense!" said Wardle, dragging off his skates with the impetuosity which characterized all his proceedings. "Here: I'll keep you company; come along." And away went the good-tempered old fellow down the slide, with a rapidity which came very close upon Mr. Weller, and beat the fat boy all to nothing.

Mr. Pickwick paused, considered, pulled off his gloves



MR. PICKWICK SLIDES

and put them in his hat, took two or three short runs, balked himself as often, and at last took another run, and went slowly and gravely down the slide, with his feet about a yard and a quarter apart, amidst the gratified shouts of all the spectators.

"Keep the pot a-bilin', sir!" said Sam. And down went Wardle again, and then Mr. Pickwick, and then Sam, and then Mr. Winkle, and then Mr. Bob Sawyer, and then the fat boy, and then Mr. Snodgrass, following closely upon each other's heels, and running after each other with as much eagerness as if all their future prospects in life depended on their expedition.

It was the most intensely interesting thing, to observe the manner in which Mr. Pickwick performed his share in the ceremony; to watch the torture of anxiety with which he viewed the person behind, gaining upon him at the imminent hazard of tripping him up; to see him gradually expend the painful force which he had put on at first, and turn slowly around on the slide, with his face toward the point from which he had started; to contemplate the playful smile which mantled on his face when he had accomplished the distance, and the eagerness with which he turned around when he had done so, and ran after his predecessor, his black gaiters tripping pleasantly through the snow, and his eyes beaming cheerfulness and gladness through his spectacles. And when he was knocked down (which happened upon the average every third round), it was the most invigorating sight that can possibly be imagined to behold him gather up his hat, gloves, and handkerchief, with a glowing countenance, and resume

his station in the rank, with an ardor and enthusiasm which nothing could abate.

The sport was at its height, the sliding was at the quickest, the laughter was at the loudest, when a sharp, smart crack was heard. There was a quick rush toward the bank, a wild scream from the ladies, and a shout from Mr. Tupman. A large mass of ice disappeared; the water bubbled up over it; Mr. Pickwick's hat, gloves, and handkerchief were floating on the surface; and this was all of Mr. Pickwick that anybody could see.

Dismay and anguish were depicted on every countenance; the males turned pale, the females fainted; Mr. Snodgrass and Mr. Winkle grasped each other by the hand and gazed at the spot where their leader had gone down with frenzied eagerness; while Mr. Tupman, by way of rendering the promptest assistance, and at the same time conveying to any persons who might be within hearing the clearest possible notion of the catastrophe, ran off across the country at his utmost speed, screaming "Fire!" with all his might.

It was at this very moment, when old Wardle and Sam Weller were approaching the hole with cautious steps, that a face, head, and shoulders emerged from beneath the water and disclosed the features and spectacles of Mr. Pickwick.

"Keep yourself up for an instant — for only one instant," bawled Mr. Snodgrass.

"Yes, do; let me implore you — for my sake," roared Mr. Winkle, deeply affected. The adjuration was rather unnecessary, the probability being that if Mr.

Pickwick had declined to keep himself up for anybody else's sake, it would have occurred to him that he might as well do so for his own.

"Do you feel the bottom there, old fellow?" said Wardle.

"Yes, certainly," replied Mr. Pickwick, wringing the water from his head and face and gasping for breath. "I fell upon my back. I could n't get on my feet at first."

The clay upon so much of Mr. Pickwick's coat as was yet visible bore testimony to the accuracy of this statement; and as the fears of the spectators were still further relieved by the fat boy's suddenly recollecting that the water was nowhere more than five feet deep, prodigies of valor were performed to get him out. After a vast quantity of splashing, and cracking, and struggling, Mr. Pickwick was at length fairly extricated from his unpleasant position and once more stood on dry land.

"Oh, he'll catch his death of cold," said Emily.

"Dear old thing!" said Arabella. "Let me wrap this shawl around you, Mr. Pickwick."

"Ah, that's the best thing you can do," said Wardle, "and when you've got it on, run home as fast as your legs can carry you, and jump into bed directly."

A dozen shawls were offered on the instant. Three or four of the thickest having been selected, Mr. Pickwick was wrapped up, and started off, under the guidance of Mr. Weller, presenting the singular phenomenon of an elderly gentleman, dripping wet, and without a hat, with his arms bound down to his sides, skimming

over the ground, without any clearly defined purpose, at the rate of six good English miles an hour.

But Mr. Pickwick cared not for appearances in such an extreme case, and, urged on by Sam Weller, he kept at the very top of his speed until he reached the door of Manor Farm.

WOMAN'S SPHERE

By S. H. Kemper

"WILBUR, dear," said Aunt Susan, "Rosa is very busy with the washing this morning, and if you will go down into the garden and gather this basket full of peas and then shell them for her to cook for dinner, I will —" Aunt Susan paused to reflect a moment and then continued, "I will give you a new ball for a birthday present."

Aunt Susan smiled kindly at the flashing look of intense joy that Wilbur lifted to her face as he seized the basket she was holding out to him.

"I — I 'd just love to have it!" he exclaimed. He was quite overcome with emotion and tore away toward the garden at top speed.

Wilbur's mother was ill, and Wilbur had been sent to visit Aunt Susan in order that the house might be quiet. Aunt Susan was really Wilbur's father's aunt. She was grandma's sister, and she was very old. Grandma was not old. Her hair was white, but it went in nice squiggles around her face, and she wore big hats with plumes and shiny, rustly dresses and high-heeled shoes. And when she kissed you she clasped you in a powerful embrace against her chest. Grandma was not old. But Aunt Susan, with her smooth gray hair and her wrinkled face and spectacles, her plain black

dress and little shawl, and her funny cloth shoes, seemed to Wilbur a being inconceivably stricken of eld. You felt intensely sorry for her for being so old. You were so sorry that you felt it inside of you; it was almost as if your stomach ached. And she was always kind and gentle. You felt that it would be a grievous thing to hurt her feelings or trouble her in any way.

Wilbur's birthday came on Thursday and this was only Monday. A long time to wait. Wilbur needed a ball very badly. He had made friends with a number of boys here in Aunt Susan's town, and the baseball season was at its height. Wilbur's friends owned several perfectly worthy bats and two or three gloves, but there was a serious lack of balls.

That afternoon, joining the boys on the vacant lot where they played, Wilbur informed them with great satisfaction of Aunt Susan's promise.

"My aunt is going to give me a new ball on my birthday," he said to them.

They were more than pleased with the news. Wilbur found himself the center of flattering interest. He told them that he guessed it would be a regular league ball.

Wilbur exerted himself earnestly to be helpful to Aunt Susan and Rosa all day on Tuesday and Wednesday. He felt that he could not do enough for Aunt Susan, and also that it would be well to remind her of her promise by constant acts of courtesy and service, for it was a long time before Thursday. But it did not seem possible that anyone could really forget an affair so important and so agreeable as the purchase of a ball. Wilbur knew where Aunt Susan would get the ball:

at Reiter's store, of course. Reiter kept a store where books and magazines and athletic goods were sold. He kept all the standard things; the ball would be of a good make, Wilbur was sure.

Aunt Susan did not often go downtown. Except when busy about her housekeeping, she was likely to spend the time rocking in her old-fashioned rocker on the front porch with a workbasket beside her, occupying herself with needlework or knitting. She knitted a great deal. There were many bright-colored wools in her workbasket.

On Wednesday afternoon Wilbur's heart gave an excited jump when he saw Aunt Susan coming downstairs tying her little bonnet over her gray hair. Her black silk shopping bag hung on her arm. Wilbur did not doubt that she was going downtown with an eye single to Reiter's store. He assumed an unconscious air, just as one did when mother went shopping before Christmas. He watched Aunt Susan out of sight and afterwards hung about the front yard till he saw her returning. He ran to open the gate for her and took her parasol and bag, looking up at her with bright, trustful eyes. The bag seemed quite full of small parcels as he carried it for Aunt Susan.

Wilbur fell asleep that night wondering whether Aunt Susan would put the ball on the breakfast table next morning, where he would see it when he entered the dining room. Perhaps she would bring it after he was asleep, and place it on the chair beside his bed, or perhaps on the old-fashioned bureau. There were many happy possibilities.

When the window opposite his bed began to grow bright with the pink and gold of sunrise, Wilbur woke and sat up, looking first at the chair, then at the bureau.

No, it was not in the room. It would be in the dining room, then. When he went downstairs he was surprised to find that Aunt Susan had not yet left her room. In the kitchen Rosa was only beginning her preparations for breakfast. Wilbur spent a long time, a restless but happy hour, waiting, idling about the dewy garden and front yard, feeding the chickens and playing with the cat.

At last Rosa rang the bell and Wilbur went into the house. Aunt Susan, seated at the breakfast table, greeted him affectionately.

"Many happy returns, dear!" she said, holding out her hand. She drew him to her and kissed his cheek. Now, surely — but the ball was not on the table beside his plate. He could not see it anywhere in the room.

The breakfasts at Aunt Susan's were always good. There would be fried chicken and waffles or muffins and squashy corn bread. Indeed, all mealtimes at Aunt Susan's would have been periods of unmixed joy if Aunt Susan had not felt obliged to keep up a steady conversation. Aunt Susan made small talk laboriously. It distracted your mind. She had a strange delusion that one was avidly interested in one's schoolbooks. She constantly dwelt upon the subject of school. It made things difficult, for school was over now and all its rigors happily forgotten. This morning, what with Aunt Susan's talk and his excitement, Wilbur could hardly eat anything.

Breakfast was over. Aunt Susan and Rosa were in the pantry consulting on housekeeping matters. Wilbur sat down in a rocking chair on the front porch and waited. He waited and waited, rocking violently. And then at last he heard Aunt Susan calling him.

He was out of his chair and in the hall like a flash.

"Yes'm," he answered. "Yes'm? What is it, Aunt Susan?"

Aunt Susan was coming down the stairs.

"Here is the ball I promised you, dear," she said. She placed it in his outstretched hand —

Wilbur had visualized it so vividly, he imagined the desired thing with such intensity, that it was as if a strange transformation had taken place before his eyes. He was holding, not the hard, heavy, white ball he had seemed actually to see, with its miraculously perfect stitching and the trim lettering of the name upon it; a curious, soft thing lay in his hand, a home-made ball constructed of wools. There seemed to be millions of short strands of bright-colored wools all held together in the center by some means and sticking out in every direction. Their smoothly clipped ends formed the surface of the ball.

It was the kind of thing you would give a baby in a go-cart.

Wilbur stood and gazed at it. The kind of thing you would give a baby in a go-cart! Then he looked up at Aunt Susan, and suddenly the sense of his great disappointment was lost in that immense, aching pity for her. She was so old, and she had made it herself, thinking it would please him.

"It's — it's awful pretty!" Wilbur stammered. He felt inexpressibly sorry for Aunt Susan. How could anyone be so utterly without comprehension!

Aunt Susan patted his cheek

"You have been a good boy," she said. "I hope you will enjoy playing at ball with your little friends."

Wilbur went cold. The other fellows! He foresaw well enough their attitude toward his misfortune. To them it would seem a subject for unsparing derision. The kind of thing you would give a baby in a go-cart! And he had said, "I guess it will be a regular league ball."

Aunt Susan went away upon her housekeeping activities, and Wilbur, after standing for a while turning the woolly ball in his hands, went upstairs to his room. He hid the ball under the neatly folded garments in the upper drawer of the bureau. It was a relief to get it out of sight. He had a heavy, sickish feeling in his chest. The more he thought over his trouble the greater it seemed. A great dread of having the other boys know about it possessed him. He felt that he could not possibly bear the ignominy.

The morning dragged itself heavily away. Wilbur remained indoors. He could not go out for fear the other fellows might see him. He winced painfully at the thought of meeting them.

Rosa baked a fine cake for him, decorating it tastefully with nine pink candles, but Wilbur regarded it wanly.

At dinner Aunt Susan noticed his lack of appetite

and fussed over him anxiously, dismaying his soul with dark hints of doses of medicine.

"I don't feel a bit sick, Aunt Susan," he protested, "honest, I don't."

He felt almost desperate. He was heavy-hearted with his disappointment, oppressed with the fear of discovery; and now he must be harried and pursued with threats of medicine.

It was a miserable afternoon. Wilbur undertook to write a letter to his mother. Usually Aunt Susan was obliged to urge him to this duty, but to-day it offered an excuse to remain indoors and Wilbur seized it gladly. Writing a letter was a business that took time and effort. After a while, as Wilbur sat in the attitude of composition, with his legs wrapped around the legs of his chair and his shoulders hunched over the table, Aunt Susan's anxious eye detected the fact that he was not writing but was absently chewing his pencil.

"Wilbur, dear," Aunt Susan said, "you are staying in the house too much. Put your letter away now and run out of doors. I think you need the fresh air. You can finish your letter to-morrow."

"Oh, I would rather finish it now, please," Wilbur said; "you know poppa is coming to see us this evening, and if I get it done I can give it to him to take to mamma."

He hastily stuck out his tongue, and breathing heavily, began to write.

Throughout the afternoon Wilbur contrived by one excuse or another to remain in the house. After the early tea Aunt Susan sat down in one of the porch

rockers with her knitting and Wilbur sedately took another. With great effort he sustained the conversation which Aunt Susan considered necessary. Presently, with a throb of alarm, Wilbur saw Henry, the boy who lived next door, climbing the fence dividing the two yards. With fascinated dread Wilbur watched him approach. He stood still at the foot of the porch steps.

"Hello," he said in his deep and husky voice.

"Hello," Wilbur replied coldly.

"Good evening, Henry," said Aunt Susan; "sit down and make us a visit. How is your father? How is your mother? When is your married sister coming home for a visit?" And so on.

Henry sat down on the steps, answering Aunt Susan with weary civility. Wilbur rocked and rocked with nervous violence. Sitting in a chair like a grown person, he felt a certain aloofness from Henry on the steps. It was a poor enough security, but he clung to it. And then suddenly Aunt Susan was saying: —

"Wilbur, get the ball I gave you and play a game of ball with Henry."

The moment of discovery had come. And Wilbur found himself wondering dully what Aunt Susan's idea of a ball game could be like. His mind seemed to fumble stiffly with the unimportant thought. He rose heavily. Henry had snapped up briskly from his place on the steps as Aunt Susan spoke.

"That's right!" he said. "Let's get out there in the road and warm up."

Wilbur turned to enter the house.

"I'll go with you," Henry said.

They ascended the stairs, Wilbur lagging on every step and Henry breasting forward like a homeward-bound horse. They crossed the little upstairs hall and stood at the door of Wilbur's room. The woolly ball lay on the bureau, its many colors garish in the sunset. Wilbur had left it in the drawer, but Rosa had been in the room putting away his freshly ironed clothes, and had taken it out and placed it on top of the bureau for all the world to see.

Wilbur shut his eyes and waited for a bitter outcry from Henry. There was, however, a moment of silence, and then Henry demanded impatiently: —

"Well, where is it at?"

Wilbur opened his eyes and regarded Henry stupidly. Henry then did not even recognize the strange, bright object on the bureau as a ball. Probably he took it for a pincushion. The shock of the unexpected reprieve made Wilbur feel faint and confused.

"It's here — it's right in this room," he stammered.

"In the bruy-yo?" Henry asked, pointing toward the old-fashioned bureau.

"I — I left it in the top drawer of the bruy-yo."

Henry went and opened the drawers one by one and rummaged in them.

"It ain't here!" he exclaimed; "I bet somebody 's stolen it from you! The colored girl! I bet she's stolen it!"

"Aw, she would n't steal! She's nice!" Wilbur exclaimed; but even as he spoke, he saw his mistake. Henry had made the descent to a course of deceit, of

hideous disloyalty to a dear friend, fearfully easy! Wilbur descended. "Maybe," he faltered, "maybe she needed a ball awfully and just had to take it! Maybe she needed it awfully!"

"Well, ain't you going to try to get it back from her?"

"Oh, no!" Wilbur cried in horror. "I won't say a word about it. It would hurt her feelings. She 's nice —"

"Well, I bet if it was my ball and anybody stole it I would raise an awful row!"

"I won't say anything about it," Wilbur repeated. "It would hurt her feelings. And I guess you better go home now, Henry. Maybe your mother is wondering where you are."

Wilbur adopted the formula with which other boys' mothers were wont to put him on the social inclined plane. He felt a desperate need to be rid of Henry. Henry departed without resentment.

A little later Wilbur's father came. It was a comfort to have poppa there. Wilbur's tired spirit leaned against his big, quiet strength. In the dusk, Aunt Susan and poppa sat on the porch and talked. Wilbur stood beside poppa's chair. It was peaceful and cool in the late evening. Wilbur liked to hear the noise the katydids made in the trees. It went on, over and over and over —

Suddenly, as if recollecting something he had forgotten, poppa put his hand into his coat pocket and drew out — it was the ball of Wilbur's dreams. Poppa, still talking to Aunt Susan, was holding it out to him.

He saw it in all its utterly desirable excellence, its natty charms, hard and heavy and smooth and gleaming white. Wilbur's small brown fingers curved themselves feebly upon its taut sides. He did not speak, but his long-lashed eyes, brooding upon the perfection within his grasp, lifted for a moment to his father's face a deep look of such intensity that poppa was startled.

"It's your birthday, old chap," he said, putting his arm around Wilbur. "I thought you might like a new ball."

He felt Wilbur trembling slightly and wondered whether, in spite of the little fellow's seemingly perfect health, he could be an overstrung and nervous child.

"Now you have two balls," Aunt Susan said fatuously, rocking herself in her old rocker.

"Yes'm," said Wilbur. From the security of his immense felicity he smiled at her kindly, very kindly, very indulgently, for how could she understand?

ROLLO LEARNING TO PLAY

By Robert J. Burdette

EARLY in the afternoon of the same day, Mr. Holliday came home bearing a large package in his arms. Not only seldom, but rarely, did anything come into the Holliday homestead that did not afford the head of the family a text for sermonic instruction, if not, indeed, rational discourse. Depositing the package upon a hall table, he called to his son in a mandatory manner: —

"Rollo, come to me."

Rollo approached, but started with reluctant steps. He became reminiscently aware, as he hastily reviewed the events of the day, that in carrying out one or two measures for the good of the house he had laid himself open to an investigation by a strictly partisan committee, and the possibility of such an inquiry, with its subsequent report, grieved him. However, he hoped for the worst, so that in any event he would not be disagreeably disappointed, and came running to his father, calling, "Yes, sir!" in his cheeriest tones.

This is the correct form in which to meet any possible adversity which is not yet in sight. Because, if it should not meet you, you are happy anyhow, and if it should meet you, you have been happy before the collision. See?

"Now, Rollo," said his father, "you are too large and strong to be spending your leisure time playing baby games with your little brother Thanny. It is time for you to begin to be athletic."

"What is athletic?" asked Rollo.

"Well," replied his father, who was an alumnus (pronounced *ahloomnoose*) himself, "in a general way it means to wear a pair of pantaloons either eighteen inches too short or six inches too long for you, and stand around and yell while other men do your playing for you. The reputation for being an athlete may also be acquired by wearing a golf suit to church, or carrying a tennis racket to your meals. However, as I was about to say, I do not wish you to work all the time, like a woman, or even a small part of the time, like a hired man. I wish you to adopt for your recreation games of sport and pastime."

Rollo interrupted his father to say that indeed he preferred games of that description to games of toil and labor, but as he concluded, little Thanny, who was sitting on the porch step with his book, suddenly read aloud, in a staccato measure.

"I–be–lieve–you–my–boy,–re–plied–the–man–heart–i–ly."

"Read to yourself, Thanny," said his father kindly, "and do not speak your syllables in that jerky manner."

Thanny subsided into silence, after making two or three strange gurgling noises in his throat, which Rollo, after several efforts, succeeded in imitating quite well. Being older than Thanny, Rollo, of course, could not invent so many new noises every day as his little

brother. But he could take Thanny's noises, they being unprotected by copyright, and not only reproduce them, but even improve upon them.

This shows the advantage of the higher education. "A little learning is a dangerous thing." It is well for every boy to learn that dynamite is an explosive of great power, after which it is still better for him to learn of how great power. Then he will not hit a cartridge with a hammer in order to find out, and when he dines in good society he can still lift his pie gracefully in his hand, and will not be compelled to harpoon it with an iron hook at the end of his forearm.

Rollo's father looked at the two boys attentively as they swallowed their noises, and then said:—

"Now, Rollo, there is no sense in learning to play a man's game with a toy outfit. Here are the implements of a game which is called baseball, and which I am going to teach you to play."

So saying he opened the package and handed Rollo a bat, a wagon-tongue terror that would knock the leather off a planet, and Rollo's eyes danced as he balanced it and pronounced it a "la-la."

"It is a bat," his father said sternly, "a baseball bat."

"Is that a baseball bat?" exclaimed Rollo, innocently.

"Yes, my son," replied his father, "and here is a protector for the hand."

Rollo took the large leather pillow and said:—

"That's an infielder."

"It is a mit," his father said, "and here is the ball."

"That's a peach," he cried.

"It is a baseball," his father said, "that is what you play baseball with."

"Is it?" exclaimed Rollo inquiringly.

"Now," said Mr. Holliday, as they went into the back yard, followed by Thanny, "I will go to bat first. and I will let you pitch, so that I may teach you how. I will stand here at the end of the barn, then when you miss my bat with the ball, as you may sometimes do, for you do not yet know how to pitch accurately, the barn will prevent the ball from going too far."

"That's the back-stop," said Rollo.

"Do not try to be funny, my son," replied his father; "in this great republic only a President of the United States is permitted to coin phrases which nobody can understand. Now, observe me; when you are at bat you stand in this manner."

And Mr. Holliday assumed the attitude of a timid man who has just stepped on the tail of a strange and irascible dog, and is holding his legs so that the animal, if he can pull his tail out, can escape without biting either of them. He then held the bat up before his face as though he was carrying a banner.

"Now, Rollo, you must pitch the ball directly toward the end of my bat. Do not pitch too hard at first, or you will tire yourself out before we begin."

Rollo held the ball in his hands and gazed at it thoughtfully for a moment; he turned and looked at the kitchen windows as though he had half a mind to break one of them; then wheeling suddenly he sent the ball whizzing through the air like a bullet. It passed

so close to Mr. Holliday's face that he dropped the bat and his grammar in his nervousness and shouted: —

"Whata you throw nat? That's no way to pitch a ball! Pitch it as though you were playing a gentleman's game; not as though you were trying to kill a cat. Now, pitch it right here; right at this place on my bat. And pitch more gently; the first thing you know you'll sprain your wrist and have to go to bed. Now, try again."

This time Rollo kneaded the ball gently, as though he suspected it had been pulled before it was ripe. He made an offer as though he would throw it to Thanny. Thanny made a rush back to an imaginary "first," and Rollo, turning quickly, fired the ball in the general direction of Mr. Holliday. It passed about ten feet to his right, but none the less he made what Thanny called a "swipe" at it that turned him around three times before he could steady himself. It then hit the end of the barn with a resounding crash that made Cotton Mather, the horse, snort with terror in his lonely stall. Thanny called out in a nasal, sing-song tone: —

"Strike — one!"

"Thanny," said his father severely, "do not let me hear a repetition of such language from you. If you wish to join our game, you may do so, if you will play in a gentlemanly manner. But I will not permit the use of slang about this house. Now, Rollo, that was better; much better. But you must aim more accurately and pitch less violently. You will never learn anything until you acquire it, unless you pay at-

tention while giving your mind to it. Now, play ball, as we say."

This time Rollo stooped and rubbed the ball in the dirt until his father sharply reprimanded him, saying, "You untidy boy; that ball will not be fit to play with!" Then Rollo looked about him over the surrounding country as though admiring the pleasant view, and with the same startling abruptness as before, faced his father and shot the ball in so swiftly that Thanny said he could see it smoke. It passed about six feet to the left of the batsman, but Mr. Holliday, judging that it was coming "dead for him," dodged, and the ball struck his high silk hat with a boom like a drum, carrying it on to the "back-stop" in its wild career.

"Take your base!" shouted Thanny, but suddenly checked himself, remembering the new rules on the subject of his umpiring.

"Rollo!" exclaimed his father, "why do you not follow my instructions more carefully? That was a little better, but still the ball was badly aimed. You must not stare around all over creation when you are playing ball. How can you throw straight when you look at everything in the world except the bat you are trying to hit? You must aim right at the bat — try to hit it — that's what the pitcher does. And, Thanny, let me say to you, and for the last time, that I will not permit the slang of the slums to be used about this house. Now, Rollo, try again, and be more careful and more deliberate."

"Father," said Rollo, "did you ever play baseball when you were a young man?"

"Did I play baseball?" repeated his father, "did I play ball? Well, say, I belonged to the Sacred Nine out in old Peoria, and I was a holy terror on third, now I tell you. One day —"

But just at this point in the history it occurred to Rollo to send the ball over the plate. Mr. Holliday saw it coming; he shut both eyes and dodged for his life, but the ball hit his bat and went spinning straight up in the air. Thanny shouted "Foul!" ran under it, reached up, took it out of the atmosphere, and cried:—

"Out."

"Thanny," said his father sternly, "another word and you shall go straight to bed! If you do not improve in your habit of language I will send you to the reform school. Now, Rollo," he continued, kindly, "that was a great deal better; very much better. I hit that ball with almost no difficulty. You are learning. But you will learn more rapidly if you do not expend so much unnecessary strength in throwing the ball. Once more, now, and gently; I do not wish you to injure your arm."

Rollo leaned forward and tossed the ball toward his father very gently indeed, much as his sister Mary would have done, only, of course, in a more direct line. Mr. Holliday's eyes lit up with their old fire as he saw the oncoming sphere. He swept his bat around his head in a fierce semicircle, caught the ball fair on the end of it, and sent it over Rollo's head, crashing into the kitchen window amid a jingle of glass and a crash of crockery, wild shrieks from the invisible maidservant, and delighted howls from Rollo and

Thanny of "Good boy!" "You own the town!" "All the way round!"

Mr. Holliday was a man whose nervous organism was so sensitive that he could not endure the lightest shock of excitement. The confusion and general uproar distracted him. "Thanny!" he shouted, "go into the house! Go into the house and go right to bed!"

"Thanny," said Rollo, in a low tone, "you're suspended; that's what you get for jollying the umpire."

"Rollo," said his father, "I will not have you quarreling with Thanny. I can correct him without your interference. And besides, you have wrought enough mischief for one day. Just see what you have done with your careless throwing. You have broken the window, and I do not know how many things on the kitchen table. You careless, inattentive boy. I should do right if I should make you pay for all this damage out of your own pocket-money. And I would, if you had any. I may do so, nevertheless. And there is Jane, bathing her eye at the pump. You have probably put it out by your wild pitching. If she dies, I will make you wash the dishes until she returns. I thought all boys could throw straight naturally without any training. You discourage me. Now come here and take this bat, and I will show you how to pitch a ball without breaking all the glass in the township. And see if you can learn to bat any better than you can pitch."

Rollo took the bat, poised himself lightly, and kept up a gentle oscillation of the stick while he waited.

"Hold it still!" yelled his father, whose nerves were

sorely shaken. "How can I pitch a ball to you when you keep flourishing that club like an anarchist in procession? Hold it still, I tell you!"

Rollo dropped the bat to an easy slant over his shoulder and looked attentively at his father. The ball came in. Rollo caught it right on the nose of the bat and sent it whizzing directly at the pitcher. Mr. Holliday held his hands straight out before him and spread his fingers.

"I've got her!" he shouted.

And then the ball hit his hands, scattered them, and passed on against his chest with a jolt that shook his system to its foundations. A melancholy howl rent the air as he doubled up and tried to rub his chest and knead all his fingers on both hands at the same time.

"Rollo," he gasped, "you go to bed too! Go to bed and stay there six weeks. And when you get up, put on one of your sister's dresses and play golf. You'll never learn to play ball if you practice a thousand years. I never saw such a boy. You have probably broken my lung. And I do not suppose I shall ever use my hands again. You can't play tiddle-de-winks. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

Rollo sadly laid away the bat and the ball and went to bed, where he and Thanny sparred with pillows until tea time, when they were bailed out of prison by their mother. Mr. Holliday had recovered his good humor. His fingers were multifariously bandaged and he smelled of arnica like a drug store. But he was reminiscent and animated. He talked of the old times and the old days,

and of Peoria and Hinman's, as was his wont oft as he felt boyish.

"And town ball," he said, "good old town ball! There was no limit to the number on a side. The ring was anywhere from three hundred feet to a mile in circumference, according to whether we played on a vacant Pingree lot or out on the open prairie. We tossed up a bat — wet or dry — for first choice, and then chose the whole school on the sides. The bat was a board, about the general shape of a Roman galley oar and not quite so wide as a barn door. The ball was of solid india rubber; a little fellow could hit it a hundred yards and a big boy, with a hickory club, could send it clear over the bluffs or across the lake. We broke all the windows in the schoolhouse the first day, and finished up every pane of glass in the neighborhood before the season closed. The side that got its innings first kept them until school was out or the last boy died. Fun? Good game? Oh, boy of these golden days, paying fifty cents an hour for the privilege of watching a lot of hired men do your playing for you — it beat two-old-cat."

HOW ANTHONY RAISED MONEY FOR THE BALL GAME

By Ralph Henry Barbour

THE senior president made his little speech and introduced the dean. The latter, who never was much of an orator, said just what everybody knew he would say, and was succeeded by Patterson, the manager. Patterson explained the needs of the Baseball Association, and Professor Nast, chairman of the Athletic Committee, followed and urged the students to come to the support of the team. Neither his remarks nor Patterson's awakened any enthusiasm, and the cheers which followed were plainly to order. Someone at the rear of the hall started a football song and one by one the audience took up the refrain. Perkins, who had stepped to the front of the platform, paused and glanced inquiringly at the head coach. The latter shook his head and Joe turned away again.

"Let them sing," whispered Hanson. "It'll warm them up."

But as soon as it was discovered that there was no opposition, the singing died away. King was on his feet then, calling for cheers for Captain Perkins. They were given loudly enough, but lacked spontaneity. Joe's speech was short, but had the right ring, and several allusions to past successes of the nine and future

victories awakened applause. But when he had taken his seat again and the cheering, in spite of the efforts of King and Bissell and others of the team, had ceased, it was evident that the meeting was bound to be a flat failure unless something was done to wake it up.

Hanson, who was down as the next speaker, called Joe to him, and for a minute they whispered together. Then Joe crossed the stage and spoke to Anthony. At the back of the room there was a perceptible impatience; several fellows had already tiptoed out, and there was much scraping of feet. Joe heard it and held up his hand. Then Anthony lifted himself up out of the ridiculously small chair in which he had been seated and moved awkwardly to the front of the platform. Instantly there was the sound of clapping, succeeded by the cry of "A-a-ay, Tidball!" Anthony settled his spectacles on his nose and thrust his big hands into his trousers' pockets.

"Good old Tidball!" cried someone; the remark summoned laughter and clapping; men on their feet and edging toward the door paused and turned back; those who had kept their seats settled themselves more comfortably and looked expectant. The senior class president jumped to his feet and called for a cheer, and the response was encouragingly hearty. Joe threw a satisfied glance at Hanson and the latter nodded. The tumult died down and Anthony, who had been facing the gathering with calm and serious countenance, began to speak.

"Well," commenced Anthony, in his even, deliberate

drawl, "you have your chance to get out, and did n't take it. I guess you're in for it. I've been requested to speak to you about baseball. I told Captain Perkins that I did n't know a baseball from a frozen turnip, but he said that made it all the better; that if I did n't know what I was talking about, you would realize that I was absolutely unprejudiced and my words would carry more weight. I said, 'How are you going to get the fellows to listen to me?' He said, 'We'll lock the doors.' I guess they're locked."

Half his audience turned to look, and the rest laughed.

"Anyhow," Anthony continued, "he kept his part of the agreement, and so I'll have to keep mine. I've said frankly that I know nothing about baseball, and I hope that you will all pardon any mistakes I may make in discussing the subject. I never saw but one game, and after it was over I knew less about it than I did before. A fellow I knew played — well, I don't know just what he did play; most of the time he danced around a bag of salt or something someone had left out on the grass. There were three of those bags, and his was the one on the southeast corner. When the game was over, he asked me how I liked it. I said, 'It looks to me like a good game for a lunatic asylum.' He said I showed ignorance; that it was the best game in the world, and just full up and slopping over with science. I did n't argue with him. But I've always thought that if I had to play baseball I'd choose to be the fellow that wears a black alpaca coat and does the talking. Seems to me he's the only one that

remains sane. I asked my friend if he was the keeper; he said no, he was the umpire."

By this time the laughter was almost continuous; but Anthony's expression of calm gravity remained unbroken. At times he appeared surprised and disturbed by the bursts of laughter; and a small freshman in the front row toppled out of his seat and had to be thumped on the back. Even the dean was chuckling.

"Well, science has always been a weak point with me, and I guess that's why I'm not able to understand the science of hitting a ball with a wagon spoke and running over salt bags. But I'm not so narrow-minded as to affirm that because I can't see the science it is n't there. You've all heard about Abraham Lincoln and the book agent, I guess. The book agent wanted him to write a testimonial for his book. Lincoln wrote it. It ran something like this: 'Any person who likes this kind of book will find this just the kind of book he likes.' Well, that's about my idea of baseball; anybody who likes that kind of game will find baseball just the kind of game he likes.

"Now they tell me that down at Robinson they've found an old wagon wheel, cut the fingers off a pair of kid gloves, bought a wire bird cage, and started a baseball club. All right. Let 'em. There are other wheels and more gloves and another bird cage, I guess. Captain Perkins says he has a club, too. I've never seen it, but I don't doubt his word; any man with Titian hair tells the truth. He says he keeps it out at the field. From what I've seen of baseball clubs I think that's a good, safe place. I hope, however, that he

locks the gates when he leaves 'em. But Captain Perkins tells me that he has the finest kind of a baseball club that ever gibbered, and he offers to bet me a suspender buckle against a pants button that his club can knock the spots off of any other club, and especially the Robinson club. I'm not a betting man, and so I let him boast.

"And after he'd boasted until he'd tired himself out he went on to say that baseball clubs were like any other aggregation of mortals; that they have to be clothed and fed, and, moreover, when they go away to mingle with other clubs they have to have their railway fare paid. Captain Perkins, as I have said once already, is a truthful man, and so I don't see but that we've got to believe him. He says that his club has n't any money; that if it does n't get some money it will grow pale and thin and emaciated, and won't be able to run around the salt bags as violently as the Robinson club; in which case the keeper — I mean the umpire — will give the game to Robinson. Well, now, what 's to be done? Are we to stand idly by with our hands in our pockets and see Robinson walk off with a game that is really our property? Or are we to take our hands out of our pockets, with the fingers closed, and jingle some coins into the collection box?

"I'm not a baseball enthusiast, as I've acknowledged, but I am an Erskine enthusiast, fellows. Perkins says we ought to beat Robinson at baseball. I say let 's do it! I say let 's beat Robinson at everything. If anybody will start a parchesi club I'll go along and stand by and yell while they down the Robinson parchesi club.

That's what Providence made Robinson for — to be beaten. And we started in and beat her. And we've been beating her ever since — when she has n't beaten us.

"I've done a whole lot of talking here this evening, and I guess you're all tired of it." (There was loud and continued dissent at this point, interspersed with cries of "Good old Tidball!") "But I promised to talk, and I like to give good measure. But the time for talking is about up. Mr. Hanson has something to say to you, and as he knows what he is going to talk about, whereas I don't know what I'm talking about, I guess I'd better stop and give him a show. But before I stop I want to point out a self-evident fact, fellows. You can't win from Robinson without a baseball team, and you can't have a baseball team unless you dig down in your pockets and pay up. Manager Patterson says the Baseball Association needs the sum of six hundred dollars. Well, let's give it to 'em. Any fellow here to-night, who thinks a victory over Robinson is n't worth six hundred dollars is invited to stand up and walk out; we'll unlock the door for him. Six hundred dollars means only about one dollar for each fellow. I am requested to state that after Mr. Hanson has spoken his piece a few of the best-looking men among us will pass through the audience with small cards upon which every man is asked to write his name and the amount he is willing to contribute to secure a victory over Robinson that will make last year's score look like an infinitesimal fraction. If someone will go through the motions, I'd like to propose three long

Erskines, three times three and three long Erskines for the nine."

Anthony bowed and sat down. The senior class president sprang to his feet, and the next moment the hall was thunderous with the mighty cheers that followed his "One, two, three!" Then came calls of "Tidball! Tidball!" and again the slogan was taken up. It was fully five minutes ere the head coach arose. And when he in turn stood at the platform's edge the cheers began once more, for enthusiasm reigned at last.

Hanson realized that further speechmaking was idle and confined his remarks to an indorsement of what Anthony had said. The distribution of blank slips of paper had already begun and his audience paid but little attention to his words, although it applauded good-naturedly. When he had ended, promising on behalf of the team, and in return for the support of the college, the best efforts of players and coaches, confusion reigned supreme. Pencils and fountain pens were passed hither and thither, jokes were bandied, songs were sung, and the tumult increased with the pushing aside of chairs and the scraping of feet as the meeting began to break up. But, though some left as soon as they had filled out their pledges, the greater number flocked into noisy groups and awaited the announcement of the result.

At length, Professor Nast accepted the slip of paper handed him by Patterson and advanced to the edge of the platform. There, he raised a hand for attention, and at the same time glanced at the figures. An expression of incredulity overspread his face, and he

turned an inquiring look upon the manager. The latter smiled and nodded, as though to dispel the professor's doubts. The hubbub died away, and the professor faced the meeting again.

"I am asked," he said, "to announce the result of the — ah — subscription. Where everyone has responded so promptly and so heartily to the appeal in behalf of the Association, it would be, perhaps, unfair to give the names of any who have been exceptionally generous. But without doing so it remains a pleasant — ah — privilege to state that among the subscriptions there is one of fifty dollars —"

Loud applause greeted this announcement, and fellows of notoriously empty pocketbooks were accused by their friends of being the unnamed benefactor, and invariably acknowledged the impeachment with profuse expressions of modesty.

"Three of twenty-five dollars," continued the professor, "six of ten dollars, seventeen of five dollars, and many of two dollars and over. The total subscription, strange as it may seem, reached the sum of five hundred and ninety-nine dollars, one dollar less than the amount asked for!"

There was a moment of silent surprise. Then, from somewhere at the left of the room, a voice cried: "Here you are, then!" and something went spinning through the air. The head coach leaped forward, caught it deftly, and held it aloft. It was a shining silver dollar.

"Thank you," he said.

THE RECHRISTENING OF PHŒBE

By Samuel Scoville, Jr.

PHŒBE, whose real name was James William Francis Field, 3d, was a "grind," which, in Yale parlance, signifies one who regards marks more than muscle and sometimes even more than manliness. In appearance the third James William was slim, tall, rosy-cheeked, wore eyeglasses, and had a prim and precise way of talking, all of which personal characteristics were to his appreciative classmates crystallized into the name of "Phœbe." Everywhere he was met by that hated title. Even late-at-night collegians returning homeward at unseemly hours and noting the light of the midnight oil shining from his window scrupled not to shout in unison, "O! Phœbe Field, stick your head out!"

If so be that James weakly complied with this simple request, they would immediately roar in delighted chorus: —

"Stick it in again — Phœbe dear!"

The crisis finally came at the Junior Prom when big, careless Billy Reeves, in a voice that carried clear across the armory, introduced him to a chaperone and three girls as "Mr. Field, commonly known as 'Phœbe.'"

From that moment James solemnly resolved to win

for himself a worthier title than that mocking, mincing girl name; and since in the college world all things are possible to an athlete, an athlete he decided to become, despite his lanky figure and lack of training. As a near-sighted novice, who weighs but one hundred and thirty-five pounds in his clothes, cannot reasonably hope to win a place on the crew, the eleven, or the nine, Phœbe was compelled to turn to the athletic team as a last resource. The next question, as to which one of the thirteen events he should look to for name and fame, was decided for him by a chance remark of the professor of hygiene and anthropometrics.

This personage was a compulsory institution prescribed by an all-wise faculty to measure each student at stated intervals and record all muscular increase; and as Phœbe never had any muscular increases to record, the unoffending professor had become his pet aversion. Accordingly, when one evening in February James William was forced shiveringly to undergo certain junior physical measurements, he was not in a mood especially receptive for advice. The talented specialist in anthropometrics hopped gayly around his unclothed victim, armed with a pencil and an abnormally cold steel tape, chirping out uncalled-for observations the while.

"Legs too long and too small," he observed, to Phœbe's unbounded disgust, noting mystic hieroglyphics the while on a chart that was criss-crossed everywhere with red and black lines.

"If you should ever take up running," he continued patronizingly, wrapping the icy tape around James's

shrinking shoulders, "try the distances. The quarter mile or the dashes require more muscle than you 'll ever have."

From that moment the quarter mile was Phœbe's chosen event, and the very next day the leader of the short-distance candidates was electrified, when he gathered his squad together in the gymnasium, to find among them James William Francis Field, 3d, clothed in a new running suit, white tennis shoes, and an air of unswerving resolve.

"It was a frightful shock to one so highly strung as my fair young self," he explained to his appreciative classmates at his eating club that night, "to find good old Phœbe Field in my squad to-day, all togged out in new jeans, gold-rimmed goggles, and handsome legs about the size of matches."

"'Doctor prescribe exercise?' says I. 'No,' says he, 'I 'm going to try for the team.'"

Here the narrator was cut short by a roar of laughter.

"And he may be a surprise-party yet," continued the first speaker. "He has good brains in that near-sighted noddle of his, and what 's more, for a man that 's never run, he has quite a touch of speed."

As the days passed by, this prophecy bade fair to be realized, for Phœbe trained for the quarter mile with the same dogged perseverance that had made him noted as a scholar, until gradually the narrow chest broadened and the pipe-stem legs began to acquire strength and speed.

Finally there came an evening when the quarter-mile candidates were weeded out by a series of time

trials on the indoor track in the gymnasium. A group of Phœbe's classmates were present, and, when his trial came, they greeted him with shouts of unrestrained joy.

"Hurroo for Phœbe Field the flyer!" they observed loudly. But their scoffs were silenced when the pistol cracked and Phœbe flashed off around the canvas-covered track, negotiating the "turns" and speeding the straightaways like a veteran. Lap after lap he covered unflaggingly, and gamely ran himself to a standstill on the last one, and when his time was announced as second best of all the new candidates, his athletic aspirations ceased from that moment to be a joke.

"He 's the deceivenest thing on the squad," Mike, the grizzled old trainer, confided to sundry of the athletic alumni who dropped in at Eastertime to take a look at the candidates. "To look at him, you would n't think he could run fast enough to keep warm, but he 's a goer for fair, and he uses his head in racing more than any man I 've got."

When the squad finally began work on the cinder path, Phœbe improved wonderfully. In the spring games he finished second to the university champion. Three weeks later, at the Yale-Harvard meet, he lost a desperate race to the Harvard record holder at the very tape, and became Yale's main hope in the quarter mile at the intercollegiate games that were looming up a short fortnight away. Never had an intercollegiate meeting meant so much to Yale. Ten years before, alumni from all the colleges of the Intercollegiate

Association had donated a huge silver challenge cup, to be competed for annually and to become the permanent property of the college winning it the greatest number of times during the decade. Three times had Yale and Harvard held the coveted trophy, and three times other colleges had wrested it away from them, so that one more victory for either the crimson or the blue sent the cup to Cambridge or New Haven permanently.

At daybreak on the morning of the intercollegiate meeting, Phœbe awoke suddenly in one of the great New York hotels, to which the team had been sent the evening before, with a sense as of an impending doom hanging over him. All that morning was one of feverish waiting for the fray, around the corridors of the hotel, confabs with the worried captain, advice from sundry old grads, who came back annually to follow the fortunes of the team, and above all a constant stream of characteristic encouragement, exhortation, and warning from old Mike. The morning passed some way or other, and at two o'clock Phœbe found himself standing in the training house at the Oval while a brawny rubber slapped great handfuls of cold alcohol all over his wiry frame. The fight was on, with the preliminary heats in the quarter-mile race the third event.

The green field, encircled by grandstands, was thronged with spectators, thrilled with college cheers, and afloat with flags of all colors. The deep-throated Harvard slogan held its own against the shattering Greek cheer of Yale, while the pyrotechnic and alpha-

betical cries of the other colleges roared back and forth from section to section, until they all blended into one vast many-keyed tumult that made the blood of the competitors pound at their temples.

Before Phœbe could realize his surroundings, he found himself out on the cinder path with a score or so of other runners, answering to the clerk of the course as that dignitary read off the list of competitors drawn for the first heat. A moment later he was on his marks with every muscle tense for the pistol. When the signal at last came, he found himself in a maddened huddle of runners at the first corner, where everyone seemed to be fighting for the pole, and, as he swerved out to clear the crowd, there was a sudden tearing pain in his left leg. Glancing down, he saw a thin red line, along which blood drops were oozing, extending fully six inches athwart the calf. The gash was little more than skin deep, however, and stung him to a speed which brought him nearer to the flying leaders with every stride, and by the time the van reached the home stretch, Phœbe had the heat well in hand, and, running well within himself, crossed the line second of the four men who were privileged to run in the final heat. Mike was waiting for him at the Yale quarters with a big fuzzy blanket.

"Good work, me boy!" he shouted, wrapping him up like a chrysalis in the blanket. "Spiked you, too, the clumsy ice wagons!" he exclaimed wrathfully as the long gash caught his eye. Phœbe was then rubbed down again and the gash on his leg washed out with raw alcohol to keep it from stiffening, during which

operation he smiled pleasantly, in accordance with training-house etiquette.

"Now you lie there and sleep until you 're called!" was Mike's parting injunction as he hurried off to attend to the Yale entries in the next event.

For a while Phœbe lay watching the deft-handed rubbers and listening to the confused shouts and cheers outside. Then things began to waver before his eyes and of a sudden he knew nothing more. It seemed to him as if he had only closed his eyes for a moment, though in reality it had been nearly two hours, when he felt someone shaking his arm and looked up sleepily to see the captain of the team and Mike standing by him, both with the drawn look on their faces that comes from a long-continued strain. The captain, a brawny hammer-thrower, with the sweat of a hard-earned victory in his event still wet on his satiny skin, spoke first.

"Phœbe," he said hoarsely, "Yale and Harvard lead. Harvard has 31 points and we have 29½. The whole thing turns on your event. Now, old man, don't go back on us — if you win, you can have anything you want!"

Phœbe was on his feet in a moment and began lacing on his spiked shoes with hands that trembled in spite of himself. Mike said not a word, but laid a huge arm across the slim back and looked into the runner's face with eyes that fairly glowed.

"I 'll do it, Mike, if it 's in me," he muttered. And as Phœbe started for the door, he turned to the hammer-thrower. "Cap'n, if I win, there 'll be something that I want."

"Anything, Phœbe, anything — *only win this race!*" howled the latter excitedly. "Now, boys, all sing!"

From every side of the training house the athletes flocked. Some were white and sick from hard-run races, a few had won, many had lost, some were dressed, others still dripping with alcohol as they left the hands of the rubbers—but they all sang, while the captain led them, using a sixteen-pound hammer and the top of a rubbing table to punctuate the specially emphatic passages, and the chorus "Here 's to good old Yale!" rang out even to the grandstands, and was greeted by the Yale sections with roars of renewed cheering. At the end of the verse there was a tremendous cheer for "Phœbe Field!" and the echoes had scarcely died away before an official with a flowing badge thrust his head into the open door, shouting: —

"Last call for the quarter mile!"

With his hated nickname still sounding in his ears, Phœbe took his place among the twelve runners who had won places in the finals and who represented the best quarter-milers among the American colleges.

Fate was kinder to him than in the preliminary heat, and he drew a position second from the pole. The coveted inside position went to a Princeton crack, while three places away were two men with the slanting crimson bar, the emblem of Harvard, across their jersey fronts, and next to them a University of California runner, who was rated high on the Pacific Coast. The rest of the entries were either second-rate performers or novices of whose ability but little was known.

As the competitors took their places, the audience,

maddened by the neck-and-neck fight throughout between Harvard and Yale, dropped all personal preferences and ten thousand voices shouted mightily for one university or the other, until Phœbe's tense nerves quivered like violin strings. He looked sidelong down the line at his Harvard opponents standing side by side, and, as he noted that they were both chewing gum and gazing at the audience with ostentatious unconcern, an unreasoning rage possessed his mind at the sight of this irritating complacency, and he inwardly vowed to ruffle their Harvard calm on the home stretch.

"On your marks!" shouted the starter through the din of cheers, and Phœbe set his teeth and resolved to run that race with every bit of brain and muscle and nerve that he possessed.

"Get set!" and the whole line crouched to spring.

A sudden silence fell upon the great audience, broken sharply by the report of the pistol. Phœbe broke off his marks with the flash, and, sprinting, snatched the pole away from the startled Princeton runner, and going at full speed held his lead handily around the dangerous first corner and swung into the back stretch a good two yards ahead of the field. Here the Californian, who had evidently planned to cut out the pace the entire distance, passed him and spurted on ahead at a gait which Phœbe's critical eye told him was too fast to last long. Somewhere in the four hundred and forty yards of a quarter mile the best of runners must slacken a little, for three hundred yards is about the limit of distance that can be covered at a sprinting pace.

