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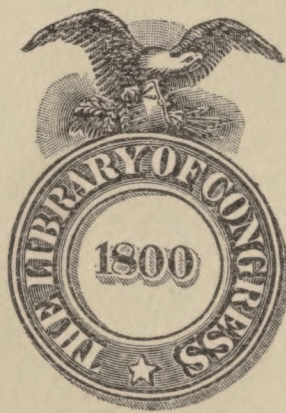
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HOW THE TWO ENDS MET

MARY F. LEONARD



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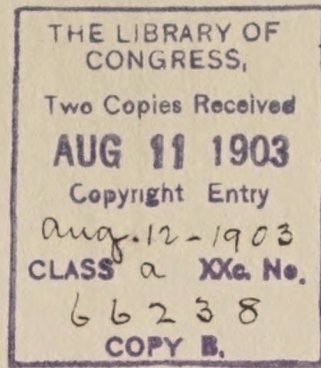
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"ARE YOU GOING TO BUILD?"

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CHAPTER I.

WHY PICKLES?

"BUT why pickles?" asked Mr. Aleck, who liked to understand things.

"Pickles or potatoes, what do I care?" thundered the major. "Here is my new walk ruined, and it will cost dear knows how much to undo the mischief. I'll sift this matter to the bottom, or my name is not Archibald Briggs!"

"I should certainly speak to a policeman, Archibald," said Mrs. Briggs, who stood in the front door, her silken draperies fluttering in the breeze.

"Go into the house at once, Marion, you'll take cold," ordered the major.

Mr. Aleck shook his head. "Now if it had stated what brand of pickles it might seem intended for an advertisement, but just pickles," he continued, but no one paid any attention.

At this opportune moment, so it seemed to Mrs. Briggs, a blue coat and brass buttons appeared on the corner. "Call him, Archibald," she entreated.

"Much good a policeman will do now," growled the major, beckoning to the man, however.

The policeman strolled up with an air of mild and dignified interest. "Anything wrong, sir?"

"Look at this!" and the irate major pointed to the newly-laid concrete walk whereon had been written in large, sprawling letters the word *pickles*. Evidently done while the cement was still soft, it now appeared to have been chiselled in stone.

The policeman shook his head and sighed. "It's them boys, sir. Why, they stole the harp off the Conservatory of Music on the next square and hung it on Lawyer Grove's front gate."

Mr. Aleck smiled. The musical instrument referred to was not a harp, but a lyre.

Observing the smile, the policeman winked

furtively as he added, " But this here's a shame, sir, yet you can't do nothing with them kids on Hallow-e'en."

"It is this dreadful neighborhood," sighed Mrs. Briggs, who had come down to hear what the policeman had to say, and now drew her skirts about her as if to escape contamination.

"You may say that, ma'am," the policeman answered, admiration in his glance.

Mr. Aleck stuffed the morning paper in his pocket and walked down the street, leaving the Briggses to extract what comfort they could from the blue-coat. He was not unsympathetic, but there was nothing he could do to mend matters, and he had an engagement down town. He was a tall, broad-shouldered young man, who wore extremely well-fitting clothes, and looked at things out of a pair of frank, merry eyes.

The major's house was on the corner, and Mr. Aleck had walked more than half the long square when he saw a small person with a school-bag over her shoulder standing before the window of the new furniture store. Mr.

Aleck slackened his pace and paused at the window also.

The small person was so absorbed in contemplation of some ancient andirons in the shape of owls with eyes of yellow glass, that Mr. Aleck's polite good morning quite startled her. Her rosy face grew rosier yet, her lips curved upward in a smile, her brown eyes just glanced at him and then dropped shyly as she replied, "Good morning."

"Are you interested in furniture?" asked Mr. Aleck.

"Oh, yes," answered the small person, shifting her bag to the other shoulder and moving away with a backward glance at the owls.

Mr. Aleck turned also, and they walked down street together.

"I look in the window every morning to see if there is anything new, so I can tell Auntie Bess when I go home. She goes the other way."

"And then" — suggested Mr. Aleck.

"Then we decide what we are going to have

in our house when Auntie Bess makes her fortune. I think we'll have the owls."

"Are you going to build?" asked Mr. Aleck.

The small person shook her head. "Not for a long time," she said, "for it takes a good while to make a fortune, I guess; but Auntie Bess says it is just as well to be cultivating our taste."

"Very wise, I am sure," and Mr. Aleck met the upward glance of the brown eyes with a friendly smile, and asked where she went to school.

The small person pointed out the building in the distance. "Auntie Bess goes to school too," she volunteered. "Only it is n't like my school; she is learning to teach kindergarten. Did you ever go to kindergarten?"

"Well, no," said Mr. Aleck, "but I should like to."

As this seemed to be a joke, the small person laughed and said she had never gone to one either.

At this moment two dirty-faced little boys passed them. One was seated in a chariot

made of a soap-box on wheels, with "Purity" emblazoned on its side; the other was acting as prancing steed. As they went by they called out something that sounded strangely like "Hello, Pickles!"

"Is that your name?" Mr. Aleck asked.

His companion dimpled and blushed as she answered, "Not really, but that is what they call me."

"Very odd," remarked Mr. Aleck.

"Well, you see, it happened in this way: Grandmamma sent me to the grocery to get a bottle of tiny Tims, — do you know what they are? little teensy, weensy pickles — and I tripped over the dog, and broke the bottle all to pieces, and the pickles went everywhere."

"Six ways for Sunday?" suggested Mr. Aleck.

"Yes, and Jumps saw me, — he is the boy who carries the papers, — and he called out, 'Hello, Pickles!' and everybody heard him, so they call me Pickles since then."

"Ah, ha!" said Mr. Aleck, "and you don't mind?"

"I don't mind if it amuses them." The dignified air of the small person entranced Mr. Aleck.

"Have you a scribe among your friends?" he asked.

This evidently puzzled her, for after a moment's thought she said she did n't know.

"Some one who is fond of writing, I mean," he explained.

But no, she did n't think of any; and as they had by this time reached the school gate the subject could not be pursued any further, much to Mr. Aleck's regret. He lifted his hat and bowed as ceremoniously as if she had been a great instead of a small person; and as he walked on he said to himself, "*Pickles* — I am beginning now to see why. But who did it — Jumps or the chariot racers? I perceive I have the instincts of a detective."

This was not the first time Mr. Aleck had seen Pickles, to call her by the only name he knew. Almost every morning for a month, in fact ever since he had come to live with his sister, he had seen her with her school-bag, and

always the same merry, cheery little person. Everybody on the block seemed to know her and have a smile and a greeting for her. The grocery man, the druggist clerk, the round-shouldered little tailor, the hardware man, all unbent at sight of Pickles.

His acquaintance with her had begun a week before this, over a kitten. The drug-store dog — so Pickles explained — had, just for fun, chased the kitten, which in its fright took refuge in a tree on the sidewalk, and there so high above the ground it became more frightened than ever, and was crying piteously. When Mr. Aleck came by, Pickles stood gazing up at the kitten, with a face full of sympathy.

“What is the trouble?” Mr. Aleck asked.

“It can’t get down, and it is so afraid, and I can’t reach it,” she answered, pointing to the small bundle of gray fur on one of the branches.

“I think I can reach it,” said Mr. Aleck.

“If you only would,” cried Pickles, joyfully, “and I’ll hold the dog while you put it over the fence.”

Thus the rescue was made, while Pickles

held on to the drug-store dog with all her might.

"I'm so much obliged," she said gratefully, and Mr. Aleck felt quite as if he had done some great and noble deed, her eyes shone so. Ever since this he had felt an interest in Pickles.

"I wonder what her real name is, and where she lives," he said to himself. "There is a diversity in our neighborhood that pleases me," he added.

There were, however, others who were not pleased by it, and one of these was his sister, Mrs. Briggs.

CHAPTER II.

DIFFERENT OPINIONS.

THE Briggses lived in a handsome mansion of brick and stone on the corner of Dean Avenue and State Street. Beyond State Street the avenue was a region of stately homes and irreproachable fashion, but below State Street it showed, instead of an orderly procession of dignified residences, a motley throng of shops and dwellings that peered over each other's shoulders and failed to keep step.

The State-Street end of the square was all it should be ; it was down near the middle that the invasion of the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker began, but of course as a whole the square was blighted, and although Mrs. Briggs lived on the corner and was only just without the pale of fashion, she felt the truth of the old saying that a miss is as good as a mile.

How the colony of shops had happened to spring up here, so far from the business part of town, no one seemed able satisfactorily to explain. One thing was evident, they were patronized, for they grew and flourished, some of the smaller stores having been replaced by larger ones. Over these stores people lived, and their children played about in the street, and this was one of the worst features of it all, in Mrs. Briggs' opinion.

The house in which she lived was a substantial one, built thirty years before by her uncle, Alexander Martin, at a time when the location seemed as good as any in the city. At his death it was left to Mrs. Briggs on condition that she make her home there for at least five years. If she did not choose to occupy it, it was to go to a distant relative who, it was quite certain, would.

Old Mr. Martin had been fond of his home, but he knew the market value of a residence on that square was small, and he did not like to think of the house in which he had lived for so long, and upon which he had spent so much

time and money, sacrificed. His niece could not make up her mind to let such a desirable place slip through her fingers, so she lived in it and bemoaned her fate meanwhile.

Mrs. Briggs complained to her next neighbor, Mrs. Percival Lawrence, who like herself was compelled to live in uncongenial surroundings, that she had no sympathy from her brother.

"Aleck laughs and calls it interesting, and says I do not appreciate my privileges. I wish Uncle Thomas had left the house to him."