Accordingly, in the next hundred yards, Phœbe

slowed his gait until, as the field approached the second corner, he was back in the ruck, with Harvard, Princeton, and California all ahead. At the corner the tremendous pace began to tell on the representative of the Pacific Coast and he staggered slightly and ran wide. Instantly one of the Harvard men flashed in between him and the pole and rounded into the home stretch with no one beside him.

On the moment the whole grandstand seemed aflame with crimson banners. "Harvard!" "Harvard!" "Harvard!" the roar ran up and down the field. Ten yards away, still on the curve, came Phœbe, traveling close and easily so as not to cover any unnecessary distance. California was in trouble and ran lurchingly, while, five yards back of the leader, Princeton and the other Harvard entry were side by side, with the latter drawing away slightly. A scant seventy-five yards from the leader was the group of grave-faced judges and timekeepers and the thin red finish line breast high across the track. Riotous Harvard alumni rushed out on the field from the grandstands, and threw up their hats, and patted each other on the back in paroxysms of delirious joy, for their university seemed sure of first, and probably second place.

Suddenly there came a fierce yell from the Yale side, and a thousand drooping blue banners waved frantically. As he turned into the home stretch, Phœbe had seen on the instant that it was impossible to keep near the pole and pass the three leaders in time, and immediately crossed to the outside of the track and was now coming like a whirlwind. With head back and eyes

flashing behind his spectacles, he ran like a demon, drawing on all the speed he had saved for the finish.

Then, in a moment he dashed into second place, passing the astonished pair before they had even suspected his nearness. The leader heard the rapid pat, pat, of his flying feet and struggled desperately to make one final spurt, but his legs tottered as he tried to lengthen his stride, yet the goal was less than ten yards away and the Yale runner still a yard or two back. Clinching his corks until the veins of his wrists stood out in ridges, Phœbe made a final effort and drew up to the leader's shoulder. Scarcely a stride from the tape, the latter glanced back. The movement, trifling as it seemed, slowed his stride by ever so tiny a fraction of a second, and, in that pin-point of time, Phœbe threw himself forward like a diver and, even while his opponent's foot was in midair on the last stride, the outstretched arms of the Yale runner broke the tape and he fell headlong on the sharp cinders, breathless and exhausted, but — a winner!

That night the Yale team and every available Yale man that could be found, professors, undergraduates, alumni, and sub-freshmen, sat down to a love feast in one of New York's largest dining rooms with the hardly won cup in the center of the table. When the last course was reached and scores of enthusiasts, their voices reduced to husky whispers by reason of much cheering, had shaken Phœbe's hand, the captain arose solemnly.

"Gentlemen," he began, "just before the hero of this, the grandest day that America has ever seen"

(loud cheers) "went out to cover himself with glory, he remarked to me that if he won, he would have a request to make, and in the name of the university I promised him anything he could ask, from the right hand of fellowship to an honorary degree. Now, in behalf of Yale, I call on him to name his wish — and we 'll do the rest."

For fully ten minutes the feelings inspired by this oratorical effort were expressed in assorted cheers, at the end of which time Phœbe was borne around the room on the shoulders of as many as could get to him and finally deposited on the banquet table. There, with one foot dangerously close to a platter of chicken salad, he paused a moment, and then, regarding the jubilant crowd benignly through his spectacles, remarked simply: —

"I 'd like to have you fellows call me Jim."

And with a prodigious, phenomenal, and altogether unsurpassable "Rah! rah! rah! rah! rah! rah! rah! rah! rah! *Jim* Field!" "Phœbe" passed away forever.

THE VISITING GENTLEMAN AT SCHOOL

By George Madden Martin

THERE was head and foot in the Second Reader. Emmy Lou heard it whispered the day of her entrance into the Second Reader room.

Once, head and foot had meant Aunt Cordelia above the coffee tray and Uncle Charlie below the carving knife. But at school head and foot meant little girls bobbing up and down, descending and ascending the scale of excellency.

There were no little boys. At the Second Reader the currents of the sexes divided, and little boys were swept out of sight. One mentioned little boys now in undertones.

But head and foot meant something beside little girls bobbing out of their places on the bench to take a neighbor's place. Head and foot meant tears — that is, when the bobbing was downward and not up. However, if one bobbed down to-day, there was the chance of bobbing up to-morrow — that is, with all but Emmy Lou and a little girl answering to the call of Kitty McKoeghany.

Step by step Kitty went up, and having reached the top, Kitty stayed there.

And step by step Emmy Lou, from her original,

alphabetically determined position beside Kitty, went down, and then, only because farther descent was impossible, Emmy Lou stayed there. But since the foot was nearest the platform, Emmy Lou took that comfort out of the situation, for the teacher sat on the platform, and Emmy Lou loved the teacher.

The Second Reader teacher was the lady, the nice lady, the pretty lady with white hair, who patted little girls on the cheek as she passed them in the hall. On the first day of school, the name of Emily Louise MacLauren had been called. Emmy Lou stood up. She looked at the teacher. She wondered if the teacher remembered. Emmy Lou was chubby and round and much in earnest. And the lady, the pretty lady, looking down at her, smiled. Then Emmy Lou knew that the lady had not forgotten. And Emmy Lou sat down. And she loved the teacher, and she loved the Second Reader. Emmy Lou had not heard the teacher's name. But could her grateful little heart have resolved its feelings into words, "Dear Teacher" must ever after have been the lady's name. And so, as if impelled by her own chubby weight and some head-and-foot force of gravity, though Emmy Lou descended steadily to the foot of the Second Reader class, there were compensations. The foot was in the shadow of the platform and within the range of Dear Teacher's smile.

Besides, there was Hattie.

Emmy Lou sat with Hattie. They sat at a front desk. Hattie had plaits; small affairs, perhaps, but tied with ribbons behind each ear. And the part bi-

secting Hattie's little head from nape to crown was exact and true. Emmy Lou admired plaits. And she admired the little pink sprigs on Hattie's dress.

After Hattie and Emmy Lou had sat together a whole day, Hattie took Emmy Lou aside as they were going home, and whispered to her.

"Who 's your mos' nintimate friend?" was what Emmy Lou understood her to whisper.

Emmy Lou had no idea what "a nintimate" friend might be. She did not know what to do.

"Have n't you got one?" demanded Hattie.

Emmy Lou shook her head.

Hattie put her lips close to Emmy Lou's ear.

"Let 's us be nintimate friends," said Hattie.

Though small in knowledge, Emmy Lou was large in faith. She confessed herself as glad to be "a nintimate" friend.

When Emmy Lou found that to be "a nintimate" friend meant to walk about the yard with Hattie's arm about her, she was glad indeed to be one. Hitherto, at recess, Emmy Lou had known the bitterness of the outcast and the pariah, and had stood around, principally in corners, to avoid being swept off her little feet by the big girls at play, and had gazed upon a paired-off and sufficient-unto-itself world.

Hattie seemed to know everything. In all the glory of its newness Emmy Lou brought her Second Reader to school. Hattie was scandalized. She showed her Reader soberly incased in a calico cover.

Emmy Lou grew hot. She hid her Reader hastily. Somehow she felt that she had been immodest. The

next day Emmy Lou's Reader came to school discreetly swathed in calico.

Hardly had the Second Reader begun, when one Friday the music man came. And after that he came every Friday and stayed an hour.

He was a tall, thin man, and he had a point of beard on his chin that made him look taller. He wore a blue cape, which he tossed on a chair. And he carried a violin. His name was Mr. Cato. He drew five lines on the blackboard, and made eight dots that looked as though they were going upstairs on the lines. Then he rapped on his violin with his bow, and the class sat up straight.

"This," said Mr. Cato, "is A," and he pointed to a dot. Then he looked at Emmy Lou. Unfortunately Emmy Lou sat at a front desk.

"Now, what is it?" said Mr. Cato.

"A," said Emmy Lou obediently. She wondered. But she had met A in so many guises of print and script that she accepted any statement concerning A. And now a dot was A.

"And this," said Mr. Cato "is B, and this is C, and this D, and E, F, G, which brings us naturally to A again," and Mr. Cato with his bow went up the stairway punctuated with dots.

Emmy Lou wondered why G brought one naturally to A again.

But Mr. Cato was tapping up the dotted stairway with his bow. "Now what are they?" asked Mr. Cato.

"Dots," said Emmy Lou, forgetting.

Mr. Cato got red in the face and rapped angrily.

"A," said Emmy Lou, hastily, "B, C, D, E, F, G, H," and was going hurriedly on when Hattie, with a surreptitious jerk, stopped her.

"That is better," said Mr. Cato, "A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A — exactly — but we are not going to call them A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A "— Mr. Cato paused impressively, his bow poised, and looked at Emmy Lou — "we are going to call them" — and Mr. Cato touched a dot — "do" — his bow went up the punctuated stairway — "re, mi, fa, sol, la, si. Now what is this?" The bow pointed itself to Emmy Lou, then described a curve, bringing it again to a dot.

"A," said Emmy Lou.

The bow rapped angrily on the board, and Mr. Cato glared.

"Do," said Mr. Cato, "do — always do — not A, nor B, nor C, never A, nor B, nor C, again — do, do," the bow rapping angrily the while.

"Dough," said Emmy Lou, swallowing miserably.

Mr. Cato was mollified. "Forget now it was ever A; A is do here. Always in the future remember the first letter in the scale is do. Whenever you meet it placed like this, A is do, A is do."

Emmy Lou resolved she would never forget. A is dough. How or why or wherefore did not matter. The point was, A is dough. But Emmy Lou was glad when the music man went. And then came spelling, when there was always much bobbing up and down and changing of places and tears. This time the rest might forget, but Emmy Lou would not. It came her turn.

She stood up. Her word was Adam. And A was

dough. Emmy Lou went slowly to get it right. "Dough-d-dough-m, Adam," said Emmy Lou.

They laughed. But Dear Teacher did not laugh. The recess bell rang. And Dear Teacher, holding Emmy Lou's hand, sent them all out. Everyone must go. Desks and slates to be scrubbed, mattered not. Everyone must go. Then Dear Teacher lifted Emmy Lou to her lap. And when she was sure they were everyone gone, Emmy Lou cried. And after a while Dear Teacher explained about A and do, so that Emmy Lou understood. And then Dear Teacher said, "You may come in." And the crack of the door widened, and in came Hattie. Emmy Lou was glad she was "a nintimate" friend. Hattie had not laughed.

But that day the carriage which took Dear Teacher to and from her home outside of town — the carriage with a white, woolly dog on the seat by the little colored-boy driver and the spotted dog running behind — stopped at Emmy Lou's gate. And Dear Teacher, smiling at Emmy Lou just arriving with her school bag, went in, too, and rang the bell.

Then Dear Teacher and Aunt Cordelia and Aunt Katie and Aunt Louise sat in the parlor and talked.

And when Dear Teacher left, all the aunties went out to the gate with her, and Uncle Charlie, just leaving, put her into the carriage and stood with his hat lifted until she was quite gone.

"At her age —" said Aunt Cordelia.

"To have to teach — " said Aunt Katie.

"How beautiful she must have been —" said Aunt Louise.

"Is —" said Uncle Charlie.

"But she has the little grandchild," said Aunt Cordelia; "she is keeping the home for him. She is happy." And Aunt Cordelia took Emmy Lou's hand.

That very afternoon Aunt Louise began to help Emmy Lou with her lessons, and Aunt Cordelia went around and asked Hattie's mother to let Hattie come and get her lessons with Emmy Lou.

And at school Dear Teacher, walking up and down the aisles, would stop, and her fingers would close over and guide the laboring digits of Emmy Lou, striving to copy within certain ruled lines upon her slate the writing on the blackboard: —

The pen is the tongue of the mind.

Emmy Lou began to learn. As weeks went by, now and then Emmy Lou bobbed up a place, although, sooner or later, she slipped back. She was not always at the foot.

But no one, not even Dear Teacher, who understood so much, realized one thing. The day after a lesson, Emmy Lou knew it. On the day it was recited, Emmy Lou had lacked sufficient time to grasp it.

With ten words in the spelling lesson, Emmy Lou listened, letter by letter, to those ten droned out five times down the line, then twice again around the class of fifty. Then Emmy Lou, having already labored faithfully over it, knew her spelling lesson.

And at home, it was Emmy Lou's joy to gather her doll children in line, and giving out past lessons, recite them in turn for her children. And so did Emmy Lou

know by heart her Second Reader as far as she had gone; she often gave the lesson with her book upside down. And an old and battered doll, dearest to Emmy Lou's heart, was always head, and Hattie, the newest doll, was next. Even the Emmy Lous must square with Fate somehow.

Along in the year a new feature was introduced in the Second Reader. The Second Reader was to have a medal. Dear Teacher did not seem enthusiastic. She seemed to dread tears. But it was decreed that the school was to use medals.

At recess Emmy Lou asked Hattie what a medal was.

The big Fourth and Fifth Reader girls were playing games from which the little girls were excluded, for the school was large and the yard was small. At one time it had seemed to Emmy Lou that the odium, the obloquy, the reproach of being a little girl was more than she could bear, but she would not change places with anyone, now she was "a nintimate" friend.

Emmy Lou asked Hattie what it was — this medal.

Hattie explained. Hattie knew everything. A medal was — well — a medal. It hung on a blue ribbon. Each little girl brought her own blue ribbon. You wore it for a week — this medal.

That afternoon Emmy Lou went around the corner to Mrs. Heinz's little fancy store. Her chin just came to Mrs. Heinz's counter. But she knew what she wanted — a yard of blue ribbon.

She showed it to Hattie the next day, folded in its paper, and slipped for safety beneath the long criss-

cross stitches which held the calico cover of her Second Reader.

Then Hattie explained. One had to stay head a whole week to get the medal.

Emmy Lou's heart was heavy — the more that she had now seen the medal. It was a silver medal that said "Merit." It was around Kitty McKoeghany's neck.

And Kitty tossed her head. And when, at recess, she ran, the medal swung to and fro on its ribbon. And the big girls all stopped Kitty to look at the medal.

There was a condition attached to the gaining of the medal. Upon receiving it one had to go foot. But that mattered little to Kitty McKoeghany. Kitty climbed right up again.

And Emmy Lou peeped surreptitiously at the blue ribbon in her Second Reader. And at home she placed her dolls in line and spelt the back lessons faithfully, with comfort in her knowledge of them. And the old battered doll, dear to her heart, wore oftenest a medal of shining tinfoil. For even Hattie, in one of Kitty's off weeks, had won the medal.

It was late in the year when a rumor ran around the Second Reader room. The trustees were coming that day to visit the school.

Emmy Lou wondered what trustees were. She asked Hattie. Hattie explained. "They are men, in black clothes. You dare n't move in your seat. They 're something like ministers." Hattie knew everything.

"Will they come here, in our room?" asked Emmy Lou. It was terrible to be at the front desk. Emmy

Lou remembered the music man. He still pointed his bow at her on Fridays.

"Of course," said Hattie; "comp'ny always comes to our room."

Which was true, for Dear Teacher's room was different. Dear Teacher's room seemed always ready, and the principal brought company to it accordingly.

It was after recess they came — the principal, the trustee (there was just one trustee), and a visiting gentleman.

There was a hush as they filed in. Hattie was right. It was like ministers. The principal was in black, with a white tie. He always was. And the trustee was in black. He rubbed his hands and bowed to the Second Reader class, sitting very straight and awed. And the visiting gentleman was in black, with a shiny black hat.

The trustee was a big man, and his face was red, and when urged by the principal to address the Second Reader class, his face grew redder.

The trustee waved his hand toward the visiting gentleman. "Mr. Hammel, children, the Hon. Samuel S. Hammel, a citizen with whose name you are all, I am sure, familiar." And then the trustee, mopping his face, got behind the visiting gentleman and the principal.

The visiting gentleman stood forth. He was a short, little man — a little, round man, whose feet were so far back beneath a preponderating circumference of waist line, that he looked like nothing so much as one of Uncle Charlie's pouter pigeons.

He was a smiling-and-bowing little man, and he held out his fat hand playfully, and in it was a shining white box.

Dear Teacher seemed taller and very far off. She looked as she did the day she told the class they were to have a medal. Emmy Lou watched Dear Teacher anxiously. Something told her Dear Teacher was troubled.

The visiting gentleman began to speak. He called the Second Reader class "dear children," and "mothers of a coming generation," and "molders of the future welfare."

The Second Reader class sat very still. There seemed to be something paralyzing to their infant faculties, mental and physical, in learning they were "mothers" and "molders." But Emmy Lou breathed freer to have it applied impartially and not to the front seat.

Their "country, the pillars of state, everything," it seemed, depended on the way these mothers learned their second readers. "As mothers and molders, they must learn now in youth to read, to number, to spell — exactly — to spell!" And the visiting gentleman nodded meaningly, tapped the white box, and looked smilingly about. The mothers moved uneasily. The smile they avoided. But they wondered what was in the box.

The visiting gentleman lifted the lid and displayed a glittering, shining something on a bed of pink cotton.

Then, as if struck by a happy thought, he turned to the blackboard. He looked about for chalk. The

principal supplied him. Fashioned by his fat, white hand, these words sprawled themselves upon the blackboard: —

The best speller in this room is to recieve this medal

There was silence. Then the Second Reader class moved. It breathed a long breath.

A whisper went around the room while Dear Teacher and the gentleman were conferring. Rumor said Kitty McKoeghany started it. Certainly Kitty, in her desk across the aisle from Hattie, in the sight of all, tossed her black head knowingly.

The whisper concerned the visiting gentleman. "He is running for trustee," said the whisper.

Emmy Lou wondered. Hattie seemed to understand. "He puts his name up on tree-boxes and fences," she whispered to Emmy Lou, "and that 's running for trustee."

The rumor was succeeded by another.

"He 's running against the trustee that 's not here to-day."

No wonder Kitty McKoeghany was head. The extent of Kitty's knowledge was boundless.

The third confidence was freighted with strange import. It came straight from Kitty to Hattie, who told it to Emmy Lou.

"When he 's trustee, he means the school board shall take his pork house for the new school."

Even Emmy Lou knew the pork house which had built itself unpleasantly near the neighborhood.

Just then the Second Reader class was summoned to

the bench. As the line took its place, a hush fell. Emmy Lou, at its foot, looked up its length and wondered how it would seem to be Kitty McKoeghany at the head.

The three gentlemen were looking at Kitty, too. Kitty tossed her head. Kitty was used to being looked at because of being head.

The low words of the gentleman reached the foot of the line. "The head one, that 's McKoeghany's little girl." It was the trustee telling the visiting gentleman. Emmy Lou did not wonder that Kitty was being pointed out. Kitty was head. But Emmy Lou did not know that it was because Kitty was Mr. Michael McKoeghany's little girl that she was being pointed out as well as because she was head, for Mr. Michael McKoeghany was the political boss of a district known as Limerick, and by the vote of Limerick a man running for office could stand or fall.

Now there were many things unknown to Emmy Lou, about which Kitty, being the little girl of Mr. Michael McKoeghany, could have enlightened her.

Kitty could have told her that the yard of the absent trustee ran back to the pork house. Also that the trustee present was part owner of that offending building. And further that Emmy Lou's Uncle Charlie, leading an irate neighborhood to battle, had compelled the withdrawal of the obnoxious business.

But to Emmy Lou only one thing was clear. Kitty was being pointed out by the principal and the trustee to the visiting gentleman because she was head.

Dear Teacher took the book. She stood on the plat-

form apart from the gentlemen and gave out the words distinctly but very quietly.

Emmy Lou felt that Dear Teacher was troubled. Emmy Lou thought it was because Dear Teacher was afraid the poor spellers were going to miss. She made up her mind that she would not miss.

Dear Teacher began with the words on the first page and went forward. Emmy Lou could tell the next word to come each time, for she knew her Second Reader by heart as far as the class had gone.

She stood up when her time came and spelled her word. Her word was "wrong." She spelled it right.

Dear Teacher looked pleased. There was a time when Emmy Lou had been given to leaving off the introductory "w" as superfluous.

On the next round a little girl above Emmy Lou missed on "enough." To her phonetic understanding, a *u* and two *f*'s were equivalent to an *ough*.

Emmy Lou spelled it right and went up one. The little girl went to her seat. She was no longer in the race. She was in tears.

Presently a little girl far up the line arose to spell.

"Right, to do right," said Dear Teacher.

"W-r-i-t-e, right," said the little girl promptly.

"R-i-t-e, right," said the next little girl.

The third stood up with triumph preassured. In spelling, the complicated is the surest, reasoned this little girl.

"W-r-i-g-h-t, right," spelled the certain little girl; then burst into tears.

The mothers of the future grew demoralized. The

pillars of state of English orthography at least seemed destined to totter. The spelling grew wild.

"R-i-t, right."

"W-r-i-t, right."

Then in the desperation of sheer hopelessness came "w-r-i-t-e, right," again.

There were tears all along the line. At their wits' end, the mothers, dissolving as they rose in turn, shook their heads hopelessly.

Emmy Lou stood up. She knew just where the word was in a column of three on page 14. She could see it. She looked up at Dear Teacher, quiet and pale, on the platform.

"R," said Emmy Lou, steadily, "i-g-h-t, right."

A long line of weeping mothers went to their seats, and Emmy Lou moved up past the middle of the bench.

The words were now more complicated. The nerves of the mothers had been shaken by this last strain. Little girls dropped out rapidly. The foot moved on up toward the head, until there came a pink spot on Dear Teacher's either cheek. For some reason Dear Teacher's head began to hold itself finely erect again.

"Beaux," said Dear Teacher.

The little girl next the head stood up. She missed. She burst into audible weeping. Nerves were giving out along the line. It went wildly down. Emmy Lou was the last. Emmy Lou stood up. It was the first word of a column on page 22. Emmy Lou could see it. She looked at Dear Teacher.

"B," said Emmy Lou, "e-a-u-x, beaux."

The intervening mothers had gone to their seats, and Kitty and Emmy Lou were left.

Kitty spelled triumphantly. Emmy Lou spelled steadily. Even Dear Teacher's voice showed a touch of the strain.

She gave out half a dozen words. Then "receive," said Dear Teacher.

It was Kitty's turn. Kitty stood up. Dear Teacher's back was to the blackboard. The trustee and the visiting gentleman were also facing the class. Kitty's eyes, as she stood up, were on the board.

"The best speller in this room is to recieve this medal"

was the assurance on the board.

Kitty tossed her little head. "R-e, re, c-i-e-v-e, ceive, receive," spelled Kitty, her eyes on the blackboard.

"Wrong."

Emmy Lou stood up. It was the second word in a column on a picture page. Emmy Lou could see it. She looked at Dear Teacher.

"R-e, re, c-e-i-v-e, ceive, receive," said Emmy Lou.

One person beside Kitty had noted the blackboard. Already the principal was passing an eraser across the words of the visiting gentleman.

Dear Teacher's cheeks were pink as Emmy Lou's as she led Emmy Lou to receive the medal. And her head was finely erect. She held Emmy Lou's hand through it all.

The visiting gentleman's manner was a little stony. It had quite lost its playfulness. He looked almost

gloomily on the mother who had upheld the pillars of state and the future generally.

It was a beautiful medal. It was a five-pointed star. It said "Reward of Merit."

The visiting gentleman lifted it from its bed of pink cotton.

"You must get a ribbon for it," said Dear Teacher.

Emmy Lou slipped her hand from Dear Teacher's. She went to the front desk. She got her Second Reader, and brought forth a folded packet from behind the crisscross stitches holding the cover.

Then she came back. She put the paper into Dear Teacher's hand.

"There 's a ribbon," said Emmy Lou.

They were at dinner when Emmy Lou got home. On a blue ribbon around her neck dangled a new medal. In her hand she carried a shiny box.

Even Uncle Charlie felt there must be some mistake.

Aunt Louise got her hat to hurry Emmy Lou right back to school.

At the gate they met Dear Teacher's carriage, taking Dear Teacher home. She stopped.

Aunt Cordelia came out, and Aunt Katie, Uncle Charlie, just going, stopped to hear.

"Spelling match!" said Aunt Louise.

"Not our Emmy Lou?" said Aunt Katie.

"The precious baby," said Aunt Cordelia.

"Hammel," said Uncle Charlie, "McKoeghany." And Uncle Charlie smote his thigh.

THE NEW MONITOR

By Myra Kelly

SCHOOL had been for some months in progress when the footsteps of Yetta Aaronsohn were turned, by a long-suffering truant officer, in the direction of room 18. During her first few hours among its pictures, plants, and children, she sadly realized the great and many barriers which separated her from Eva Gonorowsky, Morris Mogilewsky, Patrick Brennan, and other favored spirits who basked in the sunshine of Teacher's regard. For, with a face too white, hair too straight, dresses too short, and legs too long one runs a poor chance in rivalry with more blessed and bedizened children.

Miss Bailey had already appointed her monitors, organized her kingdom, and was so hedged about with servitors and assistants that her wishes were acted upon before a stranger could surmise them, and her Cabinet, from the Leader of the Line to the Monitor of the Gold-Fish Bowl, presented an impregnable front to the aspiring public.

During recess time Yetta learned that Teacher was further intrenched in groundless prejudice. Sarah Schrodsky, class bureau of etiquette and of *savoir-faire*, warned the newcomer: —

"Sooner you comes on the school mit dirt on the face

she would n't to have no kind feelin's over you. She don't lets you should set by her side: she don't lets you should be monitors off of somethings: she don't lets you should make an' thing what is nice fer you."

Another peculiarity was announced by Sadie Gonorowsky. "So you comes late on the school, she has fierce mads. Patrick Brennan, he comes late over yesterday on the morning und she don't lets he should march first on the line."

"Did she holler?" asked Yetta, in an awed whisper.

"No, she don't need she should holler when she has mads. She looks on you mit long-mad-proud-looks und you don't needs no hollers. She could to have mads 'out sayin' nothings und you could to have a scare over it. It 's fierce. Und extra she goes und tells it out to Patrick's papa — he 's the cop mit buttons what stands by the corner — how Patrick comes late und Patrick gets killed as anything over it."

"On'y Patrick ain't cried," interruped Eva Gonorowsky. She had heard her hero's name and sprang to his defense. "Patrick tells me how his papa hits him awful hacks mit a club. I don't know what is a club, on'y Patrick says it makes him biles on all his bones."

"You gets biles on your bones from off of cops sooner you comes late on the school!" gasped Yetta. "Nobody ain't tell me nothings over that. I don't know, neither, what is clubs —"

"I know what they are," the more learned Sarah Schrodsky began. "It 's a house mit man's faces in the windows. It 's full from mans by night. Ikey Borrachsohn's papa 's got one mit music inside."

"I don't likes it! I have a fraid over it!" wailed Yetta. "I don't know does my mamma likes I should come somewheres where cops mit buttons makes like that mit me. I don't know is it healthy fer me."

"Sooner you don't come late on the school nobody makes like that mit you," Eva reminded the panic-stricken newcomer, and for the first three days of her school life Yetta was very early and very dirty.

Miss Bailey, with gentle tact, delivered little lectures upon the use and beauty of soap and water which Eva Gonorowsky applied to and discussed with the newcomer.

"Miss Bailey is an awful nice teacher," she began one afternoon. "I never in my world seen no nicer teacher. On'y she 's fancy."

"I seen how she 's fancy," Yetta agreed. "She 's got her hair done fancy mit combs und her waist is from fancy goods."

"Yes, she 's fancy," Eva continued. "She likes you should put you on awful clean. Say, what you think, she sends a boy home once — mit notes even — the while he puts him on dirty sweaters. She says like this: 'Sweaters what you wear by nights und by days ain't stylish fer school.' Und I guess she knows what is stylish. I ain't never in my world seen no stylisher teacher."

"I don't know be buttoned-in-back dresses the style this year," ventured Yetta. The same misgiving had visited Eva, but she thrust it loyally from her.

"They 're the latest," she declared.

"It 's good they 're the style," sighed Yetta. "Mine

dress is a buttoned-in-back-dress, too. On'y I loses me the buttons from off of it. I guess maybe I sews 'em on again. Teacher could to have, maybe, kind feelings, sooner she sees how I puts me on mit buttons on mine back und —"

"Sure could she!" interrupted the sustaining Eva.

"Could she have kind feelings sooner I puts me on clean mit buttons on mine back und makes all things what is nice fer me? Oh, Eva, could she have feelin's over me?"

"Sure could she," cried Eva. "Sooner you makes all them things she could to make you, maybe, monitors off of somethings."

"Be you monitors?" demanded Yetta in sudden awe.

"Off of pencils. Ain't you seen how I gives 'em out and takes 'em up? She gives me too a piece of paper mit writings on it. Sooner I shows it on the big boys what stands by the door in the yard, sooner they lets me I should come right up by Teacher's room. You could to look on it." And, after unfolding countless layers of paper and of cheesecloth handkerchief, she exhibited her talisman. It was an ordinary visiting card with a line of writing under its neatly engraved "Miss Constance Bailey," and Yetta regarded it with envying eyes.

"What does it say?" she asked.

"Well," admitted Eva with reluctant candor, "I could n't to read them words, but I guess it says I should come all places what I wants the while I 'm good girls."

"Can you go all places where you wants mit it?"

"Sure could you."

"On theaytres?"

"Sure."

"On the Central Park?"

"Sure."

"On the country? Oh, I guess you could n't go on the country mit it?"

"Sure could you. All places what you wants you could go sooner Missis Bailey writes on papers how you is good girls."

"Oh, how I likes she should write like that fer me. Oh, how I likes I should be monitors off of somethings."

"I tell you what you want to do: wash your hands!" cried Eva, with sudden inspiration. "She 's crazy for what is clean. You wash your hands und your face. She could to have feelin's."

For some mornings thereafter Yetta was clean — and late. Miss Bailey overlooked the cleanliness, but noted the tardiness, and treated the offender with some of "the mads out sayin' nothings" which Sadie had predicted. Still the "cop mit buttons und clubs" did not appear, though Yetta lived in constant terror and expected that every opening of the door would disclose that dread avenger.

On the fourth morning of her ablutions Yetta reached room 18 while a reading lesson was absorbing Teacher's attention.

"Powers above!" ejaculated Patrick Brennan, with all the ostentatious virtue of the newly reformed, "here 's that new kid late again!"

The new kid, in copious tears, encountered one of the "long-mad-proud-looks" and cringed.

"Why are you late?" demanded Miss Bailey.

"I washes me the face," whimpered the culprit, and the eyes with which she regarded Eva Gonorowsky added tearfully, "Villain, behold your work!"

"So I see, but that is no reason for being late. You have been late twice a day, morning and afternoon, for the last three days and your only excuse has been that you were washing your face. Which is no excuse at all."

"I tells you 'scuse," pleaded Yetta. "I tells you 'scuse."

"Very well, I 'll forgive you to-day. I suppose I must tolerate you."

"No-o-oh, ma'an, Teacher, Missis Bailey, don't you do it," screamed Yetta in sudden terror. "I 'd have a awful frightened over it. I swear, I kiss up to God, I would n't never no more come late on the school. I don't needs nobody should make nothings like that mit me."

"Oh, it 's not so bad," Miss Bailey reassured her. "And you must expect something to happen if you *will* come late to school for no reason at all."

And Yetta was too disturbed by the danger so narrowly escaped to tell this charming but most strangely ignorant young person that the washing of a face was a most time-consuming process. Yetta's one-roomed home was on the top floor, the sixth, and the only water supply was in the yard. Since the day her father had packed "assorted notions" into a black and shiny box

and had set out to seek his very elusive fortunes in the country, Yetta had toiled three times a morning with a tin pail full of water. This formed the family's daily store and there was no surplus to be squandered. But to win Teacher's commendation she had bent her tired energies to another trip and, behold, her reward was a scolding!

Eva Gonorowsky was terribly distressed, and the plaintive sobs which, from time to time, rent the bosom of Yetta's dingy plaid dress were as so many blows upon her adviser's bruised conscience. Desperately she cast about for some device by which Teacher's favor might be reclaimed and all jubilantly she imparted it to Yetta.

"Say," she whispered, "I tell you what you want to do. You leave your mamma wash your dress."

"I don't know would she like it. I washes me the face fer her und she has a mad on me."

"She 'd like it, all right, all right; ain't I tell you how she is crazy for what is clean? You get your dress washed and it will look awful diff'rent. I done it und she had a glad."

Now a mamma who supports a family by the making of buttonholes, for one hundred of which she receives nine cents, has little time for washing, and Yetta determined, unaided and unadvised, to be her own laundress. She made endless trips with her tin pail from the sixth floor to the yard and back again, she begged a piece of soap from the friendly "janitor lady," and set valiantly to work. And Eva's prophecy was fulfilled. The dress looked "awful diff'rent" when

it had dried to half its already scant proportions. From various sources Yetta collected six buttons of widely dissimilar design and color and, with great difficulty, since her hands were puffed and clumsy from long immersion in strong suds, she affixed them to the back of the dress and fell into her corner of the family couch to dream of Miss Bailey's surprise and joy when the blended plaid should be revealed unto her. Surely, if there were any gratitude in the hearts of teachers, Yetta should be, ere the sinking of another sun, "monitors off of somethings."

That Teacher was surprised, no one who saw the glance of puzzled inquiry with which she greeted the entrance of the transformed Yetta could doubt. That she had "a glad," Yetta, who saw the stare replaced by a smile of quick recognition, was proudly assured. Eva Gonorowsky shone triumphant.

"Ain't I tell you?" she whispered jubilantly as she made room upon her little bench and drew Yetta down beside her. "Ain't I tell you how she 's crazy fer what is clean? Und I ain't never seen nothings what is clean like you be. You smells off of soap even."

It was not surprising, for Yetta had omitted the rinsing which some laundresses advise. She had wasted none of the janitor lady's gift. It was all in the meshes of the flannel dress to which it lent, in addition to its reassuring perfume, a smooth damp slipperiness most pleasing to the touch.

The athletic members of the First Reader class were made familiar with this quality before the day was

over, for, at the slightest exertion of its wearer, the rainbow dress sprang, chrysalis-like, widely open up the back. Then were the combined efforts of two of the strongest members of the class required to drag the edges into apposition while Eva guided the buttons to their respective holes and Yetta "let go of her breath" with an energy which defeated its purpose.

These interruptions of the class routine were so inevitable a consequence of Swedish exercises and gymnastics that Miss Bailey was forced to sacrifice Yetta's physical development to the general discipline and to anchor her in quiet waters during the frequent periods of drill. When she had been in time she sat at Teacher's desk in a glow of love and pride. When she had been late she stood in a corner near the bookcase and repented of her sin. And, despite all her exertions and Eva's promptings, she was still occasionally late.

Miss Bailey was seriously at a loss for some method of dealing with a child so wistful of eyes and so damaging of habits. A teacher's standing on the books of the Board of Education depends to a degree upon the punctuality and regularity of attendance to which she can inspire her class, and Yetta was reducing the average to untold depths.

"What happened to-day?" Teacher asked one morning for the third time in one week, and through Yetta's noisy repentance she heard hints of "store" and "mamma."

"Your mamma sent you to the store?" she interpreted, and Yetta nodded dolefully.

"And did you give her my message about that last week? Did you tell her that she *must* send you to school before nine o'clock?"

Again Yetta nodded, silent and resigned, evidently a creature bound upon a wheel, heartbroken but uncomplaining.

"Well, then," began Miss Bailey, struggling to maintain her just resentment, "you can tell her now that I want to see her. Ask her to come to school to-morrow morning."

"Teacher, she could n't. She ain't got no time. Und she don't know where is the school neither."

"That 's nonsense. You live only two blocks away. She sees it every time she passes the corner."

"She don't never pass no corner. She don't never come on the street. My mamma ain't got time. She sews."

"But she can't sew always. She goes out, does n't she, to do shopping and to see her friends?"

"She ain't got friends. She ain't got time she should have 'em. She sews all times. Sooner I lay me and the babies on the bed by night my mamma sews. Und sooner I stands up in mornings my mamma sews. All, *all*, ALL times she sews."

"And where is your father? Does n't he help?"

"Teacher, he is on the country. He is pedlar mans. He walk und he walk und he walk mit all things what is stylish in a box. On'y nobody wants they should buy somethings from off my papa. No, ma'an, Missis Bailey, that ain't how they makes mit my poor papa. They goes und makes dogs should bite him on the legs.

That 's how he tells in a letter what he writes on my mamma. Comes no money in the letter und me und my mamma we got it pretty hard. We got three babies."

"I 'm going home with you this afternoon," announced Miss Bailey in a voice which suggested neither "mads" nor clubs nor violence.

After that visit things were a shade more bearable in the home of the absent peddler, and one half of Yetta's ambition was achieved. Teacher had a "glad"! There was a gentleness almost apologetic in her attitude and the hour after which an arrival should be met with a long-proud-mad-look was indefinitely postponed. And, friendly relations being established, Yetta's craving for monitorship grew with the passing days.

When she expressed to Teacher her willingness to hold office she was met with unsatisfying but baffling generalities.

"But surely I shall let you be monitor some day. I have monitors for nearly everything under the sun, now, but perhaps I shall think of something for you."

"I likes," faltered Yetta, "I likes I should be monitor off of flowers."

"But Nathan Spiderwitz takes care of the window boxes. He won't let even me touch them. Think what he would do to you."

"Then I likes I should be monitor to set by your place when you goes by the principal's office."

"But Patrick Brennan always takes care of the children when I am not in the room."

"He marches first by the line too. He 's two monitors."

"He truly is," agreed Miss Bailey. "Well, I shall let you try that some day."

It was a most disastrous experiment. The First Reader class, serenely good under the eye of Patrick Brennan, who wore one of the discarded brass buttons of his sire pinned to the breast of his shirtwaist, found nothing to fear or to obey in his supplanter, and Miss Bailey returned to her kingdom to find it in an uproar and her regent in tears.

"I don't likes it. I don't likes it," Yetta wailed. "All the boys shows a fist on me. All the girls makes a snoot on me. All the childrens say cheek on me. I don't likes it. I don't likes it."

"Then you shan't do it again," Teacher comforted her. "You need n't be a monitor if you don't wish."

"But I likes I shall be monitors. On'y not that kind from monitors."

"If you can think of something you would enjoy, I shall let you try again. But it must be something, dear, that no one is doing for me."

But Yetta could think of nothing until one afternoon when she was sitting at Teacher's desk during a Swedish drill. All about her were Teacher's things. Her large green blotter, her "from gold" inkstand and pens, her books where fairies lived. Miss Bailey was standing directly in front of the desk and encouraging the First Reader class — by command and example — to strenuous waving of arms and bending of bodies.

"Forward bend!" commanded, and bent, Miss

Bailey, and her buttoned-in-back waist followed the example of less fashionable models, shed its pearl buttons in a shower upon the smooth blotter, and gave Yetta the inspiration for which she had been waiting. She gathered the buttons, extracted numerous pins from posts of trust in her attire, and when Miss Bailey had returned to her chair, gently set about repairing the breach.

"What is it?" asked Miss Bailey. Yetta, her mouth full of pins, exhibited the buttons.

"Dear me! All those off!" exclaimed Teacher. "It was good of you to arrange it for me. And now will you watch it? You 'll tell me if it should open again?"

Yetta had then disposed the pins to the best advantage and was free to voice her triumphant:

"Oh, I knows *now* how I wants I should be monitors! Teacher, mine dear Teacher, could I be monitors off of the back of your dress?"

"But surely, you may," laughed Teacher, and Yetta entered straightway into the heaven of fulfilled desire.

None of Eva's descriptions of the joys of monitorship had done justice to the glad reality. After common mortals had gone home at three o'clock, room 18 was transformed into a land where only monitors and love abounded. And the new monitor was welcomed by the existing staff, for she had supplanted no one, and was so palpitatingly happy that Patrick Brennan forgave her earlier usurpation of his office and Nathan Spiderwitz bestowed upon her the freedom of the window boxes.

"Ever when you likes you should have a crawley

bug from off of the flowers; you tell me und I 'll catch one fer you. I got lots. I don't need 'em all."

"I likes I shall have one now," ventured Yetta, and Nathan ensnared one and put it in her hand where it "crawlied" most pleasingly until Morris Mogilewsky begged it for his goldfish in their gleaming "fish theaytre." Then Eva shared with her friend and protégé the delight of sharpening countless blunted and bitten pencils upon a piece of sandpaper.

"Say," whispered Yetta as they worked busily and dirtily, "say, I 'm monitors now. On'y I ain't got no papers."

"You ask her. She 'll give you one."

"I 'd have a shamed the while she gives me und my mamma whole bunches of things already. She could to think, maybe, I 'm a greedy. But I needs that paper awful much. I needs I shall go on the country for see mine papa."

"No, she don't think you is greedy. Ain't you monitors on the back of her waist? You should come up here 'fore the childrens comes for see how her buttons stands. You go und tell her you needs that paper."

Very diplomatically Yetta did. "Teacher," she began, "buttoned-in-back-dresses is stylish for ladies."

"Yes, honey," Miss Bailey acquiesced, "so I thought when I saw that you wear one."

"On'y they opens," Yetta went on, all flushed by this high tribute to her correctness. "All times they opens, yours und mine, und that makes us shamed feelings."

Again Miss Bailey acquiesced.

"So-o-oh," pursued Yetta, with fast beating heart, "don't you wants you should give me somethings from paper mit writings on it so I could come on your room all times for see how is your buttoned-in-back-dresses?"

"A beautiful idea," cried Teacher. "We 'll take care of one another's buttons. I 'll write the card for you now. You know what to do with it?"

"Yiss, ma'an. Eva tells me all times how I could come where I wants sooner you writes on papers how I is good girls."

"I 'll write nicer things than that on yours," said Miss Bailey. "You are one of the best little girls in the world. So useful to your mother and to the babies and to me! Oh, yes, I 'll write beautiful things on your card, my dear."

When the Grand Street car had borne Miss Bailey away, Yetta turned to Eva with determination in her eye and the "paper mit writings" in her hand.

"I 'm goin' on the country for see my papa und birds und flowers und all them things what Teacher tells stand in the country. I *need* I should see them."

"Out your mamma?" Eva remonstrated.

"Out, 'out my mamma. She ain't got no time for go on no country. I don't needs my mamma should go by my side. Ain't you said I could to go all places what I wants I should go, sooner Teacher gives me papers mit writings?"

"Sure could you," Eva repeated solemnly. "There ain't no place where you could n't to go mit it."

"I 'll go on the country," said Yetta.

That evening Mrs. Aaronsohn joined her neighbors upon the doorstep for the first time in seven years. For Yetta was lost. The neighbors were comforting her, but not resourceful. They all knew Yetta; knew her to be sensible and mature for her years even according to the exacting standard of the East Side. She would presently return, they assured the distraught Mrs. Aaronsohn, and pending that happy event they entertained her with details of the wanderings and home-comings of their own offspring. But Yetta did not come. The reminiscent mothers talked themselves into silence, the deserted babies cried themselves to sleep. Mrs. Aaronsohn carried them up to bed — she hardly knew the outer aspect of her own door — and returned to the then deserted doorstep to watch for her first-born. One by one the lights were extinguished, the sewing machines stopped, and the restless night of the quarter closed down. She was afraid to go even as far as the corner in search of the fugitive. She could not have recognized the house which held her home.

All her hopes were centered in the coming of Miss Bailey. When the children of happier women were setting out for school she demanded and obtained from one of them safe conduct to room 18. But Teacher, when Eva Gonorowsky had interpreted the tale of Yetta's disappearance, could suggest no explanation.

"She was with me until half-past three. Then she and Eva walked with me to the corner. Did she tell you, dear, where she was going?"

"Teacher, yiss, ma'an. She says she goes on the country for see her papa und birds und flowers."

When this was put into Jewish for Mrs. Aaronsohn, she was neither comforted nor reassured. Miss Bailey was puzzled but undismayed. "We 'll find her," she promised the now tearful mother. "I shall go with you to look for her. Say that in Jewish for me, Eva."

The principal lent a substitute. Room 18 was deserted by its sovereign; the pencils were deserted by their monitor; and Mrs. Aaronsohn, Miss Bailey, and Eva Gonorowsky, official interpreter, set out for the nearest drug store where a telephone might be. They inspected several unclaimed children before, in the station of a precinct many weary blocks away, they came upon Yetta. She was more dirty and bedraggled than she had ever been, but the charm of her manner was unchanged and, suspended about her neck, she wore a policeman's button.

"One of the men brought her in here at ten o'clock last night," the man behind the blotter informed Miss Bailey, while Mrs. Aaronsohn showered abuse and caress upon the wanderer. "She was straying around the Bowery and she gave us a great game of talk about her father bein' a bird. I guess he is."

"My papa und birds is on the country. I likes I shall go there," said Yetta from the depths of her mother's embrace.

"There, that 's what she tells everyone. She has a card there with a Christian name and no address on it. I was going to try to identify her by looking for this Miss Constance Bailey."

"That is my name. I am her teacher. I gave her the card because —"

"I 'm monitors. I should go all places what I wants the while I 'm good girls, und Teacher writes it on pieces from paper. On'y I ain't want I should come on no cops' house. I likes I should go on the country for see my papa und birds und flowers. I says like that on a cop — I shows him the paper even — und he makes I shall come here on the cops' house where my papa don't stands und birds don't stands und flowers don't stands."

"When next you want to go to the country," said Teacher, "you ought to let us know. You have frightened us all dreadfully, and that is a very naughty thing to do. If you ever run away again, I shall have to keep the promise I made to you long and long ago when you used to come late to school. I shall have to tolerate you."

But Yetta was undismayed. "I ain't got no more a scare over that," said she with a soft smile toward the brass-buttoned person behind the blotter. "Und I ain't got no scare over cops neither; I never in mine world seen how they makes all things what is polite mit me und gives me I should eat."

"Well," cautioned Teacher, "you must never do it again," and turned her attention to the very erratic spelling of Sergeant Moloney's official record of the flight of Yetta Aaronsohn.

"Say," whispered Eva, and there was a tinge of jealousy in her soft voice, "say, who gives you the button like Patrick Brennan 's got?"

"*The Cop*," answered Yetta, pointing a dirty but reverential finger toward her new divinity. "I guess

maybe I turns me the dress around. Buttoned-in-front-mit-from-gold-button-suits is awful stylish. He 's got 'em."

"Think shame how you say," cried Eva, with loyal eyes upon the neatly buttoned and all unsuspecting back of Miss Bailey. "Ain't you seen how is Teacher's back?"

"Ain't I monitors off of it?" demanded Yetta. "Sure I know how is it. On'y I don't know be they so stylish. Cops ain't got 'em und, O Eva, cops is somethin' grand! I turns me the dress around."

SONNY'S DIPLOMA

By Ruth McEnery Stuart

YAS, sir; this is it. This here 's Sonny's diploma thet you 've heerd so much about — sheepskin they call it, though it ain't no mo' sheepskin 'n what I am. I 've skinned too many not to know. Thess to think o' little Sonny bein' a grad'jate — an' all by his own efforts, too! It is a plain-lookin' picture, ez you say, to be framed up in sech a fine gilt frame; but it 's worth it, an' I don't begrudge it to him. He picked out that red plush hisself. He 's got mighty fine taste for a country-raised child, Sonny has.

Seem like the oftener I come here an' stan' before it, the prouder I feel, an' the mo' I can't reelize thet he done it.

I 'd 'a' been proud enough to 've him go through the reg'lar co'se of study, an' be awarded this diplomy, but to 've seen 'im thess walk in an' demand it, the way he done, an' to prove his right in a fair fight — why, it tickles me so thet I thess seem to git a spell o' the giggles ev'ry time I think about it.

Sir? How did he do it? Why, I thought eve'ybody in the State of Arkansas knowed how Sonny walked over the boa'd o' school directors, an' took a diplomy in the face of Providence, at the last anniversary.

I don't know thet I ought to say that either, for they

never was a thing done mo' friendly an' amiable on earth, on his part, than the takin' of this dockiment. Why, no; of co'se he was n't goin' to that school — cert'n'y not. Ef he had b'longed to that school, they would n' 'a' been no question about it. He 'd 'a' thess gradj'ated with the others. An' when he went there with his ma an' me, why, he 'll tell you hisself that he had n't no mo' idee of gradj'atin 'n what I have this minute.

An' when he riz up in his seat, an' announced his intention, why, you could 'a' knocked me down with a feather. You see, it took me so sudden, an' I did n't see thess how he was goin' to work it, never havin' been to that school.

Of co'se eve'ybody in the county goes to the gradj'atin', an' we was all three settin' there watchin' the performances, not thinkin' of any special excitement, when Sonny took this idee.

It seems thet seein' all the other boys gradj'ate put him in the notion, an' he felt like ez ef he ought to be a-gradj'atin', too.

You see, he had went to school mo' or less with all them fellers, an' he knowed thet they did n't, none o' 'em, know half ez much ez what he did, — though, to tell the truth, he ain't never said sech a word, not even to her or me, — an', seein' how easy they was bein' turned out, why, he thess reelized his own rights — an' demanded 'em then an' there.

Of co'se we know thet they is folks in this here community thet says thet he ain't got no right to this diplomy; but what else could you expect in a jealous neighborhood where eve'ybody is mo' or less kin?

The way I look at it, they never was a diplomy earned quite so upright ez this on earth — never. Ef it was n't, why, I would n't allow him to have it, no matter how much pride I would 'a' took, an' do take, in it. But for a boy of Sonny's age to 've had the courage to face all them people, an' ask to be examined then an' there, an' to come out ahead, the way he done, why, it does me proud, that it does.

You see, for a boy to set there seein' all them know-nothin' boys gradj'ate, one after another, offhand, the way they was doin', was mighty provokin', an' when Sonny is struck with a sense of injestice, why, he ain't never been known to bear it in silence. He taken that from *her* side o' the house.