After the disfiguring of his new walk the major was on his wife's side; before this he had insisted the neighborhood was good enough for anybody; now he declared this was the last cent he would spend on improvements. Mrs. Briggs was triumphant, but having her husband on her side did not alter her uncle's will.

Over the new confectionery, which in a spirit of compromise had been placed back on a line with the dwellings, and had a neat grass plat in front of it, were two tiny flats, in one of

which Pickles lived with grandmamma and Auntie Bess.

"Small but sunny," had been Auntie Bess's comment the day they came to look at it; "which is," she added, "far better than large and gloomy."

Pickles thought so too. She had her own ideas about things, and unlike Mrs. Briggs she was pleased with the neighborhood.

"I think it is the convenientest neighborhood I ever heard of," she announced one afternoon from her place among the ferns and begonias in one of the front windows.

Auntie Bess looked up from some kindergarten material over which she was wrinkling her pretty brow and asked, "Do you? Why?"

"Because you can buy anything you want here — even bicycles."

"Which are the last things I want," replied Auntie Bess.

Pickles began to enumerate: "There are tailors, and dressmakers, and shoemakers, and

dry goods, and furniture, and a plumber, and — stove things ” —

“ Hardware,” suggested her aunt.

“ Do they call it that because it is hard? How funny ! Is anything called software ? ”

“ Pillows, perhaps,” said Auntie Bess.

“ Not really ? ” Pickles laughed, then she continued : “ And a boys’ school, and a kindergarten, and a grocery, and a drug-store, and a laundry, and Jumps, who brings the paper.”

“ The only lack seems to be a bank where you can get money for nothing,” remarked Auntie Bess.

Pickles pondered this in silence. She never quite liked to hear her aunt speak in that tone. Pickles wanted everybody to be happy, and sometimes — only sometimes — it seemed to her that her pretty young aunt was n’t.

“ Well, Elaine Rutherford, what are you looking so sober about ? ” Auntie Bess had come behind Pickles, and with a hand on either side of the round face turned it back till the brown eyes looked into hers upside down.

“ Don’t you know that people have to growl

a little sometimes? It is a charming neighborhood, and who knows? Maybe we'll have the bank some day." She bent and kissed the smiling lips. Such a roly-poly, tilt-nosed little girl as this was to have such a stately name!

Lovely, white-haired grandmamma, with her youthful face and gentle voice, generally called her Pet; Auntie Bess had a dozen names for her, but of late she had fallen into the neighborhood fashion of calling her Pickles. Of this grandmamma did not at all approve.

Mrs. Raymond — this was grandmamma's name — felt about the neighborhood something as Mrs. Briggs did. She did not quite like to have her granddaughter go to school with Tina and Lotta, the tailor's children; and Jumps, the newsboy, who had given Pickles her name, and who lived with his mother in the flat above them, was to her only a noisy, commonplace, rather objectionable boy. The fact that he went to school in the morning and delivered papers all afternoon, and was bubbling over with good-humored energy and ambition, did

not make up, in her eyes, for the fact that he was often not clean.

"You forget how dirty the town is," Auntie Bess said, for she liked Jumps.

Pickles' dainty grandmother lifted both her hands. "Forget, Bess! I am not likely to forget. Elaine has had on two clean aprons to-day, and see her now; and laundry work costs so."

Ah, yes, everything cost. No wonder Auntie Bess sighed sometimes when she thought of the old home where no question of cost ever entered, until the day when they had found themselves nearly penniless, Pickles, grandmamma, and she. Enough was saved when the big house with its costly furnishings was sold to take care of them for a while, till Auntie Bess should finish her course in the training school and get a position.

The old home had been in the country, and it was very hard to become used to the noisy, dusty city. They tried boarding at first, but it did not do at all, and Auntie Bess, who was a determined young person, decided that even if

it did cost more, they would take a flat where they could be by themselves. She and Pickles attended to the moving, for grandmamma had lost heart and hope in the dreary boarding-house and was almost ill. The handful of furniture saved from the sale furnished the tiny flat luxuriously, and Mrs. Samuels, Jumps' mother, who came down to offer her assistance, declared it was fine enough for a queen.

Auntie Bess certainly had a way of making rooms look cosy and sweet, and Pickles was charmed with their new home. The endless variety of life on this square pleased her. How so demure a little person could become acquainted with so many people in so short a time was a problem, but she seemed to know everybody, from the drug-store dog to the grocery cat.

Pickles was telling Auntie Bess about the owl andirons, and how well they would look in the big fireplace they meant to have some day, when there came a knock at the door and a call of: "Here's your piper!"

It was Jumps, of course, home from his after-

noon round, and Pickles ran to let him in. He was a tall, sturdy boy of twelve, with a bright face and a pair of twinkling eyes. Over his shoulder hung a bag, empty now, with "Evening Post" in large letters on it. Jumps did not sell papers, he only delivered them to regular subscribers.

"Come in, Jumps, and tell us what is going on," said Auntie Bess.

"What makes you say piper, Jumps, instead of paper?" asked Pickles, as she ushered him in.

"Oh, just for fun," Jumps replied, sitting down and gazing about admiringly. "All the news that I know is that somebody wrote something on Major Briggs' walk before it hardened, and he's as mad as the mischief."

"Who is Major Briggs?" asked Auntie Bess.

"Lives up at the corner;" Jumps made a motion of his head in the direction.

"That is where the gentleman lives who walked to school with me to-day," added Pickles.

"Big fat man?" asked Jumps.

"No, he is n't fat a bit, but he is tall and pleasant."

"That's Mr. Aleck," said Jumps; "major's brother-in-law."

"You didn't tell us what was written on the walk," said Auntie Bess.

"You ought to walk by and see it; it is *Pickles*, in great big letters."

"It does n't mean me, does it?" Pickles asked anxiously.

"Well, I don't know — looks kind of like it," Jumps confessed.

"Certainly not," said grandmamma, with decision. "Your name is Elaine. Does every jar with Pickles on it mean you?"

"Fact," remarked Jumps, slapping his knee.

CHAPTER III.

PUBLIC SPIRITS.

"I NEED some gum tragacanth," announced Auntie Bess. "Let's go to the drug-store by way of the major's and see how your name looks on his walk. I am glad to know who lives in that nice, old-fashioned house."

"Mr. Aleck is nice too," remarked Pickles, as she put on her hat. "What is a scribe, Auntie Bess?"

"A person who writes, I suppose."

"I thought it was out of the Bible," said Pickles, struggling with a hazy memory of her Sunday-school lesson.

"You are thinking of scribes and Pharisees? Those scribes were writers. Why do you ask?"

"Because Mr. Aleck wanted to know if any of my friends were scribes."

"Who would be likely to write your name on his front walk, I suppose."

"Do you think he meant that? Oh, dear," sighed Pickles, "then he thinks it means me."

When they reached the major's gate she gazed sorrowfully at the large letters which were plain as print. On a tree near by was posted this sign: "\$5.00 reward for information leading to the discovery of the person who defaced this walk."

"I doubt if he ever finds the culprit," said Auntie Bess.

"I don't think the public spirits would like it," Pickles remarked, shaking her head.

A few days before this a gentleman had come to school and talked to the children about public spirits — so Pickles understood it. The somewhat vague idea she received was of mysterious beings who presided over city streets and did n't like it if you threw paper or banana skins about. Being familiar with fairies and ogres, she found no trouble in adding public spirits to the list. Mischievous Auntie Bess did not set her right.

Pickles was by nature an orderly little soul, and the talk made a deep impression upon her. She felt that it was a shame, indeed, when old Mr. Bryan worked so hard all day with his scraper and brush trying to keep the asphalt clean, for people to make his task harder by throwing trash about.

When their purchase had been made and Pickles had spoken a friendly word to the drug-store dog, an unamiable fox terrier who declined to respond, she proposed going back by way of the major's for the sake of being out in the air a little longer. Her aunt said she believed she liked to see her name in stone.

When they reached the corner again a small boy stood looking through the bars of the gate. He had short, light hair that curled a little under his cap, and when he turned toward them his face was one of angelic sweetness. He wore a brace on one of his legs and carried a crutch.

"Hello, Frederick!" called Pickles.

Frederick responded, "Hello! Did you see the circus procession?"

"Yes, it passed our school."

"See the elephant?"

Pickles nodded.

"Don't you want to see another one?"

"Where is another one?" Pickles demanded.

"At my house."

"Oh, Frederick, not sure enough? Elephants don't go into houses."

"Well, I mean in the back yard. You come and see. It is going to be on exhibition tomorrow. Tickets five pins. That's cheap."

Pickles looked anxiously at her aunt. "Can I?" she asked.

"Lotta, and Jim, and Jumps, and all of them are coming," added Frederick.

"Can I?" repeated Pickles.

"May I," suggested Auntie Bess. "I'll see. Perhaps just for a few minutes."

As they walked on toward home Frederick accompanied them, swinging himself along at an astonishing pace, kicking a small tin can before him. Pickles remarked that it was too bad about the major's walk.

"Pshaw," said Frederick, "it did n't hurt his old walk."

"Why, yes, it did, Frederick. You would n't like to have *Pickles* written on your pavement. I don't like it because people will think it means me. The man who talked about public spirits said you ought to have pride in your neighborhood and keep it looking as nice as you can."

"If we all did that, what a pleasant city we should have!" remarked Auntie Bess.

The more Pickles thought about it the more she wondered if Mr. Aleck could have supposed she had anything to do with the writing on the walk, and she resolved to speak to him about it. Several days passed, however, and no Mr. Aleck. Pickles watched at the window till it was time to start for school, and then walked as far as the corner with her head over her shoulder, but she saw nothing of him.