I noticed, ez he set there that day, thet he began to look toler'ble solemn, for a festival, but it never crossed my mind what he was a-projeckin' to do. Ef I had 'a' suspicioned it, I 'm afeered I would 've opposed it, I 'd 'a' been so skeert he would n't come out all right; an' ez I said, I did n't see, for the life o' me, how he was goin' to work it.

That is the only school in the country thet he ain't never went to, 'cause it was started after he settled down to Miss Phœbe's school. He would n't hardly 'v went to it, nohow, though — less'n, of co'se, he 'd 'a' took a notion. Th' ain't no 'casion to send him to a county school when he 's the only one we 've got to edjercate.

They ain't been a thing I 've enjoyed ez much in my life ez my sackerfices on account o' Sonny's edjercation — not a one. Th' ain't a patch on any ol' coat

I 've got but seems to me to stand for some advantage to him.

Well, sir, it was thess like I 'm a-tellin' you. He set still ez long ez he could, an' then he riz an' spoke. Says he, "I have decided thet I 'd like to do a little gradj'atin this evenin' myself," thess that a-way.

An' when he spoke them words, for about a minute you could 'a' heerd a pin drop; an' then eve'ybody begin a-screechin' with laughter. A person would think thet they 'd 'a' had some consideration for a child standin' up in the midst o' sech a getherin', tryin' to take his own part; but they did n't. They thess laughed immod'rate. But they did n't faze him. He had took his station on the flo', an' he helt his ground.

Thess ez soon ez he could git a heerin', why, he says, says he: "I don't want anybody to think thet I 'm a-tryin' to take any advantage. I don't expec' to gradj'ate without passin' my examination. An', mo' 'n that," says he, "I am ready to pass it now." An' then he went on to explain thet he would like to have anybody present *thet was competent to do it* to step forward an' examine him — then an' there. An' he said thet ef he was examined fair and square, to the satisfaction of eve'ybody — *an' did n't pass* — why, he 'd give up the p'int. An' he wanted to be examined oral — in eve'ybody's hearin' — free-handed an' outspoke.

Well, sir, seem like folks begin to see a little fun ahead in lettin' him try it — which I don't see thess how they could 'a' hindered him, an' it a free school, an' me a taxpayer. But they all seemed to be in a pretty good humor by this time, an' when Sonny put

it to vote, why, they voted unanymous to let him try it. An' all o' them unanymous votes was n't, to say, friendly, neither. Heap o' them thet was loudest in their unanimosity was hopefully expectin' to see him whipped out at the first question. Tell the truth, I mo' 'n half feared to see it myself. I was that skeert I was fairly all of a trimble.

Well, when they had done votin', Sonny, after first thankin' 'em — which I think was a mighty polite thing to do, an' they full o' the giggles at his little expense that minute — why, he went on to say thet he requi'ed 'em to make *thess one condition*, an' that was thet any question he missed was to be passed on to them thet had been a-gradj'atin' so fast, an' ef they missed it, it was n't to be counted ag'inst him.

Well, when he come out with that, which, to my mind, could n't be beat for fairness, why, some o' the mothers they commenced to look purty serious, an' see like ez ef they did n't find it quite so funny ez it had been. You see, they *say* thet them boys had eve'y one reg'lar questions give' out to 'em, an' eve'y one had studied his own word; an' ef they was to be questioned hit or miss, why they would n't 'a' stood no chance on earth.

Of co'se they could n't give Sonny the same questions thet had *been* give' out, because he had heerd the answers, an' it would n't 'a' been fair. So Sonny he told 'em to thess set down, an' make out a list of questions thet they 'd all agree was about of a' equal hardness to them thet had been ast, an' was of thess the kind of learnin' thet all the reg'lar gradj'ates's

minds was sto'ed with, an' thet either he knowed 'em or he did n't — one.

It don't seem so excitin', somehow, when I tell about it now; but I tell you for about a minute or so, whilst they was waitin' to see who would undertake the job of examinin' him, why, it seemed thet eve'y minute would be the next, as my ol' daddy used to say. The only person present thet seemed to take things anyway ca'm was Miss Phœbe Kellogg, Sonny's teacher. She has been teachin' him reg'lar for over two years now, an' ef she 'a' had a right to give out diplomies, why, Sonny would 'a' thess took out one from her; but she ain't got no license to gradj'ate nobody. But she knowed what Sonny knowed, an' she knowed thet ef he had a fair show, he 'd come thoo creditable to all hands. She loves Sonny thess about ez much ez we do, I believe take it all round. Th' ain't never been but one time in these two years thet she has, to say, got me out o' temper, an' that was the day she said to me thet her sure belief was thet Sonny was goin' to *make somethin' out'n hisself some day* — like ez ef he had n't already made mo' 'n could be expected of a boy of his age. Tell the truth, I never in my life come so near sayin' somethin' I 'd 'a' been shore to regret ez I did on that occasion. But of co'se I know she did n't mean it. All she meant was thet he would turn out even mo' 'n what he was now, which would be on'y nachel, with his growth.

Everybody knows thet it was her that got him started with his collections an' his libr'y. Oh, yes; he 's got the best libr'y in the country, 'cep'n, of co'se,

the doctor's 'n' the preacher's — everybody round about here knows about that. He 's got a hund'ed books an' over. Well, sir, when he made that remark, thet any question thet he missed was to be give to the class, why, the whole atmosp'ere took on a change o' temp'ature. Even the teacher was for backin' out o' the whole business square; but he did n 't thess seem to dare to say so. You see, after him a-favorin' it, it would 'a' been a dead give-away.

Eve'ybody there had saw him step over an' whisper to Brother Binney when it was decided to give Sonny a chance, an' they knowed thet he had asked *him* to examine him. But now, instid o' callin' on Brother Binney, why, he thess said, says he: "I suppose I ought not to shirk this duty. Ef it 's to be did," says he, "I reckon I ought to do it — an' do it I will." You see, he dares n't allow Brother Binney to put questions, for fear he 'd call out some thet his smarty gradj'ates could n't answer.

So he thess claired his th'oat, an' set down a minute to consider. An' then he riz from his seat, an' remarked, with a heap o' *hems* and *haws*, thet of co'se everybody knowed thet Sonny Jones had had unusual advantages in some respec's, but thet it was one thing for a boy to spend his time a-picnickin' in the woods, getherin' all sorts of natural curiosities, but it was quite another to be a scholar accordin' to books, so 's to be able to pass sech a' examination ez would be a credit to a State institution o' learnin', sech ez the one over which he was proud to preside. This word struck me partic'lar, "proud to preside," which, in all this, of co'se,

I see he was castin' a slur on Sonny's collections of birds' eggs, an' his wild flowers, an' wood specimens, an' minerals. He even went so far ez to say thet ol' Proph', the half-crazy nigger thet tells fortunes, an' gathers herbs out'n the woods, an' talks to hisself, likely knew more about a good many things than anybody present, but thet, bein' ez he did n't know *b* from a bull's foot, why, it would n't hardly do to gradj'ate him — not castin' no slurs on Master Sonny Jones, nor makin' no invijus comparisons, of co'se.

Well, sir, there was some folks there thet seemed to think this sort o' talk was mighty funny an' smart. Some o' the mothers acchilly giggled over it out loud, they was so mightily tickled. But Sonny he thess stood his ground an' waited. Most any boy of his age would 'a' got flustered, but he did n't. He thess glanced around unconcerned at all the people a-settin' around him, thess ez ef they might 'a' been askin' him to a picnic instid o' him provokin' a whole school committee to wrath.

Well, sir, it took that school teacher about a half hour to pick out the first question, an' he did n't pick it out *then*. He 'd stop, an' he 'd look at the book, an' then he 'd look at Sonny, an' then he 'd look at the class — an' then he 'd turn a page, like ez ef he could n't make up his mind, an' he was afeerd to resk it, less 'n it might be missed, an' be referred back to the class. I never did see a man so overwrought over a little thing in his life — never. They do say, though, that school teachers feels mighty bad when their scholars misses any pi'nt in public.

Well, sir, he took so long that d'rickly everybody begin to git wo'e out, an' at last Sonny, why, he got tired, too, an' he up an' says, says he, "Ef you can't make up your mind what to ask me, teacher, why n't you let me ask myself questions? An' ef my questions seem too easy, why, I 'll put 'em to the class."

An', sir, with that he thess turns round, an' he says, says he, "Sonny Jones," says he, addressin' hisself, "what 's the cause of total eclipse of the sun?" Thess that a-way he said it; an' then he turned around, an' he says, says he: —

"Is that a hard enough question?"

"Very good," says teacher.

An', with that, Sonny, he up an' picks up a' orange an' a' apple off the teacher's desk, an' says he, "This orange is the earth, an' this here apple is the sun." An', with that, he explained all they is *to* total eclipses. I can't begin to tell you thess how he expressed it, because I ain't highly edjercated myself, an' I don't know the specifactions. But when he had got thoo, he turned to the teacher, an' says he, "Is they anything else thet you 'd like to know about total eclipses?" An' teacher says, says he, "Oh, no; not at all."

They do say thet them gradj'ates had n't never went so far *ez* total eclipses, an' teacher would n't 'a' had the subject mentioned to 'em for nothin'; but I don't say that 's so.

Well, then Sonny, he turned around, an' looked at the company, an' he says, "Is everybody satisfied?" An' all the mothers an' fathers nodded their heads "yes."

An' then he waited thess a minute, an' he says, says he, "Well, now I 'll put the next question."

"Sonny Jones," says he, "what is the difference between dew an' rain an' fog an' hail an' sleet an' snow?"

"Is that a hard enough question?"

Well, from that he started in, an' he did n't stop tell he had expounded about every kind of dampness that ever descended from heaven or rose from the earth. An' after that, why, he went on a-givin' out one question after another, an' answerin' 'em, tell everybody had declared theirselves entirely satisfied that he was fully equipped to gradj'ate — an', tell the truth, I don't doubt thet a heap of 'em felt their minds considerably relieved to have it safely over with without puttin' their gradj'ates to shame, when what does he do but say, "Well, ef you 're satisfied, why, I am — an' yet," says he, "I think I would like to ask myself one or two hard questions more, thess to make shore." An' befo' anybody could stop him, he had said: —

"Sonny Jones, what is the reason thet a bird has feathers and a dog has hair?" An' then he turned around deliberate, an' answered: "I don't know. Teacher, please put that question to the class."

Teacher had kep' his temper purty well up to this time, but I see he was mad now, an' he riz from his chair, an' says he: "This examination has been declared finished, an' I think we have spent ez much time on it ez we can spare." An' all the mothers they nodded their heads, an' started a-whisperin' — most impolite.

An' at that, Sonny, why, he thess set down as modest an' peaceable ez anything; but ez he was settin' he

remarked that he was in hopes thet some o' the regl'ars would 'a' took time to answer a few questions thet had bothered his mind f'om time to time — an' of co'se they must know; which, to my mind, was the modes'est remark a body ever did make.

Well, sir, that 's the way this diplomy was earned — by a good, hard struggle, in open daylight, by unanymous vote of all concerned — an' unconcerned for that matter. An' my opinion is thet if they are those who have any private opinions about it, an' they did n't express 'em that day, why they ain't got no right to do it underhanded, ez I am sorry to say has been done.

But it's *his* diplomy, an' it's handsomer fixed up than any in town, an' I doubt ef they ever was one *anywhere* thet was took more paternal pride in.

Wife she ain't got so yet thet she can look at it without sort o' cryin' — thess the look of it seems to bring back the figure o' the little feller, ez he helt his ground, single-handed, at that gradj'atin that day. Well, sir, we was so pleased to have him turned out a full gradj'ate thet, after it was all over, why, I riz up then and there, though I could n't hardly speak for the lump in my th'oat, an' I said thet I wanted to announce thet Sonny was goin' to have a gradj'atin party out at our farm that day week, an' thet the present company was all invited.

An' he did have it, too; an' they all come, every mother's son of 'em — from *a* to *izzard* — even to them that has expressed secret dissatisfactions; which they was all welcome, though it does seem to me thet, ef I 'd

been in their places, I 'd 'a' hardly had the face to come an' talk, too.

I 'm this kind of a disposition myself: ef I was ever to go to any kind of a collation thet I expressed disapproval of, why, the supper could n't be good enough not to choke me.

An' Sonny, why, he 's constructed on the same plan. We ain't never told him of any o' the remarks thet has been passed. They might git his little feelin's hurted, an' 't would n't do no good, though some few has been made to his face by one or two smarty, ill-raised boys.

Well, sir, we give 'em a fine party, ef I do say it myself, an' they all had a good time. Wife she whipped up eggs an' sugar for a week befo' han', an' we set the table out under the mulberries. It took eleven little niggers to wait on 'em, not countin' them thet worked the fly-fans. An' Sonny he ast the blessin'.

Then, after they 'd all et, Sonny he had a' exhibition of his little specimens. He showed 'em his bird eggs, an' his wood samples, an' his stamp album, an' his scroll-sawed things, an' his clay-moldin's, an' all his little menagerie of animals an' things. I ruther think everybody was struck when they found thet Sonny knowed the botanical names of every one of the animals he 's ever tamed, an' every bird. Miss Phœbe, she did n't come to the front much. She stayed along with wife, an' helped 'tend to the company, but I could see she looked on with pride; an' I don't want nothin' said about it, but the boa'd of school directors was so took with the things she had taught Sonny thet, when

the evenin' was over, they ast her to accept a situation in the academy next year, an' she 's goin' to take it.

An' she says thet ef Sonny will take a private co'se of instructions in nachel sciences, an' go to a few lectures, why, th' ain't nobody on earth that she 'd ruther see come into that academy ez teacher, — that is, of co'se, in time. But I doubt ef he 'd ever keer for it.

I 've always thought thet school-teachin', to be a success, has to run in families, same ez anythin' else — yet, th' ain't no tellin'.

I don't keer what he settles on when he 's grown; I expect to take pride in *the way he 'll do it* — an' that 's the principal thing, after all.

It's the "Well done" we 're all a-hopin' to hear at the last day; an' the po' laborer thet digs a good ditch 'll have thess ez good a chance to hear it ez the man that owns the farm.

THE STORY OF THE PRUNES

By Brewer Corcoran

THE doors of the great dining room at the school stood open. Beyond them, a broad aisle stretched down the center of the room, with tables extending at right angles from its either side. At least one hundred boys were standing behind the plain wooden chairs. More were rushing in to fill the vacant places.

Charlie Fitzhugh stopped in the doorway in surprise. He had eaten in many strange corners of the world — under a khaki tent in the muggy jungle, on a troopship, in far eastern cafés, where youngsters are seldom seen — but this was nearer nature than them all.

"Hurry up; you 'll be late!" exclaimed a master with a big bushy beard, who stood by the door, watch in hand.

"Where shall I go?" stammered Fitzhugh. "I 've just come."

"Hm!" growled Mr. Brown, looking him over. "Whose dormitory are you in? "

"In ours," piped the irresistible Chub, who was close behind Fitzhugh. "Mr. Mason asked me to take care of him. Can't he sit at our table? "

"Is there a vacant place?"

"Just one," the boy replied, "and I 'd like to have Fitzhugh with me, so I can look after him."

The big master looked the two lads over. "He appears able to look after himself. It would be better for you, Fitzhugh, if you kept away from Miller." He glared at Chub from under his militant eyebrows. "You 'll get him into trouble; you can't keep out of it; I don't believe you want to." He looked at his watch and snapped it to. "All right," he growled, "go ahead. You 're almost late."

As the two boys scurried into the room, Mr. Brown closed the doors and stalked to his place at the head table. He did n't like boys, and he did n't hesitate to let everyone know it. He was there to rule the big school building, and to teach. He did both with a rod of iron. But he did both well.

Chub pushed Fitzhugh to a chair at the side of a table about which twelve other boys stood nervously. At its head was a small, black-clad, white-haired man with dreamy blue eyes and a haunting smile. He looked inquiringly at Charlie, then at Chub, and then calmly bowed his head as Mr. Brown lifted his voice in thanks for the various blessings about to be showered on them all. At his last word there was a rattle of chairs, a roar of voices in eager conversation, and the hungry boys crashed into their seats and began the really serious business of the evening.

The little white-haired man looked down the table at Fitzhugh. "You must be a new boy," he stated. "I have n't seen you before."

"It 's Charlie Fitzhugh, sir. He 's to be in the fourth and lives in our dormitory," proclaimed Chub, theoretically for the benefit of Mr. Dickson, but really so

that the boys at the table might know who he was. "Fitzhugh, allow me to introduce you to Mr. Dickson," he announced grandly. Then, under his breath, "Duck your head to the fellows, too, you wop!"

"So this is Fitzhugh, is it?" smiled the old man. "The rector told me that you were coming. I've been looking for you, my lad. Your father was one of my boys. We're all proud of 'Vic' Fitzhugh."

"'Vic Fitzhugh!'" chimed in Chub. "Mr. Mason said his pater was General Fitzhugh."

"He was 'Vic' first, Chub, and we were just as proud of him then as we are now."

"So this is 'Vic the Second,' is it?" asked Swamp Fenn, who sat at Mr. Dickson's right.

"Not yet. Fitzhugh must prove himself his father's son before he can be called 'Vic.' The really old boys, and a few of us old masters who are left, remember how Fitzhugh's father came to be called 'Vic.' Here it's going to be a title that must be won, just as 'General' is in the Philippines."

"Tell us the story," bubbled Fatty Hicks, his mouth full and a fork loaded with meat poised in midair.

"Not now, Edward. You 'd forget to eat if I did. And you're really looking thin this fall."

Swamp beat on the table with his knife. "Right on your lily-white neck, Fatness! Score one for Mr. Dickson." The boys joined in the laughter.

Good-natured, lumbering, stall-fed Edward Hicks grinned appreciatively. "Thanks, sir," he chuckled. "Mamma said for me to eat plenty of wholesome food. Biff, bounce me that sponge cake. Don't go to sleep

about it. Little Eddie only weighs one hundred and eighty and he's looking thin and hungry."

"No, you don't," warned Ted Van Nest, grabbing the cake from Biff. "He ate it all last night. I'm going to fight a couple of rounds with a hunk of this."

Mr. Dickson had turned to the boy on his left and begun a discussion of a game of racquets they had played that afternoon. Chub stopped eating long enough to nod to Fitzhugh. "Old Bennie 's a wonder, ain't he? Knew it would rattle you, if he told that story. Always thinking of us kids. That's why we'd go die if he told us to."

Fitzhugh looked at the little man and recalled a story that he had heard. It was one night, away up in the hills of Mindanao, that his father had told him of Benjamin Dickson. He appreciated it now. Also he began to understand why the sunburnt soldier's eyes filled with tears when he spoke of this man, who dreamed his life away over his great organ and his violin. Fitzhugh made two resolutions on the spot. The first was that some day Mr. Dickson should call him "Vic" before the whole school, and the second that never would he do anything that would bring a look of displeasure into those kindly eyes.

It did n't take Fitzhugh long to make himself at home. Six others, out of the fourteen at the table, were Hoplites, now his chosen friends and sworn allies. Fatty Hicks was a candidate, but Chub said Fatty lacked imagination; Swamp blackballed him on the grounds that there'd be no feed for the rest if Fatty attended a Hoplite spread.

Jim Hillman, a rangy, pimple-faced, shifty-eyed youth, who sat directly across the table from Fitz, had no such ambition. Jim was the Big Noise of the Barn Stormers, who inhabited the Old Lower — the Hoplites's rival for the leadership of the fourth. Both bands were as loosely organized as the Song Birds of the fifth, or the Never Sweats of the sixth. All had their own songs to sing, their highly polished honor to defend. If one made good as a Song Bird, he became a Never Sweat in his sixth-form year. The Hoplites and the Barn Stormers were locking horns for promotion and future control of the Song Birds. No quarter was given or asked. There was only one article on their code of warfare — the game must be played without the aid of a master.

Hillman heard Chub tell Mr. Brown that Fitzhugh was under his wing, but he did n't dream that he could yet be of the chosen. He knew that election to Hoplite honors was hard to win and the path to glory long. Also he knew Chub's fondness for the forbidden joys of hazing new boys. The two had at least one thing in common.

So Jim looked Charlie Fitzhugh over and sized him up as a stranger in a strange land, therefore one who should promptly be taken in. He was most polite to the youngster. He smiled and looked at his plate. It was empty. "I see you are ready for your dessert, Mr. Fitzhugh," he said. "Won't you have some of this sponge cake? It's good — as early in the term as this."

Fitzhugh looked at him, grinned, and took the cake.

"Forget the 'Mister,'" he said, "I'm just plain Fitzhugh."

"Right you are!" laughed Jim. "If any one calls you handsome, tell me and I'll lick him. I hate liars." He held our a saucer of prunes. "Try some of these?"

Fitzhugh looked at them doubtfully. He had never lived in a boarding house. "What are they?" he asked.

"Cuban plums," replied Jim, quickly. "Take 'em and put a lot of vinegar on 'em. They're distinctly O. K. that way."

Fitzhugh was curious as well as hungry. Also he had been brought up among white people who told the truth. The prunes looked good to him and he fell. He took them and poured on the vinegar. The rest of the boys kept on talking busily, but they watched Fitzhugh out of the corner of their eyes. Chub and Swamp alone failed to see the trap set for their friend. They were discussing their chance of making the eleven.

Fitzhugh put a prune in his mouth. A pained look spread over his face. His eyes began to water. "What manner of plum is this?" he asked himself.

"Swallow it!" he heard Hillman hiss. Then he heard him say to Fatty: "Shut up, you tack-head! You'll give the game away to old Bennie."

Fitz made a desperate effort. He tried to cough, but almost choked.

Chub and Swamp turned like flashes at the noise, saw the vinegar before Fitz, saw Jim Hillman laughing. They understood. Chub himself had invented that game the spring before, and now here was an enemy

stealing his thunder and making it roar about the head of a Hoplite. It would be hard to say which was the more serious offense in Chub's eyes.

Chub turned on Jim, and said, in a low, even voice, "Fitzhugh 's a Hoplite. You score now, but look out. He'll come back. If he does n't I will."

"Me, too," chimed in the angry Swamp.

Jim roared. "Oh, the brave Hoplites! First blood this week, too. My, but you're an easy bunch! That yap is just your style. Why don't you get some live ones in your bunch of condensed-milk sops?"

Chub turned scarlet. He was too mad to speak. Swamp was, too, but he managed to land his heel on Jim's foot.

"Cut that!" snarled Jim. "You'll get us all snagged by Bennie."

Fitzhugh, in the meantime, gave one desperate gulp. He remembered that he was a Hoplite and must die game. The prune slipped, stuck, slipped again, and went down. He saw a glass of water before him, grabbed it, and swallowed it.

All but the Hoplites howled. The game was won. Mr. Dickson looked up and saw that Fitzhugh was in trouble. He noted the angry looks of the Hoplites and the joy on the faces of the Barn Stormers. He was wise beyond his years. "What is the matter, Fitzhugh?" he asked. "Don't you like your prunes?"

"Not very well, I guess," gasped Fitz.

Mr. Dickson looked quietly around. He saw what he saw. "Most of us do," he said, with an innocent smile. "James is very fond of them. If you are not

going to eat yours, suppose you give them to him. We don't believe in wasting things at St. Jo's."

"All right, sir, he can have them," grinned Fitz. He passed the mess across the table.

"Eat them, James; they will be good for you," said the master.

"I don't think I care for any to-night," the boy replied gruffly.

"I think you do, James," came the firm reply. "You old boys must set the new ones a good example by not finding fault with the food."

"I've had all I want," stammered Jim, getting redder each second under the triumphant gaze of the Hoplites and the innocent smile of the master. "They — they're bad."

"I don't think that can be possible; the matron is very careful about such things."

Jim pulled himself together. He was cornered. "There's vinegar on 'em, sir," he said slowly.

"Vinegar? Impossible!" Mr. Dickson was much surprised. "Who put it there? Do you usually put vinegar on your prunes, Fitzhugh?"

"I don't know. I never saw any before."

"Ah!" exclaimed the now smiling master. "I thought as much." He turned solemnly to Hillman. "James, the rector has forbidden the hazing of new boys; I do not approve of it myself. But, with perfect loyalty to the head, I think I may overlook this case, especially as it is you, of whom I am so fond and for whom I hope such great things. In fact, I may say that I have made up my mind to do so, James. But"

— Jim shivered — "I want you to do me a favor in return. Will you?" He paused. "Thank you. I want you to eat those prunes. I do not understand that a rule has been passed forbidding the hazing of old boys. But I will consult the head about the matter, James, if you feel that an injustice is being done you. Shall I?"

Jim shook his head and took the prunes. The old master smiled sweetly.

"Thank you, James," he said. "Are they nice?"

Jim put one in his mouth, and grabbed a glass of water. The boys at the table roared again. He looked up at the master, his eyes flashing.

"They're fine. I'll finish 'em — if the water lasts. You man the pitcher, Ted, and keep pouring while I eat. I'm the goat, sir. You score twice. I won't do it again."

"I would n't," agreed the master, as he pushed his chair back from the table. He rose and started to leave the room, then he turned. "James," he called back, "you may finish them to-morrow night — if they are still here."

THE COMEDY OF THE HERR PROFESSOR

By Ida Keniston

NEARLY a dozen fellows of the class of '99 in B—— College had met in Hammond's room.

The subject under discussion was the German play to be given in the B—— Opera House the following week by the juniors. For many years it had been the custom for the senior class of the college to give a French or a German play in the April preceding their graduation. This year the play to be given was a comedy that had been written for the occasion by Herr Ludwig, the German professor. Herr Ludwig, incensed by the poor work of the seniors, had induced the faculty to refuse permission to the senior class to present the play, and that privilege had been accorded instead to the juniors. Great was the wrath of the seniors thereat, and the informal gathering of the fellows in Hammond's room gradually resolved itself into an indignation meeting.

"I tell you, fellows," said Blake, "we ought to stop that little comedy of the professor's."

"Agreed," said Ainslie; "but how?"

"I'll tell you," said Mitchell. "Capture one or two of their leading players, entice them away — say, the

night before the dramatic — and keep them locked up somewhere, under guard, until Saturday. That would rather blight the performance."

"Good!" exclaimed Blake, in his excitement losing his balance and permitting his chair to come down on all fours. "Let's do it." He drew a long puff at his pipe, and carefully restored his chair to its more normal position of rearing back on its hind legs.

"I vote we capture Gus Henderson," suggested another of the party. "I believe he is to be the star actor. You know he is such an Adonis, anyway, and they say he has always been a bright and shining light in amateur theatricals."

"And that little Schneckenberger is to be 'leading lady,'" added Blake. "He is German, you know, so of course he has the lingo pat; and then his father is an actor, so he probably has the stage business all right."

"Well, say we get those two fellows if we can — or either of them would do," said Hammond. "I vote we tackle Henderson first. Schnecky rooms in Professor Silbee's wing, and you know old Silly's habit of prowling around at night."

It was finally arranged that a committee of three should take it upon themselves to look out for a suitable place to keep their captives, and lots were drawn to see who should be of the party to capture the juniors' "star actor."

About half past eleven on the Thursday night before the play was to be given, a little party of seniors tiptoed stealthily down the corridor that led to Hender-

son's rooms. They paused at the door for a brief reconnoissance.

"There's a dim light burning," whispered Blake, after an observation through the keyhole. "Evidently he has n't gone to bed."

Hammond cautiously and noiselessly tried the handle of the door. "Locked. We'll have to knock. Be ready, fellows."

A gentle tap at the door brought no response. A second and more imperative tap was followed by the sound of approaching footsteps. The door was thrown open by Henderson, who, as if surprised at receiving visitors at such a late hour, peered out curiously. "What is —"

He found no tiime to finish the sentence. A strong arm was thrown around his neck, a handkerchief stuffed into his mouth, and before he fairly knew what had happened the four men had pushed their way into the room, had closed the door, and swiftly and silently grappling with him, had him down on the floor, with one man sitting on his chest.

Henderson struggled furiously, but the numbers were against him, and in less time that it takes to tell it, they had rolled him over on his face and securely tied his hands behind his back. Then he was rolled over again, and permitted to rise to a sitting position.

"Oh! the juniors will give a German play, will they?" sneered Blake. "Oh, yes, but they'll find their star actor missing to-morrow night."

"Sorry, Henderson," remarked Hammond, "but

we think your health requires a change of air. We won't hurt you any, but we have provided other quarters for you until Saturday. Get up."

At this moment the conspirators received a sudden and most unpleasant shock.

"Zhentlemen!" said the deep guttural accents of Herr Ludwig.

They turned with a start, to behold Herr Ludwig, professor of German and mathematics, standing in the doorway that led from Henderson's sitting room to his bedroom. Every senior's heart sank within him, and as Herr Ludwig came forward slowly, every man stood as if under a spell, watching the familiar bent figure, the long gray hair, and the bushy eyebrows above the heavy iron-rimmed spectacles.

"Zhentlemen, this has gone far enough! Release his bonds," pointing to the captive.

One of the seniors sulkily obeyed.

"And remove that obstruction from his mouth." This was done.

The professor glared at the unhappy students. Evidently his wrath was rising and would soon find vent in words.

"Herr Blake! One moment, if you please," as Blake, who was nearest the door, began sidling in that direction, thinking he might escape unobserved. "Herr Blake, I haf seen you — I re*cog*nize you — and you, Herr Mitchell — and Hammond — and Ainslie."

"*So!*" Oh, the scorn in the little professor's voice! "You would haf it that our Deutsche play would not be gifen. But it *shall* be gifen!"

"It — we — we only meant it for a joke," stammered Blake.

"Oh, a *choke!* Well, it iss a ferry poor choke! I like a good choke myself. But this — to seek to prevent our play when we haf spent our time and money — when we haf for weeks prepared for it — when the public haf bought our tickets. Was für ein? What kind off a choke think you President Ambrose will call it? You know what he thinks of practical chokes! You will not find it a ferry funny choke, when you are expelled, or efen only suspended for a few months!"

The seniors looked at each other uneasily. Would it really mean anything so serious as expulsion or suspension?

"It iss lucky I was here to-night," said the professor. "I come here to coach our friend Henderson one little more time. He iss a good actor, but his Sherman is not all I could wish. But it iss not so bad as the *seniors'* — that iss one more thing, zhentlemen. There iss not one off you here whose standing in his class iss such that he can afford to play such chokes. Herr Blake, your Sherman would disgrace a freshman! Herr Mitchell, your mathematics —" The professor threw out his hands in eloquent silence.

Hammond nudged Ainslie. "Say something," he whispered. "We've got to say *something.*"

Thus urged, Ainslie stammered, "Herr Professor — if — we — if you'll let us off, and not report us to Prex — to President Ambrose — we — we'll all try to do our best in German and mathematics after this. And we'll be awfully grateful to you."

"Oh!" said the professor. "It were almost worth trying to see what your 'best' would be. If you and Herr Mitchell could pass a creditable examination in mathematics, it would be a most great surprise." He scratched his stubbly beard reflectively. "Well — I will make a bargain with you. If you will efery one off you gif me your word as a zhentleman that you will do your best in Sherman and mathematics for the rest of the term, I will say nothing about this to President Ambrose. Do you promise?"

"Yes, sir," and "yes, sir," came from the seniors.

"And you gif me your word that there will be no more attempt to interfere with our play in any way?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ferry well. I will say no more. I forget it all. So long as you keep your word I will nefer allude to it again. *But* if I haf occasion to be dissatisfied with your work, I *shall* remember, and I may tell President Ambrose what I remember. That iss all. Good-night, Herren."

The seniors filed slowly and sheepishly from the room.

The Herr Professor looked at Henderson. "It iss lucky we had been warned in time. I think our play will be gifen. And we haf a very good actor."

The play was "gifen," and proved a great success. Henderson fully satisfied the expectations of his friends that he would be the star actor; his six feet of masculine grace and beauty, the thrilling cadence of his voice in the love scenes quite captivating many a fluttering girlish

heart in the audience. Fritz Schneckenberger, too, in his part of "leading lady," won round after round of applause.

The theatricals over, the whole college settled down to steady work for the remaining two months of the college year. Men who had idled away their time in the previous months of the term now worked frantically to make up for lost time and to cram for the dreaded "exams."

In the senior class there was a marked improvement in the standing of at least four of the students. Blake, Hammond, Mitchell, and Ainslie showed a devotion to their studies, especially to German and mathematics, that was quite surprising. It was hard work to recover the lost ground, however, and sometimes Mitchell, after a "flunk" in mathematics, would look apprehensively at the professor. Still, their work, on the whole, showed such a vast improvement on their previous record that Herr Ludwig seemed satisfied. The professor was evidently keeping his promise. He made no allusion to the affair in Henderson's room; and but for the fact that the quartet were in any case somewhat doubtful of winning their sheepskins — and that "conscience doth make cowards of us all" — they might have supposed he had indeed forgotten.

At last the end of the term drew near. The examinations were over, and for the seniors only a few more days of college life remained.

One evening, as the seniors were holding a class meeting, the college janitor tapped at the door and handed in a note to the president of the class.

The note was as follows: —

Herr Ludwig requests the presence of the Senior Class in B —— Hall at 7.30 prompt this evening. He will not detain them long, but begs the attendance of every member of the class.

It was unanimously voted that the meeting adjourn until after the engagement with Professor Ludwig.

As the seniors trooped up the stairs to B —— Hall, a few minutes later, they encountered many of the junior class on the stairway. Evidently the juniors had received a similar summons.

The two classes, after some preliminary scufflings and jostlings, found seats in the hall, and in comparative quiet awaited the appearance of the Herr Professor.

Promptly as the clock struck the half hour, the little door at the back of the platform opened, and Herr Ludwig appeared.

The professor, in spite of his small oddities, and his ready wrath at any luckless student who had too hopelessly "flunked" in a recitation, was a favorite with the boys.

As the seniors now gazed at the well-known form and features of the little professor, they thought how, in a few more days, they would leave the old college, and their happy, careless student life would be forever a thing of the past.

With one accord they began to clap, and the sound swelled and grew until the professor, standing in the middle of the platform, bowed in response to what might fairly be termed an ovation. At length he raised

his hand. "Zhentlemen, zhentlemen," he said, mildly and protestingly. The applause gradually subsided, and finally ceased, and presently the students, out of respect for the professor, became so quiet that you might have heard the fall of a feather.

Then Herr Ludwig spoke: —

"Zhentlemen, I haf asked you to meet me this efening because I haf a story to tell you. I could not tell you before; but in a few days our college year will end, and you, seniors, will go out from these old college walls, and will be with us no more."

He paused, and his glance wandered over the room, from the seniors, sitting in the front rows, to the juniors, farther back in the hall.

Then he went on. "When the faculty decided that the Deutsche comedy should this year be given by the juniors, the seniors were not pleased. Some off them decided that the juniors should not gif the play, or that they should not gif it with success. Four off the seniors, whether on their own responsibility, or as representatives off their class, I do not know — I nefer inquired — went one night, ferry late on the night before the play wass to be gifen, to the room off one of the juniors. It wass a junior who wass to take a leading part in the play. They meant to kidnap him — to take him away — and to keep him a captif, so that the play without him could not be gifen."

The professor paused a moment. Blake and Hammond, who were sitting together, looked at each other. What did the professor mean by raking up that story and telling it to the two classes?

The professor went on and told how the four students of the senior class had forced their way into the junior's room, and had made him a prisoner. "But *I* wass there!" he said. "I had gone to coach the player once more. I heard the seniors, I waited till I learned their plan, and then I came before them."

Then followed an account of how the seniors had implored his leniency, and of the "bargain" he had made with them.

"You will know presently why I haf told you this story; why I could not tell it before. Zhentlemen, I will beg you to keep ferry still. I will ask your attention but a few moments longer."

He stepped quickly to a table that stood on the platform, concealed from the view of the students by a large screen that was placed before it.

What the professor did they could not see. In about a minute he reappeared. But what a transformation! The bent form had become erect; the stubbly beard, the bushy eye-brows, the iron-rimmed spectacles were gone; the brown, wrinkled face had become fair and smooth; the long gray hair was the only thing that remained to remind them of the professor.

Carelessly taking off the wig, and stuffing it into his pocket, *Fritz Schneckenberger*, junior, faced the audience. With a low bow, he said, still in the accents of the German professor, "Zhentlemen, does it need any further explanation?"

For a moment the silence of utter astonishment reigned in the hall.

Then, as the truth dawned on the minds of the

students, the juniors began to clap, and in a moment more the applause grew even louder than that which had greeted the first appearance of the pseudo-professor. A few hisses and jeers and catcalls from the seniors were soon drowned in the general roar of approval, for the majority of the seniors, forced to admit that they had been fairly and squarely trapped by the little junior, had joined in generous applause.

Suddenly Schneckenberger's expression of modest triumph changed to one of almost ludicrous embarrassment as his gaze became riveted on something or someone near the back of the hall.

The students turning around to see what had caused the change discovered that the *real* Professor Ludwig had entered the hall, and was advancing up the aisle. There fell a sudden silence as the professor, slowly and with dignity, ascended the steps of the platform and turned to face the audience.

Schneckenberger, although his face became a fiery red, courageously held his position, only retreating a step or two to one side, to give the Herr Professor the courtesy of the center of the stage.

"Zhentlemen," said the real Herr Ludwig — and it was a curious and comical tribute to Schneckenberger's powers of imitation to note how exactly similar were the tones of the professor to those they had just been listening to — "zhentlemen, hearing only a few moments before the hour that Professor Ludwig was to meet the seniors and juniors in this hall at a half after sefen, I thought there must haf been some mistake, and I came up to see about it. As I stood in the doorway,

I was surprised to see, as I thought, *myself* on the platform here. In utter astonishment I remained hidden behind the door, and I saw and heard all.

"Herr Schneckenberger" — turning to the junior, who was still blushing furiously — "Herr Schneckenberger, I congratulate you. Not only on your skill as an actor, but" — pausing to survey the seniors — "but on hafing accomplished more in one efening to improfe the zeal in study off some off my pupils than I had been able to accomplish with many expostulations through the whole term. I had noticed a marked improfement in the work off some off my students in the last two months, but I knew not what had caused the miracle! Herr Professor Schneckenberger, I congratulate you!"

He turned and shook hands with Schneckenberger; while once again the applause broke out, followed by the class yell of the jubilant juniors. This was responded to by the class yell of the seniors; and then seniors and juniors united in cheers for the college, for Professor Ludwig, and finally for "Herr Baby-Professor Schneckenberger-Ludwig!"

Thus ended the comedy of the Herr Professor, in which Fritz Schneckenberger played the leading rôle.

MISS BIDDLE OF BRYN MAWR

By Josephine Dodge Daskam

I SHOULD N'T have minded so much," explained Katherine, dolefully, and not without the suspicion of a sob, "if it was n't that I'd asked Miss Hartwell and Miss Ackley! I shall die of embarrassment — I shall! Oh, why could n't Henrietta Biddle have waited a week before she went to Europe?"

Her roommate, Miss Grace Farwell, sank despairingly on the pile of red floor-cushions under the window. "Oh, Kitten! you did n't ask them? Not really?" she gasped, staring incredulously at the tangled head that peered over the screen behind which Katherine was splashily conducting her toilet operations.

"But I did! I think they're simply grand, especially Miss Hartwell, and I'll never have any chance of meeting her, I suppose, and I thought this was a beautiful one. So I met her yesterday on the campus, and I walked up to her — I was horribly scared, but I don't think I showed it — and, said I, 'Oh, Miss Hartwell, you don't know me, of course, but I'm Miss Sewall, '9–, and I know Henrietta Biddle of Bryn Mawr, and she's coming to see me for two or three days, and I'm going to make a little tea for her — very informal — and I've heard her speak of you and

Miss Ackley as about the only girls she knew here, and I 'd love to have you meet her again!'"

Miss Farwell laughed hysterically. "And did she accept?" she inquired.

Katherine wiped her face for the third time excitedly. "Oh, yes! She was as sweet as peaches and cream! 'I shall be charmed to meet Miss Biddle again, and in your room, Miss Sewall,' she said, 'and shall I bring Miss Ackley?' Oh, Grace, she's lovely! She is the most —"

"Yes, I've no doubt," interrupted Miss Farwell cynically; "all the handsome seniors are. But what are you going to say to her to-day?"

Katherine buried her yellow head in the towel. "I don't know! Oh, Grace! I don't know," she mourned. "And they say the freshmen are getting so uppish, anyway, and if we carry it off well, and just make a joke of it, they'll think we're awfully f-f-fresh!" Here words failed her, and she leaned heavily on the screen, which, as it was old and probably resented having been sold third-hand at a second-hand price, collapsed weakly, dragging with it the Bodenhausen madonna, a silver rack of photographs, and a Gibson Girl drawn in very black ink on a very white ground.

"And if we are apologetic and meek," continued Miss Farwell, easily, apparently undisturbed by the confusion consequent to the downfall of a piece of furniture known to be somewhat erratic, "they'll laugh at us or be bored. We shall be known as the freshmen who invite seniors and faculty and town people to meet— nobody at all! A pretty reputation!"

"But, Grace, we could n't help it. Such things will happen!" Katherine was pinning the Gibson Girl to the wall, in bold defiance of the matron's known views on that subject.

"Yes, of course. But they must n't happen to freshmen!" her roommate returned sententiously. "How many faculty did you ask?"

"I asked Miss Parker, because she fitted Henrietta for college, at Archer Hall; and I asked Miss Williams, because she knows Henrietta's mother — oh! Miss Williams will freeze me to death when she comes here and sees just us; and I asked Miss Dodge, because she knows a lot of Bryn Mawr people. Then Mrs. Patton on Elm Street was a school friend of Mrs. Biddle's, and — oh! Grace, I *can't* manage them alone! Let's tell them not to come!"

"And what shall we do with the sandwiches? And the little cakes? And the lemons that I borrowed? And that pint of extra thick cream?" Miss Farwell checked off these interesting items on her fingers, and kicked the floor-cushions to point the question.

"Oh! I don't know! Is n't there any chance —"

"No, goosey, there is n't. See here!" Grace pulled down a letter with a special delivery stamp from the desk above her head, and read with emphasis: —

DEAR KITTEN, —

Just a line to say that Aunt Mary has sent for me at three days' notice to go to Paris with her for a year. It's now or never, you know, and I've left the college, and will come back to graduate with '9–. So sorry I can't see you before I go. Had looked forward to a very interesting time, renewing my own freshman days, and all that. Please send my blue

cloth suit right on to Philadelphia, C.O.D., when it comes to you. I hope you had n't gotten anything up for me.

With much love,

HENRIETTA BIDDLE.

BYRN MAWR, March 5.

"I don't think there 's much chance, my dear."

"No," said Katherine sadly, and with a final pat administered to the screen, which still wobbled unsteadily. "No, I suppose there is n't. And it 's eleven o'clock. They 'll be here at four! Oh! and I asked that pretty junior, Miss Pratt, you know. Henrietta knew her sister, she was in '8–."

"Ah!" returned Miss Farwell, with a suspicious sweetness. "Why did n't you ask a few more, Katherine, dear? What with the list we made out together and these last extra ones —"

"But I thought there was n't any use having the largest double room in the house, if we could n't have a decent-sized party in it! And think of all those darling, thin little sandwiches! Oh, well, we might just as well be sensible and carry the thing through, Gracie! But I am just as afraid as I can be: I tell you that. And Miss Williams will freeze me stiff." The yellow hair was snugly braided and wound around by now, and a neat though worried maiden sat on the couch and punched the Harvard pillow reflectively.

"Never mind her, Kitten, but just go ahead. You know Caroline Wilde said it was all right to ask her if she was Miss Biddle's mother's friend, and there was n't time to take her all around, and you know how nice Miss Parker was about it. We can't help it,

as you say, and we 'll go and get the flowers as we meant to. Have you anything this hour?"

With her roommate to back her, to quote the young lady herself, Miss Sewall felt equal to almost any social function. Terrifying as her position appeared — and strangely enough, the seniors appalled her far more than the faculty — there was yet a certain excitement in the situation.

What should she say to them? Would they be kind about it, or would they all turn around and go home? Would they think —

"Oh, nonsense!" interrupted Grace the practical as these doubts were thrust upon her. "If they're ladies, as I suppose they are, of course they'll stay and make it just as pleasant for us as they can. They'll see how it is. Think what we'd do, ourselves, you know!"

They went down the single, long street, with the shops on either side, a red-capped, golf-caped pair of friends, like nine hundred other girls, yet different from them all. And they chattered of Livy and little cakes and trigonometry and pleated shirtwaists and basketball and fortnightly themes like all the others, but in their little way they were very social heroines, setting their teeth to carry by storm a position that many another woman would have found doubtful.

They stopped at a little bakery, well down the street, to order some rolls for the girl across the hall from them, who had planned to breakfast in luxury and alone on chocolate and grapefruit the next morning. "Miss Carter, 24 Washburn," said Grace carelessly, when

Katherine whispered, "Look at her! Is n't that funny? Why, Grace, just see her!"

"See who — whom, I mean? (Only I hate to say 'whom.') Who is it, Kitten?"

Katherine was staring at the clerk, a tall, handsome girl, with masses of heavy black hair and an erect figure. As she went down to the back of the shop again, Katherine's eyes followed her closely.

"It's that girl that used to be in the Candy Kitchen — don't you remember? I told you then that she looked so much like my friend Miss Biddle. And then the Candy Kitchen failed, and I suppose she came here. And she 's just Henrietta's height, too. You know Henrietta stands very straight and frowns a little, and so did this girl when you gave Alice's number, and said 'Thirty-four or twenty-four?' Is n't it funny that we should see her now? Oh, dear! If only she *were* Henrietta!"

Grace stared at the case of domestic bread and breathed quickly. "Does she really look like her, Kitten?" she said.

"Oh, yes, indeed. It's quite striking. Henrietta 's quite a type, you know — nothing unusual, only very dark and tall and all that. Of course there are differences, though."

"What differences?" said Grace, still looking intently at the domestic bread.

"Oh, Henrietta's eyes are brown, and this girl's are black. And Henrietta has n't any dimple, and her hands are prettier. And Henrietta's waist is n't so small, and she has n't nearly so much hair, I should

say. But then, I have n't seen her for a year, and probably there's a greater difference than I think."

"How long is it since those seniors and the faculty saw Henrietta?" said Grace, staring now at a row of layer chocolate cakes.

Her roommate started. "Why — why, Grace, what do you mean? It's two years, Henrietta wrote, I think. And Miss Parker and Miss Williams have n't seen her for much longer than that. But — but — you don't mean anything, Grace?"

Grace faced her suddenly. "Yes," she said, "I do. You may think that because I just go right along with this thing, I don't care at all. But I do. I'm awfully scared. I hate to think of that Miss Ackley lifting her eyebrows — the way she will! And Miss Hartwell said once when somebody asked if she knew Judge Farwell's daughter, 'Oh, dear me — I suppose so! And everybody else in her class — theoretically! But practically I rarely observe them!' Ugh! She'll observe me to-day, I hope!"

"Yes, dear, I suppose she will. And me too. But —"

"Oh, yes! But if nobody knows how Miss Biddle looks, and she was going to stay at the hotel, anyway, and it would only be for two hours, and everything would be so simple."

Katherine's cheeks grew very red and her breath came fast. "But should we dare? Would she be willing? Would it be —"

"Oh, my dear, it's only a courtesy! And everybody will think it's all right, and the thing will go

beautifully, and Miss Biddle, if she has any sense of humor —"

"Yes, indeed! Henrietta would only be amused — oh, so amused! And it would be such a heavenly relief after all the worry. We could send her off on the next train — Henrietta, you know — and dress makes such a difference in a girl!"

"And I think she would if we asked her just as a favor — it would n't be a question of money! Oh, Katherine! I could cry for joy if she would!"

"She'd like to, if she has any fun in her — it would be a game with some point to it! And will you ask her, or shall I?"

They were half in joke and half in earnest: it was a real crisis to them. They were only freshmen, and they had invited the seniors and the faculty. And two of the most prominent seniors! Whom they had n't known at all! They had a sense of humor, but they were proud, too, and they had a woman's horror of an unsuccessful social function. They felt that they were doomed to endless joking at the hands of the whole college, and this apprehension, though probably exaggerated, nerved them to their *coup d'état.*

Grace walked down the shop. "I will ask her," she said.

Katherine stood with her back turned and tried not to hear. Suppose the girl should be insulted? Suppose she should be afraid? Now that there was a faint hope of success, she realized how frightened and discouraged she had been. For it would be a success, she saw that. Nobody would have had Miss Biddle to

talk with for more than a few minutes anyhow, they had asked such a crowd. And yet she would have been the center of the whole affair.

"Katherine," said a voice behind her, "let me introduce Miss Brooks, who has consented to help us!"

Katherine held out her hands to the girl. "Oh, thank you! *thank* you!" she said.

The girl laughed. "I think it 's queer," she said, "but if you are in such a fix, I'd just as lief help you as not. Only I shall give you away— I shan't know what to say."

Grace glanced at Katherine. Then she proved her right to all the praise she afterwards accepted from her grateful roommate. "That will be very easy," she said sweetly. "Miss Biddle, whom you will — will represent, speaks very rarely: she 's not at all talkative!"

Katherine gasped. "Oh, no!" she said eagerly, "she 's very statuesque, you know, and keeps very still and straight, and just looks in your eyes and makes you think she's talking. She says 'Really?' and 'Fancy, now!' and 'I expect you're very jolly here,' and then she smiles. You could do that."