The truth was, Mr. Aleck had been out of town. On the day of his return he took his sister, Mrs. Briggs, out in his new automobile. As the air was chilly, they did not go far, and it

was still early in the afternoon when they reached home. Mr. Aleck was helping Mrs. Briggs out when he became aware of a pair of bright eyes watching him from across the street.

"To whom are you bowing?" asked his sister, as he lifted his hat.

It was Pickles, who, when she saw she was recognized, left her companion, a tall, rosy boy, and crossing over came straight to Mr. Aleck's side. The damp air, which had made Mrs. Briggs' nose red in spite of her furs, had only deepened the soft tints in Pickles' cheeks. It gave one a pleasant glow to see her as she advanced, holding out her hand.

"How do you do, Mr. Aleck? I have been looking and looking for you," she said.

Mrs. Briggs paused in the gateway.

"I am very glad, indeed, to see you. I have been away for a few days," Mr. Aleck answered, shaking hands cordially.

"You see," began Pickles, going to the point at once, "I had not heard about the major's walk the day you asked me if I knew any scribes. I didn't know what you meant till I

asked Auntie Bess. I have been afraid you might think — that ” —

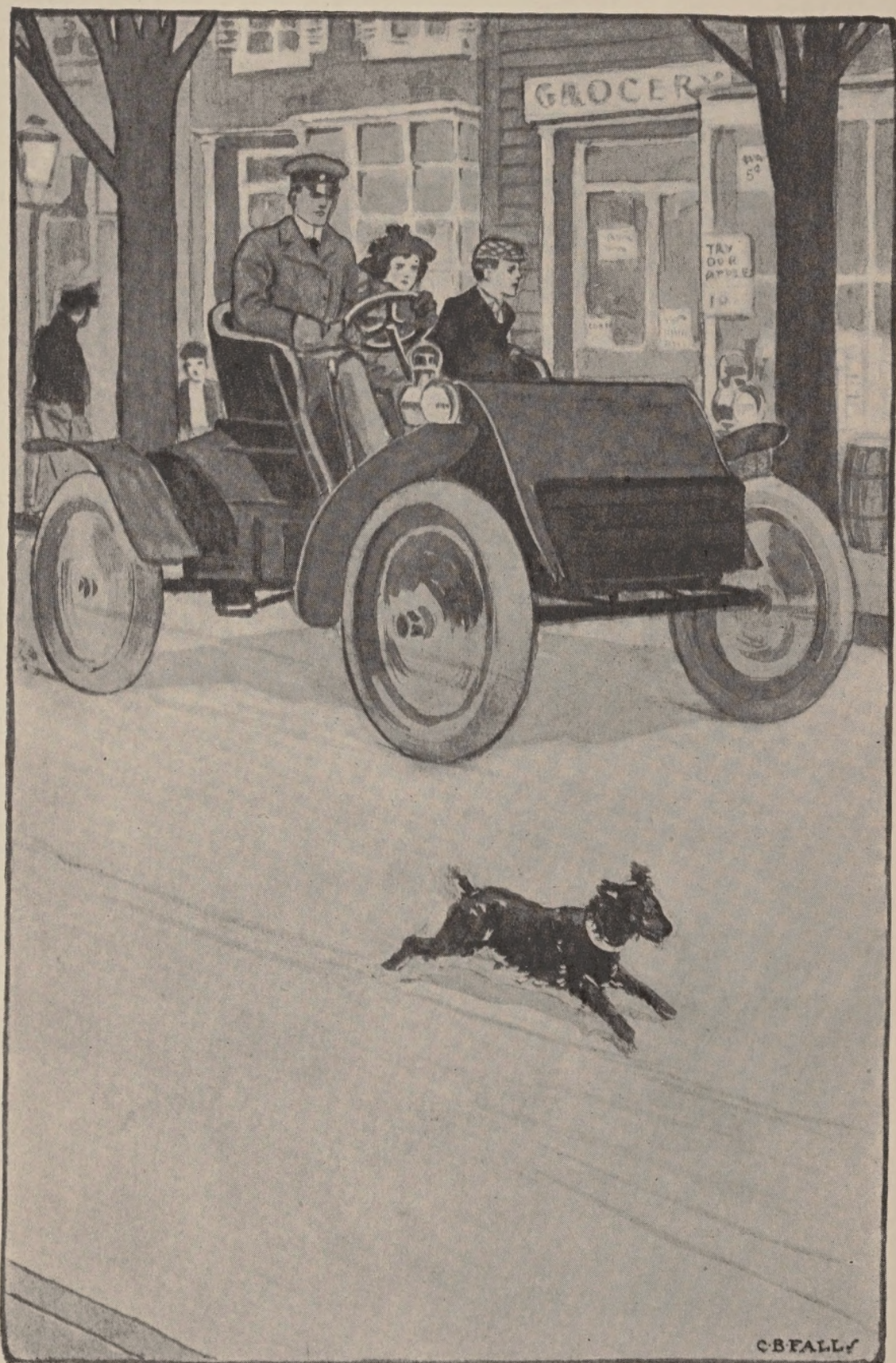
“That you did it? No, indeed,” said Mr. Aleck.

“Or that I knew who did it — because I don’t, and grandmamma does not think it means me, for it is n’t my truly name.”

“Suppose you tell me your real name so I can introduce you to my sister,” suggested Mr. Aleck, and when Pickles told him he said: “Marion, I want to introduce you to Miss Elaine Rutherford. This is my sister, Mrs. Briggs, Pickles.”

Now Mrs. Briggs was fond of children when they were clean, and she had never seen a daintier little maid or one with a more stately name. “How do you do, my dear? and how does my brother happen to know you when I do not?” she asked.

“That’s our secret,” Mr. Aleck answered, laughing. “But I want to tell you that Elaine has a singular nickname. The children call her Pickles, and she is afraid we may think she had something to do with the ornamentation of our walk.”



IN NO TIME THEY WERE SPINNING OUT THE AVENUE.

"My dear ! how dreadful to call you by such a name. Of course you had nothing to do with it. Won't you come in for a while and see me?"

"No, I thank you. Grandmamma does not let me go in places, for then she would n't know where I was. Now I am going with Jumps to see Frederick's elephant. It rained all last week, so he could n't have his exhibition."

"Who is Frederick?" asked Mr. Aleck.

"Don't you know the lame boy? He lives on our square. His aunt keeps the dry-goods store and his father is a motorman."

"This dreadful neighborhood," sighed Mrs. Briggs.

Pickles was astonished. "Why, I like it," she said, "it is so convenient and everybody is so nice."

"Did n't I say so?" Mr. Aleck looked at his sister and laughed.

"Where do you live, dear?" Mrs. Briggs asked, paying no attention to him.

"Over the confectionery, and so does Jumps. This is Jumps," Pickles added, as her companion approached. "He has a holiday to-

day because they are putting in some new machinery at the paper office."

Mrs. Briggs' manner wasn't quite so cordial to Jumps; she remarked that it was chilly and she must go in.

Mr. Aleck observed that Jumps was deeply interested in the automobile, and presently he proposed a ride around the square. Jumps' eyes shone; "Gee, but I'd like it," he said.

Pickles forgot to remember, so she explained afterwards, that grandmamma might have the same objections to automobiles she had to visits in strange houses, and in no time they were spinning out the avenue, she and Jumps and Mr. Aleck. "Around the square" was given a broad interpretation by Mr. Aleck.

Jumps asked a great many questions, and by the time they came to a stop in front of Miss Maggie Mackenzie's Dry Goods and Notion Store, he was quite capable of running the automobile himself.

"Won't you come in and see Frederick's elephant, Mr. Aleck?" asked Pickles. "It is only five pins."

CHAPTER IV.

THE ELEPHANT.

JUMPS' face beamed with joyful importance as he descended from the automobile, conscious of an admiring and envious audience.

The curiosity of the hardware man brought him out to the pavement, where he stood, his hands in his pockets, oblivious to the customer who waited impatiently inside.

Miss Mackenzie's stock of leisure was never so great as that of her neighbor, the hardware man ; when she was not waiting on people she sewed in the back of the shop, but even she now came at the call of Pearl, her one small clerk, to look at the wonderful sight of Mr. Aleck's automobile before her door, and Pickles and Jumps on terms of perfect equality with that elegant young man.

Mr. Levi, the green grocer, stepping out to get the effect of the newly arranged fruit and

vegetables in his window, had his attention called to the spectacle by the plumber; the young lady in the laundry stood with her nose against the glass; and old Aunt Dinah who lived in the alley, happening to pass at this moment, exclaimed audibly, "Laws a mercy! ain't they stylish?"

A very much astonished groom, who had been loitering about on the watch for the automobile, now came across the street and took possession in response to his master's beckoning hand. Then Pickles led the way down the narrow passage at the side of Miss Maggie's store.

"I have n't any pins; will nickels do?" Mr. Aleck asked.

"Perhaps he'll take them, seeing it's you," Jumps answered, with a grin.

Pickles produced from her pocket a paper in which ten pins had been carefully stuck. "These are for Jumps and me," she said. "You see, I did n't know you were coming."

Miss Maggie's back yard was somewhat bare, with a good deal of brick pavement and very

little grass. At the far end of it was a low shed, three sides of which were enclosed. Over the open end some curtains of faded calico were draped, and before it on a soap box sat Frederick in all the dignity of a born showman. Beside him sat another small boy, and in the two Mr. Aleck recognized the chariot racer and his steed.

"Frederick, I have brought Mr. Aleck," Pickles announced joyfully.

Frederick did not seem altogether pleased. He eyed Pickles' companion coldly. "What does he want?" he asked.

"Why, he wants to see the elephant, and he has n't any pins, so he says, can he pay a nickel instead?"

Mr. Aleck rather enjoyed the novelty of having some one speak for him.

It was plain that the mention of a nickel altered the case. "Well," said Frederick, "he may see it." He spoke condescendingly, however.

"Ask him if he always has a soap box for a throne," said Mr. Aleck to Pickles.

"'T ain't a throne, it 's a ticket office," Frederick announced scornfully.

"Can't we go in again, Frederick? We have used up all our pins."

This appeal came from a little girl with a round face and ear-rings and a yellow braid. She had a baby in her arms, wrapped in a shawl, and beside her stood a younger girl almost the counterpart of herself.

"I have let you and Tina in about ten times, and you can't go any more," Frederick declared.

"Pooh, I can get all the pins I want," said another girl who had curls and an airy manner.

"Then, Alma, I should think you would take Lotta and Tina in," observed Pickles, gravely.

Mr. Aleck put his hand in his pocket and announced that he had a number of nickels and would pay for the crowd, so the matter was settled, and Otto, Frederick's partner, drew aside the curtain and admitted them to the presence of the elephant.

Mr. Aleck could n't have told what he expected to see, but certainly nothing quite so

much like a baby elephant as the object before him.

The light was dim, for the short afternoon was nearing its end, and in solemn silence the procession moved around Frederick's masterpiece. Pickles was the first to speak. "Is n't it *marbellous*?" she exclaimed.

"It's nothing but an old sugar barrel," said Alma, scornfully.

"I don't care, it looks a heap like an elephant. The baby was most scared to death the first time she seen it," said Lotta.

Now Mr. Aleck began to laugh, and he laughed and laughed until the rest caught the infection and laughed too, without knowing exactly what it was about. He had discovered how the elephant was made, and, like Pickles, he thought it marvellous.

Frederick had placed two carpenter's horses side by side, and upon these had laid a large sugar barrel. Over this he had draped some rubber coats, and with a piece of rubber hose, begged from the plumber, he had constructed the elephant's trunk.

Frederick did not approve of so much laughter.

"I don't think it is so awful funny," he said, entering the show room.

"It is the best elephant I ever saw," Mr. Aleck hastened to assure him. "It would take the prize anywhere. How did you happen to think of it?"

It was altogether beyond Frederick's powers to tell how he thought of things. That his brain was busy with all sorts of contrivances from morning till night, his long-suffering aunt could testify.

"Will it be on exhibition to-morrow? I'd like to bring my brother-in-law to see it," said Mr. Aleck.

"'Tis n't going to be on exhibition any more," Frederick declared solemnly.

"Why, Frederick, you'd let Major Briggs see it, would n't you?" asked Jumps.

But, no, Frederick was not to be persuaded.

Miss Maggie's thimble was heard to rap smartly on the window-pane. "Frederick," she called, "come in to supper."

"Bless me! Is it supper time?" Mr. Aleck exclaimed, and then it occurred to him that perhaps Miss Maggie did not care to have strangers in her back yard. "I ought to have asked her permission," he said to Pickles as they left.

"I wonder why Frederick didn't want the major to see his elephant," said Jumps, meditatively, adding, "He's a smart little kid!"

"He is a remarkably pretty child, but not very friendly. He is evidently an odd genius," Mr. Aleck replied.

As they walked home Pickles called his attention to some of the conveniences of the neighborhood. There was the clock in the tailor's shop, placed just where you could see it easily from the street, and the slot machine at the drug-store door where you could find out your true weight for a penny. She also explained that Lotta and Tina and Otto were the tailor's children, and Alma the granddaughter of the grocer. In fact, when Mr. Aleck said good-by to Pickles and Jumps he felt

he had made great strides in his acquaintance with the neighborhood.

At his own gate he met Phyllis and Mabel Lawrence returning from dancing school with a maid. They carried their slipper bags on their arms, and their white dresses showed beneath their long coats. Mr. Aleck, feeling neighborly, stopped to speak to them.

Mabel with her curls and her society manner reminded him of Alma; of the two, Phyllis was his favorite. She was merry and child-like. He told them about the elephant and how his new friend Pickles had taken him to see it. Phyllis was interested, but Mabel was scornful.

"I wish I could see it. It must have been funny. And what is Pickles' real name?" asked Phyllis.

"Now, Phyllis, you know mamma would not let us have anything to do with those children; she says it is bad enough to have to live in such a neighborhood," Mabel said, loftily.

"It is a pity," answered Mr. Aleck, "for I

don't believe there is a nicer little girl in the world than Pickles."

This was an extravagant assertion, for, all told, Mr. Aleck did n't know more than a dozen little girls.

CHAPTER V.

THE BIRD IN THE GLOBE.

AUNTIE BESS and Pickles had been shopping and were returning on the street car late in the afternoon. Pickles carried a paper bag in which was a red Tam for every-day wear, and about every two minutes she peeped in to see if it were safe.

Across the aisle sat a stout gentleman who smiled at Pickles in a friendly way when she caught his eye. She wore her new velvet hat copied by Auntie Bess from one in Kohlers', and made of material taken from the treasure trunk. This trunk was filled with what Auntie Bess called "relics of ancient splendor." A puzzling phrase to Pickles, who saw only old silk dresses and pieces of velvet and lace. She liked the hat, however, and Auntie Bess, seeing how becoming it was to the rosy face, could n't help feeling proud of her handiwork. She ob-

served the stout gentleman's admiring glances and was pleased, never dreaming that Pickles' companion came in for a share of them.

The stout gentleman rang the bell and got off the car when they did, turning in the same direction.

It was almost dark, and the electric lights were already out up and down the street. Auntie Bess and Pickles clasped hands and hurried on merrily till they reached the corner. Here something seemed to be the matter, for a small crowd had gathered and everybody was looking up at the electric light. The stout gentleman stopped and so did they, and looked up at the light too. Something dark was fluttering around inside the globe.

"Oh, what is it?" cried Pickles, anxiously.

"It's a bird," answered Frederick, who was one of the crowd.

"What is the trouble?" asked the stout gentleman, who had not heard Frederick.

Pickles answered, "A bird — one of our birds is inside the globe. Oh, I am so sorry! Can't it get out?"

"One of your birds, did you say? Very astonishing! How did it get out?" exclaimed the gentleman.

Pickles looked bewildered. "It did n't get out, it's in."

"He thought, dearie, you meant the bird belonged to you," explained her aunt.

"Oh, no, I meant one of our sparrows — that live on our square," added Pickles.

"It is dreadful to see the poor thing. It must have flown in before the light was turned on and now is too frightened to find its way out. Can't something be done?" Auntie Bess asked this of everybody in general.

"Here comes Jumps," cried Pickles. "He'll help. Oh, Jumps, one of our birds is caught in the electric light. Can't you get it out?"

"We might telephone to the power-house for a man," said Auntie Bess.

"You could climb the post and let the light down, Jumps," suggested Frederick.

"All right," said Jumps. "Who'll boost?"

There were several volunteers, and in the meantime the crowd increased. It seemed a

simple enough thing to climb the eight or ten feet of pole to where the rope on which the light swung was fastened, but something was wrong with the pulley above ; although Jumps unwound the rope the light did not move.

"I'll have to climb to the top," said Jumps, all his determination aroused.

"Look out, boy," called the stout gentleman, "you'll kill yourself."

"No, he won't!" cried another boy, pushing his way through the crowd. "Go it, Jumps, I'll help you!"

"That is Alma's brother Jim," said Pickles.

Carefully Jumps began to make his way up the spiked pole ; the people below watched anxiously. Jim followed him. In the excitement Auntie Bess and the stout gentleman grew friendly.

"I can't bear to watch him," she said, covering her eyes with her hand.

"He is a brave boy, and all for a bird," the gentleman remarked.

"And a good boy, too," said Auntie Bess,

and she told how industrious he was and how he tried to help his mother.

It did indeed seem a dangerous feat, climbing that tall pole, but Jumps had a steady head and Jim just below was cheering him on.

"He is up as high as the house now," said Pickles, when Jumps was seen to pause. He was within reach of the pulley.

"Can you start her?" called Jim.

"Here goes," answered Jumps. "Let her down easy."

Slowly the light swung down, flickering and growing dim as it descended.

"Somebody down there tip it and let the bird out," ordered Jim.

There was a little hesitation among the crowd. Was it hot? Was there any danger from the wires? Then Auntie Bess saying, "Stay here, Pickles," ran forward, and before anybody knew what she was going to do she had tipped the globe with one hand and with the other helped the almost exhausted bird to freedom. As it fluttered feebly away to the branches of the nearest tree a shout went up.

"My dear young lady," exclaimed the stout gentleman, whom Pickles had by this time discovered was Major Briggs, "that was admirably done."

"It was very easy," said Auntie Bess, blushing and laughing. "And aren't you glad, Pickles, that the bird is out?" she added.

The two boys had now hauled the light back to its place and were on the ground once more. The crowd of vehicles and people began to disperse.

"Jumps, I am proud of you," cried Auntie Bess, "and of Jim, too."

"I want to shake hands with you. It was a fine thing," said the major.

"I didn't do any more than Miss Bess," declared Jumps, greatly abashed.

"Don't be silly," said that young lady. "Come and tell your mother about it," and she kept her hand on his arm as they walked toward home.

Jumps asked no higher reward. This Auntie Bess of Pickles' was to him the most perfect of human beings. Since she had become his

neighbor he had actually begun to think about his appearance. To ride in Mr. Aleck's automobile was an honor, but to walk down street with Miss Raymond's friendly clasp on his arm was one infinitely greater.

The Briggses had guests at dinner, and in the course of the evening the major related the incident of the bird.