"Yes, I could do that," said the girl.

"Can you come to the hotel right after dinner?" said Grace, competently, "and we'll cram you for an hour or so on Miss Biddle's affairs."

The girl laughed. "Why, yes," she said, "I guess I can get off."

So they left her smiling at them from the domestic bread, and at two o'clock they carried Miss Henrietta

Biddle's dress-suit case to the hotel and took Miss Brooks to her room. And they set her on a sofa and told her what they knew of her alma mater and her relatives and her character generally. And she amazed them by a very comprehensive grasp of the whole affair and an aptitude for mimicry that would have gotten her a star part in the senior dramatics. With a few corrections she spoke very good English, and "as she'd only have to answer questions, anyhow, she need n't talk long at a time," they told each other.

She put up her heavy hair in a twisted crown on her head, and they put the blue cloth gown on her, and covered the place in the front, where it did n't fit, with a beautiful fichu that Henrietta had apparently been led of Providence to tuck into the dress-suit case. And she rode up in a carriage with them, very much excited, but with a beautiful color and glowing eyes, and a smile that brought out the dimple that Henrietta never had.

They showed her the room and the sandwiches and the tea, and they got into their clothes, not speaking, except when a great box with three bunches of English violets was left at the door with Grace's card. Then Katherine said, "You dear thing!" And Miss Brooks smiled as they pinned hers on and said softly, "Fancy, now!"

And then they were n't afraid for her any more.

When the pretty Miss Pratt came, a little after four, with Miss Williams, she smiled with pleasure at the room, all flowers and tea and well-dressed girls, with a tall, handsome brunette in a blue gown with a beauti-

ful lace bib smiling gently on a crowd of worshipers, and saying little soft sentences that meant anything that was polite and self-possessed.

Close by her was her friend, Miss Sewall, of the freshman class, who sweetly answered half the questions about Bryn Mawr, that Miss Biddle could n't find time to answer, and steered people away who insisted on talking with her too long. Miss Farwell, also of the freshman class, assisted her roommate in receiving, and passed many kinds of pleasant food, laughing a great deal at what everybody said, and chatting amicably and unabashed with the two seniors of honor, who openly raved over Miss Biddle of Bryn Mawr.

As soon as Katherine had said, "May I present Miss Hartwell — Miss Ackley?" they took their stand by the stately stranger and talked to her as much as was consistent with propriety.

"Is n't she perfectly charming!" they said to Miss Parker, and "Yes, indeed," replied that lady, "I should have known Netta anywhere. She is just what I thought she would be!"

And Miss Williams, far from freezing the pretty hostess, patted her shoulder kindly. "Henrietta is quite worth coming to see," she said with her best and most exquisite manner. "I have heard of the Bryn Mawr style, and now I am convinced. I wish all our girls had such dignity — such a feeling for the right word!"

And they had the grace to blush. They knew who had taught Henrietta Biddle Brooks that right word!

At six o'clock Miss Biddle had to take the Philadelphia express. She had only stopped over for the tea. And so the girls of the house could not admire her over the supper table. But they probably appreciated her more. For after all, as they decided in talking her over later, it was n't so much what she said, as the way she looked when she said it!

But only a dress-suit case marked H. L. B. took the Philadelphia express that night, and a tall, red-cheeked girl in a mussy, checked suit left the hotel with a bunch of violets in her hand and a reminiscent smile on her lips.

"We simply can't thank you; we have n't any words. You've helped us give the nicest party two freshmen ever gave, if it is any pleasure to you to know that," said Katherine. "And now you're only not to speak of it."

"Oh, no; I shan't speak of it," said the girl. "You need n't be afraid. Nobody that I'd tell would believe me, very much, anyhow. I'm glad I could help you, and I had a lovely time — lovely!"

She smiled at them: the slow, sweet smile of Henrietta Biddle, late of Bryn Mawr. "You college ladies are certainly queer — but you're smart!" said Miss Brooks of the bakery.

HANDY ANDY GOES TO THE POST OFFICE

By Samuel Lover

WHEN Andy grew up to be what in country parlance is called "a brave lump of a boy," his mother thought he was old enough to do something for himself; so she took him one day along with her to the Squire's, and waited outside the door, loitering up and down the yard behind the house, among a crowd of beggars and great lazy dogs, that were thrusting their heads into every iron pot that stood outside the kitchen door, until chance might give her "a sight o' the Squire afore he wint out, or afore he wint in"; and after spending her entire day in this idle way, at last the Squire made his appearance, and Judy presented her son, who kept scraping his foot, and pulling his forelock, that stuck out like a piece of ragged thatch from his forehead, making his obeisance to the Squire, while his mother was sounding his praises for being the "handiest craythur alive — and so willin' — nothin' comes wrong to him."

"I suppose the English of all this is, you want me to take him?" said the Squire.

"Troth, an' your honor, that 's just it — if your honor would be plazed."

"What can he do?"

"Anything, your honor."

"That means *nothing*, I suppose," said the Squire.

"Oh, no, sir. Everything, I mane, that you would desire him to do."

To every one of these assurances on his mother's part Andy made a bow and a scrape.

"Can he take care of horses?"

"The best of care, sir," said the mother.

"Let him come, then, and help in the stables, and we'll see what he can do."

"May the Lord —"

"That'll do — there, now go."

"Oh, sure, but I 'll pray for you, and —"

"Will you go?"

"And may the angels make your honor's bed this blessed night, I pray."

"If you don't go, your son shan't come."

Judy and her hopeful boy turned to the right about in double-quick time, and hurried down the avenue.

The next day Andy was duly installed into his office of stable helper, and, as he was a good rider, he was soon made whipper-in to the hounds, for there was a want of such a functionary in the establishment; and Andy's boldness in this capacity soon made him a favorite with the Squire, who was one of those rollicking boys on the pattern of the old school, who scorned the attentions of a regular valet, and let anyone that chance threw in his way bring him his boots, or his hot water for shaving, or brush his coat, whenever it *was* brushed. One morning Andy, who was very often the attendant on such occasions, came to his room with hot water. He tapped at the door.

"Who 's that?" said the Squire, who had just risen, and did not know but it might be one of the women servants.

"It 's me, sir."

"Oh — Andy! Come in."

"Here 's the hot water, sir," said Andy, bearing an enormous tin can.

"Why, what brings that enormous tin can here? You might as well bring the stable bucket."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Andy, retreating. In two minutes more Andy came back, and, tapping at the door, put in his head cautiously, and said, "The maids in the kitchen, your honor, says there 's not so much hot water ready."

"Did I not see it a moment since in your hand?"

"Yes, sir; but that 's not the full o' the stable bucket."

"Go along, you stupid thief! and get me some hot water directly."

"Will the can do, sir?"

"Aye, anything, so you make haste."

Off posted Andy, and back he came with the can.

"Where 'll I put it, sir?"

"Throw this out," said the Squire, handing Andy a jug containing some cold water, meaning the jug to be replenished with the hot.

Andy took the jug, and the window of the room being open, he very deliberately threw the jug out. The Squire stared with wonder, and at last said: —

"What did you do that for?"

"Sure you *towld* me to throw it out, sir."

"Go out of this, you thick-headed villain!" said the Squire, throwing his boots at Andy's head. Andy retreated, and thought himself a very ill-used person.

Though Andy's regular business was "whipper-in," yet he was liable to be called on for the performance of various other duties: he sometimes attended at table when the number of guests required that all the subs should be put in requisition, or rode on some distant errand for the "mistress," or drove out the nurse and children on the jaunting-car; and many were the mistakes, delays, or accidents arising from Handy Andy's interference in such matters; but as they were seldom serious, and generally laughable, they never cost him the loss of his place, or the Squire's favor, who rather enjoyed Andy's blunders.

The first time Andy was admitted into the mysteries of the dining room, great was his wonder. The butler took him in to give him some previous instructions, and Andy was so lost in admiration at the sight of the assembled glass and plate, that he stood with his mouth and eyes wide open, and scarcely heard a word that was said to him. After the head man had been dinning his instructions into him for some time, he said he might go, until his attendance was required. But Andy moved not; he stood with his eyes fixed by a sort of fascination on some object that seemed to rivet them with the same unaccountable influence which the rattlesnake exercises over its victim.

"What are you looking at?" said the butler.

"Them things," said Andy, pointing to some silver forks.

"Is it the forks?" said the butler.

"Oh, no, sir! I know what forks is very well; but I never seen them things afore."

"What things do you mean?"

"These things, sir," said Andy, taking up one of the silver forks and turning it round and round in his hand in utter astonishment, while the butler grinned at his ignorance, and enjoyed his own superior knowledge.

"Well!" said Andy, after a long pause, "if ever I seen a silver spoon split that way before!"

The butler gave a horse laugh, and made a standing joke of Andy's split spoon; but time and experience made Andy less impressed with wonder at the show of plate and glass, and the split spoons became familiar as "household words" to him; yet still there were things in the duties of table attendance beyond Andy's comprehension — he used to hand cold plates for fish, and hot plates for jelly, etc. But one day he was thrown off his center in a remarkable degree by a bottle of soda water.

It was when that combustible was first introduced into Ireland as a dinner beverage that the occurrence took place, and Andy had the luck to be the person to whom a gentleman applied for some soda water.

"Sir?" said Andy.

"Soda water," said the guest, in that subdued tone in which people are apt to name their wants at a dinner table. Andy went to the butler. "Mr. Morgan, there 's a gintleman —"

"Let me alone, will you?" said Mr. Morgan.

Andy maneuvered round him a little longer, and again essayed to be heard.

"Mr. Morgan!"

"Don't you see I 'm as busy as I can be? Can't you do it yourself?"

"I dunna what he wants."

"Well, go and ax him," said Mr. Morgan.

Andy went off as he was bidden, and came behind the gentleman's chair with, "I beg your pardon, sir."

"Well!" said the gentleman.

"I beg your pardon, sir; but what 's this you axed me for?"

"Soda water."

"What, sir?"

"Soda water; but perhaps you have not any."

"Oh, there 's plenty in the house, sir! Would you like it hot, sir?"

The gentleman laughed, and supposing the new fashion was not understood in the present company, said, "Never mind."

But Andy was too anxious to please to be so satisfied, and again applied to Mr. Morgan.

"Sir!" said he.

"Bad luck to you! can't you let me alone?"

" There 's a gintleman wants some soap and wather."

"Some what?"

"Soap and wather, sir."

"Soda wather you mane. You 'll get it under the sideboard."

"Is it in the can, sir?"

"The curse o' Crum'll on you! in the bottles."

"Is this it, sir?" said Andy, producing a bottle of ale.

"No, bad cess to you! the little bottles."

"Is it the little bottles with no bottoms, sir?"

"I wish *you* wor in the bottom o' the say!" said Mr. Morgan, who was fuming and puffing, and rubbing down his face with a napkin, as he was hurrying to all quarters of the room, or, as Andy said, in praising his activity, that he was "like bad luck — everywhere."

"There they are!" said Mr. Morgan at last.

"Oh, them bottles that won't stand," said Andy; "sure them 's what I said, with no bottoms to them. How 'll I open it? it 's tied down."

"Cut the cord, you fool!"

Andy did as he was desired; and he happened at the time to hold the bottle of soda water on a level with the candles that shed light over the festive board from a large silver branch, and the moment he made the incision, bang went the bottle of soda, knocking out two of the lights with the projected cork, which, performing its parabola the length of the room, struck the Squire himself in the eye at the foot of the table, while the hostess at the head had a cold bath down her back. Andy, when he saw the soda water jumping out of the bottle, held it from him at arm's length; every fizz it made, exclaiming, "Ow! — ow! — ow!" and at last, when the bottle was empty, he roared out, "It 's all gone!"

Great was the commotion; few could resist laughter, except the ladies, who all looked at their gowns, not liking the mixture of satin and soda water. The extinguished candles were relighted — the Squire got his eye open again — and the next time he perceived the

butler sufficiently near to speak to him, he said in a low and hurried tone of deep anger, while he knit his brow, "Send that fellow out of the room!" but, within the same instant, resumed his former smile, that beamed on all around as if nothing had happened.

Andy was expelled from the *salle à manger* in disgrace, and for days kept out of the master's and mistress's way: in the meantime the butler made a good story of the thing in the servants' hall; and, when he held up Andy's ignorance to ridicule, by telling how he asked for "soap and water," Andy was given the name of "Suds," and was called by no other for months after.

But, though Andy's functions in the interior were suspended, his services in out-of-door affairs were occasionally put in requisition. But here his evil genius still haunted him, and he put his foot in a piece of business his master sent him upon one day, which was so simple as to defy almost the chance of Andy making any mistake about it; but Andy was very ingenious in his own particular line.

"Ride into the town and see if there 's a letter for me," said the Squire one day to our hero.

"Yes, sir."

"You know where to go?"

"To the town, sir."

"But do you know where to go in the town?"

"No, sir."

"And why don't you ask, you stupid thief?"

"Sure I'd find out, sir."

"Did n't I often tell you to ask what you 're to do, when you don't know?"

"Yes, sir."

"And why don't you?"

"I don't like to be throublesome, sir."

"Confound you!" said the Squire; though he could not help laughing at Andy's excuse for remaining in ignorance.

"Well," continued he, "go to the post office. You know the post office, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, where they sell gunpowder."

"You 're right for once," said the Squire; for his Majesty's postmaster was the person who had the privilege of dealing in the aforesaid combustible. "Go then to the post office and ask for a letter for me. Remember — not gunpowder, but a letter."

"Yis, sir," said Andy, who got astride of his hack and trotted away to the post office. On arriving at the shop of the postmaster (for that person carried on a brisk trade in groceries, gimlets, broadcloth, and linen drapery) Andy presented himself at the counter and said, "I want a letther, sir, if you plaze."

"Who do you want it for?" said the postmaster, in a tone which Andy considered an aggression upon the sacredness of private life.

So Andy thought the coolest contempt he could throw upon the prying impertinence of the postmaster was to repeat his question.

"I want a letther, sir, if you plaze."

"And who do you want it for?" repeated the postmaster.

"What 's that to you?" said Andy.

The postmaster, laughing at his simplicity, told him

he could not tell what letter to give him unless he told him the direction.

"The directions I got was to get a letther here — that 's the directions."

"Who gave you those directions?"

"The masther."

"And who 's your master?"

"What consarn is that o' yours?"

"Why, you stupid rascal! if you don't tell me his name, how can I give you a letter?"

"You could give it if you liked: but you 're fond of axin' impident questions, bekase you think I 'm simple."

"Go along out o' this! Your master must be as great a goose as yourself, to send such a messenger."

"Bad luck to your impidence," said Andy; "is it Squire Egan you dare to say goose to?"

"Oh, Squire Egan 's your master, then?"

"Yes, have you anything to say agin it?"

"Only that I never saw you before."

"Faith, then, you 'll never see me agin if I have my own consint."

"I won't give you any letter for the Squire, unless I know you 're his servant. Is there any one in the town knows you?"

"Plenty," said Andy, "it 's not everyone is as ignorant as you."

Just at this moment a person to whom Andy was known entered the house, who vouched to the postmaster that he might give Andy the Squire's letter. "Have you one for me?"

"Yes, sir," said the postmaster, producing one — "fourpence."

The gentleman paid the fourpence postage and left the shop with his letter.

"Here 's a letter for the Squire," said the postmaster; "you 've to pay me elevenpence postage."

"What 'ud I pay elevenpence for?"

"For postage."

"Did n't I see you give Mr. Durfy a letther for fourpence this minit, and a bigger letther than this? And now you want me to pay elevenpence for this scrap of a thing. Do you think I 'm a fool?"

"No; but I 'm sure of it," said the postmaster.

"Well, you 're welkum to be sure, sure — but don't be delayin' me now: here 's fourpence for you, and gi' me the letther."

"Go along, you stupid thief!" said the postmaster, taking up the letter, and going to serve a customer with a mouse trap. While this person and many others were served, Andy lounged up and down the shop, every now and then putting in his head in the middle of the customers and saying, "Will you gi' me the letther?"

He waited for above half an hour, in defiance of the anathemas of the postmaster, and at last left, when he found it impossible to get common justice for his master, which he thought he deserved as well as another man; for, under this impression, Andy determined to give no more than the fourpence.

The Squire in the meantime was getting impatient for his return, and when Andy made his appearance, asked if there was a letter for him.

"There is, sir," said Andy.

"Then give it to me."

"I have n't it, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"He would n't give it to me, sir."

"Who would n't give it you?"

"That owld chate beyant in the town — wanting to charge double for it."

"Maybe it 's a double letter. Why the devil did n't you pay what he asked, sir?"

"Arrah, sir, why should I let you be chated? It 's not a double letther at all: not above half the size o' one Mr. Durfy got before my face for fourpence."

"You 'll provoke me to break your neck some day, you vagabond! Ride back for your life, you omadhaun; and pay whatever he asks, and get me the letter."

"Why, sir, I tell you he was sellin' them before my face for fourpence apiece."

"Go back, you scoundrel! or I 'll horsewhip you; and if you 're longer than an hour, I 'll have you ducked in the horse pond!"

Andy vanished, and made a second visit to the post office. When he arrived, two other persons were getting letters, and the postmaster was selecting the epistles for each, from a large parcel that lay before him on the counter; at the same time many shop customers were waiting to be served.

"I 'm come for that letther, said Andy."

"I 'll attend to you by and by."

"The masther 's in a hurry."

"Let him wait till his hurry 's over."

"He 'll murther me if I 'm not back soon."

"I 'm glad to hear it."

While the postmaster went on with such provoking answers to these appeals for dispatch, Andy's eye caught the heap of letters which lay on the counter: so while certain weighing of soap and tobacco was going forward, he contrived to become possessed of two letters from the heap, and, having effected that, waited patiently enough till it was the great man's pleasure to give him the missive directed to his master.

Then did Andy bestride his hack, and in triumph at his trick on the postmaster, rattled along the road homeward as fast as the beast could carry him. He came into the Squire's presence, his face beaming with delight, and an air of self-satisfied superiority in his manner, quite unaccountable to his master, until he pulled forth his hand, which had been grubbing up his prizes from the bottom of his pocket; and holding three letters over his head, while he said, "Look at that!" he next slapped them down under his broad fist on the table before the Squire, saying: —

"Well! if he did make me pay elevenpence, I brought your honor the worth o' your money anyhow!"

THE LOAN OF A GRIDIRON

By Samuel Lover

A CERTAIN old gentleman in the west of Ireland, whose love of the ridiculous quite equaled his taste for claret and fox-hunting, was wont, upon certain festive occasions, when opportunity offered, to amuse his friends by drawing out one of his servants, who was exceedingly fond of what he termed his "thravels," and in whom a good deal of whim, some queer stories, and perhaps, more than all, long and faithful services, had established a right of loquacity. He was one of those few trusty and privileged domestics who, if his master unheedingly uttered a rash thing in a fit of passion, would venture to set him right. If the squire said, "I 'll turn that rascal off," my friend Pat would say, "Throth you won't, sir"; and Pat was always right, for if any altercation arose upon the subject matter in hand, he was sure to throw in some good reason, either from former service — general good conduct — or the delinquent's "wife and childher," that always turned the scale.

But I am digressing: on such merry meetings as I have alluded to, the master, after making certain "approaches," as a military man would say, as the preparatory steps in laying siege to some extravaganza of his servant, might perhaps assail Pat thus: "By

the bye, Sir John (addressing a distinguished guest), Pat has a very curious story, which something you told me to-day reminds me of. You remember, Pat (turning to the man, evidently pleased at the notice thus paid to himself) — you remember that queer adventure you had in France?"

"Throth I do sir," grins forth Pat.

"What!" exclaims Sir John in feigned surprise, "was Pat ever in France?"

"Indeed he was," cries mine host; and Pat adds, "aye, and farther, plaze your honor."

"I assure you, Sir John," continues mine host, "Pat told me a story once that surprised me very much, respecting the ignorance of the French."

"Indeed!" rejoins the baronet. "Really, I always supposed the French to be a most accomplished people."

"Throth then, they 're not, sir," interrupts Pat.

"Oh, by no means," adds mine host, shaking his head emphatically.

"I believe, Pat, 't was when you were crossing the Atlantic?" says the master, turning to Pat with a seductive air, and leading into the "full and true account"— for Pat had thought fit to visit North America, for "a raison he had," in the autumn of the year ninety-eight.

"Yes, sir," says Pat, "the broad Atlantic"— a favorite phrase of his, which he gave with a brogue as broad, almost, as the Atlantic itself.

"It was the time I was lost in crassin' the broad Atlantic, a comin' home," began Pat, decoyed into the

recital; "whin the winds began to blow, and the sae to rowl, that you 'd think the *Colleen dhas* (that was her name) would not have a mast left but what would rowl out of her.

"Well, sure enough, the masts went by the boord, at last, and the pumps were choak'd, and av coorse the wather gained an us; and throth, to be filled with wather is neither good for man or baste; and she was sinkin' fast, settlin' down, as the sailors call it; and faith I never was good at settlin' down in my life, and I liked it then less nor ever; accordingly we prepared for the worst, and put out the boat, and got a sack o' bishkets, and a cask o' pork, and a kag of wather, and a thrifle o' rum aboord, and any other little matthers we could think iv in the mortial hurry we wor in — and faith there was no time to be lost, for my darlint, the *Colleen dhas*, went down like a lump o' lead afore we wor many sthrokes o' the oar away from her.

"Well, we dhrifted away all that night, and next mornin' we put up a blanket an the ind av a pole as well as we could, and then we sailed iligant; for we darn't show a stitch o' canvass the night before, bekase it was blowin' like bloody murther, savin' your presence, and sure it 's the wondher of the world we wor n't swally'd alive by the ragin' sae.

"Well, away we wint, for more nor a week, and nothin' before our two good-lookin' eyes but the canophy iv heaven, and the wide ocean — the broad Atlantic — not a thing was to be seen but the sae and the sky; and though the sae and the sky is mighty

purty things in themselves, throth they 're no great things when you've nothin' else to look at for a week together — and the barest rock in the world, so it was land, would be more welkim. And then, soon enough throth, our provisions began to run low, the bishkits, and the wather, and the rum — throth *that* was gone first of all — God help uz — and, oh! it was thin that starvation began to stare us in the face — 'Oh, murther, murther, captain darlint,' says I, 'I wish we could see land anywhere,' says I.

" 'More power to your elbow, Paddy, my boy,' says he, 'for sitch a good wish, and throth it 's myself wishes the same.'

" 'Oh!' says I, 'that it may plaze you, sweet queen iv heaven, supposin' it was only a *dissolute* island,' says I, 'inhabited wid Turks, sure they would n't be such bad Chrishthans as to refuse us a bit and a sup.'

" 'Whisht, whisht, Paddy,' says the captain, 'don't be talkin' bad of anyone,' says he; ' you don't know how soon you may want a good word put in for yourself, if you should be called to quarthers in th' other world all of a suddint,' says he.

" 'Thrue for you, captain darlint,' says I — I called him darlint, and made free wid him, you see, bekase disthress makes uz all equal — 'thrue for you, captain jewel — God betune uz and harm, I owe no man any spite' — and throth that was only thruth. Well, the last bishkit was sarved out, and the wather itself was all gone at last, and we passed the night mighty cowld — well, at the brake o' day the sun riz most beautiful out o' the waves, that was as bright as silver and as

clear as cryshtal. But it was only the more crule upon us, for we wor beginnin' to feel *terrible* hungry; when all at wanst I thought I spied the land — I thought I felt my heart up in my throat in a minnit, and 'Thunder an turf, captain,' says I, 'look to leeward,' says I.

" 'What for?' says he.

" ' I think I see the land,' says I. So he ups with his bring-'m-near (that 's what the sailors call a spy glass, sir) and looks out, and, sure enough, it was.

" 'Hurra!' says he, 'we 're all right now; pull away, my boys,' says he.

" 'Take care you 're not mistaken,' says I: 'maybe it 's only a fog bank, captain darlint,' says I.

" 'Oh, no,' says he, 'it 's the land in airnest.'

" 'Oh, then, whereabouts in the wide world are we, captain?' says I; 'maybe it id be in Roosia, or Proosia, or the Garman Oceant,' says I.

" 'Tut, you fool,' says he — for he had that consaited way wid him — thinkin' himself cleverer nor any one else —'tut, you fool,' says he, 'that 's France,' says he.

" 'Hare an ouns,' says I, 'do you tell me so? and how do you know it 's France it is, captain dear?' says I.

" 'Bekase this is the Bay o' Bishky we 're in now,' says he.

" 'Throth I was thinkin' so myself,' says I, 'by the rowl it has; for I often heerd av it in regard of that same '; and throth the likes av it I never seen before nor since, and, with the help o' God, never will.

"Well, with that, my heart began to grow light; and when I seen my life was safe, I began to grow twice

hungrier than ever — so, says I, 'Captain jewel, I wish we had a gridiron.'

" 'Why then,' says he, 'thunder and turf,' says he, 'what puts a gridiron into your head?'

" 'Bekase I 'm starvin' with the hunger,' says I.

" 'And sure, bad luck to you,' says he, 'you could n't ate a gridiron,' says he, 'barrin' you wor a pelican o' the wilderness,' says he.

" 'Ate a gridiron!' says I; 'och, in throth I 'm not sich a gommach all out as that, anyhow. But sure, if we had a gridiron, we could dress a beef-stake,' says I.

" 'Arrah! but where 's the beef-stake?' says he.

" 'Sure, could n't we cut a slice off the pork?' says I.

" 'I never thought o' that,' says the captain. 'You 're a clever fellow, Paddy,' says he, laughin'.

" 'Oh, there 's many a thrue word said in joke,' says I.

" 'Thrue for you, Paddy,' says he.

" 'Well then,' says I, 'if you put me ashore there beyant' (for we were nearin' the land all the time), 'and sure I can ax thim for to lind me the loan of a gridiron,' says I.

" 'You gommach,' says he, 'sure I towld you before that 's France — and sure they 're all furriners there,' says the captain.

" 'Well,' says I, 'and how do you know but I 'm as good a furriner myself as any o' thim?'

" 'What do you mane?' says he.

" 'I mane,' says I, 'what I towld you, that I 'm as good a furriner myself as any o' thim.'

" 'Make me sinsible,' says he.

" 'By dad, maybe that 's more nor me, or greater nor me, could do,' says I — and we all began to laugh at him, for I thought I 'd pay him off for his bit o' consait about the Garman Oceant.

" 'Lave aff your humbuggin',' says he, 'I bid you, and tell me what it is you mane, at all at all.'

" '*Parly voo frongsay*,' says I.

" 'Oh, your humble sarvant,' says he; 'why, you 're a scholar, Paddy.'

" 'Throth, you may say that,' says I.

" 'Why, you 're a clever fellow, Paddy,' says the captain, jeerin' like.

" 'You 're not the first that said that,' says I, 'whether you joke or no.'

" 'Oh, but I 'm in airnest,' says the captain — 'and do you tell me, Paddy,' says he, 'that you spake Frinch?'

" '*Parly voo frongsay*,' says I.

" 'That bangs Banagher, and all the world knows Banagher beats the divil — I never met the likes o' you, Paddy,' says he — 'pull away, boys, and put Paddy ashore, and maybe we won't get a good bellyful before long.'

"So with that it was no sooner said nor done — they pulled away, and got close in shore in less than no time, and run the boat up in a little creek, and a beautiful creek it was, with a lovely white sthrand — an iligant place for ladies to bathe in the summer; and out I got — and it 's stiff enough in my limbs I was, afther bein' cramp'd up in the boat, and perished with the cowld and hunger; but I conthrived to scramble on,

one way or t'other, tow'rds a little bit iv a wood that was close to the shore, and the smoke curlin' out of it, quite timptin' like.

"'By the powdhers o' war, I 'm all right,' says I; 'there 's a house there;' and sure enough there was, and a parcel of men, women, and childher, ating their dinner around a table, quite convaynient. And so I wint up to the door, and I thought I 'd be very civil to thim, as I heerd the Frinch was always mighty p'lite intirely — and I thought I 'd show them I knew what good manners was.

"So I took aff my hat, and, making a low bow, says I, 'God save all here,' says I.

"Well, to be sure, they all stopt ating at wanst, and begun to stare at me — and, faith, they almost look'd me out o' countenance; and I thought to myself it was not good manners at all — more betoken from furriners, which they call so mighty p'lite; but I never minded that, in regard o' wantin' the gridiron; and so says I, 'I beg your pardon,' says I, 'for the liberty I take, but it 's only bein' in disthress in regard of ating,' says I, 'that I make bowld to throuble yez, and if you could lind me the loan of a gridiron,' says I, 'I 'd be entirely obleeged to ye.'

"They all stared at me twice worse nor before; and with that, says I (knowin' what was in their minds), 'indeed, it 's thrue for you,' says I — 'I 'm tatthered to pieces, and God knows I look quare enough — but it 's by raison of the storm,' says I, 'which dhruv us ashore here below, and we 're all starvin',' says I.

"So then they began to look at each other agin; and

myself, seeing at wanst dirty thoughts was in their heads, and that they tuk me for a poor beggar, comin' to crave charity — with that, says I, 'Oh, not at all,' says I, 'by no manes — we have plenty of mate ourselves, there below, and we 'll dhress it,' says I, 'if you would be plased to lind us the loan of a gridiron,' says I, makin' a low bow.

"Well, sir, with that, throth they stared at me twice worse nor ever — and, faith, I began to think that maybe the captain was wrong, and that it was not France at all at all; and so says I, 'I beg pardon, sir,' says I, to a fine owld man, with a head of hair as white as silver — 'maybe I 'm undher a mistake,' says I; 'but I thought I was in France, sir: are n't you furriners?' says I — '*Parly voo frongsay?*'

"'We, munseer,' says he.

" 'Then would you lind me the loan of a gridiron,' says I, 'if you plase?'

"Oh, it was thin they stared at me as if I had siven heads; and, faith, myself began to feel flusthered like, and onaisy — and so says I, makin' a bow and scrape agin, 'I know it 's a liberty I take, sir,' says I, 'but it 's only in the regard of bein' cast away; and if you plase, sir,' says I, '*Parly voo frongsay?*'

" 'Munseer,' says he, mighty sharp.

" 'Then would you lind me the loan of a gridiron?' says I, 'and you 'll obleege me.'

"Well, sir, the ould chap began to munseer me; but the divil a bit of a gridiron he 'd gi' me; and so I began to think they wor all neygars, for all their fine manners; and throth my blood begun to rise, and says I, 'By my

sowl, if it was you in disthriss,' says I, 'and if it was to owld Ireland you kem, it 's not only the gridiron they 'd give you, if you ax'd it, but something to put on it too, and the dhrop o' dhrink into the bargain, and *cead mille failte.*'

"Well, the word *cead mille failte* seemed to sthreck his heart, and the owld chap cocked his ear, and so I thought I 'd give him another offer, and make him sinsible at last; and so says I, wanst more, quite slow, that he might undherstand — '*Parly — voo — frongsay, munseer?*'

" 'We, munseer,' says he.

" 'Then lind me the loan of a gridiron,' says I, ' and bad scram to you.'

"Well, bad win to the bit of it he 'd gi' me, and the owld chap begins bowin' and scrapin,' and said something or other about a long tongs.

" 'Phoo! — the divil sweep yourself and your tongs,' says I, 'I don't want a tongs at all at all; but can't you listen to raison,' says I — '*Parly voo frongsay?*'

" 'We, munseer.'

" 'Then lind me the loan of a gridiron,' says I, 'and howld your prate.'

"Well, what would you think but he shook his owld noddle as much as to say he would n't; and so says I, 'Bad cess to the likes o' that I ever seen — throth if you wor in my counthry it 's not that-a-way they 'd use you; the curse o' the crows on you, you owld sinner,' says I, 'the divil a longer I 'll darken your door.'

"So he seen I was vex'd, and I thought, as I was turnin' away, I seen him begin to relint, and that his

conscience throubled him; and, says I, turnin' back, 'Well, I 'll give you one chance more — you owld thief — are you a Chrishthan at all at all? Are you a furriner,' says I, 'that all the world calls so p'lite? Bad luck to you, do you undherstand your own language? — *Parly voo frongsay?*' says I.

" 'We, munseer,' says he.

" 'Then thunder an turf,' says I, 'will you lind me the loan of a gridiron?'

"Well, sir, the divil resave the bit of it he 'd gi' me — and so with that, 'The curse o' the hungry an you, you owld negardly villain,' says I; 'the back o' my hand and the sowl o' my fut to you, that you may want a gridiron yourself yit,' says I; 'and wherever I go, high and low, rich and poor, shall hear o' you,' says I; and with that I left them there, sir, and kem away — and in throth it 's often sense that I thought that it was remarkable."

EZEKIEL'S RACE WITH THE BELL

By Lucy Pratt

MISS JANE LANE sat in a straight-backed chair on her clean, white veranda, and, quite ignoring the glistening, alluring Hampton Roads which beckoned to her in the morning sun, gave her undivided attention to a small note which she held in her hand. And as she read, Miss Jane's face became both shocked and grieved. Her protégé, Ezekiel Esquire Jordan, sat on a step below her and, looking both cheerful and resigned to anything, regarded the glistening, alluring "Roads" which also beckoned to him in the morning sun.

But Miss Jane had laid down her paper and was looking at him, still both shocked and grieved.

"To think, Ezekiel," she finally began, taking the bull fairly and squarely by the horns, "to think, that after all the trouble and pains that have been taken to get you *in*to the Whittier School, and after their consideration in being willing to admit you there, to think, that after all this, you can't manage to get there *on time*."

"Yas'm," murmured Ezekiel contritely.

"Well, now, just tell me why it is that you *can't* manage to get there on time."

"*I* dunno 'm," murmured Ezekiel again.

"Four mornings!" went on Miss Jane. "For *four mornings*, so I hear from the principal, in a note written yesterday afternoon, you have been late. Why, I *am ashamed* of you, Ezekiel."

Ezekiel failed to respond, even briefly.

"What excuse have you to offer, I should like to know? What reason did you give Miss Doane? Any?"

"Yas'm. I jes' 'mence tellin' 'er all 'bout 'ow I'se comin' down de road, 'n' all 'bout ole man where 's pushin' 'long li'l' ole cyart 'n' a-sellin' li'l' hotcakes —'n' she say dat ain' no 'scuse, 'n' she ain' gwine lemme come 't all lessen I kin git dere time de res' does."

"I should say not," agreed Miss Jane, in no doubtful tones. "I only wonder that they have kept you as long as they have. Now, the truth of the matter is, Ezekiel, there is not the *slightest* excuse for your having been late once. Not once."

"Yas'm, Miss Doane she say 't ain' no 'scuse nudder. 'N' I jes' 'mence tellin' her 'bout ole man where 's sellin' li'l' hot cakes —"

"But that had nothing to do with *you*. Absolutely nothing."

"No'm. 'T ain' nuth'n' do wid me. But ole man come 'long a-pushin' on 'is cyart, say: —

"'Heyo, boy! Ain't yer want a li'l' hot cake fer yer breakfus'?' Speak jes' dat-a-way, Miss Jane. Say: —

" 'Heyo, boy! Ain't yer want a li'l' hot cake fer yer breakfus'?'

" 'N' co'se I ain't. 'N' yit co'se I'se 'blige answer 'im, too. So: —

" 'No,' I say, 'I ain' want no li'l' hot cake fer my breakfus'.'

" 'Ain't yer?' ole man say, ' ain't yer? Cuz I kin give yer li'l' hot cake fer a penny.'

" 'Penny nuth'n',' I say. Yas'm, it 's jes' de way I answer 'im, Miss Jane. ' Penny nuth'n',' I say. Cuz co'se I knows I ain' no time fer no sech foolishness. But same time I jes' 'appen ter kine o' feel in my pocket, yer know, jes' kine o' feel in my pocket."

"Now, this is all entirely unnecessary, Ezekiel," put in Miss Jane; "you were late to school, and that is enough."

"Yas'm. But w'en I putten my han' in my pocket, yer see, yer see I jes' natchelly —"

"Yes, I don't doubt you found a penny. Now really, are n't you ashamed, Ezekiel, to have made yourself late to school in this inexcusable way?"

" 'N' co'se ole man, jes' soon 's he seen dat penny he jes' whup outen a li'l' cake 'n' putten it on de fiah twell it begins a-sizzlin' 'n' a-smokin' 'n' a-poppin' jes' like praesen'ly somebody 'll be *'blige* ter eat it. 'N' ole man say: —

" 'Hyeah 's yer li'l' hot cake fer yer!'

" 'N' co'se I'se r'al mad w'en he talk dat-a-way too. Cuz co'se I ain' no time ter eat nuth'n'.

" 'G'long!' I say. ' I ain' gwine eat no li'l' hot cake,' I say, 'cuz I ain' time! You hyeah?'

" 'Ain' time!' he say, ' 'N' after I'se jes' been a-cookin' it fer yer! Ain' time! Well, yer is! Yer 's 'blige ter eat it!'

" 'I ain' nudder!' I say. 'No, suh! I ain't!'

" 'N' same time, co'se, li'l' cake 's jes' a-sizzlin' on de fiah.

" 'Yer ain't!' he holler, 'well, who is? I ain't! Somebody 's 'blige ter, ain't dey! 'N' I ain't!'

" 'I ain't!' I say.

"'I ain't!' he holler back.

" ''N' I ain't!' I holler back 'gin.

"'N' li'l' cake 's jes' a-sizzlin' on de fiah."

"Ezekiel!" put in Miss Jane. "This is altogether *too* ridiculous. Now I should like you to talk common sense."

"Wha'm yer say, Miss Jane? Yas'm.

" ''N' I ain't!' I holler back agin. Yas'm, I jes *holler* back, Miss Jane."

"Very well. I don't care what you hollered back. And I don't care to hear anything more about the old man or the little cake, either."

Ezekiel looked momentarily crushed.

"Of course," she added, more leniently, "I suppose you ate it, did n't you?"

"Well, yer see, Miss Jane — he jes' keep on a-holl'in' an' a-holl'in', twell presen'ly — yer see — I'se jes' *'blige* ter eat it."

"Yes. I thought so. Now, Ezekiel. This morning *I* will see that you get to school in time. No, it is n't time to start yet. I will tell you when it is. I can't get over your seeming lack of appreciation, Ezekiel. I sometimes wonder how it was that you were ever admitted to the Whittier School, anyway."

Ezekiel looked rather mystified about it himself.

"And especially after that very queer story that you told that first afternoon — about —"

"'Bout 'Manuel 'n' li'l' dawg," explained Ezekiel. "Yas'm. Miss No'th she tole me I kin tell a story ter de chillen. 'N' 's all 'bout 'Manuel 'n' 'is li'l' dawg. 'N' 'bout after de li'l' dawg gotten drownded, 'Manuel he 's jes' 'blige ter live dere all 'lone."

"It was very good of Miss North to let you tell it, I am sure. For of course she must have known that it was an entirely made-up story."

"But I ain't tole 'em *all* 'bout it, nudder. Cuz af' de li'l' dawg drownded, w'y, af' dat, co'se, 'Manuel 's all 'lone 'gin. So praesen'ly he 's jes' 'blige git 'im anudder li'l' an'mul.

"'N' after studyin' 'bout it long time, he 'cide ter git 'im a li'l' chick'n."

"A chicken?" questioned Miss Jane, "I should n't think that a chicken would have made a very satisfactory pet."

"Yas'm, he gotten 'im a li'l' chick'n. 'N' fus' time he ever seen 'er, she come a-flyin' right in fru de do', a-settin' on a li'l' leaf."

"A leaf? But no chicken could have been supported by a *leaf*."

"Yas'm, a-flyin' right in fru de do' a-settin' on a li'l' leaf. 'N' she keep on flyin' 'long on de leaf, right up, 'n' right up, twell she gotten clare up ter de tip top o' de room. 'N' den she turn 'roun, 'n' jes' set righ' down on a li'l' sunbeam where 's comin' in fru de winder.'

"But she *could n't* have sat down on a sunbeam, Ezekiel. Be sensible."

"Yas'm, she is. Jes' a-settin' up dere on a li'l' sunbeam. 'N' praesen'ly li'l' boy calls out: —

" 'Oh, ain't yer gwine come down? Ain't yer gwine come down? Come down, 'n' we 'll git us some breakfus'!'

"But li'l' chick'n on de sunbeam, co'se she ain't gwine be fool dat-a-way 'thout axin' a li'l' mo' 'bout it. So she answer back: —

" 'W'at 's yer gwine have fer breakfus'?'

" 'Gwine have some tea —'n' some cake —'n'—'

" 'Well, I ain't comin' down fer no sech a thing,' chick'n say.

" 'But it 's *co'n* cake,' 'Manuel call out. 'Wid li'l' kernels o' *co'n* a-stickin' right into it!'

" 'Well, w'y ain't yer say so 'fo'?' she say. 'N' she jes' hop right offen de li'l' sunbeam, 'n' flew righ' down on de flo' siden de li'l' boy.

"'N' 'Manuel he jes' 'kine o' has ter laf to 'isself ter think she been ser sassy. 'N' yit he speak up r'al deep 'n' kine o' big like, say: " 'W'at 's yer name, chick'n?'

"' My name Joshua,' chick'n say r'al peart.

"'N' she give 'er lef' wing a flop, 'n' snap 'er eyes at de li'l' boy twell he 's mos' 'blige ter laf agin.

" 'Joshua!' he say, 'ain' dat kine o' funny name fer — fer a chick'n?'

" 'No, 't ain' nuth'n' funny 'bout it!' Joshua say, r'al mad, 'n' flap bofe 'er wings jes' like she 's gwine fly up on de sunbeam agin.

" 'Dat 's de trufe,' 'Manuel say, 'cert'nly is de trufe. 'T ain' nuth'n' funny 'bout it. Cert'nly hope yer 's well, Joshua.'

"'N' af' dat li'l' chick'n 'n' 'Manuel live dere 'lone tergedder.

"'N' li'l' chick'n's name Joshua jes' same 's befo'.

"'N' eve'ything jes' goes 'long so, 'cep'n' w'en Joshua git mad at de li'l' boy. 'N' den she allays stick outen 'er fedders, 'n' snap 'er eyes, 'n' flap 'er wings like she gwine up on de li'l' sunbeam agin, twell 'Manuel speak up quick 'n' say: —

" 'Oh, co'se I ain' 'ten' no harm, Joshua! 'Scuse *me!* Co'se ain't 'ten no harm!'

"But one mawnin' li'l' boy he seem ter kine o' fergit 'bout Joshua bein' s' easy ter git mad, 'n' jes' after breakfus', w'en dey 's fixin' ter clean up de house, he slap 'er kine o' laffin 'n' easy like siden de haid, call out: —

" 'Come 'long, ole chick'n! Who you think y' are, a-tippin' roun' yere ez ef yer 's to a party? Come 'long, now, 'n' git yer wuk done!'

"'N' Joshua, ain' she mad! Oh, my! She jes' stick outen 'er fedders, 'n' swell up, 'n' snap 'er eyes at de li'l' boy, 'n' begins flappin' 'er wings, flap, flap, flap! 'N' she 's gwine right up on dat li'l' sunbeam agin, sho'.

" 'Oh, w'at yer stan'in' up dere a-flappin' away like a ole win'mill fer?' 'Manuel say. 'W'at yer stan'in' up dere like dat fer, huh?'

"Oh, my! Joshua ain't 'er eyes snap! 'N' flap, flap, flap she went agin, flap, flap, flap! Right stret up, up, up, ter dat li'l' sunbeam! 'N' den she turn 'roun, 'n' se' down 'n' look down at 'Manuel agin, 'n' 'er eyes keep on a-snappin', 'n' 'er fedders a-stickin' out, 'n' 'er wings still a-gwine flap, flap, flap!

" 'Well, w'at yer s'mad 'bout now?' 'Manuel say;

'yer better come down now: Yer better come down now, Joshua! Cuz co'se I ain' 'ten' no harm!'

"But li'l' chick'n ain't say nary word, jes' set dere on de li'l' sunbeam, 'n' ain't say nary word.

"'N' all day 'Manuel keep on a-callin', 'n' all day Joshua she jes' keep on a-settin' dere, 'n' ain' say nary word. Twell praesen'ly, w'en it 'mence gettin' kine o' late, li'l' boy call out: —

" 'Well, w'at yer gwine do w'en de sun 's went down? W'at yer gwine set on w'en de sun 's went down?'

"'N' Joshua she speak up fer de fus' time.

" 'Gwine set on de moon,' she say.

"'N' doan't yer know, jes' 's she spoken de words, li'l' sunbeam begins ter flicker back 'n' fofe, back 'n' fofe, 'n' praesen'ly it jes' flicker right out fru de winder. 'N' same time it all 'mence gittin' ser kine o' dark, seem like 'Manuel he cyan' see nuth'n' 't all. 'N' all he kin hyeah 's jes' li'l' chick'n still a-flappin' jes' same way 's 'fo'. So he jes' wait — twell it begin gittin' a li'l' lighter, 'n' a li'l' lighter, twell sho' 'nuff, w'en he looks up agin he seen a r'al shinin' li'l' moonbeam a-comin' right in fru de winder jes' where sunbeam 's went out.

"'N' Joshua she jes' turn 'roun' 'n' set right down on de moonbeam.

"'N' li'l' boy he look up fru de light where 's comin' down ser bright 'n' shinin' fum de li'l' beam, twell he seen Joshua a-settin' dere, 'n' den he jes' lay down on de flo' where it 's a li'l' nudder dash o' light, 'n' drap right off ter sleep. 'N' he sleep dere all night long on same li'l' dash o' light.

"'N' Joshua keep on a-settin' dere all night too, on same li'l' moonbeam.

"'N' so she keep it up — jes' same —'n' ain' nuver come down — keep on a-settin' on de sunbeam all day 'n' de moonbeam all night. 'N' she git thinner 'n' thinner, 'n' smaller 'n' smaller, 'n' still she ain't come down.

"'N' one night de li'l' boy look up in de light 'n' begins ter cry, 'n' say: —

" 'Oh, yer 's gittin' smaller 'n' smaller, Joshua! Yer 's ser small now I cyant sca'cely see yer!'

"'N' it 's mos' mawnin' when he spoke.

"'N' praesen'ly he kin hyeah sump'n' where soun' like de li'l' chick'n's voice kine o' far 'way, say: —

" 'Good-bye! I'se ser small I seem ter jes' be gwine right off in de moonbeam!'

"'N' it flicker 'n' flicker agin, 'n' at las' flicker out fru de winder.

"'N' 'Manuel he jes' wait a-lookin' up. Jes' wait. 'N' de sunbeam come back. 'N' still he 's lookin' up. But she ain't dere. Not no li'l' chick'n a-settin' on de beam. Not narry one. Cuz Joshua 's went off in de moonbeam, 'n' dat 's de en' o' de story."

Miss Jane passed her hand over her forehead, and glanced off at the beckoning Hampton Roads.

There was a faint, far-away sound down the road.

"What a very — queer sort of story, Ezekiel. How did you ever happen to think of such a thing?"

From away down the road came the faint, far-away sound again.

"Ezekiel! What 's that?"

He looked back at her, half confusedly at first, then with sudden, vivid realization: —

"It 's de school-bell a-ringin', Miss Jane! It — it 's de school-bell — a-ringin'!"

"I know it." Miss Jane looked suddenly horrified. "And I told you — *I would tell you!* Run, Ezekiel! Run as fast as you can!"

Ezekiel jumped from the clean white veranda and swept off into the road. Miss Jane stood looking at him as he gradually faded before her eyes. Into the road — around the corner — into another long, straight road — and he was gone.

Other people, big and little, traveling on in the long, straight road, stepped aside and looked curiously at him.

Cling! Clang! came the clear, small note of the little Whittier bell — still far away, and he was still sweeping on, a strange, ever-increasing thing of speed. A something real seemed actually to have taken hold of him.

"Not no mo'! She — she say — I cyan' come — no mo' — ef I'se late," he gasped between his breaths. "Not no mo'!"

And the Whittier School stood at the other end of the road, growing gradually in distinctness.

"Not — no mo'!"

It grew gradually, surely. He could see it standing up there — almost mockingly. He thought — he could see it all, too, just as it was inside, the children just getting ready to march to the assembly room, listening to the first music from the piano, coming in to them faintly — Miss Doane on the platform and Miss North looking — perhaps she was looking for him — she

always looked so sorry when he was late — and yet — she always seemed so quick to understand. Oh, he did n't mean to be late this morning!

"*Not no mo'!*"

A boy striding on ahead of him fell kicking in the dust, but Ezekiel — did n't know. Ezekiel was tearing, flying, sweeping breathlessly on to the Whittier School. Another boy dodged and shied off into the hedge at one side, but Ezekiel — did n't know. Ezekiel was tearing, flying, sweeping on. The last note of the bell died away and reverberated, and he was in the school yard.

And just here something unexpected but fully realized happened. A small kindergarten child stepped suddenly before him, and down went the child. Then, for the first time, Ezekiel stopped. It was something like the quick, jolting stop of an electric car, and he looked down breathless, distressed, and haggard. But it was only a momentary setback. In another moment the child was picked up, thrown up, and he was on again, up the steps, through the back hall, and into the schoolroom, while the kindergartner hung back over his shoulder crying miserably.

"Why, Ezekiel!"

Miss North looked at him, endeavoring to comprehend. And the children looked too.

Ezekiel dropped into his seat, and the kindergartner dropped gently to the floor beside him.

"I — I — I ain't late — is I? I ain't late — is I, Miss No'th?" His head dropped down in his chest, which heaved with convulsed, exhausted little gasps.