"I assure you it was thrilling, positively thrilling," he declared, "and all for one poor bird. I don't know when I have seen a more charming young lady than the one who finally released it. She had a little girl with her whom she called by a singular name."

"It must have been my friend Pickles," said Mr. Aleck.

"She seemed to have peculiar ideas too," continued the major. "She kept calling it *our* bird, and I supposed of course it was a pet of her own, but, bless you! when I asked her, she said she meant one of the sparrows that live on our square. How she knew where it lived is more than I can tell."

"She gave it the benefit of the doubt," said

Mr. Aleck, laughing. "Pickles is very loyal to our square." Then he told about the public spirits of whom he had recently heard as he walked to school with her.

Everybody was amused. Among the guests was the president of the Good Order Club, recently organized in the city, who, although he laughed with the rest, added earnestly, "If only we had more of that feeling we should not need to get up reform clubs. Loyalty to one's own environment, to city or neighborhood, that is where we need to begin."

Mr. Aleck had been urged to join the Good Order Club, and had declined. He had not lived in the city long and it did not interest him, but now the thought of the public spirits took possession of him. The unconscious loyalty of his small friend made him ashamed of his indifference, and he surprised the president of the new society the next day by sending in an application for membership accompanied by a generous subscription.

As for the major. he did not cease to talk of the bravery of Jumps and Jim, and the charms

of Pickles and Auntie Bess. It really required an effort on his part to remember to be angry about the defacement of his walk. Mrs. Briggs saw him going back to his original opinion of the neighborhood — as good enough for anybody.

"I wish you would call on Miss What's-her-name," he said to his wife more than once.

"Archibald, you are absurd," Mrs. Briggs declared indignantly. "You are more easily taken in by a pretty face than any one I know. You are even ignorant of the name of this person upon whom you wish me to call. The next thing you will be insisting that I shall patronize Miss Maggie's dry-goods store and have my new suit made by the tailor across the street."

"I have no doubt you might do worse," the major insisted stoutly.

"I should not be surprised," said Mrs. Briggs, changing the subject slightly, "if it turns out that this Jimps or Jumps or whatever you call him was the very one who spoiled your walk."

CHAPTER VI.

AN ACCIDENT.

"FREDERICK MACKENZIE, did you break my screw-driver? Here I have been looking everywhere for it, only to find it at last on the cellar steps all broken and rusty." Miss Maggie's voice showed a good deal of feeling.

Frederick, who sat by the stove looking at the pictures in his reader, replied, without lifting his eyes: "You said I could have it."

"I didn't say you could break it, did I? This is the last time I'll let you have anything of mine. First it is the oil can and then the scissors. I can't keep a thing. And now my screw-driver is gone just when I need it. You'll have to go to Bowser's and get me one, and mind you, I am going to tell your father on you."

Jumps, who had come in to purchase some thread for his mother, overheard this conversa-

tion, and he suddenly became so absorbed in thought that Pearl had to ask him twice what he wanted. Even then for a minute he stared at her blankly and could n't remember.

Jumps had had his suspicions before, now he saw them confirmed. While Pearl wrapped up the spools and made change he was thinking: "Yes, it was Hallow-e'en, because I remember Mr. Brown said to me, 'Now don't get into mischief to-night, Jumps.' And when I came home the lights were just coming out, and I passed Frederick rattling something along the iron fence. I'm sure it was the screw-driver, and I'll bet a dozen cookies he did the writing on the major's walk with it. He is always writing and copying things."

Jumps remembered, too, the advertisement hanging in the grocery — a picture of a small girl inscribing on a blackboard the legend, "Eat Arnold's Pickles." Had n't he seen Frederick copying it on a piece of wrapping paper?

Miss Maggie continued to express her mind until her nephew found his cap and started for the door. Jumps was waiting for him.

"I know who wrote on the major's walk," he said as they reached the street.

Frederick looked at him warily. "Are you going to tell?" he asked.

Jumps saw an opportunity for some teasing. "Guess I'll have to. I told Mr. Aleck I'd try to find out, and then you see Pickles is worried about it, for fear they might think she did it."

"I bet you don't know," said Frederick, growing braver. "And anyhow, Pickles could n't do it. She can't write hardly at all."

"Oh, I know all right that she did n't do it. She does n't go around copying signs in grocery stores. She did n't borrow Miss Maggie's screw-driver either, and break it on the major's walk."

"I did n't break it on the walk. It was on the fence," said Frederick, off his guard.

"But you wrote with it all the same," cried Jumps, laughing.

"Say, Jumps, are you going to tell?"

"Never mind, you'll see."

"Jumps, what do you suppose the major

would do to the fellow that did it?" Frederick's complacency was breaking down.

"I don't know — send him to jail for a while, I reckon."

Frederick pondered this standing in the door of the hardware shop. "Say, Jumps," he began, and his tone was humble, "don't tell."

"I'll think about it," said Jumps, and ran away laughing.

Would Jumps tell? Frederick wondered, as he carried home the screw-driver. Jumps had always been good to him. But if he told, the major would give him five dollars. That was a great deal of money. Jumps wanted a new bicycle, he had heard him say so. Frederick began to be unhappy.

After delivering up the screw-driver he did not seek the society of Otto, as usual, but instead hung about the shop watching Pearl, who was unpacking and placing on the shelves some gay flannelettes. There was a corner under the counter where he could hide if he saw a policeman coming. He did n't think Pearl would tell on him. Having this arranged

he felt easier and began to comment on the goods. His taste and Pearl's were not alike, and a lively argument began.

It was destined to be an unlucky day for Frederick. Giving a scornful push to a roll that Pearl called lovely, he sent it down on some bottles of perfume which stood on the counter, knocking two of them off on the floor where, from their shattered remains, rose an overpowering fragrance.

"Frederick's done broke two of your cologne bottles, Miss Maggie," called Pearl.

Miss Maggie was there before Frederick had time to escape.

"I did n't mean to," he cried.

His aunt was white with anger. She took him by the arm. "You walk yourself out of this place, and don't you dare come in again to-day;" and opening the door she pushed him out.

"If you had been minding your business it would n't have happened," Frederick heard her say to Pearl as the door closed. It opened again a moment later and his cap fell at his

feet. He put it on. Was that a policeman coming this way? No, it was n't after all.

The November day was cold. Frederick walked on toward the grocery. Sometimes he was allowed to spend an hour or two there spelling out advertisements and labels.

The first person he saw when he went in was Pickles talking to the grocery cat, while Auntie Bess gave an order to the grocery man. She smiled brightly and Frederick's sinking heart was cheered. He liked Pickles.

"Do look at Joe, is n't he funny?" said Pickles.

Joe was a large striped cat, with a benevolent face and the small ears of the expert mouser. He usually sat on one of the stools in front of the butcher's table where he watched the customers being served and never once offered to touch the meat himself.

The funniest thing about him, Pickles thought, was his fondness for being twirled. He would sit erect with great gravity while the top of the stool was sent spinning around, and

when it came to a standstill he would arch his back and purr loudly.

Pickles adored him and was never ready to leave the grocery when Joe was there. "You give him some meat sometimes, don't you?" she asked the butcher.

"Don't you be afraid; he gets enough. See what a good coat he has. That's a sign he is well fed."

Pickles stroked the shining back. "He is getting ready for cold weather," she said.

Frederick looked on, rather envying Joe.

"Well, dearie, are you ready to go?" It was Auntie Bess, who put her arm around Pickles and gave her a little hug.

Pickles was so used to caresses it is probable she did not notice it, but Frederick saw it, and it reminded him that he was an outcast. Nobody wanted him. Jumps was going to tell on him and he would be sent to jail.

Miss Raymond smiled on him and said, "How do you, Frederick? How is the elephant?" Then she and Pickles left the store.

Frederick followed gloomily. Mr. Levi did not seem anxious for his society. Saturday morning was a busy time. Aimlessly he swung himself along. He decided he would run away somewhere, and then Aunt Maggie would be sorry she had turned him out when he did n't come back.

He went as far as the corner and turned on the cross street. A piece of coal lay on the pavement, and seeing it he began to kick it before him as was his habit. He became deeply absorbed in this pastime. At the next crossing a vigorous kick sent the coal out into the middle of the street crowded with wagons and carriages. Frederick had not a thought beyond that bit of coal. He plunged after it. The driver of a coal cart yelled at him, somebody called, "Look out!" Frederick awoke to a sudden, bewildering sense of danger. He hesitated, turned, and then something seemed to seize him and whirl him away — away —

Then he seemed to be waking up out of a dream. A policeman was coming to take him to jail, when Auntie Bess appeared and put her

arm around him calling him "Dearie," and the policeman faded away. Frederick opened his eyes and looked into the kindest, brightest face. Not like Auntie Bess, and yet something like her too. A gentle, firm voice said, "Drink this," and Frederick obediently drank something from a cup, and looked up at the face again.

It smiled on him now and the voice said, "That is right;" adding, "He is awake, doctor."

At this a gentleman came to the bedside. "He'll do now," he said.

Frederick tried to remember where he had been when he went to sleep, but he could n't. The lady with the face that made him think of Auntie Bess wore a blue dress and a long white apron. She looked very, very clean; so did the bed on which he lay; so did everything. But why was he lying there? Why could n't he get up when he tried? What was the matter with his arm? There were three other beds in the room, and in the one across from his own some one seemed to be lying. The

sunshine came in at the window where the lady and the doctor stood talking together. Presently the lady moved away.

"Don't go," said Frederick.

She turned and smiled, "I'll be back in a minute, dearie."

The doctor came and sat down beside him, and told him he had been hurt and would have to lie still for a while. Then he asked him his name. As Frederick told it, it all came back to him — the broken bottles, Aunt Maggie's anger, and the coal he tried to kick across the street.

"Where am I?" he asked.

"At the Children's Hospital. Don't you think it is a nice place?"

Frederick knew little about hospitals, but with one thing he was familiar. "Did I come in the *animalance*?" he asked, eagerly.

"In the ambulance?" asked the doctor, smiling; "no, a lady sent you here in her carriage."

Frederick was disappointed. To ride in the ambulance seemed to him a great honor. Tears

rose to his eyes. Then Miss Emerson came — this was what the doctor called her — and leaned over him and laid a soft hand on his forehead.

“His name is Frederick Mackenzie, and he lives at 1035 Dean Avenue,” said the doctor. This was what Frederick heard as he drifted off to sleep: “I promised Mrs. Briggs I would telephone her at once, as soon as we found out about him.”

Had Jumps told the major? What had Mrs. Briggs to do with it?

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEWS.

MRS. BRIGGS lay in a darkened room with a blinding headache, the cause of which was Frederick's accident. It had happened that as he stepped off the curbstone into the crowded street in pursuit of the piece of coal Mrs. Briggs' brougham turned the corner. For a second a wagon hid Frederick from the view of her driver, who pulled back his horses just too late. There was a frightened cry, a small crutch flew in one direction, a shabby cap in another, and everything at the corner came to a standstill, even before the reason for it was known.

Mrs. Briggs, looking out to see what the matter was, sank back faint at sight of the golden head of the child as some one lifted him from the street.

He was carried into a drug-store, and, although it was so near his home, no one recognized him. The doctor who was hurriedly summoned insisted upon his being taken at once to the hospital, and Mrs. Briggs, who had followed into the store, eagerly proffered her carriage.

Mrs. Briggs herself walked home in a sad state of mind. Suppose the child should die! The thought was terrible, although she was convinced that Matthew had not been to blame. Such a pretty child too, and probably his mother was worrying about him at that minute, little guessing what had happened.

The more she dwelt upon it the more distressed she became. She could not forget the still, appealing little face, and the crutch some one had picked up added to the pathos. In this state the major found her when he came home to lunch. In vain he tried to console her, and the result of it all was the headache and a visit from the doctor.

The telephone message from the hospital came in the middle of the afternoon, and was reassuring. Frederick's injuries were not so

serious as had been feared. He had recovered consciousness and told his name.

"Frederick Mackenzie? Why, it must be my friend of the elephant," Mr. Aleck exclaimed when he had heard the story.

"Aleck, I believe you know everybody," said his sister from the couch, where she lay white and exhausted. "I want you to go at once for me to his mother and say — Oh dear, what can I say?"

"Now don't excite yourself, Marion," begged the major, as his wife pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"If it is our Frederick, I believe he has n't any mother," said Mr. Aleck; "but I will go over to see his aunt at once. Frederick is one of your neighbors, Marion."

Pickles was putting her dolls to bed when Jumps came in with the news of the accident.

"Poor little boy!" exclaimed Auntie Bess. "It must have happened soon after we saw him in the grocery."

"Will they be good to him at the hospital?" asked Pickles.

"I saw Miss Maggie, and she had just been there. She says it is a first-rate place. She wanted to bring him home, but they would n't let her. Frederick was asleep, so she could n't speak to him. Miss Maggie feels awful bad because she was mad at Frederick this morning. I heard her just giving it to him," Jumps concluded.

"It is the best place in the world for him," said Auntie Bess.

"Mr. Aleck came over and told Miss Maggie his sister was all upset about it, and that she and the major would do everything for Frederick. Mr. Levi says he reckons the Briggses are afraid Frederick's father will sue them."

The news of the accident created much excitement in the neighborhood. The dry-goods store was besieged by inquirers, most of whom had some story to tell of Frederick's cleverness.

Miss Maggie was tearful. She had a kind heart in spite of her sharp tongue, and, to use her own words, she had never laid hands on her nephew ; but now she could n't forget that

she had turned him out. Aside from this, she enjoyed the notoriety of the occasion. She was greatly pleased at Mr. Aleck's call, although she acknowledged it was no more than right for the Briggses to do all they could for Frederick.

The girls, Lotta, and Tina, and Alma, discussed the accident with the deepest interest, each telling what she had heard, and what she knew about the hospital ; but Otto, Frederick's partner, said nothing. As he listened he was full of awe at the fate of his playmate. In his thought the hospital stood next to the jail.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HOSPITAL.

"Do you know that day after to-morrow will be Thanksgiving?" asked Pickles of Mr. Aleck as they walked down the street together one morning about two weeks after Frederick's accident.

"Why, so it is! How are you going to celebrate?"

"I am going to church with grandmamma in the morning, and in the afternoon Auntie Bess and I are going to see Frederick. They let him have company now."

"And I suppose you will have turkey for dinner," said Mr. Aleck.

"I guess so. Why do people always have turkey on Thanksgiving?" asked Pickles.

"I really don't know. Could you suggest anything better?"

Pickles thought a moment. "There are Ply-

mouth Rock chickens," she said. "Would n't they be more" —

"Appropriate? That's a good idea, of course they would. I'll suggest it to Mrs. Briggs," Mr. Aleck said, laughing.

"We are to have an entertainment at our school to-morrow and Lotta is going to say, 'The breaking waves dashed high!' Have you ever heard it?"

Mr. Aleck thought he had, long ago.

Pickles looked forward to her visit to the hospital eagerly. Besides wishing to see Frederick she was curious to know what a hospital was like, and she was a little disappointed when she followed Auntie Bess in at the gate of what seemed just an ordinary house with a garden at one side. If it had not been for the plate on the door one would never have guessed it was the Children's Hospital. Inside there was n't much furniture, the walls and floors were bare, except for a few rugs and pictures in the reception room where they waited. By and by a nurse in a white apron and cap came and took them up-stairs.

Auntie Bess asked how Frederick was getting on, and the nurse said he was doing very well indeed, that the doctor hoped while he was there to help his weak ankle. Then she laughed and said Frederick was a mischief, and nobody but Miss Emerson could manage him. She told how much he liked a hot water bag and how one day when his temperature was being taken he had slyly put the bag against the thermometer while the nurse's back was turned. The nurse, who was young and inexperienced, had gone to Miss Emerson in alarm to report an unheard-of degree of fever.

Pickles thought this was very funny. It had not been long since she had measles, and she knew all about having one's temperature taken.

The nurse showed them into a bright room where there were four beds, and on one of these lay Frederick who, without doubt, was a show patient with his golden curls and big brown eyes. His offhand, blunt manners were something of a shock.

"Hello, Pickles," he cried, and seemed delighted to see her and Auntie Bess.

"We are so glad you are getting well, Frederick," said Pickles, standing beside him. "Do you like the hospital?" As she looked around the room she caught the eye of a little black-haired girl in the bed opposite Frederick's.

Frederick nodded. "It's a heap nicer than home," he said with candor. "Miss Emerson and the doctor are going to make my leg well." With an air of much importance he now took from under his pillow a piece of a newspaper. "Did you see this?" he asked, handing it to Miss Raymond.

Auntie Bess unfolded it and saw the account of his accident, which had been published in the "Evening Post" the day it occurred.

"Do you see my name?" Frederick asked eagerly, adding, "Gee, but I'm proud of that!"

Auntie Bess laughed and said she had read it before. Frederick's manner was one of calm superiority over all who had not been run over



"HELLO, PICKLES," HE CRIED.

and taken to the hospital and had their names in the paper.

"Jumps brought it to me," Frederick explained.

"Did you know Jumps had broken his wheel?" asked Pickles. "He has to go on foot now. Is n't it too bad?"

"Can't he get a new one?"

"Not till he saves up some money. I wish I had a lot of money; I'd give him a bicycle," said Pickles. "I have brought you a picture-book, Frederick," she added.

Frederick accepted it with condescension. "I have a heap of picture-books, and flowers, and things to eat," he explained. "Mrs. Briggs brings me something most every day."

"I should think, then, you would share them with the little girl over there," suggested Auntie Bess.

"That's Mamie," Frederick announced by way of introduction. "I did give you some of my things, did n't I, Mamie?"

The black head nodded. Pickles went over to speak to Mamie.

She lay flat on her back and could n't move as Frederick did. From the foot of her bed hung a heavy weight. The nurse told them afterwards that she had something the matter with her spine.

Mamie seemed shy, but she smiled at Pickles, and was evidently pleased to see her.

And now another visitor was ushered in, who was, of all persons, Mr. Aleck! He shook hands with Frederick, and when he saw Auntie Bess, who sat beside the bed, he looked very much surprised.

"Why, Miss Raymond," he said, "this is an unexpected pleasure. I did n't know you were in this part of the country."

Auntie Bess shook hands with him and explained that she lived here; and she called him Mr. Martin.

Pickles crossed the room in surprise. "I didn't know you knew Auntie Bess, Mr. Aleck," she said.

"Why, Pickles, is that you? I did n't know it myself. Why did you not tell me who Auntie Bess was?"

Pickles opened her eyes. "I thought everybody knew," she said.

Her aunt laughed. "I am sure I did not guess who Mr. Aleck was until the other day when I saw him going into Miss Maggie's."

Mr. Aleck seemed to have forgotten Frederick, but that young man called himself to notice by bringing forth the paper and insisting upon pointing out his name. Mr. Aleck was properly impressed, and then he produced a transparent slate from his overcoat pocket.

"Why, it is like Christmas, Frederick," Pickles remarked, feeling that it might be rather pleasant to be in a hospital and have presents brought to you every day.

Auntie Bess said she and Pickles must go, and Mr. Aleck said he must too, so they walked home together.

Mr. Aleck asked Pickles if she had Plymouth Rock chickens for dinner, and Pickles replied that Auntie Bess had already ordered the turkey.