"Why, no, you are n't late," she began gently, looking at him wonderingly, "but — what in the world"— she picked up the small kindergartner and sat down wiping away his big, unhappy tears.

And just then the door opened and a boy with a muddy, scratched face came shuffling into the room.

"He — he knock me inter de brier bush!" he began, pointing wrathfully at Ezekiel.

Again the door opened, and another boy came in. He was limping with conscious heroism, and a big black and blue bump on his forehead stood out with unmistakable distinctness.

"Ole 'Zekle Jerden knock me down, Miss No'th!" he began, with perhaps an even more violent show of wrath. "I'se jes' walkin' down de road, 'n' ole 'Zekle Jerden come 'long 'n' knock me down!"

Miss North, with dawning comprehension, and a sudden faint, rebellious contraction at the corners of the mouth, looked at the newcomers.

"I — I am sorry. Sit down, both of you."

The small kindergartner still sobbed softly, and Ezekiel looked up wearily.

"Is I — hurt dat li'l' chile — Miss No'th?" he whispered. "I — I seem ter be gwine ser fas' — I could n' seem ter stop."

She put her cool hand on his hot, thumping forehead.

"No, you have n't hurt him. But how did all this — happen, Ezekiel?"

"I did n't wanter — git sent —'way," he whispered again, faintly. "But I wisht I'd started — jes' a li'l'

bit earlier. I — reckon 't ain' been — quite ser much trouble 'bout it — ef I had."

"I wish you had, Ezekiel."

And once again the door opened and this time Miss Jane Lane walked into the room.

"Miss North," she began, in a low tone of abject apology. "I am very sorry that Ezekiel was late, but I want to explain that it was my fault, entirely my fault. I really told him that I would tell him when it was time to start. But — he was telling me a story" — Miss Jane looked positively foolish —"and I did n't realize the time."

Miss North's smile was comforting.

"He was telling you a story?" Miss North's smile broadened. "But he was not late, Miss Lane. He came in at the last moment, to be sure, behind the others — but he was not late."

"Not late? He just es*caped* being late? Why, how very glad I am! But surely it would have been better if he had started earlier, much better. I will see that he *does* start earlier in the future, Miss North."

Miss North glanced around the room, which presented a strangely battered-up appearance, glanced at the boy with the scratched cheeks and the boy with the bumped forehead, and then down at the small kindergartner, still sobbing softly into her skirts. And finally her glance went back to Ezekiel, sitting limp and exhausted in his seat, with his head dropped wearily.

"Yes," she agreed. "Yes, I do think that it would be better for him to start — a little earlier."

"A BOOK FOR MOTHERS"

By Lucy Pratt

BOTH Miss North and Ezekiel were at school early. Miss North apparently considered it an opportunity of advantage.

"Come here, Ezekiel," she began, looking up from her desk. Ezekiel approached.

"Now, I want you to put your mind on this, Ezekiel," she went on, taking the bull by the horns, "and see if you can tell me why it is that you have been doing so badly in your work for the last few days. Of course, you must know that you have been doing very badly, don't you?"

Ezekiel looked rather grieved at hearing the matter put so plainly, but did not offer an immediate explanation.

"Well, now, I suppose there must be some reason for this," went on Miss North logically, "because don't you know how very well you *have* been doing — until just lately? Why, of course there must be some reason for it?"

"Yas'm, mus' be so," agreed Ezekiel faintly.

"Yes, of course. Now, what is it?"

"*I* dunno'm," returned Ezekiel, as if he were really the very last one who should be expected to know.

"Well, you must find out, Ezekiel," announced

Miss North concisely, "and you must begin to do *very much* better again."

"Yas'm," agreed Ezekiel, apparently perfectly willing to investigate, and perfectly willing to improve, too, if it were really necessary.

"Yas'm. One time I'se a-wukkin' fer Mis' Simons in de gyarden, 'n' she come along, talk jes' dat-a-way, too. Say: "'W'y, 'Zek'el, yer mus' do *ve'y much* better 'n dis. Is I 'blige set righ' down yere 'n' *watch yer?*' she say. 'N' I say, 'No'm.' 'N' she say, 'Well, certainly *look* like she is.' So she se' down, 'n' fus' yer know, she 's a-readin' outen a book 'n' ain' payin' no mo' 'tention ter me 'n 's ef I ain' dere 't all."

"Yes; that has n't really very much to do with this, but still I can imagine, too, that it might have been so."

"Yas'm; 'n' praesen'ly, after she 's been a-readin' quite a li'l' while, she gotten up ag'in 'n' walk off, 'n' say dat cert'nly 's de mos' no-count book where 's been written fer some time; she reckon she could 'a' done better 'erself."

"I don't doubt it," murmured Miss North — "not for a moment. Well, Ezekiel, I shall expect to notice a great improvement in you to-day."

"Yas'm. Say she reckon she could 'a' done better 'erself. Is yer ever written a book, Miss No'th?"

"No, I never have," admitted Miss North.

"Cuz I'se writin' a book now," he went on meditatively.

"Are you?" Miss North felt painfully inferior. "What is your book about, Ezekiel?"

"'Bout — 'bout chillen — 'n' *mothers*," explained Ezekiel modestly. "Is yer say yer ain' nuver written a book yit, Miss No'th?"

"Never," reiterated Miss North, bound to be truthful to the bitter end.

"Cuz I doan' guess Miss' Simons nuver written a book, nurrer," he went on ruminatingly but consolingly. "No'm, I doan' guess she nuver did."

"I don't believe she ever did, either," returned Miss North, taking hope. "But, now, this book of yours, Ezekiel — you say it is about children and — "

"'Bout chillen 'n' — mothers," explained Ezekiel again; "but mo' specially 'bout mothers."

"I see. Don't you find it rather a large subject? That is — don't you find it rather — rather hard to write about children and mothers?"

"Yas'm, kine o' hard; specially 'bout mothers."

"Yes, I should think so," agreed Miss North. "Perhaps you will let me see your book some time. Do you think you could?"

"Yas'm. Yer kin see it now, ef yer wants ter. Yas'm, yer kin see it right now, Miss No'th."

"No, it is time for the bell now. But some time, some time I should like very much to see it. Take your seat now, Ezekiel."

And the children, in a long, winding file, had marched in.

But it was not until the morning was almost gone, and the immaculate specimen copy for the daily writing lesson was being painstakingly reproduced on long,

straight lines, that the first complaint of the day was made.

"Ole 'Zek'el Jerden, he ain' doin' no writin' lesson," came the voice of righteous indignation; "he 's writin' sump'n' else."

To be sure. Ezekiel was writing in his book.

"Ezekiel," began Miss North in suggestive tones, "do you remember what I told you this morning?"

"Yas'm" — Ezekiel's book disappeared inside his desk — "yas'm, I 'se gwine do my writin', Miss No'th."

But it was the afternoon that was almost gone when the next complaint came in. Again they were reproducing neat little paragraphs from the blackboard, and again there came an indignant voice: —

"'Zek'el Jerden ain' copyin' no home-wuk 't all!"

Certainly not. Ezekiel was writing in his book.

"Ezekiel" — Miss North's voice sounded uncompromising — "you may bring that book to my desk."

Ezekiel rather sheepishly made his way to the desk and deposited a magnificent checkered-backed notebook.

"Now you may copy your home work. I begin to see why you have fallen back in your work, Ezekiel."

But the children, in a long, winding file, had marched out again, and again Ezekiel stood before Miss North's desk. Across the front row sat three small and meek-looking individuals, whose glances back and forth among themselves and up toward Miss North alternated between broad but surreptitious grins and modest, long-suffering looks of resignation.

"I should like you very straight and quiet in the front row, please," suggested Miss North.

Their general appearance, at this point, was so altogether nice and irreproachable that it really seemed rather indelicate of Miss North to have referred to it at all.

"And now, Ezekiel, as I said before, I begin to see why you have fallen back in your work."

"Yas'm," responded Ezekiel, evidently quite clear on the matter, too.

"Now, my suggestion is that you finish this book up just as soon as possible, and then perhaps you will be able to turn your attention to your school work again."

"Yas'm," agreed Ezekiel, absolutely agreeable.

"Well, now, how *nearly done* is the book? Do you think you could finish it to-night?"

"'Bout — 'bout half done, I reckon; yas'm, I could finish it ter-night."

Miss North picked up the checkered-backed note-book and glanced over three or four painstakingly written pages.

"It is n't going to be a very long book, is it? Perhaps that is just as well, too. Well, suppose you read it to me as far as you have gone."

"Yas'm," and Ezekiel obligingly took the book and began to read.

" 'A Book For Mothers,' " he announced.

"That is the title, I suppose," suggested Miss North intelligently. "But I thought it was going to be both for mothers and children!"

"No'm; *'bout* mothers 'n' chillen, but specially *for* mothers."

"Oh, yes, of course. Now go on, Ezekiel, and I won't interrupt."

The three across the front row looked quite impressed at the turn events had taken, and Ezekiel began again.

According to oral interpretation, his written manuscript might have been about like this: —

A BOOK FOR MOTHERS

Eve'y mother where has sense should read dis book. Co'se, ef she ain' got no sense, I s'pose it ain' gwine do no good anyway, but ef she has, w'y, read it.

This stipulation being made in regard to the readers of the book, Ezekiel glanced at Miss North (who, being taken a bit unawares, made haste to compose her countenance) and continued:—

" 'Eve'y chile, at de age o' twelve years ole, co'se begins gittin' triflin' 'n' bad, 'n' runs out on de street at night, 'n' down ter Jones's corner, 'n' sometime look like his mother cyan' do scacely nothin' wid 'em 't all — at de age o' twelve years ole.' "

"Is it always exactly at twelve?" put in Miss North modestly.

"Yas'm. 'So at de age o' twelve years ole eve'y mother mus' learn 'er chillen 'tain' right ter ac' no sech a way. 'N' ef she cyan' learn 'em, she mus' whup 'em, 'n' ef dat ain' no use, she must mek 'em go hongry 'mos' all time, 'n' whup 'em ag'in, 'n' ef dat ain' no use, w'y, she mus' read 'em de Bible 'n' see 'ow dat 'll wuk.

"'My country, 't is of thee,
Sweet land o' liberty,
O' thee I sing!'"

From all appearances Miss North had again been taken unawares.

"What? What was that? What did you say, Ezekiel?"

"I jes' put in a li'l' pote-ry," explained Ezekiel, "jes' a li'l' verse o' pote-ry to make it go 'long r'al smooth 'n' soun' kine o' easy."

"Oh! Go on, Ezekiel!"

"Yas'm. 'Cuz, co'se, tain' right fer chillen ter go runnin' out at night, 'thout their mother. So, ef de Bible ain' no use, w'y, she mus' jes' go runnin' right 'long, too.'"

There was an audible snicker from one of the three in the front row — whether from mere nervous emotion at this forecast of a few of the scenes which were doubtless in store for him at the age of twelve, or from real joy, was not at the moment apparent.

" 'Once, 't was a li'l' boy,' " went on Ezekiel, " 'n' he 's a r'al good li'l' boy, too, 'n' allays went ter Sunday-school 'n' mine 'is mamma, 'n' ain' nuver run down ter Jones's corner 'cep'n' w'en she sen' 'im wid de 'lasses-bucket, 'n' allays jes' ez good! Twell nex' he know he 's twelve years ole. 'N' den, co'se, he starts right off gittin' trifling 'n' bad.

" 'Well, ef 'is mamma had did like she oughter, 'n' whup 'im, 'n' read 'im de Bible, 'n' run out after 'im on de street, o' co'se 't would' nuver 'a' come out way it did. But she ain' do no sech a thing. She jes' say ef

he ac' dat-a-way, w'y, she ain' gwine bother wid him 't all. So, w'at yer s'pose 'appen ter de li'l' boy? Well, one night 'bout twelve o'clock he wek up — yas, 't wuz jes' ez de clock 's a-strikin' (twelve, apparently, was the fatal number), 'n' fus' he jes' lay dere studyin' 'bout what he 'll do nex'. 'N' den he 'cide it 's gittin' kine o' wea'ysome layin' dere ser long 'thout sayin' nary word ter nobody, so he got outen de baid 'n' start right out on de street.

" ''N' fus' thing he seen a-comin' down de road wuz a li'l' gyurl a-trundlin' 'long a baby-ca'iage wid a li'l' baby a-settin' right up on de seat a-chewin' on a clo'es-pin.' "

"Twelve o'clock at night, did you say it was, Ezekiel?"

"Yas'm, jes' 'zackly twelve o'clock. ''N' some'ow it seem ter mek de li'l' boy kine o' mad w'en he seen de baby a-settin' up on de seat, a-chewin' on de clo'es-pin, so w'at yer s'pose he done? W'y, he jes' hop right up in de ca'iage 'n' set right plumb down top o' de baby, 'n' mash 'im ser flat dat praesen'ly we'n he jump out on de groun' 'n' look in de ca'iage ag'in, w'y, 'tain' nothin' lef' o' de baby 'tall, 'cep'n a kine o' li'l' flat cake like, not no bigger 'n dis!' "

At this point Ezekiel was obliged to stop and point out to Miss North his sketch of the baby's remains.

" 'Well, w'en de li'l' gyurl come roun' 'n' look in de ca'aige like she 's gwine set 'er baby up r'al nice ag'in, 'n' ain' foun' nothin' 'cep'n' de li'l' flat cake, w'y, den co'se *she 's* mad.

" ' "Now, ain't yer 'shame ter do 'im like dat!" she

say. "Well, I'se gwine call de p'lice 'n' show 'im jes' w'at yer done!"

" 'So she call de p'lice, 'n' de p'lice come 'n' look in de ca'aige.

" ' "Sho! Now, ain' dat too bad!" p'lice say. "Wuz you de cause o' dis disfiggerment, boy? Well, suh! I'se gwine 'rest yer fer 'sault 'n' battery!"

" 'So de li'l' boy 's 'rested frer 'sault 'n' battery, 'n' 's 'blige go ter jail 'n' stay dere all de res' of his life.

"'De rose is red, de vi'let 's blue,
De honey is sweet, 'n' so are you,
Li'l' gyurl where sets on de seat in de corner,
Three cheers fer de red, white, 'n' blue!'"

This delightful mingling of sentiment and patriotism was evidently merely thrown in to relieve the stress and tension of the moment. At any rate, the three little boys in the front row drew a short breath of relief at the temporary stay in proceedings, and Ezekiel continued: —

" 'Well, de nex' time de li'l' boy went out on de street at night, w'at yer s'pose he done? W'y, he jes' bus' right into a lady's house 'n' stole all her jew'lry. So de lady went climbin' out de winder af' 'im, 'n' cotch 'im by de coat, 'n' call de p'lice, 'n' he 's 'rested ag'in, 'n' dat time dey had 'im shot fer a burglar.

" 'But he keep on jes' ez triflin' 'n' bad 's ever, 'n' nex' time he met a ole gen'leman, 'n' 'mence ter wrastle wid 'im right on de street.

" ' "Well, w'at yer doin'?" ole man say. "Well, I reckon I'se 'blige call my li'l' dawg!" So ole man call 'is li'l' dawg, 'n' de li'l' boy run right up a tree, 'n' de

li'l' dawg after 'im. But soon 's dey 's up de tree, w'y de li'l' boy se' down on one branch, 'n' de li'l' dawg se' down on anurrer branch, 'n' so dey jes' set dere a-blinkin' at de dark.

" ' "Well, w'at you-all a-settin' up dere like dat fer?" ole man say. "Come down!"

" 'But dey set dere jes' same, a-blinkin' at de dark.

" ''N' ole man holler ag'in, 'n' de moon come a-risin' up in de sky, 'n' den dey jes' set dere a-blinkin' at de moon.

" ' "Well, I'se gwine climb up 'n' git yer, den," ole man say, 'n' he 'mence ter climb de tree. But de win' 'mence ter blow, 'n' de tree 'mence ter rock, 'n' higher up ole man got de mo' de win' keep on blowin', 'n' de tree a-rockin' back 'n' fofe, back 'n' fofe, 'n' de li'l' boy 'n' de li'l' dawg still a-settin' on de branch a-blinkin' at de moon.

" ' Come down!" ole man say. 'N' same time he spoken de words de win' jes' blew 'im right outen de tree 'n' he tum'le down on de groun' daid!

" ' "See w'at yer done!" li'l' dawg say. 'N' same time *he* spoken de words, ole win' jes' blew 'im right outen de tree an' *he* tum'le down daid on de groun', too.

" 'But de li'l' boy jes' keep on a-settin' on de branch a-blinkin' at de moon.

" ''N' w'en de p'lice come 'long 'n' foun' 'em all daid 'cep'n' de li'l' boy where 's settin' on de branch, w'y, dey 'rest 'im 'n' ca'ied 'im off ter jail, 'n' dat time dey had 'is haid chop off fer a murd'rer.

"''N' nex' time, he met a ole lady; 'n' ole lady

'mence ter scole 'im right smart fer bein' out ser late in de night, so w'at yer s'pose he done?

"'W'y is a elephunt like a brick?'

("I'se 'fraid it 's gittin' kine o' wea'ysome 'long yere, so I jes' put in a li'l' riddle.)

"'W'y is a elephunt like a brick?

"'Cuz cyan't neider one of 'em climb a tree.

"''N' she 'mence ter scole 'im right smart fer bein' out ser late in de night, so w'at yer s'pose he done?'

"I thought o' sump'n' else, too!

"W'y is a elephunt like a pertater?

"Cuz cyan' neider one of 'em climb a tree!"

"H'm, yes! I see! I see! I see! *But what did he do, Ezekiel?*" interrupted Miss North, in some alarm at this new field which was opening up with such a wealth of possibility.

"W'y is a elephunt like a *bag o' salt?*

"W'y, cuz cyan' neider one of 'em climb a tree!

"I'se mekin' 'em up myself, Miss No'th, 'n' it 's jes' ez easy!

"W'y is a elephunt —"

"*I see! But wait — Ezekiel!* Now — tell me what he did!"

"Well — well, yer see, I ain' 'zackly 'cide w'at he *is* done, cuz dat 's jes' ez fur 's I'se went we'n I 'mence 'bout de elephunts.

"W'y is a elephunt —"

"Yes! Yes, indeed! Certainly! And yet, that does n't seem to be a very good place to leave it, either!"

"No'm; 'tain' no place ter leave it."

"So what did he do to the old lady? Would n't it be

nice to have him do something very kind, just for a little change?"

"Yas'm," agreed Ezekiel, picking up connections again.

"'N' de ole lady 'mence ter scole 'im right smart fer bein' out ser late in de night, so w'at yer s'pose he done? W'y, he give 'er a nice li'l' bag o' cough-drops."

"That was kind, I am sure." Miss North thought she saw the end in view. "Now, how are you going to finish it."

"'N' den he went home 'n' drown 'isself in de well."

Ezekiel paused, evidently considering his labors practically over.

"That was a little sudden, was n't it?" suggested Miss North, "just a little sudden?"

"Yas'm, but dat ain' quite de en', nudder. De en' is 'bout mothers. Like dis: —

"'N' so eve'y mother mus' watch out right smart. Cuz, co'se, de same thing *might* 'appen ter any li'l' boy. 'N' dat 's w'y dey mus' learn 'em ter do right, 'n' read 'em de Bible, 'n' run down ter Jones's corner after 'em. Cuz dey 'll git inter right smart o' trouble ef dey doan't. 'N' 'specially 'bout de age o' twelve years old."

"And so that is the end? Well, supposing you sit down, Ezekiel, and finish it."

The three little boys had gone, feeling that they had had a rather strenuous and impressive half hour, and Ezekiel turned in the doorway and looked back again at Miss North.

"Show your book to Miss Jane, Ezekiel, if you see her. I think — perhaps she would like it. Good-night."

"'Night, Mis' No'th."

The next morning Miss North was at school early again. So also was Ezekiel.

For some minutes she worked quietly at her desk, and he sat in his seat, while his eyes wandered dreamily around the room. Then she pushed a pile of papers into her desk drawer and looked up.

"Did you read your book to Miss Jane last night, Ezekiel?"

"Yas'm."

"And how did she like it? What did she say about it?"

"Say it doan' soun' like r'al sense, 'n' say she reckon I'se wastin' my time. Say she reckon I better frow it 'way 'n' jes' put my mine on my books."

"Throw it away?"

"Yas'm. But I ain' frow it 'way," he went on cheerfully — "no'm; I jes' burn it up."

"What? What did you say, Ezekiel?"

"I ain' frow it 'way — no'm; I jes' burn it up."

"Burned it up!" Miss North found herself feebly recalling the fate of the "French Revolution." "*Burned it up!* Why — why did you burn it up?"

"Well, yer see, 'long 's I'se *finish* it, I jes' 'cide I ain' gwine bother no mo' wid it; so I jes' burn it right up. But" — he looked a bit regretful — "but I — I reckon I could write yer anurrer book — ef yer feels dat-a-way

'bout it, Miss No'th! W'y, I reckon I could write anurrer one — jes' ez good — Miss No'th!"

"I don't doubt that you could, my child; I don't doubt it."

She smiled in a way that he hardly understood, and glanced up at the clock. Then they both remembered a conversation which they had had the morning before.

"No, you need n't write me another one, Ezekiel. You know you are going to begin and *work hard* now."

The soft, dreamy, willing little dark face looked back into hers, and suddenly, in a vivid, flashing moment, she felt the full meaning of a bitter truth — of a child-like, willing, erring race transplanted from the gentle drift of an Oriental country to the stern, exacting West — surrounded there by another people, uncomprehending and impatient. In the full light of the moment she felt ashamed that she should have ever been less realizing — should have ever been found wanting in her part, so simple compared with theirs.

"Yes, Ezekiel," she repeated mechanically, "you are going — to work hard."

"Yas'm," he murmured. "I's gwine try."

MISS OPHELIA AND TOPSY

By Harriet Beecher Stowe

ONE morning, while Miss Ophelia was busy in some of her domestic cares, St. Clare's voice was heard, calling her at the foot of the stairs.

"Come down here, cousin; I 've something to show you."

"What is it?" said Miss Ophelia, coming down, with her sewing in her hand.

"I 've made a purchase for your department — see here," said St. Clare; and, with the word, he pulled along a little negro girl, about eight or nine years of age.

She was one of the blackest of her race; and her round, shining eyes, glittering as glass beads, moved with quick and restless glances over everything in the room. Her mouth, half open with astonishment at the wonders of the new Mas'r's parlor, displayed a white and brilliant set of teeth. Her woolly hair was braided in sundry little tails, which stuck out in every direction. The expression of her face was an odd mixture of shrewdness and cunning, over which was oddly drawn, like a kind of veil, an expression of the most doleful gravity and solemnity. She was dressed in a single filthy, ragged garment, made of bagging; and stood with her hands demurely folded before her. Altogether, there was something odd and goblin-like about her

appearance — something, as Miss Ophelia afterwards said, "so heathenish," as to inspire that good lady with utter dismay; and, turning to St. Clare, she said: —

"Augustine, what in the world have you brought that thing here for?"

"For you to educate, to be sure, and train in the way she should go. I thought she was rather a funny specimen in the Jim Crow line. Here, Topsy," he added, giving a whistle, as a man would to call the attention of a dog, "give us a song, now, and show us some of your dancing."

The black, glassy eyes glittered with a kind of wicked drollery, and the thing struck up, in a clear shrill voice, an odd negro melody, to which she kept time with her hands and feet, spinning round, clapping her hands, knocking her knees together, in a wild, fantastic sort of time, and producing in her throat all those odd guttural sounds which distinguish the native music of her race; and finally, turning a somerset or two, and giving a prolonged closing note, as odd and unearthly as that of a steam whistle, she came suddenly down on the carpet, and stood with her hands folded, and a most sanctimonious expression of meekness and solemnity over her face, only broken by the cunning glances which she shot askance from the corners of her eyes.

Miss Ophelia stood silent, perfectly paralyzed with amazement.

St. Clare, like a mischievous fellow as he was, appeared to enjoy her astonishment; and, addressing the child again, said: "Topsy, this is your new mistress. I 'm going to give you up to her; see, now, that you behave yourself."

TOPSY

"Yes, Mas'r," said Topsy, with sanctimonious gravity, her wicked eyes twinkling as she spoke.

"You 're going to be good, Topsy, you understand," said St. Clare.

"Oh, yes, Mas'r," said Topsy, with another twinkle, her hands still devoutly folded.

"Now, Augustine, what upon earth is this for?" said Miss Ophelia. "Your house is so full of these little plagues, now, that a body can't set down their foot without treading on 'em. I get up in the morning, and find one asleep behind the door, and see one black head poking out from under the table, one lying on the door-mat — and they are mopping and mowing and grinning between all the railings, and tumbling over the kitchen floor! What on earth did you want to bring this one for?"

"For you to educate — did n't I tell you? You 're always preaching about educating. I thought I would make you a present of a fresh-caught specimen, and let you try your hand on her, and bring her up in the way she should go."

"*I* don't want her, I am sure; — I have more to do with 'em now than I want to."

"That 's you Christians, all over! — you 'll get up a society, and get some poor missionary to spend all his days among just such heathen. But let me see one of you that would take one into your house with you, and take the labor of their conversion on yourselves! No; when it comes to that, they are dirty and disagreeable, and it 's too much care, and so on."

"Augustine, you know I did n't think of it in that

light," said Miss Ophelia, evidently softening. "Well, it might be a real missionary work," said she, looking rather more favorably on the child.

St. Clare had touched the right string. Miss Ophelia's conscientiousness was ever on the alert. "But," she added, "I really did n't see the need of buying this one; — there are enough now, in your house, to take all my time and skill."

"Well, then, cousin," said St. Clare, drawing her aside, "I ought to beg your pardon for my good-for-nothing speeches. You are so good, after all, that there 's no sense in them. Why, the fact is, this concern belonged to a couple of drunken creatures that keep a low restaurant that I have to pass by every day, and I was tired of hearing her screaming, and them beating and swearing at her. She looked bright and funny, too, as if something might be made of her — so I bought her, and I 'll give her to you. Try, now, and give her a good orthodox New England bringing up, and see what it 'll make of her. You know I have n't any gift that way; but I 'd like you to try."

"Well, I 'll do what I can," said Miss Ophelia; and and she approached her new subject very much as a person might be supposed to approach a black spider, supposing her to have benevolent designs toward it.

"She 's dreadfully dirty, and half naked," she said.

"Well, take her down stairs, and make some of them clean and clothe her up."

Miss Ophelia carried her to the kitchen regions.

"Don't see what Mas'r St. Clare wants of 'nother nigger!" said Dinah, surveying the new arrival with no

friendly air. "Won't have her round under *my* feet, *I* know!"

"Pah!" said Rosa and Jane, with supreme disgust; "let her keep out of our way! What in the world Mas'r wanted another of these low niggers for, I can't see."

"You go 'long! No more nigger dan you be, Miss Rosa," said Dinah, who felt this last remark a reflection on herself. "You seem to tink yourself white folks. You an't nerry one, black *nor* white. I 'd like to be one or turrer."

Miss Ophelia saw that there was nobody in the camp that would undertake to oversee the cleansing and dressing of the new arrival; and so she was forced to do it herself, with some very ungracious and reluctant assistance from Jane.

It is not for ears polite to hear the particulars of the first toilet of a neglected, abused child. In fact, in this world, multitudes must live and die in a state that it would be too great a shock to the nerves of their fellow-mortals even to hear described. Miss Ophelia had a good, strong, practical deal of resolution; and she went through all the disgusting details with heroic thoroughness, though, it must be confessed, with no very gracious air — for endurance was the utmost to which her principles could bring her. When she saw, on the back and shoulders of the child, great welts and calloused spots, ineffaceable marks of the system under which she had grown up thus far, her heart became pitiful within her.

"See there!" said Jane, pointing to the marks, "don't that show she 's a limb? We 'll have fine works

with her, I reckon. I hate these nigger young uns! so disgusting! I wonder that Mas'r would buy her!"

The "young un" alluded to heard all these comments with the subdued and doleful air which seemed habitual to her, only scanning, with a keen and furtive glance of her flickering eyes, the ornaments which Jane wore in her ears. When arrayed at last in a suit of decent and whole clothing, her hair cropped short to her head, Miss Ophelia, with some satisfaction, said she looked more Christian-like than she did, and in her own mind began to mature some plans for her instruction.

Sitting down before her, she began to question her.

"How old are you, Topsy?"

"Dunno, Missis," said the image, with a grin that showed all her teeth.

"Don't know how old you are? Did n't anybody ever tell you? Who was your mother?"

"Never had none!" said the child, with another grin.

"Never had any mother? What do you mean? Where were you born?"

"Never was born!" persisted Topsy, with another grin, that looked so goblin-like, that, if Miss Ophelia had been at all nervous, she might have fancied that she had got hold of some sooty gnome from the land of Diablerie; but Miss Ophelia was not nervous, but plain and business-like, and she said, with some sternness:—

"You must n't answer me in that way, child; I 'm not playing with you. Tell me where you were born, and who your father and mother were."

"Never was born," reiterated the creature, more emphatically; "never had no father nor mother, nor

nothin'. I was raised by a speculator, with lots of others. Old Aunt Sue used to take car on us."

The child was evidently sincere; and Jane, breaking into a short laugh, said —

"Laws, Missis, there 's heaps of 'em. Speculators buys 'em up cheap, when they 's little, and gets 'em raised for market."

"How long have you lived with your master and mistress?"

"Dunno, Missis."

"Is it a year, or more, or less?"

"Dunno, Missis."

"Laws, Missis, those low negroes, — they can't tell; they don't know anything about time," said Jane; "they don't know what a year is; they don't know their own ages."

"Have you ever heard anything about God, Topsy?"

The child looked bewildered, but grinned as usual.

"Do you know who made you?"

"Nobody, as I knows on," said the child, with a short laugh.

The idea appeared to amuse her considerably; for her eyes twinkled, and she added —

"I spect I grow'd. Don't think nobody never made me."

"Do you know how to sew?" said Miss Ophelia, who thought she would turn her inquiries to something more tangible.

"No, Missis."

"What can you do? — what did you do for your master and mistress?"

"Fetch water, and wash dishes, and rub knives, and wait on folks."

"Were they good to you?"

"Spect they was," said the child, scanning Miss Ophelia cunningly.

Miss Ophelia rose from this encouraging colloquy; St. Clare was leaning over the back of her chair.

"You find virgin soil there, cousin; put in your own ideas — you won't find many to pull up."

Miss Ophelia's ideas of education, like all her other ideas, were very set and definite; and of the kind that prevailed in New England a century ago, and which are still preserved in some very retired and unsophisticated parts, where there are no railroads. As nearly as could be expressed, they could be comprised in very few words: to teach them to mind when they were spoken to; to teach them the catechism, sewing, and reading; and to whip them if they told lies. And though, of course, in the flood of light that is now poured on education, these are left far away in the rear, yet it is an undisputed fact that our grandmothers raised some tolerably fair men and women under this régime, as many of us can remember and testify. At all events, Miss Ophelia knew of nothing else to do; and, therefore, applied her mind to her heathen with the best diligence she could command.

The child was announced and considered in the family as Miss Ophelia's girl; and, as she was looked upon with no gracious eye in the kitchen, Miss Ophelia resolved to confine her sphere of operation and instruction chiefly to her own chamber. With a self-sacrifice

which some of our readers will appreciate, she resolved, instead of comfortably making her own bed, sweeping and dusting her own chamber — which she had hitherto done, in utter scorn of all offers of help from the chambermaid of the establishment — to condemn herself to the martyrdom of instructing Topsy to perform these operations — ah, woe the day! Did any of our readers ever do the same, they will appreciate the amount of her self-sacrifice.

Miss Ophelia began with Topsy by taking her into her chamber, the first morning, and solemnly commencing a course of instruction in the art and mystery of bed-making. Behold, then, Topsy, washed and shorn of all the little braided tails wherein her heart had delighted, arrayed in a clean gown, with well-starched apron, standing reverently before Miss Ophelia, with an expression of solemnity well befitting a funeral.

"Now, Topsy, I 'm going to show you just how my bed is to be made. I am very particular about my bed. You must learn exactly how to do it."

"Yes, ma'am," says Topsy, with a deep sigh, and a face of woeful earnestness.

"Now, Topsy, look here; — this is the hem of the sheet — this is the right side of the sheet, and this is the wrong; — will you remember?"

"Yes, ma'am," says Topsy, with another sigh.

"Well, now, the under sheet you must bring over the bolster — so — and tuck it clear down under the mattress nice and smooth — so — do you see?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Topsy, with profound attention.

"But the upper sheet," said Miss Ophelia, "must be

brought down in this way, and tucked under firm and smooth at the foot — so — the narrow hem at the foot."

"Yes, ma'am," said Topsy, as before; but we will add, what Miss Ophelia did not see, that, during the time when the good lady's back was turned, in the zeal of her manipulations, the young disciple had contrived to snatch a pair of gloves and a ribbon, which she had adroitly slipped into her sleeves, and stood with her hands dutifully folded, as before.

"Now, Topsy, let 's see *you* do this," said Miss Ophelia, pulling off the clothes, and seating herself.

Topsy, with great gravity and adroitness, went through the exercise completely to Miss Ophelia's satisfaction; smoothing the sheets, patting out every wrinkle, and exhibiting, through the whole process, a gravity and seriousness with which her instructress was greatly edified. By an unlucky slip, however, a fluttering fragment of the ribbon hung out of one of her sleeves, just as she was finishing, and caught Miss Ophelia's attention. Instantly she pounced upon it. "What 's this? You naughty, wicked child, — you 've been stealing this!"

The ribbon was pulled out of Topsy's own sleeve, yet was she not in the least disconcerted; she only looked at it with an air of the most surprised and unconscious innocence.

"Laws! why, that ar 's Miss Feely's ribbon, ain't it? How could it 'a' got caught in my sleeve?"

"Topsy, you naughty girl, don't you tell me a lie — you stole that ribbon!"

"Missis, I declar for 't, I did n 't; — never seed it till dis yer blessed minnit."

"Topsy," said Miss Ophelia, "don't you know it 's wicked to tell lies?"

"I never tells no lies, Miss Feely," said Topsy, with virtuous gravity; "it's jist the truth I 've been a tellin' now, and an't nothin' else."

"Topsy, I shall have to whip you, if you tell lies so."

"Laws, Missis, if you 's to whip all day, could n't say no other way," said Topsy, beginning to blubber. "I never seed dat ar — it must a got caught in my sleeve. Miss Feely must have left it on the bed, and it got caught in the clothes, and so got in my sleeve."

Miss Ophelia was so indignant at the barefaced lie, that she caught the child, and shook her.

"Don't you tell me that again!"

The shake brought the gloves on the floor, from the other sleeve.

"There, you!" said Miss Ophelia, "will you tell me now, you did n't steal the ribbon?"

Topsy now confessed to the gloves, but still persisted in denying the ribbon.

"Now, Topsy," said Miss Ophelia, "if you 'll confess all about it, I won't whip you this time."

Thus adjured, Topsy confessed to the ribbon and gloves, with woful protestations of penitence.

"Well, now, tell me. I know you must have taken other things since you have been in the house, for I let you run about all day yesterday. Now, tell me if you took anything, and I shan't whip you."

"Laws, Missis! I took Miss Eva's red thing she wars on her neck."

"You did, you naughty child! — Well, what else?"

"I took Rosa's yerrings, — them red ones."

"Go bring them to me this minute, both of 'em."

"Laws, Missis! I can't, — they 's burnt up!"

"Burnt up! — what a story! Go get 'em, or I 'll whip you."

Topsy, with loud protestations, and tears, and groans, declared that she *could* not. "They 's burnt up — they was."

"What did you burn 'em up for?" said Miss Ophelia.

"'Cause I 's wicked — I is. I 's mighty wicked, anyhow. I can't help it."

Just at this moment, Eva came innocently into the room, with the identical coral necklace on her neck.

"Why, Eva, where did you get your necklace?" said Miss Ophelia.

"Get it? Why, I 've had it on all day," said Eva.

"Did you have it on yesterday?"

"Yes; and what is funny, Aunty, I had it on all night. I forgot to take it off when I went to bed."

Miss Ophelia looked perfectly bewildered; the more so, as Rosa, at that instant, came into the room, with a basket of newly ironed linen poised on her head, and the coral eardrops shaking in her ears!

"I 'm sure I can't tell anything what to do with such a child!" she said, in despair. "What in the world did you tell me you took those things for, Topsy?"

"Why, Missis said I must 'fess; and I could n't

think of nothin' else to 'fess," said Topsy, rubbing her eyes.

"But, of course, I did n't want you to confess things you did n't do," said Miss Ophelia; "that 's telling a lie, just as much as the other."

"Laws, now, is it?" said Topsy, with an air of innocent wonder.

"La, there ain't any such thing as truth in that limb," said Rosa, looking indignantly at Topsy. "If I was Mas'r St. Clare, I 'd whip her till the blood run. I would, — I 'd let her catch it."

"No, no, Rosa," said Eva, with an air of command, which the child could assume at times; "you must n't talk so, Rosa. I can't bear to hear it."

"La sakes! Miss Eva, you 's so good, you don't know nothing how to get along with niggers. There 's no way but to cut 'em well up, I tell ye."

"Rosa!" said Eva, "hush! Don't you say another word of that sort!" And the eye of the child flashed, and her cheek deepened its color.

Rosa was cowed in a moment.

"Miss Eva has got the St. Clare blood in her, that 's plain. She can speak, for all the world, just like her papa," she said, as she passed out of the room.

Eva stood looking at Topsy.

There stood the two children, representatives of the two extremes of society. The fair, high-bred child with her golden head, her deep eyes, her spiritual, noble brow, and princelike movements; and her black, keen, subtle, cringing, yet acute neighbor. They stood the representatives of their races. The Saxon, born of

ages of cultivation, command, education, physical and moral eminence; the Afric, born of ages of oppression, submission, ignorance, toil, and vice!

Something, perhaps, of such thoughts struggled through Eva's mind. But a child's thoughts are rather dim, undefined instincts; and in Eva's noble nature many such were yearning and working, for which she had no power of utterance. When Miss Ophelia expatiated on Topsy's naughty, wicked conduct, the child looked perplexed and sorrowful, but said sweetly: —

"Poor Topsy, why need you steal? You 're going to be taken good care of, now. I 'm sure I'd rather give you anything of mine, than have you steal it."

It was the first word of kindness the child had ever heard in her life; and the sweet tone and manner struck strangely on the wild, rude heart, and a sparkle of something like a tear shone in the keen, round, glittering eye; but it was followed by the short laugh and habitual grin. No! the ear that has never heard anything but abuse is strangely incredulous of anything so heavenly as kindness; and Topsy only thought Eva's speech something funny and inexplicable — she did not believe it.

But what was to be done with Topsy? Miss Ophelia found the case a puzzler; her rules for bringing up did n't seem to apply. She thought she would take time to think of it; and by the way of gaining time, and in hopes of some indefinite moral virtues supposed to be inherent in dark closets, Miss Ophelia shut Topsy up in one till she had arranged her ideas further on the subject.

"I don't see," said Miss Ophelia to St. Clare, "how I 'm going to manage that child, without whipping her."

"Well, whip her, then, to your heart's content; I 'll give you full power to do what you like."

"Children always have to be whipped," said Miss Ophelia; "I never heard of bringing them up without."

"Oh, well, certainly," said St. Clare; "do as you think best. Only, I 'll make one suggestion: I 've seen this child whipped with a poker, knocked down with the shovel or tongs, whichever came handiest; and, seeing that she is used to that style of operation, I think your whippings will have to be pretty energetic, to make much impression."

"What is to be done with her, then!" said Miss Ophelia.

"You have started a serious question," said St. Clare; "I wish you 'd answer it. What is to be done with a human being that can be governed only by the lash — *that* fails, — it 's a very common state of things down here!"

"I 'm sure I don't know; I never saw such a child as this."

"Such children are very common among us, and such men and women, too. How are they to be governed?" said St. Clare.

"I 'm sure it 's more than I can say," said Miss Ophelia.

"Or I either," said St. Clare. "The horrid cruelties and outrages that once in a while find their way into the papers — such cases as Prue's, for example —

what do they come from? In many cases, it is a gradual hardening process on both sides — the owner growing more and more cruel, as the servant more and more callous. Whipping and abuse are like laudanum; you have to double the dose as the sensibilities decline. I saw this very early when I became an owner; and I resolved never to begin, because I did not know when I should stop — and I resolved, at least, to protect my own moral nature. The consequence is, that my servants act like spoiled children; but I think that better than for us both to be brutalized together. You have talked a great deal about our responsibilities in educating, cousin. I really wanted you to *try* with one child, who is a specimen of thousands among us."

"It is your system makes such children," said Miss Ophelia.

"I know it; but they are *made* — they exist — and what *is* to be done with them?"

"Well, I can't say I thank you for the experiment. But, then, as it appears to be a duty, I shall persevere and try, and do the best I can," said Miss Ophelia; and Miss Ophelia, after this, did labor, with a commendable degree of zeal and energy on her new subject. She instituted regular hours and employments for her, and undertook to teach her to read and to sew.

In the former art, the child was quick enough. She learned her letters as if by magic, and was very soon able to read plain reading; but the sewing was a more difficult matter. The creature was as lithe as a cat, and as active as a monkey, and the confinement of sewing was her abomination; so she broke her needles, threw

them slyly out of windows, or down in chinks of the walls; she tangled, broke, and dirtied her thread, or, with a sly movement, would throw a spool away altogether. Her motions were almost as quick as those of a practiced conjurer, and her command of her face quite as great; and though Miss Ophelia could not help feeling that so many accidents could not possibly happen in succession, yet she could not, without a watchfulness which would leave her no time for anything else, detect her.

Topsy was soon a noted character in the establishment. Her talent for every species of drollery, grimace, and mimicry — for dancing, tumbling, climbing, singing, whistling, imitating every sound that hit her fancy — seemed inexhaustible. In her play hours, she invariably had every child in the establishment at her heels, open-mouthed with admiration and wonder — not excepting Miss Eva, who appeared to be fascinated by her wild diablerie, as a dove is sometimes charmed by a glittering serpent. Miss Ophelia was uneasy that Eva should fancy Topsy's society so much, and implored St. Clare to forbid it.

"Poh! let the child alone," said St. Clare. "Topsy will do her good."

"But so depraved a child — are you not afraid she will teach her some mischief?"

"She can't teach her mischief; she might teach it to some children, but evil rolls off Eva's mind like dew off a cabbage-leaf — not a drop sinks in."

"Don't be too sure," said Miss Ophelia. "I know I'd never let a child of mine play with Topsy."

"Well, your children need n't," said St. Clare, "but mine may; if Eva could have been spoiled it would have been done years ago."

Topsy was at first despised and contemned by the upper servants. They soon found reason to alter their opinion. It was very soon discovered that whoever cast an indignity on Topsy was sure to meet with some inconvenient accident shortly after; — either a pair of earrings or some cherished trinket would be missing, or an article of dress would be suddenly found utterly ruined, or the person would stumble accidentally into a pail of hot water, or a libation of dirty slop would unaccountably deluge them from above when in full gala dress; — and on all these occasions, when investigation was made, there was nobody found to stand sponsor for the indignity. Topsy was cited, and had up before all the domestic judicatories, time and again; but always sustained her examinations with most edifying innocence and gravity of appearance. Nobody in the world ever doubted who did the things; but not a scrap of any direct evidence could be found to establish the suppositions, and Miss Ophelia was too just to feel at liberty to proceed to any length without it.

The mischiefs done were always so nicely timed, also, as further to shelter the aggressor. Thus, the times for revenge on Rosa and Jane, the two chambermaids, were always chosen in those seasons when (as not unfrequently happened) they were in disgrace with their mistress, when any complaint from them would of course meet with no sympathy.

In short, Topsy soon made the household understand

the propriety of letting her alone; and she was let alone accordingly.

Topsy was smart and energetic in all manual operations, learning everything that was taught her with surprising quickness. With a few lessons, she had learned to do the proprieties of Miss Ophelia's chamber in a way with which even that particular lady could find no fault. Mortal hands could not lay spread smoother, adjust pillows more accurately, sweep and dust and arrange more perfectly, than Topsy, when she chose, — but she did n't very often choose. If Miss Ophelia, after three or four days of careful and patient supervision, was so sanguine as to suppose that Topsy had at last fallen into her way, could do without overlooking, and so go off and busy herself about something else, Topsy would hold a perfect carnival of confusion, for some one or two hours. Instead of making the bed, she would amuse herself with pulling off the pillow-cases, butting her woolly head among the pillows, till it would sometimes be grotesquely ornamented with feathers sticking out in various directions; she would climb the posts, and hang head downward from the tops; flourish the sheets and spreads all over the department; dress the bolster up in Miss Ophelia's night-clothes, and enact various scenic performances with that — singing and whistling, and making grimaces at herself in the looking-glass; in short, as Miss Ophelia phrased it, "raising Cain" generally.

On one occasion, Miss Ophelia found Topsy with her very best scarlet India Canton crape shawl wound around her head for a turban, going on with her re-

hearsals before the glass in great style — Miss Ophelia having, with carelessness most unheard of in her, left the key for once in her drawer.

"Topsy!" she would say, when at the end of all patience, "what does make you act so?"

"Dunno, Missis, — I spects 'cause I 's so wicked!"

"I don't know anything what I shall do with you, Topsy."

"Law, Missis, you must whip me; my old Missis allers whipped me. I an't used to workin' unless I gets whipped."

"Why, Topsy, I don't want to whip you. You can do well, if you 've a mind to; what is the reason you won't?"

"Laws, Missis, I 's used to whippin'; I spects it 's good for me."

Miss Ophelia tried the recipe, and Topsy invariably made a terrible commotion, screaming, groaning, and imploring, though half an hour afterwards, when roosted on some projection of the balcony, and surrounded by a flock of admiring "young uns," she would express the utmost contempt of the whole affair.

"Law, Miss Feely whip! — would n't kill a skeeter, her whippin's. Oughter see how old Mas'r made the flesh fly; old Mas'r know'd how!"

Topsy always made great capital of her own sins and enormities, evidently considering them as something peculiarly distinguishing.

"Law, you niggers," she would say to some of her auditors, "does you know you 's all sinners? Well, you is — everybody is. White folks is sinners too — Miss

Feely says so; but I spects niggers is the biggest ones; but lor! ye an't any on ye up to me. I 's so awful wicked there can't nobody do nothin' with me. I used to keep old Missis a swarin' at me half de time. I spects I 's the wickedest crittur in the world;" and Topsy would cut a somerset, and come up brisk and shining on to a higher perch, and evidently plume herself on the distinction.

Miss Ophelia busied herself very earnestly on Sundays, teaching Topsy the catechism. Topsy had an uncommon verbal memory and committed with a fluency that greatly encouraged her instructress.

"What good do you expect it is going to do her?" said St. Clare.

"Why, it always has done children good. It 's what children always have to learn, you know," said Miss Ophelia.

"Understand it or not," said St. Clare.

"Oh, children never understand it at the time; but, after they are grown up, it 'll come to them."

"Mine has n't come to me yet," said St. Clare, "though I 'll bear testimony that you put it into me pretty thoroughly when I was a boy."

"Ah, you were always good at learning, Augustine. I used to have great hopes of you," said Miss Ophelia.

"Well, have n't you now?" said St. Clare.

"I wish you were as good as you were when you were a boy, Augustine."

"So do I, that 's a fact, cousin," said St. Clare. "Well, go ahead and catechise Topsy; maybe you 'll make out something yet."

Topsy, who had stood like a black statue during this discussion, with hands decently folded, now, at a signal from Miss Ophelia, went on —

"Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created."

Topsy's eyes twinkled, and she looked inquiringly.

"What is it, Topsy?" said Miss Ophelia.

"Please, Missis, was dat ar state Kintuck?"

"What state, Topsy?"

"Dat state dey fell out of. I used to hear Mas'r tell how we came down from Kintuck."

St. Clare laughed.

"You 'll have to give her a meaning, or she 'll make one," said he. "There seems to be a theory of emigration suggested there."

"Oh, Augustine, be still," said Miss Ophelia; "how can I do anything, if you will be laughing?"

"Well, I won't disturb the exercises again, on my honor;" and St. Clare took his paper into the parlor, and sat down till Topsy had finished her recitations. They were all very well, only that now and then she would oddly transpose some important words, and persist in the mistake, in spite of every effort to the contrary; and St. Clare, after all his promises of goodness, took a wicked pleasure in these mistakes, calling Topsy to him whenever he had a mind to amuse himself, and getting her to repeat the offending passages, in spite of Miss Ophelia's remonstrances.

"How do you think I can do anything with the child, if you will go on so, Augustine?" she would say.

"Well, it is too bad — I won't again; but I do like

to hear the droll little image stumble over those big words!"

"But you confirm her in the wrong way."

"What 's the odds? One word is as good as another to her."

"You wanted me to bring her up right; and you ought to remember she is a reasonable creature, and be careful of your influence over her."

"Oh, dismal! so I ought; but, as Topsy herself says, 'I 's so wicked!' "

In very much this way Topsy's training proceeded, for a year or two — Miss Ophelia worrying herself, from day to day, with her, as a kind of chronic plague, to whose inflictions she became, in time, as accustomed as persons sometimes do to the neuralgia or sick headache.

St. Clare took the same kind of amusement in the child that a man might in the tricks of a parrot or a pointer. Topsy, whenever her sins brought her into disgrace in other quarters, always took refuge behind his chair; and St. Clare, in one way or other, would make peace for her. From him she got many a stray picayune, which she laid out in nuts and candies, and distributed, with careless generosity, to all the children in the family; for Topsy, to do her justice, was good-natured and liberal, and only spiteful in self-defence.

CHAD

By F. Hopkinson Smith

IT was some time before I could quiet the old man's anxieties and coax him back into his usual good humor, and then only when I began to ask him of the old plantation days.

Then he fell to talking about the colonel's father, General John Carter, and the high days at Carter Hall when Miss Nancy was a young lady and the colonel a boy home from the university.

"Dem was high times. We ain't neber seed no time like dat since de war. Git up in de mawnin' an' look out ober de lawn, an' yer come fo'teen or fifteen couples ob de fustest quality folks, all on horseback ridin' in de gate. Den such a scufflin' round! Old marsa an' missis out on de po'ch, an' de little pickaninnies runnin' from de quarters, an' all hands helpin' 'em off de horses, an' dey all smokin' hot wid de gallop up de lane.

"An' den sich a breakfast an' sich dancin' an' co'tin'; ladies all out on de lawn in der white dresses, an' de gemmen in fairtop boots, an' Mammy Jane runnin' round same as a chicken wid its head off — an' der heads was off befo' dey knowed it, an' dey a-br'ilin' on de gridiron.

"Dat would go on a week or mo', an' den up dey 'll all git an' away dey 'd go to de nex' plantation, an' take Miss Nancy along wid 'em on her little sorrel mare, an'

I on Marsa John's black horse, to take care bofe of 'em. Dem was times!

"My old marsa" — and his eyes glistened — "my old Marse John was a gemman, sah, like dey don't see nowadays. Tall, sah, an' straight as a cornstalk; hair white an' silky as de tassel; an' a voice like de birds was singin', it was dat sweet.

"'Chad,' he use' ter say — you know I was young den, an' I was his body servant — 'Chad, come yer till I bre'k yo' head; an' den when I come he 'd laugh fit to kill hisself. Dat 's when you do right. But when you was a low-down nigger an' got de debbil in yer, an' ole marsa hear it an' send de oberseer to de quarters for you to come to de little room in de big house whar de walls was all books an' whar his desk was, 't wa'n't no birds about his voice den — mo' like de thunder."

"Did he whip his negroes?"

"No, sah; don't reckelmember a single lick laid on airy nigger dat de marsa knowed of; but when dey got so bad — an' some niggers is dat way — den dey was sold to de swamp lan's. He would n't hab 'em round 'ruptin' his niggers, he use' ter say.

"Hab coffee, sah? Won't take I a minute to bile it. Colonel ain't been drinkin' none lately, an' so I don't make none."

I nodded my head, and Chad closed the door softly, taking with him a small cup and saucer, and returning in a few minutes followed by that most delicious of all aromas, the savory steam of boiling coffee.

"My Marsa John," he continued, filling the cup with the smoking beverage, "never drank nuffin' but tea,

eben at de big dinners when all de gemmen had coffee in de little cups — dat's one ob 'em you's drinkin' out ob now; dey ain't mo' dan fo' on 'em left. Old marsa would have his pot ob tea; Henny use' ter make it for him; makes it now for Miss Nancy.

"Henny was a young gal den, long 'fo' we was married. Henny b'longed to Colonel Lloyd Barbour, on de next plantation to ourn.

"Mo' coffee, Major?" I handed Chad the empty cup. He refilled it, and went straight on without drawing breath.

"Wust scrape I eber got into wid old Marsa John was ober Henny. I tell ye she was a harricane in dem days. She came into de kitchen one time where I was helpin' git de dinner ready an' de cook had gone to de spring house, an' she says: —

" 'Chad, what ye cookin' dat smells so nice?'

" 'Dat's a goose,' I says, 'cookin' for Marsa John's dinner. We got quality,' says I, pointin' to de dinin'-room do'.

" 'Quality!' she says. 'Spec' I know what de quality is. Dat's for you an' de cook.'

"Wid dat she grabs a caarvin' knife from de table, opens de do' ob de big oven, cuts off a leg ob de goose, an' dis'pears round de kitchen corner wid de leg in her mouf. 'Fo' I knowed whar I was Marsa John come to de kitchen do' an' says, 'Gittin' late, Chad; bring in de dinner.' You see, Major, dey ain't no up an' down stairs in de big house, like it is yer; kitchen an' dinin' room all on de same flo'.

"Wall, sah, I was scared to def, but I tuk dat goose

an' laid him wid de cut side down on de bottom of de pan 'fo' de cook got back, put some dressin' an' stuffin' ober him, an' shet de stove do'. Den I tuk de sweet potatoes an' de hominy an' put 'em on de table, an' den I went back in de kitchen to git de baked ham. I put on de ham an' some mo' dishes, an' marsa says, lookin' up: —

" 'I t'ought dere was a roast goose, Chad?'

" 'I ain't yerd nothin' 'bout no goose,' I says. 'I 'll ask de cook.'

"Next minute I yerd old marsa a-hollerin': —

" 'Mammy Jane, ain't we got a goose?'

" 'Lord-a-massy! yes, marsa. Chad, you wu'thless nigger, ain't you tuk dat goose out yit?'

" 'Is we got a goose?' said I.

" 'Is we got a goose? Did n't you help pick it?'

"I see whar my hair was short, an' I snatched up a hot dish from de hearth, opened de oven do', an' slide de goose in jes as he was an' lay him down befo' Marsa John.

" 'Now see what de ladies 'll have for dinner,' says old marsa, pickin' up his caarvin' knife.

" 'What 'll you take for dinner, miss?' says I. 'Baked ham?'

" 'No,' she says, lookin' up to whar Marsa John sat: 'I think I 'll take a leg ob dat goose' — jes so.

"Well, marsa cut off de leg an' put a little stuffin' an' gravy on wid a spoon, an' says to me, 'Chad, see what dat gemman 'll have.'

" 'What 'll you take for dinner, sah?' says I. 'Nice breast o' goose, or slice o' ham?'

" 'No; I think I 'll take a leg of dat goose,' he says.

"I did n't say nuffin', but I knowed bery well he wa'n't a-gwine to git it.

"But, Major, you oughter seen old marsa lookin' for der udder leg ob dat goose! He rolled him ober on de dish, dis way an' dat way, an' den he jabbed dat ole bone-handled caarvin' fork in him an' hel' him up ober de dish an' looked under him an' on top ob him, an' den he says, kinder sad like: —

" 'Chad, whar is de udder leg ob dat goose?'

" 'It did n't hab none,' says I.

" 'You mean ter say, Chad, dat de gooses on my plantation on'y got one leg?'

" 'Some ob 'em has an' some ob 'em ain't. You see, marsa, we got two kinds in de pond, an' we was a little boddered today, so Mammy Jane cooked dis one 'cause I cotched it fust.'

" 'Well,' said he, lookin' like he look when he send for you in de little room, 'I 'll settle wid ye after dinner.'

"Well, dar I was shiverin' an' shakin' in my shoes, an 'droppin' gravy an' spillin' de wine on de tablecloth, I was dat shuck up; an' when de dinner was ober he calls all de ladies an' gemmen, an' says, 'Now come down to de duck pond. I 'm gwineter show dis nigger dat all de gooses on my plantation got mo' den one leg.'

"I followed 'long, trapesin' after de whole kit an' b'ilin', an' when we got to de pond" — here Chad nearly went into a convulsion with suppressed laughter — "dar was de gooses sittin' on a log in de middle of dat ole green goose pond wid one leg stuck down — so— an' de udder tucked under de wing."

Chad was now on one leg, balancing himself by my chair, the tears running down his cheeks.

" 'Dar, marsa,' says I, 'don't ye see? Look at dat ole gray goose! Dat's de berry match ob de one we had to-day.'

"Den de ladies all hollered an' de gemmen laughed so loud dey yerd 'em at de big house.

" 'Stop, you black scoun'rel!' Marsa John says, his face gittin' white an' he a-jerkin' his handkerchief from his pocket. 'Shoo!'

"Major, I hope to have my brains kicked out by a lame grasshopper if ebery one ob dem gooses did n't put down de udder leg!

" 'Now, you lyin' nigger,' he says, raisin' his cane ober my head, 'I 'll show you' —

" 'Stop, Marsa John!' I hollered; ''t ain't fair, 't ain't fair.'

" 'Why ain't it fair?' says he.

" ''Cause,' says I, 'you did n't say "Shoo!" to de goose what was on de table.' "

Chad laughed until he choked.

"And did he thrash you?"

"Marsa John? No, sah. He laughed loud as anybody; an' den dat night he says to me as I was puttin' some wood on de fire: —

" 'Chad, where did dat leg go?' An' so I ups an' tells him all about Henny, an' how I was lyin' 'cause I was 'feared de gal would git hurt, an' how she was on'y a-foolin', thinkin' it was my goose; an' den de ole marsa look in de fire for a long time, an' den he says: —

" 'Dat 's Colonel Barbour's Henny, ain't it, Chad?'

" 'Yes,' marsa, says I.

"Well, de next mawnin' he had his black horse saddled, an' I held the stirrup for him to git on, an' he rode ober to de Barbour plantation, an' did n't come back till plumb black night. When he come up I held de lantern so I could see his face, for I wa'n't easy in my mine all day. But it was all bright an' shinin' same as a' angel's.

" 'Chad,' he says, handin' me de reins, 'I bought yo' Henny dis arternoon from Colonel Barbour, an' she 's comin' ober tomorrow, an' you can bofe git married next Sunday.' "

THE SEARCHINGS OF JONATHAN

By Elisabeth Woodbridge

WHAT I find it hard to understand is, why a person who can see a spray of fringed gentian in the middle of a meadow can't see a book on the sitting-room table."

"The reason why I can see the gentian," said Jonathan, "is because the gentian is there."

"So is the book," I responded.

"Which table?" he asked.

"The one with the lamp on it. It's a red book, about *so* big."

"It is n't there; but, just to satisfy you, I 'll look again."

He returned in a moment with an argumentative expression of countenance. "It is n't there," he said firmly. "Will anything else do instead?"

"No, I wanted you to read that special thing. Oh, dear! And I have all these things in my lap! And I know it *is* there."

"And I *know* it is n't." He stretched himself out in the hammock and watched me as I rather ostentatiously laid down thimble, scissors, needle, cotton, and material and set out for the sitting-room table. There were a number of books on it, to be sure. I glanced rapidly

through the piles, fingered the lower books, pushed aside a magazine, and pulled out from beneath it the book I wanted. I returned to the hammock and handed it over. Then, after possessing myself, again rather ostentatiously, of material, cotton, needle, scissors, and thimble, I sat down.

"It 's the second essay I specially thought we 'd like," I said.

"Just for curiosity," said Jonathan, with an impersonal air, "where did you find it?"

"Find what?" I asked innocently.

"The book."

"Oh! On the table."

"Which table?"

"The one with the lamp on it."

"I should like to know where."

"Why — just there — on the table. There was an 'Atlantic' on top of it, to be sure."

"I saw the 'Atlantic.' Blest if it looked as though it had anything under it! Besides, I was looking for it on top of things. You said you laid it down there just before luncheon, and I did n't think it could have crawled in under so quick."

"When you 're looking for a thing," I said, "you must n't think, you must look. Now go ahead and read."

If this were a single instance, or even if it were one of many illustrating a common human frailty, it would hardly be worth setting down. But the frailty under consideration has come to seem to me rather particularly masculine. Are not all the Jonathans in the world

continually being sent to some sitting-room table for something, and coming back to assert, with more or less pleasantness, according to their temperament, that it is not there? The incident, then, is not isolated; it is typical of a vast group. For Jonathan, read Everyman; for the red book, read any particular thing that you want Him to bring; for the sitting-room table, read the place where you know it is and Everyman says it is n't.

This, at least, is my thesis. It is not, however, unchallenged. Jonathan has challenged it when, from time to time, as occasion offered, I have lightly sketched it out for him. Sometimes he argues that my instances are really isolated cases and that their evidence is not cumulative, at others he takes refuge in a *tu quoque* — in itself a confession of weakness — and alludes darkly to "top shelves" and "bottom drawers." But let us have no mysteries. These phrases, considered as arguments, have their origin in certain incidents which, that all the evidence may be in, I will here set down.

Once upon a time I asked Jonathan to get me something from the top shelf in the closet. He went, and failed to find it. Then I went, and took it down. Jonathan, watching over my shoulder, said, "But that was n't the top shelf, I suppose you will admit."

Sure enough! There was a shelf above. "Oh, yes; but I don't count that shelf. We never use it, because nobody can reach it."

"How do you expect me to know which shelves you count and which you don't?"

"Of course, anatomically — structurally — it is one, but functionally it is n't there at all."

"I see," said Jonathan, so contentedly that I knew he was filing this affair away for future use.

On another occasion I asked him to get something for me from the top drawer of the old "highboy" in the dining room. He was gone a long while, and at last, growing impatient, I followed. I found him standing on an old wooden-seated chair, screw driver in hand. A drawer on a level with his head was open, and he had hanging over his arm a gaudy collection of ancient table covers and embroidered scarfs, mostly in shades of magenta.

"She stuck, but I 've got her open now. I don't see any pillow-cases, though. It 's all full of these things." He pumped his laden arm up and down, and the table-covers wagged gayly.

I sank into the chair and laughed. "Oh! Have you been prying at that all this time? Of *course* there 's nothing in *that* drawer."

"There 's where you 're wrong. There 's a lot in it; I have n't taken out half. If you want to see — "

"I *don't* want to see! There 's nothing I want less! What I mean is — I never put anything there."

"It 's the top drawer." He was beginning to lay back the table covers.

"But I can't reach it. And it 's been stuck for ever so long."

"You said the top drawer."

"Yes, I suppose I did. Of course what I meant was the top one of the ones I use."

"I see, my dear. When you say top shelf you don't mean top shelf, and when you say top drawer you don't

mean top drawer; in fact, when you say top you don't mean top at all — you mean the height of your head. Everything above that does n't count."

Jonathan was so pleased with this formulation of my attitude that he was not in the least irritated to have put out unnecessary work. And his satisfaction was deepened by one more incident. I had sent him to the bottom drawer of my bureau to get a shawl. He returned without it, and I was puzzled.

"Now, Jonathan, it 's there, and it 's the top thing."

"The real top," murmured Jonathan, "or just what you call top?"

"It 's right in front," I went on; "and I don't see how even a man could fail to find it."

He proceeded to enumerate the contents of the drawer in such strange fashion that I began to wonder where he had been.

"I said my bureau."

"I went to your bureau."

"The bottom drawer."

"The bottom drawer. There was nothing but a lot of little boxes and — "

"Oh, *I* know what you did! You went to the secret drawer."

"Is n't that the bottom one?"

"Why, yes, in a way — of course it is; but it does n't exactly count — it 's not one of the regular drawers — it has n 't any knobs, or anything —"

"But it 's a perfectly good drawer."

"Yes. But nobody is supposed to know it 's there; it looks like a molding —"

"But I know it 's there."

"Yes, of course."

"And you know I know it 's there."

"Yes, yes; but I just don't think about that one in counting up. I see what you mean, of course."

"And I see what you mean. You mean that your shawl is in the bottom one of the regular drawers — with knobs — that can be alluded to in general conversation. Now I think I can find it."

He did. And in addition he amused himself by working out phrases about "when is a bottom drawer not a bottom drawer?" and "when is a top shelf not a top shelf?"

It is to these incidents — which I regard as isolated and negligible, and he regards as typical and significant — that he alludes on the occasions when he is unable to find a red book on the sitting-room table. In vain do I point out that when language is variable and fluid it is alive, and that there may be two opinions about the structural top and the functional top, whereas there can be but one as to the book being or not being on the table. He maintains a quiet cheerfulness, as of one who is conscious of being, if not invulnerable, at least well armed.

For a time he even tried to make believe that he was invulnerable as well — to set up the thesis that if the book was really on the table he could find it. But in this he suffered so many reverses that only strong natural pertinacity kept him from capitulation.

Is it necessary to recount instances? Every family can furnish them. As I allow myself to float off into a

reminiscent dream I find my mind possessed by a continuous series of dissolving views in which Jonathan is always coming to me saying, "It is n't there," and I am always saying, "Please look again."

Though everything in the house seems to be in a conspiracy against him, it is perhaps with the fishing-tackle that he has most constant difficulties.

"My dear, have you any idea where my rod is? No, don't get up — I 'll look if you 'll just tell me where —"

"Probably in the corner behind the chest in the orchard room."

"I 've looked there."

"Well, then, did you take it in from the wagon last night?"

"Yes, I remember doing it."

"What about the little attic? You might have put it up there to dry out."

"No. I took my wading boots up, but that was all."

"The dining room? You came in that way."

He goes and returns. "Not there." I reflect deeply.

"Jonathan, are you *sure* it 's not in that corner of the orchard room?"

"Yes, I 'm sure; but I 'll look again." He disappears, but in a moment I hear his voice calling, "No! Yours is here, but not mine."

I perceive that it is a case for me, and I get up. "You go and harness. I 'll find it," I call.

There was a time when, under such conditions, I should have begun by hunting in all the unlikely places I could think of. Now I know better. I go straight to

the corner of the orchard room. Then I call to Jonathan, just to relieve his mind.

"All right! I 've found it."

"Where?"

"Here in the orchard room."

"*Where* in the orchard room?"

"In the corner."

"What corner?"

"The usual corner — back of the chest."

"The devil!" Then he comes back to put his head in at the door. "What are you laughing at?"

"Nothing. What are you talking about the devil for? Anyway, it is n't the devil; it 's the brownie."

For there seems no doubt that the things he hunts for are possessed of supernatural powers; and the theory of a brownie in the house, with a special grudge against Jonathan, would perhaps best account for the way in which they elude his search but leap into sight at my approach. There is, to be sure, one other explanation, but it is one that does not suggest itself to him, or appeal to him when suggested by me, so there is no need to dwell upon it.

If it is n't the rod, it is the landing net, which has hung itself on a nail a little to the left or right of the one he had expected to see it on; or his reel, which has crept into a corner of the tackle drawer and held a ball of string in front of itself to distract his vision; or a bunch of snell hooks, which, aware of its protective coloring, has snuggled up against the shady side of the drawer and tucked its pink-papered head underneath a gay pickerel spoon.

Fishing tackle is, clearly, "possessed," but in other fields Jonathan is not free from trouble. Finding anything on a bureau seems to offer peculiar obstacles. It is perhaps a big, black-headed pin that I want. "On the pincushion, Jonathan."

He goes, and returns with two sizes of safety pins and one long hatpin.

"No, dear, those won't do. A small, black-headed one — at least small compared with a hatpin, large compared with an ordinary pin."

"Common or house pin?" he murmurs, quoting a friend's phrase.

"Do look again! I hate to drop this to go myself."

"When a man does a job, he gets his tools together first."

"Yes; but they say women should n't copy men, they should develop along their own lines. Please go."

He goes, and comes back. "You don't want fancy gold pins, I suppose?"

"No, no! Here, you hold this, and I 'll go." I dash to the bureau. Sure enough, he is right about the cushion. I glance hastily about. There, in a little saucer, are a half dozen of the sort I want. I snatch some and run back.

"Well, it was n't in the cushion, I bet."

"No," I admit; "it was in a saucer just behind the cushion."

"You said cushion."

"I know. It 's all right."

"Now, if you had said simply 'bureau,' I 'd have looked in other places on it."

"Yes, you 'd have *looked* in other places!" I could not forbear responding. There is, I grant, another side to this question. One evening when I went upstairs I found a partial presentation of it, in the form of a little newspaper clipping, pinned on my cushion. It read as follows: —

> "My dear," said she, "please run and bring me the needle from the haystack."
> "Oh, I don't know which haystack."
> "Look in all the haystacks — you can't miss it; there 's only one needle."

Jonathan was in the cellar at the moment. When he came up, he said, "Did I hear any one laughing?"

"I don't know. Did you?"

"I thought maybe it was you."

"It might have been. Something amused me — I forget what."

I accused Jonathan of having written it himself but he denied it. Some other Jonathan, then; for, as I said, this is not a personal matter, it is a world matter. Let us grant, then, a certain allowance for those who hunt in woman-made haystacks. But what about pockets? Is not a man lord over his own pockets? And are they not nevertheless as so many haystacks piled high for his confusion? Certain it is that Jonathan has nearly as much trouble with his pockets as he does with the corners and cupboards and shelves and drawers of his house. It usually happens over our late supper, after his day in town. He sets down his teacup, struck with a sudden memory. He feels in his vest pockets — first the right, then the left. He proceeds to search

himself, murmuring, "I thought something came today that I wanted to show you — oh, here! no, that is n't it. I thought I put it — no, those are to be — what 's this? No, that 's a memorandum. Now, where in —" He runs through the papers in his pockets twice over, and in the second round I watch him narrowly, and perhaps see a corner of an envelope that does not look like office work. "There, Jonathan! What 's that? No, not that — that!"

He pulls it out with an air of immense relief. "There! I knew I had something. That 's it."

When we travel, the same thing happens with the tickets, especially if they chance to be costly and complicated ones, with all the shifts and changes of our journey printed thick upon their faces. The conductor appears at the other end of the car. Jonathan begins vaguely to fumble without lowering his paper. Pocket after pocket is browsed through in this way. Then the paper slides to his knee and he begins a more thorough investigation, with all the characteristic clapping and diving motions that seem to be necessary. Some pockets must always be clapped and others dived into to discover their contents.

No tickets. The conductor is halfway up the car. Jonathan's face begins to grow serious. He rises and looks on the seat and under it. He sits down and takes out packet after packet of papers and goes over them with scrupulous care. At this point I used to become really anxious — to make hasty calculations as to our financial resources, immediate and ultimate — to wonder if conductors ever really put nice people like us off

trains. But that was long ago. I know now that Jonathan has never lost a ticket in his life. So I glance through the paper that he has dropped or watch the landscape until he reaches a certain stage of calm and definite pessimism, when he says, "I must have pulled them out when I took out those postcards in the other car. Yes, that 's just what has happened." Then, the conductor being only a few seats away, I beg Jonathan to look once more in his vest pocket, where he always puts them. To oblige me he looks, though without faith, and lo! this time the tickets fairly fling themselves upon him, with smiles almost curling up their corners. Does the brownie travel with us, then?

I begin to suspect that some of the good men who have been blamed for forgetting to mail letters in their pockets have been, not indeed blameless, but at least misunderstood. Probably they do not forget. Probably they hunt for the letters and cannot find them, and conclude that they have already mailed them.

In the matter of the home haystacks Jonathan's confidence in himself has at last been shaken. For a long time, when he returned to me after some futile search, he used to say, "Of course you can look for it if you like, but it is *not* there." But man is a reasoning, if not altogether a reasonable, being, and with a sufficient accumulation of evidence, especially when there is some one constantly at hand to interpret its teachings, almost any set of opinions, however fixed, may be shaken. So here.

Once when we shut up the farm for the winter I left my fountain pen behind. This was little short of a

tragedy, but I comforted myself with the knowledge that Jonathan was going back that week-end for a day's hunt.

"Be sure to get the pen first of all," I said, "and put it in your pocket."

"Where is it?" he asked.

"In the little medicine cupboard over the fireplace in the orchard room, standing up at the side of the first shelf."

"Why not on your desk?" he asked.

"Because I was writing tags in there, and set it up so it would be out of the way."

"And it *was* out of the way. All right. I'll collect it."

He went, and on his return I met him with eager hand — "My pen!"

"I 'm sorry," he began.

"You did n't forget!" I exclaimed.

"No. But it was n't there."

"But — did you look?"

"Yes, I looked."

"Thoroughly?"

"Yes. I lit three matches."

"Matches! Then you did n't get it when you first got there!"

"Why — no — I had the dog to attend to — and — but I had plenty of time when I got back, and it *was n't* there."

"Well — Dear me! Did you look anywhere else? I suppose I may be mistaken. Perhaps I did take it back to the desk."

"That 's just what I thought myself," said Jonathan.

"So I went there, and looked, and then I looked on all the mantelpieces and your bureau. You must have put it in your bag the last minute — bet it 's there now!"

"Bet it is n't."

It was n't. For two weeks more I was driven to using other pens — strange and distracting to the fingers and the eyes and the mind. Then Jonathan was to go up again.

"Please look once more," I begged, "and don't expect not to see it. I can fairly see it myself, this minute, standing up there on the right-hand side, just behind the machine-oil can."

"Oh, I 'll look," he promised. "If it 's there, I 'll find it."

He returned penless. I considered buying another. But we were planning to go up together the last week of the hunting season, and I thought I would wait on the chance.

We got off at the little station and hunted our way up, making great sweeps and jogs, as hunters must, to take in certain spots we thought promising — certain ravines and swamp edges where we are always sure of hearing the thunderous whir of partridge wings, or the soft, shrill whistle of woodcock. At noon we broiled chops and rested in the lee of the wood edge, where, even in the late fall, one can usually find spots that are warm and still. It was dusk by the time we came over the crest of the farm ledges and saw the huddle of the home buildings below us, and quite dark when we reached the house. Fires had been made and coals smouldered on the hearth in the sitting room.

"You light the lamp," I said, "and I 'll just take a match and go through to see if that pen *should* happen to be there."

"No use doing anything to-night," said Jonathan. "To-morrow morning you can have a thorough hunt."

But I took my match, felt my way into the next room, past the fireplace, up to the cupboard, then struck my match. In its first flare-up I glanced in. Then I chuckled.

Jonathan had gone out to the dining room, but he has perfectly good ears.

"NO!" he roared, and his tone of dismay, incredulity, rage, sent me off into gales of unscrupulous laughter. He was striding in, candle in hand, shouting, "It was *not there!*"

"Look yourself," I managed to gasp.

This time, somehow, he could see it.

"You planted it! You brought it up and planted it!"

"I never! Oh, dear me! It pays for going without it for weeks!"

"*Nothing* will ever make me believe that that pen was standing there when I looked for it!" said Jonathan, with vehement finality.

"All right," I sighed happily. "You don't have to believe it."

But in his heart perhaps he does believe it. At any rate, since that time he has adopted a new formula: "My dear, it may be there, of course, but I don't see it." And this position I regard as unassailable.

One triumph he has had. I wanted something that was stored away in the shut-up town house.

"Do you suppose you could find it?" I said, as gently as possible.

"I can try," he said.

"I think it is in a box about this shape — see? — a gray box, in the attic closet, the farthest-in corner."

"Are you sure it 's in the house? If it 's in the house, I think I can find it."

"Yes, I 'm sure of that."

When he returned that night, his face wore a look of satisfaction very imperfectly concealed beneath a mask of nonchalance.

"*Good* for you! Was it where I said?"

"No."

"Was it in a different corner?"

"No."

"Where was it?"

"It was n't in a corner at all. It was n't in that closet."

"It was n't! Where, then?"

"Downstairs in the hall closet." He paused, then could not forbear adding, "And it was n't in a gray box; it was in a big hatbox with violets all over it."

"Why, *Jonathan!* Are n't you grand! How did you ever find it? I could n't have done better myself."

Under such praise he expanded. "The fact is," he said confidentially, "I had given it up. And then suddenly I changed my mind. I said to myself, 'Jonathan, don't be a man! Think what she 'd do if she were here now.' And then I got busy and found it."

"Jonathan!" I could almost have wept if I had not been laughing.

"Well," he said, proud, yet rather sheepish, "what is there so funny about that? I gave up half a day to it."

"Funny! It isn 't funny — exactly. You don't mind my laughing a little? Why, you 've lived down the fountain pen — we 'll forget the pen —"

"Oh, no, you won't forget the pen either," he said, with a certain pleasant grimness.

"Well, perhaps not — of course it would be a pity to forget that. Suppose I say, then, that we 'll always regard the pen in the light of the violet hatbox?"

"I think that might do." Then he had an alarming afterthought. "But, see here — you won't expect me to do things like that often?"

"Dear me, no! People can't live always on their highest levels. Perhaps you 'll *never* do it again." Jonathan looked distinctly relieved. "I 'll accept it as a unique effort — like Dante's angel and Raphael's sonnet."

"Jonathan," I said that evening, "what do you know about St. Anthony of Padua?"

"Not much."

"Well, you ought to. He helped you to-day. He 's the saint who helps people to find lost articles. Every man ought to take him as a patron saint."

"And do you know which saint it is who helps people to find lost virtues — like humility, for instance?"

"No. I don't, really."

"I did n't suppose you did," said Jonathan.

THE ATTACK ON THE MINISTER'S MELON PATCH

By Harriet Beecher Stowe

FOR two or three days El Vinton and Tom and Jimmy had seemed to have some plan on foot from which I was excluded. There was a great deal of chaffing and laughing among them, and passing of catchwords from one to another; and it was evident that something was going on which was not to be communicated to me.

One evening, just at twilight, El proposed that we should all go in swimming together in a neighboring pond. The evening was delightful — it had been a hot August day — the full moon was just rising, and would light our way home. El Vinton put his arm in mine, and made himself unusually gracious and agreeable. In fact, he usually did that, and if he had not possessed that easy, jolly kind of way, I think I should not have borne as I did the sort of dictation he exercised over us all.

He rattled, and chattered, and talked all the way to the pond, and we had a glorious swim. By the time we started to return home, it was broad, clear moonlight, clear enough to see to read by.

We came along cross-lots, swishing through the high, dewy meadow grass, and I gathered, as I went, hand-

fuls of bright, spicy wild roses and golden lilies, as a bouquet for Lucy. Suddenly we came to the minister's watermelon patch, and I was going to propose that we should make a circuit round it, to avoid tramping the vines, when El Vinton, putting one hand on the top rail, swung himself over, saying —

"Now for it, boys! Here 's a dessert for us!"

The boys followed him, and forthwith began, in the bright moonlight, sounding the melons.

"Take care, fellows!" said El. "I 'm the judge of ripeness. Don't cut till I give verdict."

"Boys," said I, "what are you doing?"

"Oh, you 'll see if you live long enough," said El, coolly cutting off one or two fine melons, and taking them to a retired spot under a large tree. "This way, Tom, with that one. Jimmy, don't you cut any; let me cut them."

"But," said I, "boys, this is too bad. This is Mr. Sewell's patch — the minister.

"All the better," said El. "Just as if we did n't know that. I would n't have taken Deacon Sharpe's, for I know they would give us a stomach ache; but Mr. Sewell's are your real Christian melons — won't hurt anybody."

The boys all laughed as they sat down under the tree, and El began cutting up a great, ripe, red melon. I stood irresolute.

"Perhaps you had better run and tell of us," said El.

"I think it's a shame for you to say that, El Vinton," said I. "You know it 's unjust."

"Well, so 't is," he said, with a frank, dashing air.

"I know, Bill, that you are as good-hearted a fellow as breathes, and any one that says you are a sneak or a spy, I 'll fight him. So sit down with us."

"But seriously," said I, sitting down, "I must expostulate."

"Well, wet your whistle first," said El, cutting a great fresh piece, and holding it up to my mouth.

Now, if you imagine a thirsty boy, on a hot August night, with a cool, trickling slice of watermelon held right to his lips, you will, perhaps, see how it was that I ate my slice of watermelon before I was well aware what I did.

"Goes down pretty well, don't it?" said El, stroking my back. "You see there 's nothing like your real orthodox, pious melons. Why, I don't doubt that there 's grace grown into these melons that will set us a long way on in saintship."

There was a general laugh at this sally, and I laughed, too, but still said, in an uneasy voice —

"After all, El, it isn 't handsome to take the minister's melons in this way."

"Bless you!" said El, "it is n't the melons we care for, it 's the fun. Let 's see. These melons are worth, say half a dollar apiece; that 's a liberal estimate. Well, suppose we eat six of them; that 's three dollars! What 's three dollars?" he said, with a magnificent slap of his pocket. "Now I, for one, am ready to plank down five dollars this minute, as my part of a subscription to get Sewell a concordance, or a cyclopaedia, or set of Shakespeare, or any such thing as folks give to ministers; but I want my fun out of him, you see. I want

my melons in this pastoral way, just when I feel like eating 'em, — and enough of them — and so here goes a roarer," giving a smart slash of his knife across the third melon.

And so, on and on we went, never knowing that Abner Stearns, the parson's hired man, had his eye at a hole in the shrubbery, and was taking an exact account of us. Long before we left the fields, Abner had made his way across the lots, and detailed to Mr. Sewell the whole that he had seen and heard.

"There 's one on 'em — that 'ere Bill Somers — *he* seemed rather to go agin it, but they would n't hear to it, and kind o' roped him in among 'em," said Abner. "And now, Mr. Sewell, if you say so, I can jest go up with you to Mr. Exeter, with this ere story, 'cause I got a good look at every one on 'em, and knows exactly who they be, and I can testify on 'em slick as a whistle. That 'air Vinton boy, from Boston, he 's the head o' the hull. I hain 't never had no great opinion o' him. He 's up to every kind o' shine, and jest the one to rope in other boys."

"Well, Abner," said Mr. Sewell, "I have my own plan about this affair, and you must promise me not to say a single word about it to any human being, not even to your wife."

"That 's pretty well put in, too," said Abner, "for if I told Cinthy, she 'd want to tell Dolly Ann, and Dolly Ann, she 'd want to tell Dolly, and 'twould be all over the town afore night."

"Precisely so," said the minister, "but my plan requires absolute silence. I can't manage without."

"Go ahead, Parson Sewell," said Abner. "I 'll be dumb as a catfish," and Abner went home, wondering what the minister's plan was.

"Lucy," said Mr. Sewell, coming out of his study, "I think we had four nice, ripe melons put down cellar this morning, did n't we?"

"Yes, papa."

"Well, I 'm going to invite the boys over at the opposite house to a little melon supper. I 'll bring up the melons, and you set out a table, and I 'll go over and invite them."

Now as Lucy had particularly friendly feelings toward, at least, one boy in the lot, she set about her hospitality with alacrity.

We were coming up the street in the full, broad moonlight.

"I tell you," said El, "I 'm about as full as I can wag. It 's wonderful how watermelons can fill a fellow up. I feel as I used to after a Thanksgiving dinner."

"So do I," said Tom. "I could n't really get down another morsel."

At this moment, as we turned the corner to our boardinghouse, Mr. Sewell stood out plain before us, in the moonlight.

"Good evening, young gentlemen," he said, in a bland, polite tone. "I 've been looking for you."

Our hearts all thumped, I fancy, a little quicker than before, but Mr. Sewell was so calm and polite, it could not be that he suspected where we had been.

"I 've been looking for you," said Mr. Sewell, "just to ask you to step in a few moments and eat water-

melons with us. We have a splendid lot of nice, ripe watermelons, and I thought you could help us to put some of them away."

I saw El give Danforth a look of despair; but of course there was nothing to be done but seem highly delighted and honored, and we followed Mr. Sewell into the house and to a table piled with ripe melons, for which, wearied and cloyed as we were, we had to feign a boy's fresh appetite.

Mr. Sewell was pressing. He cut and carved without mercy — would not hear an apology, piled up our plates with new slices before we had half demolished the old ones, while we munched away with the courage of despair.

Lucy was there, doing her part of the hospitality in the prettiest and most graceful manner possible.

I had reasons of my own why the feast seemed almost to choke me. I had eaten very little of the melons in the lot, but the sense of the meanness of my conduct oppressed me. I could not bear to meet Lucy's eyes — and Mr. Sewell's politeness was dreadful to me. I rather fancy that there never was a set of boys who groaned more in spirit over a delicious banquet than we over those melons. It was in vain we made excuses; feigned modesty, delicacy; said, "No, I thank you," and so on. The hospitality was so pressing, and our guilty consciences made us so afraid of being suspected, that we nearly killed ourselves in the effort. But at last we had to stop short of what was provided for us.

There was a sort of subdued twinkle in Mr. Sewell's eye, as he bade us good-night, that struck me singularly.

It was like a sudden flash of lightning on a dark night. I felt perfectly sure that somehow he knew all about us. I felt my cheeks flame up to my hair, and my misery was at its climax.

When we stumbled home the boys were alternately laughing and groaning, and declaring that the parson had caught them; but I stumbled into bed, blind and despairing. Oh, the misery of utter shame and self-contempt! I really wished I had never been born; I wished I had never come to Highland Academy; never known Lucy or Mr. Sewell; wished that El Vinton had kept a thousand miles away; and, finally, it occurred to me to wish the right wish which lay at the bottom of all — that I had had sense and manliness enough, weeks ago, to begin with my roommates as I knew I ought to go on, and not get into the miserable tangle which had ended in this disgrace.

I did not sleep a wink that night, and next morning, at five o'clock, I was up, and seeing Mr. Sewell out in his garden, I resolved to go to him and make a clean breast of it.

I went and told him I wanted to see him alone, and went with him into his study and told him what a miserable, silly fool I had been for the few weeks past.

"I tell you, Mr. Sewell, because I won't play the hypocrite any longer," I said. "Lucy thinks a great deal too well of me; and you have been a great deal too kind to me; and I thought I might as well let you see just how mistaken you have been in me, and what a mean, miserable humbug I am."

"Oh, no, not quite a humbug," said Mr. Sewell,

smiling. "Courage, my boy. You 've made a clean breast of it, and now you 've got down to firm ground, I think. It's just as well to get through this kind of experience while you are a boy, if you are one of those that can learn anything by experience."

"But now I don't know what to do," said I. "I am wrong all round; and seem to have lost the power of doing right."

"Well, you have made it pretty hard to do right," he said; "but if you 've pluck enough now, to face about, and to tell your roommates just what you have told me — that you have been going wrong, but that you are determined now to do right, and having told them so, if you will keep to it with steadiness for a week or two, you may get back the ground that you never ought to have lost in the first place. It 's tremendously hard to face about when you have been yielding, but it can be done."

"It shall be done," said I; and I took my hat up and walked over to our room, and got the boys together and made my speech to them. I blamed nobody but myself. I told them I had acted like a sneak; and that I did n't wonder they had no respect for me, but I told them I meant to be done acting like a sneak, and be a man; that I should, for the future, keep from drinking and smoking, and breaking school rules, and that if they would join me, well and good, but if they did n't, it should make no difference.

Mr. Sewell that same day sent for El Vinton and Jimmy, and had a talk with them, and matters in our room began to wear quite another appearance.

"I tell you, fellows," said El Vinton, "it was rather bully of the parson not to blow on us. Exeter would have turned us out of school in less than no time. And Sewell gave me some precious good counsel," he added; "and on the whole, I don't know but I 'll make an experiment of the ways of virtue."

THE MINISTER'S HOUSEKEEPER

By Harriet Beecher Stowe

SCENE. — The shady side of a blueberry pasture. — Sam Lawson with the boys, picking blueberries. — Sam, *loq.*

WAL, you see, boys 't was just here — Parson Carryl's wife she died along in the forepart o' March: my cousin Huldy she undertook to keep house for him. The way on 't was, that Huldy she went to take care o' Mis' Carryl in the fust on 't, when she fust took sick. Huldy was a tailoress by trade; but then she was one o' these 'ere facultized persons that has a gift for most anything, and that was how Mis' Carryl come to set sech store by her, that, when she was sick, nothin' would do for her but she must have Huldy round all the time; and the minister he said he 'd make it good to her all the same, and she should n't lose nothin' by it. And so Huldy she stayed with Mis' Carryl full three months afore she died, and got to seein' to everything pretty much round the place.

"Wal, arter Mis' Carryl died, Parson Carryl he 'd got so kind o' used to hevin' on her round, takin' care o' things, that he wanted her to stay along a spell; and so Huldy she stayed along a spell, and poured out his tea, and mended his close, and made pies and cakes, and cooked and washed and ironed, and kep' everything as

neat as a pin. Huldy was a dreffful chipper sort o' gal; and work sort o' rolled off from her like water off a duck's back. There wa'n't no gal in Sherburne that could put sich a sight o' work through as Huldy; and yet, Sunday mornin', she always come out in the singers' seat like one o' these 'ere June roses, lookin' so fresh and smilin', and her voice was jest as clear and sweet as a meadow lark's. I 'member how she used to sing some o' them 'ere places where the treble and counter used to go together: her voice kind o' trembled a little, and it sort o' went through and through a feller! tuck him right where he lived!"

Here Sam leaned contemplatively back with his head in a clump of sweet fern, and refreshed himself with a chew of young wintergreen. "This 'ere young wintergreen, boys, is jest like a feller's thoughts o' things that happened when he was young: it comes up jest so fresh and tender every year, the longest time you hev to live; and you can't help chawin' on 't though 't is sort o' stingin'. I don't never get over likin' young wintergreen."

"But about Huldah, Sam?"

"Oh, yes! about Huldy. When a feller is Indianin' round, these 'ere pleasant summer days, a feller's thoughts gits like a flock o' young partridges: they 's up and down and everywhere; 'cause one place is jest about as good as another, when they 's all so kind o' comfortable and nice. Wal, about Huldy, — as I was a-sayin'. She was jest as handsome a gal to look at as a feller could have; and I think a nice, well-behaved young gal in the singers' seat of a Sunday is a means o'

grace: it 's sort o' drawin' to the unregenerate, you know. Why, boys, in them days, I 've walked ten miles over to Sherburne of a Sunday mornin', jest to play the bass viol in the same singers' seat with Huldy. She was very much respected, Huldy was; and, when she went out to tailorin', she was allers bespoke six months ahead, and sent for in waggins up and down for ten miles round; for the young fellers was allers 'mazin' anxious to be sent after Huldy, and was quite free to offer to go for her. Wal, after Mis' Carryl died, Huldy got to be sort o' housekeeper at the minister's, and saw to everything, and did everything: so that there wa'n't a pin out o' the way.

"But you know how 't is in parishes: there allers is women that thinks the minister's affairs belongs to them, and they ought to have the rulin' and guidin' of 'em; and, if a minister's wife dies, there 's folks that allers has their eyes open on providences, — lookin' out who 's to be the next one.

"Ye see, the Parson's wife, she was one of them women who hed their eyes everywhere and on everything. She was a little thin woman, but tough as Inger rubber, and smart as a steel trap; and there wa'n't a hen laid an egg, or cackled, but Mis' Carryl was right there to see about it; and she hed the garden made in the spring, and the medders mowed in summer, and the cider made, and the corn husked, and the apples got in the fall; and the doctor, he hed n't nothin' to do but jest sit stock-still a-meditatin' on Jerusalem and Jericho and them things that ministers think about. But he did n't know nothin' about where anything he eat or

drank or wore come from or went to: his wife jest led him round in temporal things and took care on him like a baby.

"Wal, to be sure, Mis' Carryl looked up to him in spirituals, and thought all the world on him; for there wa'n't a smarter minister nowhere round. Why, when he preached on decrees and election, they used to come clear over from South Parish, and West Sherburne, and Oldtown to hear him; and there was sich a row o' waggins tied along by the meetin'house that the stables was all full, and all the hitchin' posts was full clean up to the tavern, so that folks said the doctor made the town look like a gineral trainin' day a Sunday.

"He was gret on texts, the doctor was. When he hed a p'int to prove, he 'd jest go through the Bible, and drive all the texts ahead o' him like a flock o' sheep; and then, if there was a text that seemed agin him, why, he 'd come out with his Greek and Hebrew, and kind o'chase it round a spell, jest as ye see a feller chase a contrary bellwether, and make him jump the fence arter the rest. I tell you, there wa'n't no text in the Bible that could stand agin the doctor when his blood was up. The year arter the doctor was app'inted to preach the 'lection sermon in Boston, he made such a figger that the Brattle Street Church sent a committee right down to see if they could n't get him to Boston; and then the Sherburne folks, they up and raised his salary, ye see, there ain't nothin' wakes folks up like somebody else's wantin' what you 've got. Wal, that fall they made him a Doctor o' Divinity at Cambridge College, and so they sot more by him than ever. Wal,

you see, the doctor, of course he felt kind o' lonesome and afflicted when Mis' Carryl was gone; but railly and truly, Huldy was so up to everything about house, that the doctor did n't miss nothin' in a temporal way. His shirt bosoms was pleated finer than they ever was, and them ruffles round his wrists was kep' like the driven snow; and there wa'n't a brack in his silk stockin's, and his shoe buckles was kep' polished up, and his coats brushed, and then there wa'n't no bread and biscuit like Huldy's; and her butter was like solid lumps o' gold; and there were n't no pies to equal hers. She was kind o' pleasant to look at; and the more the doctor looked at her the better he liked her; and so things seemed to be goin' on quite quiet and comfortable ef it had n't been that Mis' Pipperidge and Mis' Deakin Blodgett and Mis' Sawin got their heads together a-talkin' about things.

" 'Poor man,' says Mis' Pipperidge, 'what can that child that he 's got there do towards takin' the care of all that place? It takes a mature woman,' she says, 'to tread in Mis' Carryl's shoes.'

" 'That it does,' said Mis' Blodgett; 'and, when things once get to runnin' downhill, there ain't no stoppin' on 'em,' says she.

"Then Mis' Sawin she took it up. (Ye see, Mis' Sawin used to go out to dressmakin', and was sort o' jealous, 'cause folks sot more by Huldy than they did by her.) 'Well,' says she, 'Huldy Peters is well enough at her trade. I never denied that, though I do say I never did believe in her way o' makin' buttonholes; and I must say, if 't was the dearest friend I hed, that

I thought Huldy tryin' to fit Mis' Kittridge's plum-colored silk was a clear piece o' presumption; the silk was jist sp'iled, so 't wa'n't fit to come into the meetin'-house. I must say, Huldy's a gal that 's always too venturesome about takin' 'sponsibilities she don't know nothin' about.'

" 'Of course she don't,' said Mis' Deakin Blodgett. 'What does she know about all the lookin' and seein' to that there ought to be in guidin' the minister's house. Huldy's well meanin', and she 's good at her work, and good in the singers' seat; but Lordy massy! she hain't got no experience. Parson Carryl ought to have an experienced woman to keep house for him. There 's the spring house cleanin' and the fall house cleanin' to be seen to, and the things to be put away from the moths; and then the gettin' ready for the Association and all the ministers' meetin's; and the makin' the soap and the candles, and settin' the hens and turkeys, watchin' the calves, and seein' after the hired men and the garden; and there that 'ere blessed man jist sets there at home as serene, and has nobody round but that 'ere gal, and don't even know how things must be a-runnin' to waste!'

"Wal, the upshot on 't was, they fussed and fuzzled and wuzzled till they 'd drinked up all the tea in the teapot; and then they went down and called on the Parson, and wuzzled him all up talkin' about this, that, and t'other that wanted lookin' to, and that it was no way to leave everything to a young chit like Huldy, and that he ought to be lookin' about for an experienced woman. The Parson he thanked 'em kindly, and said

he believed their motives was good, but he did n't go no further. He did n't ask Mis' Pipperidge to come and stay there and help him, nor nothin' o' that kind; but he said he 'd attend to matters himself. The fact was the Parson had got such a likin' for havin' Huldy round, that he could n't think o' such a thing as swappin' her off for the Widder Pipperidge.

"But he thought to himself, 'Huldy is a good girl; but I ought n't to be a-leavin' everything to her — it 's too hard on her. I ought to be instructin' and guidin' and helpin' of her; 'cause 't ain't everybody could be expected to know and do what Mis' Carryl did;' and so at it he went; and did n't Huldy hev a time on 't when the minister began to come out of his study, and want to tew round and see to things? Huldy, you see, thought all the world of the minister, and she was 'most afraid to laugh; but she told me she could n't, for the life of her, help it when his back was turned, for he wuzzled things up in the most singular way. But Huldy she 'd jest say, 'Yes, sir,' and get him off into his study, and go on her own way.

" 'Huldy,' says the minister one day, 'you ain't experienced out doors; and, when you want to know anything, you must come to me.'

" 'Yes, sir,' says Huldy.

" 'Now, Huldy,' says the Parson, 'you must be sure to save the turkey eggs, so that we can have a lot of turkeys for Thanksgiving.'

" 'Yes, sir,' says Huldy; and she opened the pantry door, and showed him a nice dishful she 'd been a-savin' up. Wal, the very next day the Parson's hen turkey

was found killed up to old Jim Scroggs's barn. Folks said Scroggs killed it; though Scroggs he stood to it he did n't: at any rate, the Scroggses they made a meal on 't; and Huldy she felt bad about it, 'cause she 'd set her heart on raisin' the turkeys; and says she, 'Oh, dear! I don't know what I shall do. I was just ready to set her.'

" 'Do, Huldy?' says the Parson. 'Why, there 's the other turkey, out there by the door; and a fine bird, too, he is.'

"Sure enough, there was the old tom turkey a-struttin' and a-sidlin' and a-quitterin', and a-floutin' his tail feathers in the sun, like a lively young widower, all ready to begin life over ag'in.

" 'But,' says Huldy, 'you know *he* can't set on eggs.'

" 'He can't? I 'd like to know why,' says the Parson. 'He shall set on eggs, and hatch 'em too.'

" 'O doctor' says Huldy, all in a tremble; 'cause, you know, she did n't want to contradict the minister, and she was afraid she should laugh — 'I never heard that a tom turkey would set on eggs.'

" 'Why, they ought to,' said the Parson, getting quite 'arnest; 'what else be they good for? you just bring out the eggs, now, and put 'em in the nest, and I 'll make him set on 'em.'