Then Mr. Aleck and Auntie Bess began to talk about things of which Pickles knew noth-

ing. Of a house party where they had met several years before, and of people and places in which they seemed to have a common interest. Pickles enjoyed it as much as if she understood, for Auntie Bess looked so very pretty, and smiled so brightly, and Mr. Aleck seemed to like to look at her, all of which pleased her adoring little niece.

Just before they reached home Mr. Aleck asked Pickles if she had heard anything more about public spirits.

She answered, "No," adding, "We are having talks on human nature now."

Mr. Aleck looked puzzled, and said that was a profound subject.

Auntie Bess then explained that it was Pickles' name for physiology.

"It is about skeletons and muscles, you know," Pickles added.

Mr. Aleck went off, laughing.

"Don't you remember my telling you about a Miss Raymond whom I met at the Lawtons' three years ago?" Mr. Aleck asked his sister that evening.

"I believe I do," Mrs. Briggs replied.
"Why?"

"Well, I am very much surprised to find she is the aunt of whom Pickles is always talking."

"Did n't I tell you so?" cried the major.

"No, Archibald, I think not. You could never remember her name."

"But I insisted she was somebody worth knowing."

"Of course there are worthy persons who live over confectioneries"—began Mrs. Briggs.

"Bosh! Marion. In these days of flats the best sort of people live over stores. Don't be a snob. Worthy persons indeed!" Mr. Aleck was highly incensed.

"I must say your manners are not improving, Aleck. You did not allow me to finish. I was going to add that I saw Miss — Raymond, is it? — with the child you will call Pickles, and she is an extremely pretty and refined looking girl." Mrs. Briggs was the picture of injured dignity.

Her brother laughed and begged her pardon.
"It is astonishing how our interest in this neighborhood grows," he remarked.

CHAPTER IX.

A CONFESSION.

FREDERICK had something on his mind, and Mamie kept reminding him of it by asking when Jumps would be coming again. Jumps' breezy, cheery manner charmed Mamie. Frederick was fond of him too, looking up to him as a small boy does to a larger one.

On his second visit — for Jumps came again and brought Otto — Frederick asked about his wheel, and Jumps explained that as soon as he had saved up five dollars more he could get a new one, paying the rest of the price in instalments. But he added cheerfully that there was always something to spend money for and it was hard to save. In the meantime, to use his own expression, he had to hoof it.

Frederick reflected that Jumps could have made five dollars by telling the major, and he had n't. Jumps was good not to. There was

another thing. Miss Emerson had said on the occasion of some mischief, that when you did wrong you ought to be brave enough to say so. Frederick pinned his faith to Miss Emerson and wished to please her. So he thought and thought about it.

Major Briggs and his wife were very kind. The major found Frederick amusing; Mrs. Briggs admired his golden curls and dark eyes and was happy in having an object to lavish attentions upon. Frederick received them graciously. He did not care for petting, except from Miss Emerson, he was too much of a boy for that, but he liked to have Mrs. Briggs near him. It was pleasant to touch her soft furs and to inhale the faint fragrance that pervaded all her dainty belongings, even her purse, which upon one occasion he had been allowed to open. It was not as interesting as the major's. That was a large, flat affair, and he carried it in his breast pocket, and in it were bills — ever so many. Frederick was sure the major must be rich.

"Say," he began one day, when these atten-

tive friends were making him a visit, "would you really and truly give five dollars to anybody who told you who wrote on your walk?"

The major was surprised. He had ceased to feel very deeply about the matter. "Why, yes, I suppose so — yes, I said I would. Why?"

"And what would you do to the fellow that did it?" Frederick watched him narrowly.

"Oh, I don't know. Scare him a little, I guess."

The major did not seem dangerous. "If you'll give me five dollars I'll tell," said Frederick.

Greatly amused the major produced a five-dollar note from the before-mentioned pocket-book. "There," he said, spreading it on his knee.

Frederick put out his hand and touched it with one finger.

"Well?" said the major.

Frederick heaved a deep sigh. "It was *me*," he announced.

For a minute the major did not understand.

"What!" he said. "Do you mean to say you did it yourself?"

Frederick nodded.

"You little rascal, you," the major began, and then he laughed.

"Oh, Archibald," exclaimed Mrs. Briggs.

The major continued to laugh as if he would never stop. Miss Emerson came in, perhaps to see what it was about, and he told her the story, pounding his knee and laughing again.

Miss Emerson looked grave. "Why, Frederick," she said, and Frederick, who was beginning to think himself rather clever, felt suddenly ashamed.

"Would you do such a tricky thing as this when Major Briggs has been so kind?" Miss Emerson asked.

"He can send me to jail if he wants to. Jumps would n't tell and I—I"— Here Frederick began to cry.

"Don't tease him. It was so clever of him," said Mrs. Briggs. "Don't cry, there's a darling. You can have the money. Can't he, major?"

"What were you going to do with the money, Frederick?" asked Miss Emerson, firmly.

"Gi-ve it to Ju-mps," he sobbed.

After a little questioning she had the whole story, and there was truth in the brown eyes.

"I think after all he did not mean to be tricky," said Miss Emerson, "but I don't believe he ought to have the money."

"I'll tell you what," suggested the major. "I'm willing to call it even, if Frederick is. He spoiled my walk, and my coachman ran over him. Now I have a five-dollar bill I don't want. I'll make him a present of it and he can give it to Jumps if he likes."

Frederick looked at Miss Emerson, who smiled. "I am not sure it is right," she said, "but as Major Briggs is so kind" —

"She says you can have it, dear," cried Mrs. Briggs, putting the bill in Frederick's hand.

"Now I want to know how you came to write on my walk, and why you wrote *Pickles*," said the major.

"It was so nice and soft," Frederick ex-

plained, "and I saw pickles on a sign in the grocery."

When they were having their supper that evening, Mamie, who had been an interested listener during the visit of Frederick's friends, asked, "Are you going to give it to Jumps, sure enough?"

"Course," was his answer.

"I like Jumps," added Mamie.

"Who is Jumps?" asked the nurse, who was feeding her.

"He comes to see Frederick."

Then Frederick told about Jumps, and how he had climbed the electric-light pole to save the bird, and when she heard it Mamie liked him more than ever.

Jumps was very much astonished and overwhelmed at being presented with the five dollars when he came to see Frederick on Sunday.

"It's because you did n't tell on me," Frederick explained.

"I'm not a tell-tale," said Jumps, indignantly.

"But you said maybe you'd tell."

"Oh, I was just teasing you."

It was some time before Jumps could be made to understand, and even then he did n't want to take the money until Miss Emerson explained how disappointed Frederick would be. As it was, Frederick felt rather chagrined, he had looked forward to the occasion so eagerly.

"Sometimes you think you are going to have a lot of fun and you don't," he remarked gloomily.

CHAPTER X.

MR. ALECK MAKES PLANS.

ONE thing puzzled Pickles. Mr. Aleck took to going the other way in the morning. He had not moved his office either. Jumps said he had n't. In this way it happened that Auntie Bess had his company more frequently than her little niece.

Auntie Bess was very busy just now. She was nearly through her kindergarten course and was hoping to get a position to teach. Grandmamma said she was working too hard.

Mr. Aleck, too, was busy. He had been made secretary of the Good Order Club.

One day Mrs. Briggs came to call. Pickles, who was coming in herself at the time, conducted her up-stairs and ushered her into the the sitting room, where Auntie Bess was at work.

Mrs. Briggs was a very elegant lady, but she was n't quite so elegant as grandmamma, Pickles thought, for all her beautiful clothes, and she was right. If Mrs. Briggs had any idea of patronizing she changed her mind when she met Pickles' gracious, dignified grandmother.

When she was leaving she pressed Auntie Bess's hand affectionately and begged her to come to see her. "I am lonely, I have so few friends here, and I want to know you," she said.

She invited Pickles to spend the afternoon and had Mabel and Phyllis Lawrence there. Pickles enjoyed it, for the major was at home and told them stories and showed them curiosities from all over the world. She liked Phyllis, but Mabel hurt her feelings by calling Jumps ugly.

"I don't like my friends to be called names," she said with dignity.

"Ho, I would n't have a paper-boy for a friend ;" and Mabel shrugged her shoulders.

"He is n't always going to be a paper-boy,"

Pickles answered wisely ; and then Mrs. Briggs made them laugh by asking if they were talking about paper dolls.

About this time Christmas came. The week after Thanksgiving our square showed signs of its approach. Miss Maggie began to make her window particularly gay with toys and dolls and china knick-knacks. The hardware man displayed some bewitching little cooking stoves, with an array of pots and pans to stir the housewifely soul to its depths. Some delicious ice cream freezers too, that would hold about a pint, kept company with pistols and fireworks. Mr. Levi's window showed all sorts of goodies, and outside were Christmas-trees by the dozen.

Auntie Bess liked the furniture man's window best, but Pickles did not care so much for antique brass lamps and inlaid cabinets.

The Briggs family went away to spend Christmas and their house was closed, but the rest of the square had a good time.

Jumps received a receipted bill for his bicycle from Mr. Aleck, which had on it : "For

the boy who saved the bird." Pickles had a beautiful book from the same person, and Lotta and Tina and Otto were not forgotten either.

At the hospital Frederick had a royal time, his only regret was he could n't have any fire-crackers. He was recovering rapidly, but announced with decision that he meant to stay there always. Pickles had been very much astonished to hear Frederick had done the writing on the major's walk, and she was relieved, too, to find it had not meant her after all.

After the holidays things settled down into the old grooves. The children went back to school, and Auntie Bess to her classes. January was cold and stormy, and an epidemic of mumps broke out, so the neighbors did not see much of one another.