"So Huldy she thought there were n't no way to convince him but to let him try: so she took the eggs out, and fixed 'em all nice in the nest; and then she come back and found old Tom a-skirmishin' with the Parson pretty lively, I tell ye. Ye see, old Tom he did n't take the idee at all; and he flopped and gobbled, and fit the

Parson; and the Parson's wig got round so that his cue stuck straight out over his ear, but he 'd got his blood up. Ye see, the old doctor was used to carryin' his p'ints o' doctrine; and he had n't fit the Arminians and Socinians to be beat by a tom turkey; so finally he made a dive, and ketched him by the neck in spite o' his floppin', and stroked him down, and put Huldy's apron round him.

" 'There, Huldy,' he says, quite red in the face, 'we 've got him now;' and he traveled off to the barn with him as lively as a cricket.

"Huldy came behind jist chokin' with laugh, and afraid the minister would look round and see her.

" 'Now, Huldy, we 'll crook his legs, and set him down,' says the Parson, when they got him to the nest; 'you see he is getting quiet, and he 'll set there all right.'

"And the Parson he sot him down; and old Tom he sot there solemn enough, and held his head down all droopin', lookin' like a rail pious old cock, as long as the Parson sot by him.

" 'There! you see how still he sets,' says the Parson to Huldy.

"Huldy was 'most dyin' for fear she should laugh. 'I 'm afraid he 'll get up,' says she, 'when you do.'

" 'Oh no, he won't!' says the Parson, quite confident. 'There, there,' says he, layin' his hands on him, as if pronouncin' a blessin'. But when the Parson riz up, old Tom he riz up too, and began to march over the eggs.

" 'Stop, now!' says the Parson. 'I 'll make him get

down ag'in: hand me that corn basket; we 'll put that over him.'

"So he crooked old Tom's legs, and got him down ag'in; and they put the corn basket over him, and then they both stood and waited.

" 'That 'll do the thing, Huldy,' said the Parson.

" 'I don't know about it,' says Huldy.

" 'Oh yes, it will, child! I understand,' says he.

"Just as he spoke, the basket riz right up and stood and they could see old Tom's long legs.

" 'I 'll make him stay down, says the Parson; for he had got his spunk up.

" 'You jist hold him a minute, and I 'll get something that 'll make him stay, I guess;' and out he went to the fence, and brought in a long, thin, flat stone, and laid it on old Tom's back.

"Old Tom he wilted down considerable under this and looked railly as if he was goin' to give in. He stayed still there a good long spell, and the minister and Huldy left him there and come up to the house; but they had n't more than got in the door before they see old Tom a-hippin' along, as high-steppin' as ever, sayin', 'Talk! talk! and quitter! quitter!' and struttin' and gobblin' as if he 'd come through the Red Sea, and got the victory.

" 'Oh, my eggs!' says Huldy. 'I 'm afraid he 's smashed 'em!'

"And sure enough, there they was, smashed flat enough under the stone.

" 'I 'll have him killed,' said the Parson: 'we won't have such a critter round.'

"But the Parson he slep' on 't, and then did n't do it; he only come out next Sunday with a tiptop sermon on the ''Riginal Cuss' that was pronounced on things in gineral, when Adam fell, and showed how everything was allowed to go contrary ever since. There was pigweed, and pulsey, and Canady thistles, cutworms, and bagworms, and cankerworms, to say nothin' of rattlesnakes. The doctor made it very impressive and sort o' improvin'; but Huldy she told me, goin' home, that she hardly could keep from laughin' two or three times in the sermon when she thought of old Tom a-standin' up with the corn basket on his back.

"Wal, next week Huldy she jist borrowed the minister's horse and side saddle, and rode over to South Parish to her Aunt Bascome's — Widder Bascome's, you know, that lives there by the trout brook — and got a lot o' turkey eggs o' her, and come back and set a hen on 'em, and said nothin'; and in good time there was as nice a lot o' turkey chicks as ever ye see.

"Huldy never said a word to the minister about his experiment, and he never said a word to her; but he sort o' kep' more to his books, and did n't take it on him to advise so much.

"But not long arter he took it into his head that Huldy ought to have a pig to be a-fattin' with the buttermilk. Mis' Pipperidge set him up to it; and jist then old Tim Bigelow, out to Juniper Hill, told him if he 'd call over he 'd give him a little pig.

"So he sent for a man, and told him to build a pigpen right out by the well, and have it all ready when he came home with his pig.

"Huldy she said she wished he might put a curb round the well out there, because in the dark, sometimes, a body might stumble into it; and the Parson he told him he might do that.

"Wal, old Aikin, the carpenter, he did n't come till most the middle of the arternoon; and then he sort o' idled, so that he did n't get up the well curb till sundown; and then he went off and said he 'd come and do the pigpen next day.

"Wal, arter dark, Parson Carryl he driv into the yard, full chizel, with his pig. He 'd tied up his mouth to keep him from squealin'; and he see what he thought was the pigpen — he was rather near-sighted — and so he ran and threw piggy over; and down he dropped into the water, and the minister put out his horse and pranced off in to the house quite delighted.

" 'There, Huldy, I 've got you a nice little pig.'

" 'Dear me!' says Huldy: 'where have you put him?'

" 'Why, out there in the pigpen, to be sure.'

" 'Oh, dear me!' says Huldy: 'that 's the well curb. There ain't no pigpen built,' says she.

" 'Then I 've thrown the pig into the well!' says the Parson.

"Wal, Huldy she worked and worked, and finally she fished piggy out in the bucket, but he was dead as a doornail; and she got him out o' the way quietly, and did n't say much; and the Parson he took to a great Hebrew book in his study; and says he, 'Huldy, I ain't much in temporals,' says he. Huldy says she kind o' felt her heart go out to him, he was so sort o' meek and helpless and larned; and says she, 'Wal, Parson Carryl,

don't trouble your head no more about it; I 'll see to things;' and sure enough, a week arter there was a nice pen, all shipshape, and two little white pigs that Huldy bought with the money for the butter she sold at the store.

"'Wal, Huldy,' said the Parson, 'you are a most amazin' child: you don't say nothin', but you do more than most folks.'

"Arter that the Parson set sich store by Huldy that he come to her and asked her about everything, and it was amazin' how everything she put her hand to prospered. Huldy planted marigolds and larkspurs, pinks and carnations, all up and down the path to the front door, and trained up mornin'-glories and scarlet runners round the windows. And she was always a-gettin' a root here, and a sprig there, and a seed from somebody else — for Huldy was one o' them that has the gift, so that ef you jist give 'em the leastest sprig of anything they make a great bush out of it right away; so that in six months Huldy had roses and geraniums and lilies, sich as it would a took a gardener to raise. The Parson he took no notice at fust; but when the yard was all ablaze with flowers he used to come and stand in a kind o' maze at the front door, and say, 'Beautiful, beautiful! Why, Huldy, I never see anything like it.' And then when her work was done arternoons, Huldy would sit with her sewin' in the porch, and sing and trill away till she 'd draw the meadow larks and the bobolinks and the orioles to answer her, and the great big elm tree overhead would get perfectly rackety with the birds; and the Parson, settin' there in his study, would git to

kind o' dreamin' about the angels, and golden harps, and the New Jerusalem; but he would n't speak a word 'cause Huldy she was jist like them wood thrushes, she never could sing so well when she thought folks was hearin'. Folks noticed, about this time, that the Parson's sermons got to be like Aaron's rod, that budded and blossomed; there was things in 'em about flowers and birds, and more 'special about the music o' heaven. And Huldy she noticed that ef there was a hymn run in her head while she was round a-workin' the minister was sure to give it out next Sunday. You see, Huldy was jist like a bee: she always sung when she was workin', and you could hear her trillin', now down in the corn patch, while she was pickin' the corn; and now in the buttery, while she was workin' the butter; and now she 'd go singin' down cellar, and then she 'd be singin' up overhead, so that she seemed to fill a house chock full o' music.

"Huldy was so sort o' chipper and fair-spoken that she got the hired men all under her thumb: they come to her and took her orders jist as meek as so many calves; and she traded at the store, and kep' the accounts, and she hed her eyes everywhere, and tied up all the ends so tight that there wa'n't no gettin' round her. She would n't let nobody put nothin' off on Parson Carryl, 'cause he was a minister. Huldy was allers up to anybody that wanted to make a hard bargain; and, afore he knew jist what he was about, she 'd got the best end of it, and everybody said that Huldy was the most capable gal that they 'd ever traded with.

"Wal, come to the meetin' of the Association, Mis'

Deakin Blodgett and Mis' Pipperidge come callin' up to the Parson's, all in a stew, and offerin' their services to get the house ready; but the doctor he jist thanked 'em quite quiet, and turned 'em over to Huldy; and Huldy she told 'em that she 'd got everything ready, and showed 'em her pantries, and her cakes and her pies and her puddin's, and took 'em all over the house; and they went peekin' and pokin', openin' cupboard doors, and lookin' into drawers; and they could n't find so much as a thread out o' the way, from garret to cellar and so they went off quite discontented. Arter that the women set a new trouble a-brewin'. Then they begun to talk that it was a year now since Mis' Carryl died; and it railly was n't proper such a young gal to be stayin' there, who everybody could see was a-settin' her cap for the minister.

"Mis' Pipperidge said that, so long as she looked on Huldy as the hired gal, she had n't thought much about it; but Huldy was railly takin' on airs as an equal, and appearin' as mistress o' the house in a way that would make talk if it went on. And Mis' Pipperidge she driv round up to Deakin Abner Snow's, and down to Mis' 'Lijah Perry's, and asked them if they was n't afraid that the way the Parson and Huldy was a-goin' on might make talk. And they said they had n't thought on 't before, but now, come to think on 't, they was sure it would; and they all went and talked with somebody else, and asked them if they did n't think it would make talk. So come Sunday, between meetin's there wa'n't nothin' else talked about; and Huldy saw folks a-noddin' and a-winkin', and a-lookin' arter her, and she

begun to feel dreffful sort o' disagreeable. Finally Mis' Sawin she says to her, 'My dear, did n't you never think folks would talk about you and the minister?'

"'No; why should they?' says Huldy, quite innocent.

"'Wal, dear,' says she, 'I think it 's a shame; but they say you 're tryin' to catch him, and that it 's so bold and improper for you to be courtin' of him right in his own house — you know folks will talk — I thought I 'd tell you 'cause I think so much of you,' says she.

"Huldy was a gal of spirit, and she despised the talk, but it made her dreffful uncomfortable; and when she got home at night she sat down in the mornin'-glory porch, quite quiet, and did n't sing a word.

"The minister he had heard the same thing from one of his deakins that day; and when he saw Huldy so kind o' silent, he says to her, 'Why don't you sing, my child?'

"He hed a pleasant sort o' way with him, the minister had, and Huldy had got to likin' to be with him, and it all come over her that perhaps she ought to go away; and her throat kind o' filled up so she could n't hardly speak; and, says she, 'I can't sing to-night.'

"Says he, 'You don't know how much good your singin' has done me, nor how much good *you* have done me in all ways, Huldy. I wish I knew how to show my gratitude.'

"'O sir!' says Huldy, '*is* it improper for me to be here?'

"'No, dear,' says the minister, 'but ill-natured folks

will talk; but there is one way we can stop it, Huldy — if you will marry me. You 'll make me very happy, and I 'll do all I can to make you happy. Will you?'

"Wal, Huldy never told me jist what she said to the minister — gals never does give you the particulars of them 'ere things jist as you 'd like 'em — only I know the upshot and the hull on 't was, that Huldy she did a consid'able lot o' clear starchin' and ironin' the next two days; and the Friday o' next week the minister and she rode over together to Dr. Lothrop's in Oldtown; and the doctor, he jist made 'em man and wife. Wal, you 'd better believe there was a-starin' and a-wonderin' next Sunday mornin' when the second bell was a-tollin', and the minister walked up the broad aisle with Huldy, all in white, arm in arm with him, and he opened the minister's pew, and handed her in as if she was a princess; for, you see, Parson Carryl come of a good family, and was a born gentleman, and had a sort o' grand way o' bein' polite to women folks. Wal, I guess there was a-rus'lin' among the bunnets. Mis' Pipperidge gin a great bounce, like corn poppin' on a shovel, and her eyes glared through her glasses at Huldy as if they 'd 'a' sot her afire; and everybody in the meetin'house was a-starin', I tell yew. But they could n't none of 'em say nothin' agin Huldy's looks; for there wa'n't a crimp nor a frill about her that wa'n't jis' *so*; and her frock was white as the driven snow, and she had her bunnet all trimmed up with white ribbins; and all the fellows said the old doctor had stole a march, and got the handsomest gal in the parish.

"Wal, arter meetin' they all come round the Parson

and Huldy at the door, shakin' hands and laughin'; for by that time they was about agreed that they 'd got to let putty well alone.

" 'Why, Parson Carryl,' says Mis' Deakin Blodgett, 'how you 've come it over us.'

" 'Yes,' says the Parson, with a kind o' twinkle in his eye. 'I thought,' says he, 'as folks wanted to talk about Huldy and me, I 'd give 'em somethin' wuth talkin' about.' "

"NELLIE" AT THE COUNTY FAIR

By Henry A. Shute

IN early October came the great event of the year — the Rockingham County Fair. To us who attend the huge Agricultural Fair of to-day, with its interesting but abominable Midway, its magnificent array of blooded stock, its splendid racing and horse show, its automobile and aëroplane death daring, its wonderful demonstration of farm implements and machinery, the old-time fairs may seem of trivial importance.

But no. In our boyish vision the old Rockingham County Fair, held in Exeter in the 'sixties, was the most marvelous exhibition ever held on the American continent, its exhibits the most gorgeous, its horse racing the most exciting, its pulling matches with oxen, its ploughing matches with oxen and horses, the most stupendous contests ever dreamed of. Why, how long would an automobile truck of one hundred horse power stand up against old William Conner's string of three yoke of Hereford oxen under the goad? "Huh!" and again, "Huh!" — with an accent of utter contempt.

What of the pacing record of $1.58\frac{1}{4}$ as against the $2.39\frac{1}{4}$ of some of the trotters and pacers of the 'sixties. Well, I guess if the modern trotters and pacers were put

on the little half mile track in Exeter in the old days, beside old "Sheepskin," with Wake-up Robinson in the sulky, or with Scott Locke behind "Nellie," or Ben Adams behind "Old Regulator," where would the modern pacers and trotters be? "Tell me that, fellers; jest tell me that! Huh! Well, I guess! Huh!"

It was, indeed, a great time. The course of years has brought us the World's Fair in Philadelphia in 1876, the Chicago Exposition of 1893, that of Buffalo in 1901, of St. Louis in 1904, of Seattle in 1909, and one is projected for San Francisco in 1915; but where are they in comparison with the old Rockingham Fair on the Gilman Field in Exeter, New Hampshire, U. S. A., in the 'sixties. Where are they, I say? And again, "Huh!"

The old town was in the throes of preparation for weeks before the event. The field of afternoons was alive with teams working on the grounds. The track was leveled as far as practicable and the grass mowed and all refuse raked up and burned. The fences were repaired; new posts put in and all freshly whitewashed. The sheds were repaired, and put in good shape; new booths erected for the exhibition of cattle, horses, sheep and swine, and fowl; ground broken for the pulling matches, and countless other tasks performed. As the grounds were surrounded by a high board fence, and as every year numerous peep-holes were excavated by small boys who were unable to get in, and who with great ingenuity knocked out knot-holes and made apertures by pulling out decayed parts of the boards, naturally a great amount of work was

absolutely necessary to put this bulwark in such condition that not even the prying eyes of the non-paying patrons of the fair could penetrate its secrets.

Then there were hay, grain, and stubble to buy for the ruminants; the judges' stand to be reinforced with additional props to its weather-beaten, spindly, and tottery legs, so that the hoarse gentleman with the huge black mustache who leaned out of his eyrie and occasionally bellowed "Go!" — but more often rang a large dinner bell to a procession of wildly scrabbling horses — and his companions, who compared watches at the end of a race and wrangled unseemly, might not come to everlasting smash as did one Humpty Dumpty. All this, done under the eyes of the small boys, did much to whet their ambitions for the future and to distract their attention from their daily school tasks.

As the day of the fair approached, strange people began to arrive. A grimy individual with peaked cap, driving a rangy, gamy-looking animal in a prodigiously high-wheeled sulky, under which dangled a pail, a roll of blankets, an extra whip, and a pair of rubber boots, attracted immediate attention as a famous driver of an equally famous trotter or pacer. A diminutive, bandy-legged gentleman in topboots, much too large for his skinny legs, mounted on a flat saddle strapped to a giraffe-like equine, the rider's knees on a level with his ears and his head sunk between his shoulders, bespoke some well-known and daring jockey with a runner in a direct line of descent from "Flying Childers." And for a week or more the boys gathered at the track before and after school, on the chance of seeing these gentle-

men fly round the track on a practice spin with these wonderful animals.

Happy the day and fortunate the youth who could get the coveted opportunity to lead around a blanketed horse in the cooling-out process after a warming-up heat, or who could carry water for, or hand brushes or currycombs to, the drivers who acted as grooms, trainers, and rubbers-down to their skinny charges. At about this time the local horsemen began to put on fearful and wonderful costumes and to drive through our streets at highly irregular gaits. To see old "Wake-up" Robinson astride a two-story sulky coming down the street behind "Old Sheepskin," so called because of the heavy sheepskin padding he wore on breastplate and breeching, his driver's long black whiskers streaming away behind and over its wearer's shoulders, his peaked cap with long visor pulled down over his eyes, and his wide grinning mouth emitting his hoarse war cry from which he derived his nickname "Wake up," was a sight for the gods.

On this occasion that eminently dignified and respectable storekeeper, Henry Dow, at the "Sign of the Big Boot," an immensely tall and dignified man with a crest of long hair that reminded one forcibly of a blue jay, daily climbed aboard an unusually tall and spindly sulky and held the "webbings" over a dappled, switch-tailed pony of not over fourteen hands, which gave him the appearance of driving a sheared sheep, and jogged him up the street to the track.

Even that pillar of the Advent Church, the venerable Nathaniel Churchill, could not refrain from exercising

his smooth roadsters in a road cart or four-wheeled skeleton wagon, although his religious scruples and strict puritanical up-bringing did not allow him to indulge in horse racing. Indeed, he did not even attend the fairs to witness it, although the struggle between his perfectly natural desire and his religious views must have caused the good old man untold suffering. And as he was unquestionably the best horse breeder and judge of horses in the county, and possibly in the State, it was a great pity and a loss to the town, and to him, for he had some real horses.

The track upon which these memorable races were held was peculiar in several respects. In the back stretch there was for several rods a hollow where the road fell away rapidly, then as rapidly regained its level. Beyond this for fully one hundred yards was a dense growth of scrub pines that effectually concealed the progress of the horses from the anxious gaze of those financially or otherwise interested in the race, which added to the delightful uncertainty of the contest, and made the choice of a favorite a most hazardous pursuit. Indeed, horses having a record in the thirties, and on that account acclaimed as sure winners, ofttimes came in disgracefully in the rear of two-forty-five trotters, and were lucky if they were inside the distance flag.

It came about in this way: A horse driven at top speed at a trot or pace, suddenly dipping into the hollow, was thrown out of its stride, lost its legs, and had to gallop to keep from falling. If by any possibility the horse was sturdy and steady enough to hold his

stride when going downhill, he was practically certain to lose it coming out of the hollow. So it became the practice of the drivers on approaching the hollow to loosen their reins, stimulate their horses by a cut of the whip and a loud yell of encouragement, take both slopes at a furious gallop and trust to luck and skill to pull their horses to their stride just before they came out of the woods and into the gaze of the hoarse gentleman with the enormous mustache, and of his horsy friends who compared watches at the finish.

In this way a horse that could gallop might, although far behind at the dip, arrive at the home stretch in advance of a much faster and steadier trotter or pacer, and stand an excellent chance of winning the stakes. This led to many protests on the part of drivers who claimed that they were designedly fouled by rivals, and much unseemly language was indulged in by participants in the races which led to fist fights, in which the whole neighborhood of the finish line became embroiled.

Again, the strain on the fragile and ofttimes rickety wooden sulky wheels was very great at the rise from the dip, and occasionally splintering crashes were heard, and from the shadow of the woods bounded frantically kicking horses, driverless, and attached to one-wheeled and splintered sulkies, and followed at a distance by limping and swearing men, who on reaching the judges' stand raised their hands to high Heaven and invoked curses on their successful rivals. Indeed, a horserace at the old Rockingham Fair was a thing of powerful uncertainty, and of an attractiveness far superior

to anything of modern times, and the populace crowded to see and occasionally to take part in some of the exciting phases of the sport.

Then, there was the slow race, where to insure the utmost speed possible and to prevent each owner or driver from trying to win the race by driving his horse as slowly as possible and taking up the greater part of the day in accomplishing a mile, each man entering a horse had to drive his rival's horse and had his own driven by the rival, and each man stimulated his rival's horse to his utmost speed in order to win the race by beating his own horse.

This also created a great deal of interest; and as each man literally lambasted his rival's horse, the finish of the race frequently brought the drivers into fistic collision as they viewed the welts on their damaged plugs. However, no professional training was necessary for this race, unless it might be training of a pugilistic nature which was of the greatest possible assistance.

For many evenings before the opening day of the fair, the Exeter Cornet Band practiced with hideous intonation and terrific *ensemble*, which was the sweetest possible music to the boys, who, with troops of others, spent their evenings in and around the high-school yard, chasing, dancing, wrestling, yelling, and jumping fences and straddling posts, while the band, aloft in a back room of the old town hall, long since abandoned as the seat of the municipality, and the home of Torrent No. 3, collared and threw such masterpieces of music as the "King John March," "Shoo, Fly, Doan Bodder

Me," the "Washington March," the "Mulligan Guards," and other *fortissimo* selections.

Plupy, however, was always present at these rehearsals, but never joined in these mad scenes of riot and jollity. Instead, he sat on the stairs of the band room, as near to the door as he could get, and drank in this flood and tempest of sound as one entranced. Poor boy; he was born with a most intense love of music, and thought a bandsman a being far higher than a governor or even a president. He had for a long time been trying to earn and save money enough for a cornet, but, being of a convivial and somewhat self-indulgent nature, had drawn on his fund so frequently that it had never risen to a point of accumulation at which the purchase of a cornet was remotely probable. But these rehearsals, far exceeding in number the regular weekly rehearsals, made another element in the popularity of the fair.

Rooms at the various hostelries were engaged in advance by gentlemen in high boots, paper collars, false bosoms, and detachable cuffs. Stall room for horses was bespoken. The clerks and proprietors of the Squamscott (Major's), the American (Levi's), and the Granite House (Hoyt's) became bustlingly active, affable, and polite. The saloons, long since defunct, thank Heaven! had laid in heavy supplies of fiery and controversial liquors and were confidently reckoning on a heavy business.

Morning and night the hopeful farmer curried and rubbed down his pet cow or brood mare with colt, viewed his mammoth squash, his elephantine pumpkin,

apoplectic apple, or blushing peach. Daily the thoughtful wife watered and coaxed her brilliant asters, braided her rugs, and consulted the cook book and her neighbors for effective recipes for bread, pastry, and culinary dainties — all for exhibition in the "Ladies' Department." Octogenarians recalled their choicest tales of "ye olden time," and had mother overhaul their broadcloth coats, their stovepipe hats, and gray woolen trousers. Octogenarianesses sewed the thirty-five hundredth patch of dimity or silk or calico, and "nary one alike," on her patchwork quilt, and confidently awaited first, second, third prize, or honorable mention.

The daughter of the house painted astonishing pictures in most amazing colors, or wove "God Bless Our Homes" in rainbow hues, and drew astounding animals in black and white, which she labeled for identification as a matter of convenience to the judges. The scholars in the public schools prepared writing books, with a variety of ennobling sentiments, in the finest and most elaborate of long hand, while the drawing teacher took down from the wall of his room the pen-and-ink sketch of an impossible deer and an equally fabulous bird of paradise that had cost him prodigies of penmanship and marvels of careful erasure.

Indeed, every kind and condition of men, women and children were vitally interested in this fair and looked foward to its event with the greatest of pleasurable anxiety. The old fair was like the game of golf: every one who desired could play it with satisfaction. Unlike that game, every one wished to play the fair,

and did; and with that condition of public sentiment, what wonder that our three boys were well-nigh crazy with delight.

The schools were to have a three days' vacation, the life of the fair. Inasmuch as the entire Prudential and School Committee were either officials of the fair or exhibitors, and the honored principals of the high and grammar schools were enlisted as marshals, and entitled to wear the crimson sash and to brandish the baton covered with gilt paper and further embellished with ribbons, as a badge of authority, and as most of the female teachers had charge of the school exhibit of writing and compositions, a vacation was absolutely necessary, and the matter had been accomplished with a great deal of tact, diplomacy, and finesse on the part of these shrewd instructors.

There were tents containing a two-headed calf, a horse with five legs, an educated pig, and an armless man who could write his name, or for that matter any person's name, with his toes (there were no Poles, Russians, Lithuanians, or Armenians in America in those days), and would do so for a consideration. There was, of course, the living skeleton, his companion, the pinky-white fat woman, and the dreadful bearded lady, the sleeping beauty whose bosom rose and fell rhythmically as long as Jimmy turned the crank. There was a long, polished case on wheels, with small peepholes of polished magnifying glass, through which holes, at the modest price of one penny, you gazed enthralled upon colored prints from the then very recent war of the rebellion, with which you were prob-

ably familiar from the pages of Harper's or some other magazines, but without the coloring and enlargement. Pie and coffee stands, lemonade booths, ginger-pop stalls, and counters for the serving of plain beans and brown bread were knocked together of pine boards and tenpenny nails.

It would require a book to tell the various attractions, exhibits and amusing episodes of that fair. They were crowded into three days, and it was, indeed, three days of thrilling enjoyment for the boys, and Plupy was especially fortunate in securing a season ticket in this manner: Charles Taylor was an official of the fair management, occupying the position of commissary-general to the live-stock department; that is, he was the official purchaser and distributor of the hay, grain and roots, straw, and other provender for the various kinds and conditions of animal in the fair; and as such he was a very busy man, and to facilitate his rapid transit he had borrowed of his particular friend George, Plupy's little mare, Nellie. This loaning of the horse gave, as may be supposed, peculiar privileges to Plupy, which that youth extended, whenever possible, to his two cronies, Beany and Pewt.

It also transpired that the use of Nellie by the worthy commissary furnished a good deal of excitement for our friends and for the patrons of the fair, and a great deal of embarrassment to the bookmakers and betting men. Nellie was quartered in the horse sheds with distinguished company, having a stall of her own and other furniture necessary to the comfort of a race horse, to which she had not been accustomed

but which she took to like a duck to water; for one of the grooms and rubbers-down of the trotters and pacers daily rubbed, curried, bandaged, hot-watered, cold-creamed, massaged, and in other ways testified to his appreciation of certain forbidden favors extended to him by the good-natured but designing commissary.

In this way, and with generous feeding, the little animal was ready to jump out of her skin with spirits, and as she darted down from place to place on her errands with the commissary she attracted much attention by her good looks and her rapid gait. She was a bit tender in her forefeet for pavements, which circumstance had brought her within the range of Plupy's father's modest pocketbook; but care and the soft country roads had practically cured her, and a week's care by an expert stableman had worked wonders.

There were races during the afternoons of the three days, which races commenced at two o'clock and were generally finished by five, unless dead heats rendered an extra heat or two necessary to a decision. Beginning with the lower-class horses, the 3-minute class, the 2.48, the free slow race. The second-day card was the 2.44 and the 2.40 class and the pacing race for stallions. The third, which was the great day, offered, as a climax programme, the 2.36 and 2.30 trots and the free-for-all with a purse of $175 — with $100 for first, $50 for second, and $25 for third horse. In this free-for-all any one, who fancied his horse and could raise an entry fee of ten dollars, could take part in the race; but, as the purse brought out the best horses, it was seldom

that a really mediocre horse was started. Indeed, it occured not infrequently that a horse that had previously trotted in a low-time race, not previously holding a fast record, would make it extremely interesting for the favorites, and render the long-shot men in the betting correspondingly jubilant at the close of the race. It was this that made the free-for-all the race *par excellence* of the fair, and the nerves of the bookmakers and betting men exceedingly banjoey during the heats.

The days had passed in a riot of good times for the boys, whose appetites were insatiable. The good old town had an air of demoralization. Paper littered the streets leading to the grounds. Unfortunates without legs sat on the pavements and ground hideous and unfinished symphonies on tiny box organs: I can distinctly remember some of these tunes after a lapse of over forty years. Demoralized county sports leaned against posts and spat and swore. Marshals in gaudy sashes clattered up the streets. There were village cut-ups with their girls promenading with red balloons and riding whips bound in blue and crimson-paper ribbons. A man who could play phenomenal cornet solos on a tin tunnel, including the "Wood-up Quickstep," called crowds to his broad platform, where he sold them bottles of cure-all warranted effective for all ills ranging from bunions to religious controversies. The town hall was the theater of the horticultural, patchwork, tidy, and art exhibit, and the steps were littered with peanuts and the remains of countless lunches. The governor had arrived, and was escorted to the fair

grounds by the band and a detachment of veteran soldiers and the entire force of marshals in a champing, curveting line. The crowd was immense; the two races had been trotted amid great excitement; and the final race of the day, the free-for-all, was called.

Just before the last heat of the previous race, Plupy, who had accompanied a sweating trotter to the stables to see him rubbed down and cooled — to him an interesting sight — and to drink his fill of the spicy and instructive remarks of the stableman, overheard something that filled him with an idea almost too big for him to grasp. One of the rubbers, incensed at the poor showing of his charge, profanely allowed to his mates that he could take that little bay mare, Nellie, and clean out half the racers in the stable. Plupy gasped at the brilliancy of the idea that suddenly struck him, and he edged nearer the group.

"Say, that's my horse you are talking about; d' ye s'pose they would gimme a chance?" he asked.

The grooms laughed and said, "Any one can enter a horse for the free-for-all that can raise ten dollars for the entry fee."

Plupy gasped at the enormity of the amount, sighed at the recollection of his depleted cornet fund, and his jaw dropped in despair. Had he known this at the opening of the fair, he and Beany and Pewt could have pooled their possessions and have made up the entry fee; but, alas, to quote again from Dumas' immortal hero, "Nothing remained but bitter memories."

But the groom suddenly came to his assistance. "Look here, fellers, what's the reason we can't dress

this young feller up in a driver's suit and cap, hook up the mare, and have him drive in with the rest? The chances are that nobody will know the difference, and he may get a chance. Whadger say?" he demanded.

It is not my purpose to record here just about what they said. It was very much to the point. Would the little feller do it? The little feller would, and rapid preparation began. Plupy was invested with a spotted shirt, a yellow cap with an immense visor, a whip, and a pair of gloves, all of which were much too large for him. The cap in particular rested on his ears, the generous spread of which prevented him from being totally eclipsed. In fact, he looked like a suit that had been discarded and thrown into a corner. As he desired above all things to escape recognition and ex ulsion, this was very much to his taste. Meanwhile the grooms instructed him in the code of the track.

"You'll hafter take th' outside, the farthest horse from the pole horse. In turnin' to score, allers turn to the left. Don't let yer hoss break at the line, or ye'll be sent back. It don't matter if you are a bit behind at the start; you can make it up with a good horse; but don't start ahead of the pole horse or they'll ring you back. 'N' if you git a chance to pass a hoss, don't cut in ahead of him unless you are at least a length ahead or they'll protest you. Mind this; don't git the pole behind a leadin' hoss, or you'll git in a pocket."

"What's that?" asked Plupy.

"Why, it's this: If you git behind a hoss at the rail, 'n' another hoss gits on your right, there ain't no way

to git out 'nless you jumps over or pulls yer hoss back 'n' goes round 'em, 'n' yer can't do neither 'thout losin' the race. Unnerstan'?"

Plupy understood.

"'N' one thing more; don't try to beat everybody the first time round, 'n' don't let go of yer hoss when a driver runs by yer. Runnin' don't count, 'n' no feller can run by the wire a winner. Th' only place to run a hoss is when you get to the dip; run her then, but take her down to a trot as soon as you get outer the dip. Some of the green drivers run their hosses until they come out of the woods, 'n' by that time th' hoss has got into his runnin' stride 'n' it's hard to pull him down, 'n' a square trotter may beat him out at the finish.

"Now, don't get excited. Talk to your horse quiet like. Th' other drivers will yell like Indians 'n' try to make yer mare break. Just 'tend to keepin' yer mare straight, 'n' when you come outer the woods th' second time round, put for the wire as fast as you can 'ithout makin' her break. Now, don't be a bit afraid; they can't do no more to ye than takin' yer outer the race, 'n' I guess ye'll git one heat trotted, ennyway. There goes the bell now. Wait till most of 'em gits out. Sorry ye ain't got time for a warmin'-up heat, but 't won't be safe.

"There goes old Wake-up Robinson with 'Sheepskin, 'n' Benson with 'Flyin' Cloud,' 'n' Nealey Travers with 'Billy Boy,' 'n' old man Dow with that dock-tailed pony; beat him, ennyway, whatever you do; 'n' hello! there's Jim Flanders with 'Rex.' You'll

do well if you can get inside the distance with that hoss. He's flighty 'n' if he gets nervous, Jim can't keep him on his feet. Go ahead now," said the groom, who had been examining the harness and sulky while talking, loosening a strap here, tightening one there, pulling the sulky back to see that the little mare had breeching room. "Go ahead." And giving Plupy a last instruction to keep cool and keep his horse cool, he gave him a clap on the shoulder and the little mare a pat on the flank, and they were off.

To this day Plupy has never forgotten his intense pride and fear as he trotted on the track in company with these great drivers: pride in his horse and in his own importance and fear that he might be detected and humiliated before the crowd, and in particular fear that his father, who with his sisters was in a row of seats, the predecessor of the grand stand of later days, might recognize the horse and him and publicly lambaste him. Knowing, however, that Nellie, in her strange harness and vehicle, looked unfamiliar and like a rat, and feeling that he looked like nothing else under the sun, he hoped not to be recognized.

As he drove to the scoring line, there was a laugh at his ridiculous appearance, but admiring comments on his horse, and something in the gait of the little mare at once caught the crowd.

"Go it, Tom Thumb," bellowed a big voice to the small boy.

"Don't let 'em break yer hoss, scarecrow," shouted another.

"Look out for old Wake-up," continued a third.

Plupy nodded and grinned, but his heart was thumping so loudly that he could hear it, and there was a lump in his throat that nearly choked him to death. Then the bell rang, the mob of horses started with a rush for the wire, and with them charged the little mare, pulling double. Plupy was behind on the outside, but Rex broke, and the bell rang. Plupy pulled and talked the mare down and turned her, nearly colliding with Sheepskin and earning a hearty curse from old Wake-up.

As they came back to the score, Plupy's father whose eye had been caught by Nellie the moment she entered the track and who had been staring intently at her, suddenly recognized her and her driver, and hurried out of the stand and rushed toward the track shouting to his metamorphosed son to "come out of that."

He was too late, however, for the bell rang, and with a rush they started for the wire, just as Beany and Pewt, with eyes standing out a full inch, shrieked, "Plupy! It's Plupy," and jumped up and down in excitement.

The horses in an unbroken line swept by the wire. "Go!" bellowed the starter.

The crowd cheered. It was a start. Sheepskin had the pole, and at once took the lead, closely followed by Flying Cloud. A half length behind, with his nose at Flying Cloud's saddle, came Billy Boy, with the Dow dapple about on a line and a full length behind, and on the outside came Nellie and Rex, going like clockwork. Along the first half the dapple gave way to the little

mare, who came up to Billy Boy's throatlatch, with Rex even with the mare, and Rex's driver grinning good-naturedly at the boy.

"Steady she is, lad," he cautioned. "I'm goin' to win this race if Rex is not too cranky; but do your best; don't let your horse get away from you at the dip."

Plupy nodded and watched his mare. The wind was singing in his ears and he was tingling all over.

They were at the dip, and the horses took it at a furious gallop, Plupy keeping well to the outside for safety and anxious not to unduly excite the mare, and had her going steadily fifty feet beyond the dip, passing Billy Boy, whose driver had trouble in pulling him down. Meantime Rex had left the mare, was rapidly overtaking Flying Cloud and Sheepskin, going like a machine with a beautiful stride, and they passed the wire the first time down with Sheepskin a nose ahead of Rex, who was rapidly overtaking him, Flying Cloud at Rex's wheel, and three lengths behind came Plupy's little mare, leading Billy Boy by a short head, while the dappled pony trailed four or five lengths in the rear.

The people yelled encouragement.

"Go it!" roared one man leaning over the rail.

"That's the boy for you!" shouted another.

"Steady!" shouted the groom; "keep her steady; don't let 'em break her!"

Pewt and Beany cheered shrilly, "Go it, Plupe! Put on the whip! Beat old Whiskers!"

Plupy's father waved frantically, forgetting his

scruples as he saw how the game little mare stuck to the leaders.

One hundred yards from the wire on the first quarter of the second lap, Rex put on a burst of speed that left Sheepskin and Flying Cloud in the rear, and the little mare lost a half length in the spurt which the gray made to keep up with Rex, but gained a half length on Billy Boy as that trotter felt the strain of the pace.

Then Rex went off his feet in a tangled break, and before he reached the dip was passed by both the gray and Flying Cloud and went down the incline neck and neck with Billy Boy, whose driver had driven his horse to a gallop a good hundred yards from the dip and had passed Plupy's mare, to the speechless dismay of Beany and Pewt and of the crowd, whose sympathies were with the boy and the gallant little horse.

"Nealey's too much for the boy; beat him by a trick," said one.

"Too bad," said another; "I thought the little fellow might have a chance, but he don't know the ropes like an old-timer."

"He'll be out of it before they get out of the woods. Watch out now," as the whistling of whips, the yells of the drivers, and the rapid beat of flying hoofs were heard. "Here they come," yelled hundreds of voices, and the crowd rose to its feet in excitement as the horses burst out of the woods, Sheepskin a length to the front, its driver leaning forward, plying the whip and yelling his war cry of "Wake-up, thar! Wake-up, thar!" in a voice like a foghorn, while at his wheel was Flying Cloud going like a whirlwind and Benson yelling like

a demon, neck and neck with Billy Boy, whose gallop had rested him and whose driver cursed and whipped as the trotter went off his feet. But what was this? For still on the outside two lengths to the rear and two hundred yards from the finish came a little bay mare with her neck stretched forward, her trim ears laid flat to her head, her mane flying, and her slim legs going like piston rods in a wild engine, while on the sulky, with hair flying and cap gone, eyes glazing and shrill voice encouraging the mare in a high squeaky falsetto, sat Plupy.

The crowd went wild. Shouts, shrieks, bellows of encouragement, and hoarse directions were showered on the driver. Beany and Pewt yelled like ones possessed, while the groom leaned over the rail until he held on by his eyelids.

She has passed the plunging Billy Boy; she is up to the Cloud's wheel, to his flank, his saddle, she creeps up to his throatlatch; she is by him, a head, a neck, a half length; she is clear, and has lapped the big gray fifty yards from the wire.

The driver's whiskers stand out straight behind him; he sees the little bay head at his elbow, and down comes his whip on the gray again and again. He yells and swings his whip, wildly trying to break up the little mare; but he might as well try to stop the flight of time. She reaches his saddle, then his shoulders, and then with a mighty burst of speed passes him and sweeps across the wire a length ahead.

How the crowd roar and cheer! The groom comes rushing into the ring and unchecks the little mare,

blankets her, and gives her a mouthful of water. She is dripping, and her nostrils are dilated and her satin skin a network of throbbing veins. Other grooms rush in and shout profane congratulations to Plupy, who is in a daze of delight. He can scarcely believe it true. He has beaten all these race horses in a real race. Nellie has done it, and both he and Nellie are famous. "We done it!" he exclaimed in amazement.

But as the grooms led away the horses, in front of the judges' stand the drivers, headed by old Wake-up, wrangled and protested against the race.

"That mare hain't entered, 'n' wa'n't on the score card, 'n' ain't got no right to be in the race," barked Wake-up hoarsely, brandishing his whip.

"Shut up, Whiskers," said a man in the crowd; "you're mad 'cause the little feller beat ye!"

"I can beat that mare ten lengths in the half mile and distance her in the mile, 'n' I'll do it, too, if she is entered fair and square," yelled Wake-up, his whiskers bristling with rage.

"Ah-h, you could n't beat a stone boat hitched to oxen with that old crow bait," shouted another; "why don't you give the boy a chance?" And the crowd cheered and groaned.

"I'll pay the entry fee," yelled a man, pulling out a roll of bills, "and I'll back that mare and the boy for anything any one wants to cover." And he flourished his bills at the crowd amid cheers.

"I protest; 't ain't reg'lar; th' mare had oughter been entered before the race; I protest," yelled the driver of Flying Cloud to the judges.

WAKE-UP ROBINSON BEHIND OLD SHEEPSKIN

"Don't blame ye; I'd do it if I hed to drive thet ole caliker plug of yours," yelled another in the crowd, at which there was a shout of laughter.

"We gotter drive horses 'cordin' to the rules," barked Wake-up.

"That's more'n you ever did, old furze brush; ye tried to break up the boy's hoss when he was passin' ye. *You* drive 'cordin' to the rules! You never did that in yer life," said another angrily.

"What do you say, Flanders?" some one asked the driver of Rex, who had said nothing.

"I say, give the boy a chance. I'll beat him if I can, but I'll beat him fair. And I'll pay his entry fee if none of his friends will," said Flanders, with a good-natured grin. "The boy's all right, and the mare's all right, and I say, give 'em a fair chance at the purse."

"Good boy!" yelled an enthusiast; "that's what I call square.

"Give the boy a chance," shouted the crowd, jostling and crowding around the judges' stand. "Give 'em a chance," they roared, "or we'll pull the stand down."

"Gentlemen," roared the big-voiced starter, "this race is goin' to be on the square, whether you pull the stand down or not. I'd like to see the boy win, but he did n't enter his hoss before the race, and he can't do it after one heat. The protest is sustained."

"Aw! Pull him out of the stand! Give us a fair judge. Call off the race," roared the crowd, surging toward the stand.

Things were looking very bad for the judges and the

drivers when Plupy's father, who had been making a hurried but devious passage through the crowd of people and carriages, jostled his way through the jam in front of the judges' stand.

"Look here, gentlemen," he said, facing the crowd; "hold on just a minute. I've some interest in this matter. The boy is mine and the mare is mine, and I'm not going to allow my boy to drive another heat. I did n't enter the mare, and did n't know anything about it until I saw her in the track. I came here to see the race and I believe in it, but as long as my boy is under my authority, he does n't drive race horses. When he grows up, he can do as he pleases, but not now."

The crowd was variously affected. Some applauded, some hissed, some groaned.

But Flanders shouted, "Gentlemen! the boy's father is right and the judge is right. Better let the race go on. I want to get Mr. Robinson's scalp, myself," he added, grinning broadly, at which the crowd cheered and laughed uproariously.

"One word more, gentlemen," said Plupy's father. "If Mr. Robinson is anxious to see a race, I'll put up a hundred dollars against his fifty that I can step into the sulky and beat him with that little mare, one heat, best two in three, or three in five, and I never drove a race horse in my life."

"Ah-h-r-r!" sneered that gentleman; "you could n't raise a fifty cents."

"Could n't eh?" said Plupy's father, pulling a wad of bills out of his pocket and flourishing them before

Wake-up's face. "That money was earned honestly and not by pulling good horses or throwing races. Now, cover it if you dare, and bring out your horse. Only you'll drive fair for once, you old whisk broom, you; for if you try any games with me, I'll not only beat you, but as soon as the race is over, I'll pull you out of that gig of yours and dust this whole track with that old stable broom you wear on your face." And he thrust his fist full of bills so close to that bewhiskered gentleman's face that he took several quick steps backward.

This time there was no question about the applause. The crowd yelled with delight and jeered the discomfited driver as he hastily strode to the stables without covering the bet. Whereat Plupy's father grasped his staring and open-mouthed son by the hand, and said, "Come, hurry up get out of that rig of yours and don't you ever do that again as long as you live." And they hurried to the stables, followed by Beany and Pewt and a train of retainers, where they found the groom hard at work on the mare.

When told of the decision the groom was exceedingly profane, and allowed there was no justice in this world anyway.

But for the glow of winning this heat Plupy would have been bitterly disappointed in not securing a part of the purse; but after the race, in which old Sheepskin and his driver were disgracefully beaten, not only by Rex but by Flying Cloud and Billy Boy, to the huge and outspoken delight of the crowd, Flanders, the good-natured driver, sought him out and gave him

a five-dollar bill and several hundred dollars' worth of good advice in regard to racing.

"Keep out of it, boy. Horse-racing never did any man any good. It leads to drinking and card playing and gambling. I'm making money now at it, but I'm going to quit it as soon as I can. This may be my last race. I hope so, for I've seen too many men go to the devil with it. The saddest thing in the world is a broken-down driver, and they mostly become broken down before they quit. So promise me you'll keep out of it, boy." And he offered his hand.

Plupy promised, and shook on it; a promise, I am glad to say, he has kept to this day.

REBECCA'S JOURNEY

Dy Kate Douglas Wiggin

THE old stagecoach was rumbling along the dusty road that runs from Maplewood to Riverboro. The day was as warm as midsummer, though it was only the middle of May, and Mr. Jeremiah Cobb was favoring the horses as much as possible, yet never losing sight of the fact that he carried the mail. The hills were many, and the reins lay loosely in his hands as he lolled back in his seat and extended one foot and leg luxuriously over the dashboard. His brimmed hat of worn felt was well pulled over his eyes, and he revolved a quid of tobacco in his left cheek.

There was one passenger in the coach — a small dark-haired person in a glossy buff calico dress. She was so slender and so stiffly starched that she slid from space to space on the leather cushions, though she braced herself against the middle seat with her feet and extended her cotton-gloved hands on each side, in order to maintain some sort of balance. Whenever the wheels sank farther than usual into a rut, or jolted suddenly over a stone, she bounded involuntarily into the air, came down again, pushed back her funny little straw hat, and picked up or settled more firmly a small pink sunshade, which seemed to be her chief responsibility — unless we except a bead purse,

into which she looked whenever the condition of the roads would permit, finding great apparent satisfaction in that its precious contents neither disappeared nor grew less. Mr. Cobb guessed nothing of these harassing details of travel, his business being to carry people to their destinations, not, necessarily, to make them comfortable on the way. Indeed he had forgotten the very existence of this one unnoteworthy little passenger.

When he was about to leave the post office in Maplewood that morning, a woman had alighted from a wagon, and coming up to him, inquired whether this were the Riverboro stage, and if he were Mr. Cobb. Being answered in the affirmative, she nodded to a child who was eagerly waiting for the answer, and who ran toward her as if she feared to be a moment too late. The child might have been ten or eleven years old perhaps, but whatever the number of her summers, she had an air of being small for her age. Her mother helped her into the stage coach, deposited a bundle and a bouquet of lilacs beside her, superintended the "roping on" behind of an old hair trunk, and finally paid the fare, counting out the silver with great care.

"I want you should take her to my sisters' in Riverboro," she said. "Do you know Mirandy and Jane Sawyer? They live in the brick house."

Lord bless your soul, he knew 'em as well as if he'd made 'em!

"Well, she's going there, and they're expecting her. Will you keep an eye on her, please? If she can get out anywhere and get with folks, or get anybody in to keep her company, she'll do it. Good-bye, Rebecca;

try not to get into any mischief, and sit quiet, so you'll look neat an' nice when you get there. Don't be any trouble to Mr. Cobb. — You see, she's kind of excited. — We came on the cars from Temperance yesterday, slept all night at my cousin's, and drove from her house —eight miles it is — this morning."

"Good-bye, mother, don't worry; you know it is n't as if I had n't traveled before."

The woman gave a short sardonic laugh and said in an explanatory way to Mr. Cobb, "She 's been to Wareham and stayed over night; that is n't much to be journey-proud on!"

"It *was traveling*, mother," said the child eagerly and willfully. "It was leaving the farm, and putting up lunch in a basket, and a little riding and a little steam cars, and we carried our nightgowns."

"Don't tell the whole village about it, if we did," said the mother, interrupting the reminiscences of this experienced voyager. "Have n't I told you before," she whispered, in a last attempt at discipline, "that you should n't talk about nightgowns and stockings and — things like that, in a loud tone of voice, and especially when there's men folks round?"

"I know, mother, I know, and I won't. All I want to say is" — here Mr. Cobb gave a cluck, slapped the reins, and the horses started sedately on their daily task — "all I want to say is that it is a journey when" — the stage was really under way now and Rebecca had to put her head out of the window over the door in order to finish her sentence — "it *is* a journey when you carry a nightgown!"

The objectionable word, uttered in a high treble, floated back to the offended ears of Mrs. Randall, who watched the stage out of sight, gathered up her packages from the bench at the store door, and stepped into the wagon that had been standing at the hitching post. As she turned the horse's head towards home she rose to her feet for a moment, and shading her eyes with her hand, looked at a cloud of dust in the dim distance.

"Mirandy'll have her hands full, I guess," she said to herself; "but I should n't wonder if it would be the making of Rebecca."

All this had been half an hour ago, and the sun, the heat, the dust, the contemplation of errands to be done in the great metropolis of Milltown, had lulled Mr. Cobb's never active mind into complete oblivion as to his promise of keeping an eye on Rebecca.

Suddenly he heard a small voice above the rattle and rumble of the wheels and the creaking of the harness. At first he thought it was a cricket, a tree toad, or a bird, but having determined the direction from which it came, he turned his head over his shoulder and saw a small shape hanging as far out of the window as safety would allow. A long black braid of hair swung with the motion of the coach; the child held her hat in one hand and with the other made ineffectual attempts to stab the driver with her microscopic sunshade.

"Please let me speak!" she called.

Mr. Cobb drew up the horses obediently.

"Does it cost any more to ride up there with you?"

she asked. "It's so slippery and shiny down here, and the stage is so much too big for me, that I rattle round in it till I'm 'most black and blue. And the windows are so small I can only see pieces of things, and I've 'most broken my neck stretching round to find out whether my trunk has fallen off the back. It's my mother's trunk, and she's very choice of it."

Mr. Cobb waited until this flow of conversation, or more properly speaking this flood of criticism, had ceased, and then said jocularly: —

"You can come up if you want to; there ain't no extry charge to sit side o' me." Whereupon he helped her out, "boosted" her up to the front seat, and resumed his own place.

Rebecca sat down carefully, smoothing her dress under her with painstaking precision, and putting her sunshade under its extended folds between the driver and herself. This done she pushed back her hat, pulled up her darned white cotton gloves, and said delightedly: —

"Oh! this is better! This is like traveling! I am a real passenger now, and down there I felt like our setting hen when we shut her up in a coop. I hope we have a long, long ways to go?"

"Oh! we've only just started on it," Mr. Cobb responded genially; "it's more'n two hours."

"Only two hours," she sighed. "That will be half past one; mother will be at cousin Ann's, the children at home will have had their dinner, and Hannah cleared all away. I have some lunch, because mother said it would be a bad beginning to get to the brick

house hungry and have Aunt Mirandy have to get me something to eat the first thing. — It's a good growing day, is n't it?"

"It is, certain; too hot, most. Why don't you put up your parasol?"

She extended her dress still farther over the article in question as she said, "Oh dear no! I never put it up when the sun shines; pink fades awfully, you know, and I only carry it to meetin' cloudy Sundays; sometimes the sun comes out all of a sudden, and I have a dreadful time covering it up; it's the dearest thing in life to me, but it's an awful care."

At this moment the thought gradually permeated Mr. Jeremiah Cobb's slow-moving mind that the bird perched by his side was a bird of very different feather from those to which he was accustomed in his daily drives. He put the whip back in its socket, took his foot from the dashboard, pushed his hat back, blew his quid of tobacco into the road and having thus cleared his mental decks for action, he took his first good look at the passenger, a look which she met with a grave, childlike stare of friendly curiosity.

The buff calico was faded, but scrupulously clean, and starched within an inch of its life. From the little standing ruffle at the neck the child's slender throat rose very brown and thin, and the head looked small to bear the weight of dark hair that hung in a thick braid to her waist. She wore an odd little visored cap of white leghorn, which may either have been the latest thing in children's hats, or some bit of ancient finery

furbished up for the occasion. It was trimmed with a twist of buff ribbon and a cluster of black and orange porcupine quills, which hung or bristled stiffly over one ear, giving her the quaintest and most unusual appearance. Her face was without color and sharp in outline. As to features, she must have had the usual number, though Mr. Cobb's attention never proceeded so far as nose, forehead, or chin, being caught on the way and held fast by the eyes. Rebecca's eyes were like faith — "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Under her delicately etched brows they glowed like two stars, their dancing lights half hidden in lustrous darkness. Their glance was eager and full of interest, yet never satisfied; their steadfast gaze was brilliant and mysterious, and had the effect of looking directly through the obvious to something beyond, in the object, in the landscape, in you. They had never been accounted for, Rebecca's eyes. The school teacher and the minister at Temperance had tried and failed; the young artist who came for the summer to sketch the red barn, the ruined mill, and the bridge ended by giving up all these local beauties and devoting herself to the face of a child — a small, plain face illuminated by a pair of eyes carrying such messages, such suggestions, such hints of sleeping power and insight, that one never tired of looking into their shining depths, nor of fancying that what one saw there was the reflection of one's own thought.

Mr. Cobb made none of these generalizations; his remark to his wife that night was simply to the effect

that whenever the child looked at him she knocked him galley-west.

"Miss Ross, a lady that paints, gave me the sunshade," said Rebecca, when she had exchanged looks with Mr. Cobb, and learned his face by heart. "Did you notice the pinked double ruffle and the white tip and handle? They're ivory. The handle is scarred, you see. That's because Fanny sucked and chewed it in meeting when I was n't looking. I've never felt the same to Fanny since."

"Is Fanny your sister?"

"She 's one of them."

"How many are there of you?"

"Seven. There's verses written about seven children: —

> "'Quick was the little Maid's reply,
> O master! we are seven!'

I learned it to speak in school, but the scholars were hateful and laughed. Hannah is the oldest, I come next, then John, then Jenny, then Mark, then Fanny, then Mira."

"Well, that *is* a big family!"

"Far too big, everybody says," replied Rebecca with an unexpected and thoroughly grown-up candor that induced Mr. Cobb to murmur, "I swan!" and insert more tobacco in his left cheek.

"They're dear, but such a bother, and cost so much to feed, you see," she rippled on. "Hannah and I have n't done anything but put babies to bed at night and take them up in the morning for years and years. But it's finished, that's one comfort, and we'll have a

lovely time when we're all grown up and the mortgage is paid off."

"All finished? Oh, you mean you've come away?"

"No, I mean they're all over and done with; our family's finished. Mother says so, and she always keeps her promises. There has n't been any since Mira, and she's three. She was born the day father died. Aunt Miranda wanted Hannah to come to Riverboro instead of me, but mother could n't spare her; she takes hold of housework better than I do, Hannah does. I told mother last night if there was likely to be any more children while I was away I'd have to be sent for, for when there's a baby it always takes Hannah and me both, for mother has the cooking and the farm."

"Oh, you live on a farm, do ye? Where is it? — near to where you got on?"

"Near? Why, it must be thousands of miles! We came from Temperance in the cars. Then we drove a long ways to Cousin Ann's and went to bed. Then we got up and drove ever so far to Maplewood, where the stage was. Our farm is away off from everywheres, but our school and meetinghouse is at Temperance, and that's only two miles. Sitting up here with you is most as good as climbing the meetinghouse steeple. I know a boy who's been up on our steeple. He said the people and cows looked like flies. We have n't met any people yet, but I'm *kind* of disappointed in the cows; — they don't look so little as I hoped they would; still (brightening) they don't look quite as big as if we were down side of them, do they? Boys always do the nice splendid things, and girls can only

do the nasty dull ones that get left over. They can't climb so high, or go so far, or stay out so late, or run so fast, or anything."

Mr. Cobb wiped his mouth on the back of his hand and gasped. He had a feeling that he was being hurried from peak to peak of a mountain range without time to take a good breath in between.

"I can't seem to locate your farm," he said, "though I 've been to Temperance and used to live up that way. What's your folks' name?"

"Randall. My mother's name is Aurelia Randall; our names are Hannah Lucy Randall, Rebecca Rowena Randall, John Halifax Randall, Jenny Lind Randall, Marquis Randall, Fanny Ellsler Randall, and Miranda Randall. Mother named half of us and father the other half, but we did n't come out even, so they both thought it would be nice to name Mira after Aunt Miranda in Riverboro; they hoped it might do some good, but it did n't, and now we call her Mira. We are all named after somebody in particular. Hannah is "Hannah at the Window Binding Shoes," and I am taken out of 'Ivanhoe'; John Halifax was a gentleman in a book; Mark is after his uncle Marquis de Lafayette that died a twin. (Twins very often don't live to grow up, and triplets almost never — did you know that, Mr. Cobb?) We don't call him Marquis, only Mark. Jenny is named for a singer and Fanny for a beautiful dancer, but mother says they're both misfits, for Jenny can't carry a tune and Fanny's kind of stiff-legged. Mother would like to call them Jane and Frances and give up their middle names, but she says

it would n't be fair to father. She says we must always stand up for father, because everything was against him, and he would n't have died if he had n't had such bad luck. I think that's all there is to tell about us," she finished seriously.

"Land o' Liberty! I should think it was enough," ejaculated Mr. Cobb. "There wa'n't many names left when your mother got through choosin'! You've got a powerful good memory! I guess it ain't no trouble for you to learn your lessons, is it?"

"Not much; the trouble is to get the shoes to go and learn 'em. These are spandy new I 've got on, and they have to last six months. Mother always says to save my shoes. There don't seem to be any way of saving shoes but taking 'em off and going barefoot; but I can't do that in Riverboro without shaming Aunt Mirandy. I 'm going to school right along now when I'm living with Aunt Mirandy, and in two years I'm going to the seminary at Wareham; mother says it ought to be the making of me! I 'm going to be a painter like Miss Ross when I get through school. At any rate, that's what *I* think I'm going to be. Mother thinks I'd better teach."

"Your farm ain't the old Hobbs place, is it?"

"No, it's just Randall's Farm. At least that's what mother calls it. I call it Sunnybrook Farm."

"I guess it don't make no difference what you call it so long as you know where it is," remarked Mr. Cobb sententiously.

Rebecca turned the full light of her eyes upon him reproachfully, almost severely, as she answered: —

"Oh! don't say that, and be like all the rest! It does make a difference what you call things. When I say Randall's Farm, do you see how it looks?"

"No, I can't say I do," responded Mr. Cobb uneasily.

"Now when I say Sunnybrook Farm, what does it make you think of?"

Mr. Cobb felt like a fish removed from his native element and left panting on the sand; there was no evading the awful responsibility of a reply, for Rebecca's eyes were searchlights, that pierced the fiction of his brain and perceived the bald spot on the back of his head.

"I s'pose there's a brook somewheres near it," he said timorously.

Rebecca looked disappointed but not quite disheartened. "That's pretty good," she said encouragingly. "You're warm but not hot; there 's a brook, but not a common brook. It has young trees and baby bushes on each side of it, and it 's a shallow chattering little brook with a white sandy bottom and lots of little shiny pebbles. Whenever there's a bit of sunshine the brook catches it, and it 's always full of sparkles the livelong day. Don't your stomach feel hollow? Mine does! I was so 'fraid I 'd miss the stage I could n't eat any breakfast."

"You 'd better have your lunch, then. I don't eat nothin' till I get to Milltown; then I get a piece o' pie and cup o' coffee."

"I wish I could see Milltown. I suppose it's bigger and grander even than Wareham; more like Paris?

Miss Ross told me about Paris; she bought my pink sunshade there and my bead purse. You see how it opens with a snap? I 've twenty cents in it, and it's got to last three months, for stamps and paper and ink. Mother says Aunt Mirandy won't want to buy things like those when she's feeding and clothing me and paying for my schoolbooks."

"Paris ain't no great," said Mr. Cobb disparagingly. "It's the dullest place in the State o' Maine. I 've druv there many a time."

Again Rebecca was obliged to reprove Mr. Cobb, tacitly and quietly, but none the less surely, though the reproof was dealt with one glance, quickly sent and as quickly withdrawn.

"Paris is the capital of France, and you have to go to it on a boat," she said instructively. "It 's in my geography, and it says: 'The French are a gay and polite people, fond of dancing and light wines.' I asked the teacher what light wines were, and he thought it was something like new cider, or maybe ginger pop. I can see Paris as plain as day by just shutting my eyes. The beautiful ladies are always gayly dancing around with pink sunshades and bead purses, and the grand gentlemen are politely dancing and drinking ginger pop. But you can see Milltown most every day with your eyes wide open," Rebecca said wistfully.

"Milltown ain't no great, neither," replied Mr. Cobb, with the air of having visited all the cities of the earth and found them as naught. "Now you watch me heave this newspaper right onto Mis' Brown's doorstep."

Piff! and the packet landed exactly as it was intended, on the corn husk mat in front of the screen door.

"Oh, how splendid that was!" cried Rebecca with enthusiasm. "Just like the knife thrower Mark saw at the circus. I wish there was a long, long row of houses each with a corn husk mat and a screen door in the middle, and a newspaper to throw on every one!"

"I might fail on some of 'em, you know," said Mr. Cobb, beaming with modest pride. "If your Aunt Mirandy 'll let you, I 'll take you down to Milltown some day this summer when the stage ain't full."

A thrill of delicious excitement ran through Rebecca's frame, from her new shoes up, up to the leghorn cap and down the black braid. She pressed Mr. Cobb's knee ardently and said in a voice choking with tears of joy and astonishment, "Oh, it can't be true, it can't; to think I should see Milltown. It 's like having a fairy godmother who asks you your wish and then gives it to you! Did you ever read 'Cinderella,' or 'The Yellow Dwarf,' or 'The Enchanted Frog,' or 'The Fair One with Golden Locks?'"

"No," said Mr. Cobb cautiously, after a moment's reflection. "I don't seem to think I ever did read jest those partic'lar ones. Where 'd you get a chance at so much readin'?"

"Oh, I 've read lots of books," answered Rebecca casually. "Father's, and Miss Ross's and all the dif'rent school teachers', and all in the Sunday-school library. I've read 'The Lamplighter,' and 'Scottish Chiefs,' and 'Ivanhoe,' and 'The Heir of Redclyffe,'

and 'Cora, the Doctor's Wife,' and 'David Copperfield,' and 'The Gold of Chickaree,' and 'Plutarch's Lives,' and 'Thaddeus of Warsaw,' and 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and lots more. — What have you read?"

"I've never happened to read those partic'lar books; but land! I've read a sight in my time! Nowadays, I 'm so drove I get along with the Almanac, the 'Weekly Argus,' and the 'Maine State Agriculturist.' — There's the river again; this is the last long hill, and when we get to the top of it we'll see the chimbleys of Riverboro in the distance. 'T ain't fur. I live 'bout half a mile beyond the brick house myself."

Rebecca's hand stirred nervously in her lap and she moved in her seat. "I did n't think I was going to be afraid," she said almost under her breath; "but I guess I am, just a little mite — when you say it 's coming so near."

"Would you go back?" asked Mr. Cobb curiously.

She flashed him an intrepid look and then said proudly, "I 'd never go back — I might be frightened, but I'd be ashamed to run. Going to Aunt Mirandy's is like going down cellar in the dark. There might be ogres and giants under the stairs — but, as I tell Hannah, there *might* be elves and fairies and enchanted frogs! — Is there a main street to the village, like that in Wareham?"

"I s'pose you might call it a main street, an' your Aunt Sawyer lives on it, but there ain't no stores nor mills, an' it's an awful one-horse village! You have to go 'cross the river an' get on to our side if you want to see anything goin' on."

"I 'm almost sorry," she sighed, "because it would be so grand to drive down a real main street, sitting high up like this behind two splendid horses, with my pink sunshade up, and everybody in town wondering who the bunch of lilacs and the hair trunk belongs to. It would be just like the beautiful lady in the parade. Last summer the circus came to Temperance, and they had a procession in the morning. Mother let us all walk in and wheel Mira in the baby carriage, because we could n't afford to go to the circus in the afternoon. And there were lovely horses and animals in cages, and clowns on horseback; and at the very end came a little red and gold chariot drawn by two ponies, and in it, sitting on a velvet cushion, was the snake charmer, all dressed in satin and spangles. She was so beautiful beyond compare, Mr. Cobb, that you had to swallow lumps in your throat when you looked at her, and little cold feelings crept up and down your back. Don't you know how I mean? Did n't you ever see anybody that made you feel like that?"

Mr. Cobb was more distinctly uncomfortable at this moment than he had been at any one time during the eventful morning, but he evaded the point dexterously by saying, "There ain't no harm, as I can see, in our makin' the grand entry in the biggest style we can. I 'll take the whip out, set up straight, an' drive fast; you hold your bo'quet in your lap, an' open your little red parasol, an' we'll jest make the natives stare!"

The child's face was radiant for a moment, but the glow faded just as quickly as she said, "I forgot — mother put me inside, and maybe she 'd want me to

be there when I got to Aunt Mirandy's. Maybe I'd be more genteel inside, and then I would n't have to be jumped down and my clothes fly up, but could open the door and step down like a lady passenger. Would you please stop a minute, Mr. Cobb, and let me change?"

The stage driver good-naturedly pulled up his horses, lifted the excited little creature down, opened the door, and helped her in, putting the lilacs and the pink sunshade beside her.

"We 've had a great trip," he said, "and we 've got real well acquainted, have n't we? — You won't forget about Milltown?"

"Never!" she exclaimed fervently; "and you 're sure you won't, either?"

"Never! Cross my heart!" vowed Mr. Cobb solemnly, as he remounted his perch; and as the stage rumbled down the village street between the green maples, those who looked from their windows saw a little brown elf in buff calico sitting primly on the back seat holding a great bouquet tightly in one hand and a pink parasol in the other. Had they been farsighted enough they might have seen, when the stage turned into the side dooryard of the old brick house, a calico yoke rising and falling tempestuously over the beating heart beneath, the red color coming and going in two pale cheeks, and a mist of tears swimming in two brilliant dark eyes.

Rebecca's journey had ended.

"There's the stage turnin' into the Sawyer girls' dooryard," said Mrs. Perkins to her husband. "That

must be the niece from up Temperance way. It seems they wrote to Aurelia and invited Hannah, the oldest, but Aurelia said she could spare Rebecca better, if 't was all the same to Mirandy 'n' Jane; so it's Rebecca that 's come. She'll be good comp'ny for our Emma Jane, but I don't believe they'll keep her three months! She looks black as an Injun what I can see of her; black and kind of up-an-comin'. They used to say that one o' the Randalls married a Spanish woman, somebody that was teachin' music and languages at a boardin' school. Lorenzo was dark complected, you remember, and this child is, too. Well, I don't know as Spanish blood is any real disgrace, not if it's a good ways back and the woman was respectable."

REBECCA INVITES COMPANY

By Kate Douglas Wiggin

THE Aid Society had called its meeting for a certain Wednesday in March of the year in which Rebecca ended her Riverboro school days and began her studies at Wareham. It was a raw, blustering day, snow on the ground and a look in the sky of more to follow. Both Miranda and Jane had taken cold and decided that they could not leave the house in such weather, and this deflection from the path of duty worried Miranda, since she was an officer of the society. After making the breakfast table sufficiently uncomfortable and wishing plaintively that Jane would n't always insist on being sick at the same time she was, she decided that Rebecca must go to the meeting in their stead. "You 'll be better than nobody, Rebecca," she said flatteringly; "your Aunt Jane shall write an excuse from afternoon school for you; you can wear your rubber boots and come home by the way of the meetin' house. This Mr. Burch, if I remember right, used to know your grandfather Sawyer, and stayed here once when he was candidatin'. He 'll mebbe look for us there, and you just go and represent the family, an' give him our respects. Be careful how you behave. Bow your head in prayer; sing all the hymns, but not too loud and bold; ask after Mis' Strout 's boy;

tell everybody what awful colds we've got; if you see a good chance, take your pocket handkerchief and wipe the dust off the melodeon before the meetin' begins, and get twenty-five cents out of the sittin' room match-box in case there should be a collection."

Rebecca willingly assented. Anything interested her, even a village missionary meeting, and the idea of representing the family was rather intoxicating.

The service was held in the Sunday-school room, and although the Reverend Mr. Burch was on the platform when Rebecca entered, there were only a dozen persons present. Feeling a little shy and considerably too young for this assemblage, Rebecca sought the shelter of a friendly face, and seeing Mrs. Robinson in one of the side seats near the front, she walked up the aisle and sat beside her.

"Both my aunts had bad colds," she said softly, "and sent me to represent the family."

"That 's Mrs. Burch on the platform with her husband," whispered Mrs. Robinson, "She's awful tanned up, ain't she? If you're goin' to save souls seems like you hev' to part with your complexion. Eudoxy Morton ain't come yet; I hope to the land she will, or Mis' Deacon Milliken'll pitch the tunes where we can't reach 'em with a ladder; can't you pitch, afore she gits her breath and clears her throat?"

Mrs. Burch was a slim, frail little woman with dark hair, a broad low forehead, and patient mouth. She was dressed in a well-worn black silk, and looked so tired that Rebecca's heart went out to her.

"They're poor as Job's turkey," whispered Mrs.

Robinson; "but if you give 'em anything they'd turn right round and give it to the heathen. His congregation up to Parsonsfield clubbed together and give him that gold watch he carries; I s'pose he'd 'a' handed that over too, only heathens always tell time by the sun 'n' don't need watches. Eudoxy ain't comin'; now for massy's sake, Rebecca, do git ahead of Mis' Deacon Milliken and pitch real low."

The meeting began with prayer and then the Reverend Mr. Burch announced, to the tune of "Mendon": —

"Church of our God! arise and shine,
Bright with the beams of truth divine;
Then shall thy radiance stream afar,
Wide as the heathen nations are.

"Gentiles and kings thy light shall view,
And shall admire and love thee too;
They come, like clouds across the sky,
As doves that to their windows fly."

"Is there any one present who will assist us at the instrument?" he asked unexpectedly.

Everybody looked at everybody else, and nobody moved; then there came a voice out of a far corner saying informally, "Rebecca, why don't you?" It was Mrs. Cobb. Rebecca could have played "Mendon" in the dark, so she went to the melodeon and did so without any ado, no member of her family being present to give her self-consciousness.

The talk that ensued was much the usual sort of thing. Mr. Burch made impassioned appeals for the spreading of the gospel, and added his entreaties that all who were prevented from visiting in person the peoples

who sat in darkness should contribute liberally to the support of others who could. But he did more than this. He was a pleasant, earnest speaker, and he interwove his discourse with stories of life in a foreign land — of the manners, the customs, the speech, the point of view; even giving glimpses of the daily round, the common task, of his own household, the work of his devoted helpmate and their little group of children, all born under Syrian skies.

Rebecca sat entranced, having been given the key of another world. Riverboro had faded; the Sunday-school room, with Mrs. Robinson's red plaid shawl, and Deacon Milliken's wig, on crooked, the bare benches and torn hymn books, the hanging texts and maps, were no longer visible, and she saw blue skies and burning stars, white turbans and gay colors; Mr. Burch had not said so, but perhaps there were mosques and temples and minarets and date palms. What stories they must know, those children born under Syrian skies! Then she was called upon to play "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun."

The contribution box was passed and Mr. Burch prayed. As he opened his eyes and gave out the last hymn he looked at the handful of people, at the scattered pennies and dimes in the contribution box, and reflected that his mission was not only to gather funds for the building of his church, but to keep alive, in all these remote and lonely neighborhoods, that love for the cause which was its only hope in the years to come.

"If any of the sisters will provide entertainment,"

he said, "Mrs. Burch and I will remain among you to-night and to-morrow. In that event we could hold a parlor meeting. My wife and one of my children would wear the native costume, we would display some specimens of Syrian handiwork, and give an account of our educational methods with the children. These informal parlor meetings, admitting of questions or conversation, are often the means of interesting those not commonly found at church services; so I repeat, if any member of the congregation desires it and offers her hospitality, we will gladly stay and tell you more of the Lord's work."

A pall of silence settled over the little assembly. There was some cogent reason why every "sister" there was disinclined for company. Some had no spare room, some had a larder less well stocked than usual, some had sickness in the family, some were "unequally yoked together with unbelievers" who disliked strange ministers. Mrs. Burch's thin hands fingered her black silk nervously. "Would no one speak!" thought Rebecca, her heart fluttering with sympathy. Mrs. Robinson leaned over and whispered significantly, "The missionaries always used to be entertained at the brick house; your grandfather never would let 'em sleep anywheres else when he was alive." She meant this for a stab at Miss Miranda's parsimony, remembering the four spare chambers, closed from January to December; but Rebecca thought it was intended as a suggestion. If it had been a former custom, perhaps her aunts would want her to do the right thing; for what else was she representing the family? So, delighted that

duty lay in so pleasant a direction, she rose from her seat and said in the pretty voice and with the quaint manner that so separated her from all the other young people in the village, "My aunts, Miss Miranda and Miss Jane Sawyer, would be very happy to have you visit them at the brick house, as the ministers always used to do when their father was alive. They sent their respects by me." The "respects" might have been the freedom of the city, or an equestrian statue, when presented in this way, and the aunts would have shuddered could they have foreseen the manner of delivery; but it was vastly impressive to the audience, who concluded that Mirandy Sawyer must be making her way uncommonly fast to mansions in the skies, else what meant this abrupt change of heart?

Mr. Burch bowed courteously, accepted the invitation "in the same spirit in which it was offered," and asked Brother Milliken to lead in prayer.

If the Eternal Ear could ever tire it would have ceased long ere this to listen to Deacon Milliken, who had wafted to the throne of grace the same prayer, with very slight variations, for forty years. Mrs. Perkins followed; she had several petitions at her command, good sincere ones too, but a little cut and dried, made of scripture texts laboriously woven together. Rebecca wondered why she always ended, at the most peaceful seasons, with the form, "Do Thou be with us, God of Battles, while we strive onward like Christian soldiers marching as to war;" but everything sounded real to her to-day; she was in a devout mood, and many things Mr. Burch had said had moved her strangely. As she

lifted her head the minister looked directly at her and said, "Will our young sister close the service by leading us in prayer?"

Every drop of blood in Rebecca's body seemed to stand still, and her heart almost stopped beating. Mrs. Cobb's excited breathing could be heard distinctly in the silence. There was nothing extraordinary in Mr. Burch's request. In his journeyings among country congregations he was constantly in the habit of meeting young members who had "experienced religion" and joined the church when nine or ten years old. Rebecca was now thirteen; she had played the melodeon, led the singing, delivered her aunts' invitation with an air of great worldly wisdom, and he, concluding that she must be a youthful pillar of the church, called upon her with the utmost simplicity.

Rebecca's plight was pathetic. How could she refuse; how could she explain she was not a "member;" how could she pray before all those elderly women! John Rogers at the stake hardly suffered more than this poor child for the moment as she rose to her feet, forgetting that ladies prayed sitting, while deacons stood in prayer. Her mind was a maze of pictures that the Reverend Mr. Burch had flung on the screen. She knew the conventional phraseology, of course; what New England child, accustomed to Wednesday evening meetings, does not? But her own secret prayers were different. However, she began slowly and tremulously:—

"Our Father who art in Heaven, . . . Thou art God in Syria just the same as in Maine; . . . over there

to-day are blue skies and yellow stars and burning suns . . . the great trees are waving in the warm air, while here the snow lies thick under our feet, . . . but no distance is too far for God to travel and so He is with us here as He is with them there, . . . and our thoughts rise to him 'as doves that to their windows fly.' . . .

"We cannot all be missionaries, teaching people to be good, . . . some of us have not learned yet how to be good ourselves, but if thy kingdom is to come and thy will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven, everybody must try and everybody must help, . . . those who are old and tired and those who are young and strong. . . . The little children of whom we have heard, those born under Syrian skies, have strange and interesting work to do for Thee, and some of us would like to travel in far lands and do wonderful brave things for the heathen and gently take away their idols of wood and stone. But perhaps we have to stay at home and do what is given us to do . . . sometimes even things we dislike, . . . but that must be what it means in the hymn we sang, when it talked about the sweet perfume that rises with every morning sacrifice. . . . This is the way that God teaches us to be meek and patient, and the thought that He has willed it so should rob us of our fears and help us bear the years. Amen."

Poor little ignorant, fantastic child! Her petition was simply a succession of lines from the various hymns, and images the minister had used in his sermon, but she had her own way of recombining and applying

these things, even of using them in a new connection, so that they had a curious effect of belonging to her. The words of some people might generally be written with a minus sign after them, the minus meaning that the personality of the speaker subtracted from, rather than added to, their weight; but Rebecca's words might always have borne the plus sign.

The "Amen" said, she sat down, or presumed she sat down, on what she believed to be a bench, and there was a benediction. In a moment or two, when the room ceased spinning, she went up to Mrs. Burch, who kissed her affectionately and said, "My dear, how glad I am that we are going to stay with you. Will half-past five be too late for us to come? It is three now, and we have to go to the station for our valise and for our children. We left them there, being uncertain whether we should go back or stop here."

Rebecca said that half-past five was their supper hour, and then accepted an invitation to drive home with Mrs. Cobb. Her face was flushed and her lip quivered in a way that Aunt Sarah had learned to know, so the homeward drive was taken almost in silence. The bleak wind and Aunt Sarah's quieting presence brought her back to herself, however, and she entered the brick house cheerily. Being too full of news to wait in the side entry to take off her rubber boots, she carefully lifted a braided rug into the sitting room and stood on that while she opened her budget.

"There are your shoes warming by the fire," said Aunt Jane. "Slip them right on while you talk."

"It was a very small meeting, Aunt Miranda," began Rebecca, "and the missionary and his wife are lovely people, and they are coming here to stay all night and to-morrow with you. I hope you won't mind."

"Coming here!" exclaimed Miranda, letting her knitting fall in her lap, and taking her spectacles off, as she always did in moments of extreme excitement. "Did they invite themselves?"

"No," Rebecca answered, "I had to invite them for you; but I thought you'd like to have such interesting company. It was this way —"

"Stop your explainin', and tell me first when they 'll be here. Right away?"

"No, not for two hours — about half-past five."

"Then you can explain, if you can, who gave you any authority to invite a passel of strangers to stop here over night, when you know we ain't had any company for twenty years, and don't intend to have any for another twenty — or at any rate while I 'm the head of the house."

"Don't blame her, Miranda, till you 've heard her story," said Jane. "It was in my mind right along, if we went to the meeting, some such thing might happen, on account of Mr. Burch knowing father."

"The meeting was a small one," began Rebecca. "I gave all your messages, and everybody was disappointed you could n't come, for the president was n't there, and Mrs. Matthews took the chair, which was a pity, for the seat was n't nearly big enough for her, and she reminded me of a line in a hymn we sang, 'Wide as the heathen nations are,' and she wore that

kind of a beaver garden-hat that always gets on one side. And Mr. Burch talked beautifully about the Syrian heathen, and the singing went real well, and there looked to be about forty cents in the basket that was passed on our side. And that would n't save even a heathen baby, would it? Then Mr. Burch said, if any sister would offer entertainment, they would pass the night, and have a parlor meeting in Riverboro to-morrow, with Mrs. Burch in Syrian costume, and lovely foreign things to show. Then he waited and waited, and nobody said a word. I was so mortified I did n't know what to do. And then he repeated what he said, and explained why he wanted to stay, and you could see he thought it was his duty. Just then Mrs. Robinson whispered to me and said the missionaries always used to go to the brick house when grandfather was alive, and that he never would let them sleep anywhere else. I did n't know you had stopped having them, because no traveling ministers have been here, except just for a Sunday morning, since I came to Riverboro. So I thought I ought to invite them, as you were n't there to do it for yourself, and you told me to represent the family."

"What did you do — go up and introduce yourself as folks was goin' out?"

"No; I stood right up in meeting. I had to, for Mr. Burch's feelings were getting hurt at nobody's speaking. So I said, 'My aunts, Miss Miranda and Miss Jane Sawyer, would be happy to have you visit at the brick house, just as the missionaries always did when their father was alive, and they sent their respects by

me.' Then I sat down; and Mr. Burch prayed for grandfather, and called him a man of God, and thanked our Heavenly Father that his spirit was still alive in his descendants (that was you), and that the good old house where so many of the brethren had been cheered and helped, and from which so many had gone out strengthened for the fight, was still hospitably open for the stranger and wayfarer."

Sometimes, when the heavenly bodies are in just the right conjunction, nature seems to be the most perfect art. The word or the deed coming straight from the heart, without any thought of effect, seems inspired.

A certain gateway in Miranda Sawyer's soul had been closed for years; not all at once had it been done, but gradually, and without her full knowledge. If Rebecca had plotted for days, and with the utmost cunning, she could not have effected an entrance into that forbidden country, and now, unknown to both of them, the gate swung on its stiff and rusty hinges, and the favoring wind of opportunity opened it wider and wider as time went on. All things had worked together amazingly for good. The memory of old days had been evoked, and the daily life of a pious and venerated father called to mind; the Sawyer name had been publicly dignified and praised; Rebecca had comported herself as the granddaughter of Deacon Israel Sawyer should, and showed conclusively that she was not "all Randall," as had been supposed. Miranda was rather mollified by and pleased with the turn of events, although she did not intend to show it, or give

anybody any reason to expect that this expression of hospitality was to serve for a precedent on any subsequent occasion.

"Well, I see you did only what you was obliged to do, Rebecca," she said, "and you worded your invitation as nice as anybody could have done. I wish your Aunt Jane and me was n't both so worthless with these colds; but it only shows the good of havin' a clean house, with every room in order, whether open or shut, and enough victuals cooked so 't you can't be surprised and belittled by anybody, whatever happens. There was half a dozen there that might have entertained the Burches as easy as not, if they had n't 'a' been too mean or lazy. Why did n't your missionaries come right along with you?"

"They had to go to the station for their valise and their children."

"Are there children?" groaned Miranda.

"Yes, Aunt Miranda, all born under Syrian skies."

"Syrian grandmother!" ejaculated Miranda (and it was not a fact). "How many?"

"I did n't think to ask; but I will get two rooms ready, and if there are any over I'll take 'em into my bed," said Rebecca, secretly hoping that this would be the case. "Now, as you're both half sick, could n't you trust me just once to get ready for the company? You can come up when I call. Will you?"

"I believe I will," sighed Miranda reluctantly. "I'll lay down side o' Jane in our bedroom and see if I can get strength to cook supper. It's half past three — don't you let me lay a minute past five. I kep' a

good fire in the kitchen stove. I don't know, I'm sure, why I should have baked a pot o' beans in the middle of the week, but they'll come in handy. Father used to say there was nothing that went right to the spot with returned missionaries like pork 'n' beans 'n' brown bread. Fix up the two south chambers, Rebecca."

Rebecca, given a free hand for the only time in her life, dashed upstairs like a whirlwind. Every room in the brick house was as neat as wax, and she had only to pull up the shades, go over the floors with a whisk broom, and dust the furniture. The aunts could hear her scurrying to and fro, beating up pillows and feather beds, flapping towels, jingling crockery, singing meanwhile in her clear voice:—

"In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown;
The heathen in his blindness
Bows down to wood and stone."

She had grown to be a handy little creature, and tasks she was capable of doing at all she did like a flash, so that when she called her aunts at five o'clock to pass judgment, she had accomplished wonders. There were fresh towels on bureaus and washstands, the beds were fair and smooth, the pitchers were filled, and soap and matches were laid out; newspaper, kindling, and wood were in the boxes, and a large stick burned slowly in each air-tight stove. "I thought I'd better just take the chill off," she explained, "as they're right from Syria; and that reminds me, I must look it up in the geography before they get here."

There was nothing to disapprove, so the two sisters went downstairs to make some slight changes in their dress. As they passed the parlor door Miranda thought she heard a crackle and looked in. The shades were up, there was a cheerful blaze in the open stove in the front parlor, and a fire laid on the hearth in the back room. Rebecca's own lamp, her second Christmas present from Mr. Aladdin, stood on a marble-topped table in the corner, the light that came softly through its rose-colored shade transforming the stiff and gloomy ugliness of the room into a place where one could sit and love one's neighbor.

"For massy's sake, Rebecca," called Miss Miranda up the stairs, "did you think we'd better open the parlor?"

Rebecca came out on the landing braiding her hair.

"We did on Thanksgiving and Christmas, and I thought this was about as great an occasion," she said. "I moved the wax flowers off the mantelpiece so they would n't melt, and put the shells, the coral, and the green stuffed bird on top of the what-not, so the children would n't ask to play with them. Brother Milliken 's coming over to see Mr. Burch about business, and I should n't wonder if Brother and Sister Cobb happened in. Don't go down cellar, I'll be there in a minute to do the running."

Miranda and Jane exchanged glances.

"Ain't she the beatin'est creetur that ever was born int' the world!" exclaimed Miranda; "but she can turn off work when she's got a mind to!"

At quarter past five everything was ready, and the

neighbors, those at least who were within sight of the brick house (a prominent object in the landscape when there were no leaves on the trees), were curious almost to desperation. Shades up in both parlors! Shades up in the two south bedrooms! And fires — if human vision was to be relied on — fires in about every room. If it had not been for the kind offices of a lady who had been at the meeting, and who charitably called in at one or two houses and explained the reason of all this preparation, there would have been no sleep in many families.

The missionary party arrived promptly, and there were but two children, seven or eight having been left with the brethren in Portland, to diminish traveling expenses. Jane escorted them all upstairs, while Miranda watched the cooking of the supper; but Rebecca promptly took the two little girls away from their mother, divested them of their wraps, smoothed their hair, and brought them down to the kitchen to smell the beans.

There was a bountiful supper, and the presence of the young people robbed it of all possible stiffness. Aunt Jane helped clear the table and put away the food, while Miranda entertained in the parlor; but Rebecca and the infant Burches washed the dishes and held high carnival in the kitchen, doing only trifling damage — breaking a cup and plate that had been cracked before, emptying a silver spoon with some dishwater out of the back door (an act never permitted at the brick house), and putting coffee grounds in the sink. All evidences of crime having been removed by

Rebecca, and damages repaired in all possible cases, the three entered the parlor, where Mr. and Mrs. Cobb and Deacon and Mrs. Milliken had already appeared.

It was such a pleasant evening! Occasionally they left the heathen in his blindness bowing down to wood and stone, not for long, but just to give themselves (and him) time enough to breathe, and then the Burches told strange, beautiful, marvelous things. The two smaller children sang together, and Rebecca, at the urgent request of Mrs. Burch, seated herself at the tinkling old piano and gave "Wild roved an Indian girl, bright Alfarata" with considerable spirit and style.

At eight o'clock she crossed the room, handed a palm-leaf fan to her aunt Miranda, ostensibly that she might shade her eyes from the lamplight; but it was a piece of strategy that gave her an opportunity to whisper, "How about cookies?"

"Do you think it 's worth while?" sibilated Miss Miranda in answer.

"The Perkinses always do."

"All right. You know where they be."

Rebecca moved quietly towards the door, and the young Burches cataracted after her as if they could not bear a second's separation. In five minutes they returned, the little ones bearing plates of thin caraway wafers — hearts, diamonds, and circles daintily sugared, and flecked with caraway seed raised in the garden behind the house. These were a specialty of Miss Jane's, and Rebecca carried a tray with six tiny crystal glasses filled with dandelion wine, for which Miss Miranda had been famous in years gone by. Old

Deacon Israel had always had it passed, and he had bought the glasses himself in Boston. Miranda admired them greatly, not only for their beauty but because they held so little. Before their advent the dandelion wine had been served in sherry glasses.

As soon as these refreshments — commonly called a "*co*lation" in Riverboro — had been genteelly partaken of, Rebecca looked at the clock, rose from her chair in the children's corner, and said cheerfully, "Come! time for little missionaries to be in bed!"

Everybody laughed at this, the big missionaries most of all, as the young people shook hands and disappeared with Rebecca.

AN UNWILLING GUEST

By Frank R. Stockton

ONE day, in the following spring, I was riding home from the station with Euphemia — we seldom took pleasure drives now, we were so busy on the place — and as we reached the house I heard the dog barking savagely. He was loose in the little orchard by the side of the house. As I drove in, Pomona came rushing to the side of the carriage.

"Man up the tree!" she shouted.

I helped Euphemia out, left the horse standing by the door, and ran to the dog, followed by my wife and Pomona. Sure enough, there was a man up the tree, and Lord Edward was doing his best to get at him, springing wildly at the tree and fairly shaking with rage.

I looked up at the man. He was a thoroughbred tramp, burly, dirty, generally unkempt, but, unlike most tramps, he looked very much frightened. His position, on a high crotch of an apple tree, was not altogether comfortable, and although, for the present, it was safe, the fellow seemed to have a wavering faith in the strength of apple-tree branches, and the moment he saw me, he earnestly besought me to take that dog away, and let him down.

I made no answer, but turning to Pomona, I asked her what this all meant.

"Why, sir, you see," said she, "I was in the kitchen bakin' pies, and this fellow must have got over the fence at the side of the house, for the dog did n't see him, and the first thing I know'd he was stickin' his head in the window, and he asked me to give him somethin' to eat. And when I said I 'd see in a minute if there was anything for him, he says to me, 'Gim me a piece of one of them pies' — pies I 'd just baked and was settin' to cool on the kitchen table! 'No, sir,' says I, 'I 'm not goin' to cut one of them pies for you, or any one like you.' 'All right!' says he, 'I 'll come in and help myself.' He must have known there was no man about, and comin' the way he did, he had n't seen the dog. So he come round to the kitchen door, but I shot out before he got there and unchained Lord Edward. I guess he saw the dog, when he got to the door, and at any rate he heard the chain clankin', and he did n't go in, but just put for the gate. But Lord Edward was after him so quick that he had n't no time to go to no gates. It was all he could do to scoot up this tree, and if he 'd been a millionth part of a minute later he 'd 'a' been in another world by this time."

The man, who had not attempted to interrupt Pomona's speech, now began again to implore me to let him down, while Euphemia looked pitifully at him, and was about, I think, to intercede with me in his favor, but my attention was drawn off from her by the strange conduct of the dog. Believing, I suppose, that he might leave the tramp for a moment, now that I had arrived,

he had dashed away to another tree, where he was barking furiously, standing on his hind legs and clawing at the trunk.

"What 's the matter over there?" I asked.

"Oh, that 's the other fellow, said Pomona. "He 's no harm." And then, as the tramp made a movement as if he would try to come down, and make a rush for safety during the absence of the dog, she called out, "Here, boy! here, boy!" and in an instant Lord Edward was again raging at his post, at the foot of the apple tree.

I was grievously puzzled at all this, and walked over to the other tree, followed, as before, by Euphemia and Pomona.

"This one," said the latter, "is a tree man —"

"I should think so," said I, as I caught sight of a person in gray trousers standing among the branches of a cherry tree not very far from the kitchen door.

The tree was not a large one, and the branches were not strong enough to allow him to sit down on them, although they supported him well enough, as he stood close to the trunk just out of reach of Lord Edward.

"This is a very unpleasant position, sir," said he, when I reached the tree. "I simply came into your yard, on a matter of business, and finding that raging beast attacking a person in a tree, I had barely time to get up into this tree myself, before he dashed at me. Luckily I was out of his reach; but I very much fear I have lost some of my property."

"No, he has n't," said Pomona. "It was a big book

he dropped. I picked it up and took it into the house. It 's full of pictures of pears and peaches and flowers. I 've been looking at it. That 's how I knew what he was. And there was no call for his gittin' up a tree. Lord Edward never would have gone after him if he had n't run as if he had guilt on his soul."

"I suppose, then," said I, addressing the individual in the cherry tree, "that you came here to sell me some trees."

"Yes, sir," said he quickly, "trees, shrubs, vines, evergreens — everything suitable for a gentleman's country villa. I can sell you something quite remarkable, sir, in the way of cherry trees — French ones, just imported; bear fruit three times the size of anything that could be produced on a tree like this. And pears — fruit of the finest flavor and enormous size —"

"Yes," said Pomona, "I seen them in the book. But they must grow on a ground vine. No tree could n't hold such pears as them."

Here Euphemia reproved Pomona's forwardness, and I invited the tree agent to get down out of the tree.

"Thank you,"said he, "but not while that dog is loose. If you will kindly chain him up, I will get my book, and show you specimens of some of the finest small fruit in the world, all imported from the first nurseries of Europe — the Red-Gold Amber Muscat grape — the —"

"Oh, please let him down!" said Euphemia, her eyes beginning to sparkle.

I slowly walked toward the tramp tree, revolving

various matters in my mind. We had not spent much money on the place during the winter, and we now had a small sum which we intended to use for the advantage of the farm, but had not yet decided what to do with it. It behooved me to be careful.

I told Pomona to run and get me the dog chain, and I stood under the tree, listening, as well as I could, to the tree agent talking to Euphemia, and paying no attention to the impassioned entreaties of the tramp in the crotch above me. When the chain was brought, I hooked one end of it in Lord Edward's collar, and then I took a firm grasp of the other. Telling Pomona to bring the tree agent's book from the house, I called to that individual to get down from his tree. He promptly obeyed, and, taking the book from Pomona, began to show the pictures to Euphemia.

"You had better hurry, sir," I called out. "I can't hold this dog very long." And, indeed, Lord Edward had made a run toward the agent, which jerked me very forcibly in his direction. But a movement by the tramp had quickly brought the dog back to his more desired victim.

"If you will just tie up that dog, sir," said the agent, "and come this way, I should like to show you the Meltinagua pear — dissolves in the mouth like snow, sir; trees will bear next year."

"Oh, come look at the Royal Sparkling Ruby grape!" cried Euphemia. "It glows in the sun like a gem."

"Yes," said the agent, "and fills the air with fragrance during the whole month of September —"

"I tell you," I shouted, "I can't hold this dog another minute! The chain is cutting the skin off my hands. Run, sir, run! I 'm going to let go!"

"Run! run!" cried Pomona. "Fly for your life!"

The agent now began to be frightened, and shut up his book.

"If you could only see the plates, sir, I 'm sure —"

"Are you ready?" I cried, as the dog, excited by Pomona's wild shouts, made a bolt in his direction.

"Good-day, if I must —" said the agent, as he hurried to the gate.

But there he stopped.

"There is nothing, sir," he said, "that would so improve your place as a row of the Spitzenberg Sweet-scented Balsam fir along this fence. I 'll sell you three-year-old trees —"

"He 's loose!" I shouted, as I dropped the chain.

In a second the agent was on the other side of the gate. Lord Edward made a dash toward him; but, stopping suddenly, flew back to the tree of the tramp.

"If you should conclude, sir," said the tree agent, looking over the fence, "to have a row of those firs along here —"

"My good sir," said I, "there is no row of firs there now, and the fence is not very high. My dog, as you see, is very much excited, and I cannot answer for the consequences if he takes it into his head to jump over."

The tree agent turned and walked slowly away.

"Now, look-a-here," cried the tramp from the tree,

in the voice of a very ill-used person, ain't you goin' to fasten up that dog, and let me git down?"

I walked up close to the tree and addressed him.

"No," I said, "I am not. When a man comes to my place, bullies a young girl who was about to relieve his hunger, and then boldly determines to enter my house and help himself to my property, I don't propose to fasten up any dog that may happen to be after him. If I had another dog, I 'd let him loose, and give this faithful beast a rest. You can do as you please. You can come down and have it out with the dog, or you can stay up there, until I have had my dinner. Then I will drive down to the village and bring up the constable, and deliver you into his hands. We want no such fellows as you about."

With that, I unhooked the chain from Lord Edward, and walked off to put up the horse. The man shouted after me, but I paid no attention. I did not feel in a good humor with him.

Euphemia was a good deal disturbed by the occurrences of the afternoon. She was sorry for the man in the tree; she was sorry that the agent for the Royal Ruby grape had been obliged to go away; and I had a good deal of trouble during dinner to make her see things in the proper light. But I succeeded at last.

I did not hurry through dinner, and when we had finished, I went to my work at the barn. Tramps are not generally pressed for time, and Pomona had been told to give our captive something to eat.

I was just locking the door of the carriage house, when Pomona came running to me to tell me that the

tramp wanted to see me about something very important — just a minute, he said. I put the key into my pocket and walked over to the tree. It was now almost dark, but I could see that the dog, the tramp, and the tree still kept their respective places.

"Look-a-here," said the individual in the crotch, "you don't know how dreadful oneasy these limbs gits after you 've been settin' up here as long as I have. And I don't want to have nuthin' to do with no constables. I 'll tell you what I 'll do: if you 'll chain up that dog, and let me go, I 'll fix things so that you 'll not be troubled no more by tramps."

"How will you do that?" I asked.

"Oh, never you mind," said he. "I 'll give you my word of honor I 'll do it. There 's reg'lar understandin' among us fellers, you know."

I considered the matter. The word of honor of a fellow such as he was could not be worth much, but the merest chance of getting rid of tramps should not be neglected. I went in to talk to Euphemia about it, although I knew what she would say. I reasoned with myself as much as with her.

"If we put this one fellow in prison for a few weeks," I said, "the benefit is not very great. If we are freed from all tramps, for the season, the benefit is very great. Shall we try for the greatest good?"

"Certainly," said Euphemia; "and his legs must be dreadfully stiff."

So I went out, and after a struggle of some minutes, I chained Lord Edward to a post at a little distance from the apple tree. When he was secure, the tramp de-

scended nimbly from his perch, notwithstanding his stiff legs, and hurried out of the gate. He stopped to make no remarks over the fence. With a wild howl of disappointed ambition, Lord Edward threw himself after him. But the chain held.

A lane of moderate length led from our house to the main road, and the next day, as we were riding home, I noticed, on the trunk of a large tree which stood at the corner of the lane and road, a curious mark. I drew up to see what it was, but we could not make it out. It was a very rude device, cut deeply into the tree, and somewhat resembled a square, a circle, a triangle, and a cross, with some smaller marks beneath it. I felt sure that our tramp had cut it, and that it had some significance, which would be understood by the members of his fraternity.

And it must have been, for no tramps came near us all that summer. We were visited by a needy person now and then, but by no member of the regular army of tramps.

One afternoon, that fall, I walked home, and at the corner of the lane I saw a tramp looking up at the mark on the tree, which was still quite distinct.

"What does that mean?" I said, stepping up to him.

"How do I know?" said the man, "and what do you want to know fur?"

"Just out of curiosity," I said; "I have often noticed it. I think you can tell me what it means, and if you will do so, I 'll give you a dollar."

"And keep mum about it?" said the man.

"Yes," I replied, taking out the dollar.

"All right!" said the tramp. "That sign means that the man that lives up this lane is a mean, stingy cuss, with a wicked dog, and it 's no good to go there."

I handed him the dollar and went away, perfectly satisfied with my reputation.

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