Soon after Mrs. Briggs' return Miss Maggie reported proudly that when the lady came over to inquire for Frederick, she bought some French cambric for a shirtwaist. Then the tailor's wife had her story to tell. Mrs. Briggs had ordered a walking skirt from their shop.

Mr. Aleck laughed when he heard it, and said, "Public spirits."

"No," replied Mrs. Briggs, seriously, "not at all. The Morrises recommended him to me, and I assure you he is not a cheap tailor either."

"It all goes to prove Pickles right when she calls this the *convenientest* neighborhood," insisted Mr. Aleck.

It was whispered about the neighborhood that Major Briggs intended to do great things for Frederick. The truth was the major had gone to Frederick's father and offered to clothe and educate the child, who, by his lameness, would be unfitted for any hard work.

Mr. Mackenzie, who had recently married the second time, was grateful enough to be relieved of this responsibility.

Mr. Aleck explained this to Pickles and Auntie Bess one evening. He said as Frederick would soon be able to leave the hospital he thought of celebrating the occasion with a party, and he wanted suggestions.

Auntie Bess thought for a while, her elbow

on the table, her chin in her hand. Mr. Aleck watched her. It was clear to Pickles that Mr. Aleck liked to look at Auntie Bess.

"The twenty-second is Washington's Birthday," Auntie Bess presently announced.

"So I have always been told," remarked Mr. Aleck.

"And you don't perceive its bearing upon the subject before us?" she asked in a professional manner.

"It is a holiday."

"Well, why not have a Washington's Birthday party?"

"With appropriate decorations — I see. That is just the thing."

There seemed endless possibilities in the idea when they came to discuss it. Mr. Aleck took out his note-book and put down all the suggestions.

"You can't do everything at one party," said Auntie Bess at last. "It will cost a good deal, but I suppose you do not mind that. I have rather fallen into the habit of considering the cost of things."

“Not this time,” answered Mr. Aleck, as if he were in the habit of minding it, and was only making an exception of this party.

It was such fun not to have to count the cost, — even Pickles felt it as they laid their plans, and she was very much distressed when bedtime came and she had to leave.

CHAPTER XI.

A BIRTHDAY PARTY.

THE invitations to Mr. Aleck's party created the wildest excitement. For days beforehand Lotta and Tina and Alma could think of nothing else. It diverted Frederick's mind, too, from his unhappiness at leaving the hospital, especially when he found Miss Emerson was to be one of the guests.

The children all knew about Washington's Birthday, for it was celebrated at school, but a Washington's Birthday party was something new even to Mabel and Phyllis, who had been to parties of many kinds.

Mrs. Briggs, who had rather laughed at the idea at first, became interested, and Auntie Bess's suggestions were carried out in a royal way. The major owned some beautiful flags, and with these the spacious rooms were deco-

rated, and each guest as he arrived was given a tiny one of silk as a badge.

Auntie Bess and Pickles helped receive, and Pickles wore red, white, and blue ribbons on her white dress.

The hour was six o'clock, as Jumps could not come in the afternoon. It was not a large party, only a dozen children and seven or eight grown people, and there was not the least stiffness about it. The major and Mr. Aleck made everybody feel at ease. As soon as all had arrived, the guests were conducted to the dining-room where the fun began in earnest.

The table in the centre of the room was enough to stir anybody's patriotism. On it stood a birthday cake covered with white icing and thirteen red and blue candles, while around the edge drooped tiny American flags. From a bouquet of flags in the chandelier hung red, white, and blue ribbons, which were caught at the four corners of the table in large bows. Red and white roses bent their lovely heads over silver vases, and candles in gauzy red

shades cast a soft glow over everything. At each place lay a toy hatchet.

Pickles clasped her hands in admiration. "Is n't it perfectly beautiful?" she cried.

"What a heap of candles!" remarked Frederick.

"It is almost as pretty as the table at mamma's luncheon," said Mabel.

"Oh, Mabel, it's prettier!" Phyllis exclaimed.

"Just look at all the ribbon," Lotta whispered to Alma.

"And the hatchets. What are they for, Mr. Aleck?" asked Jumps.

"You'll find out after a while," was the reply.

Only the younger guests were seated at the large table. The grown people were placed at two side tables where they could look on at the children.

Lotta and Tina were rather bewildered. They had never associated things to eat with ribbons and flowers, but they discovered before long that they went very well together.

The elegance of everything might have had a subduing effect upon some of the guests if Mr. Aleck had not kept them laughing. When the ices were served and the time came to blow out the candles and cut the cake, he made a speech.

He said he had always wanted to have a birthday party, but his birthday came at an inconvenient time, in the middle of the summer, so a Washington's Birthday party had been suggested as the next best thing. Then he wanted to know if any one could tell him why he had thirteen candles on Washington's cake.

"'Cause he was thirteen years old," Otto said confidently.

"No doubt he was once," Mr. Aleck agreed, "but that is n't the reason."

And now Lotta redeemed the family by guessing it was because there were thirteen States at the time of the Revolution.

"That is it exactly. If Washington were alive to-day he would be something like one hundred and seventy years old, and a cake would have to be rather large to accommodate so many candles."

"I'd like to have one that big," said Frederick, modestly.

"I know what the hatchets are for," remarked Pickles. "'Cause Washington cut the cherry-tree."

"But you don't know what we are going to do with them," said Mr. Aleck. "And now I wish to be allowed to finish my speech and get in a moral. What is the use in being grown up if you can't point a moral sometimes? I am not going to talk about Washington, for you all have heard a great deal about him at school, and these colors and candles and hatchets speak of him, but I want to say a word about our square. This is a neighborhood party — all except Miss Emerson, and she is interested in it. When I came here to live about six months ago I did n't care much for the neighborhood; then I came to know Pickles and I found she liked it, so I concluded there must be something pleasant about it, and the longer I live here the better I am pleased with it.

"Washington left us the great lesson of loving our country, but there are few of us

who can do anything directly for our country. We can, however, do something for our neighborhood ; and after all, what is our country but a lot of neighborhoods ?

" You may have noticed that a good many of the trees on this square have died in the last few years, and I happen to know the Park Commissioners are going to put out some new ones for us. Won't you do all you can to help these trees to grow ? This is one way in which to make our neighborhood pleasant. There are others, but I'll mention only one. The most important thing in a neighborhood is, after all, the people. Let's try to be kind, pleasant people."

Mr. Aleck's speech was heartily applauded, and they all promised to take care of the new trees.

When Washington's Birthday cake was cut it was found to be full of marshmallows, and it was unanimously decided to be worthy of him.

" Now," said the major, " we'll go back to the drawing-room and play games till it is time for the cherry-tree."

What in the world could this be? It reminded them of their hatchets, however. Alma and Pickles had forgotten theirs.

They played a number of good old-fashioned games, such as Stage Coach and Going to Jerusalem, grown people and all, and even Mabel forgot herself and had a good time.

It was after one of these games, when everybody had stopped to rest. The children, crowded around the major, were listening to one of his funny stories; Mrs. Briggs was talking to Miss Emerson; Auntie Bess, standing in the open doorway between the drawing-room and library, was readjusting her badge, when Mr. Aleck spoke to her.

"I want to know why you are looking so grave," he said.

"I thought I was being very gay," she answered, still absorbed in her flag.

"I am afraid you did not approve of my speech," he said.

"On the contrary, I thought it quite the proper thing, coming from the secretary of the

Good Order Club." There was a twinkle in her eye.

"Thank you, I am overwhelmed. But truly — as Pickles says — you were looking dreadfully serious."

"I had a little disappointment this morning," she acknowledged, as they crossed the room and sat down on the davenport.

"Yes?" Mr. Aleck's tone was sympathetic.

"I was rather counting on getting a position in the Third Street School, you know, but it has been given to some one else." Miss Raymond looked down at her clasped hands as she spoke.

Mr. Aleck smiled, not at all as if he felt the gravity of the situation.

"Of course, I suppose something else will offer; but I am disappointed," Miss Raymond continued.

"I am confident of that. In fact, I think I know of something. It may not be exactly what you are looking for, but" —

As Mr. Aleck hesitated, Miss Raymond replied, "Oh, I am not so very particular."

She lifted her eyes as she spoke, and something in her companion's face made her drop them again very quickly. "I mean" — she began.

"If that is the case, I'll take courage," remarked Mr. Aleck, cheerfully.

"Oh, no — please — don't think" — Miss Raymond rose hastily.

Mr. Aleck stood before her. "I must say it now, — I have waited so long. Listen, Bess. For three years I have thought of you. Be good to me. Won't I do as well as the Third Street School?"

"Auntie Bess, Auntie Bess, you ought to have heard the story the major told. It was so funny," cried Pickles, rushing up.

"Was it, dear?" asked her aunt, absently.

"Don't you think my stories are as good as the major's?" demanded Mr. Aleck.

Pickles looked at her aunt and then at Mr. Aleck. "Were you telling her a story? I don't believe it was funny."

"It was true, though. Ask her, Pickles, if she believes it."

"Do you, Auntie Bess?" asked Pickles.

A charming color spread over Miss Raymond's face as she answered laughing, "I suppose so."

"Then ask her, Pickles, if she would rather have heard the major's story."

"Would you, Auntie Bess?"

"How can I tell?" said Auntie Bess, saucily; "I did n't hear the major. Come, let us go back to the others."

In the drawing-room she played on the piano, and sang, and set all the children singing. She coaxed Lotta to recite, and told a story herself in a charming way.

"What a great thing it is to be young and happy," Miss Emerson remarked to the major, watching her.

And Mr. Aleck looked on with a strong hope that Auntie Bess had liked his story.

The last thing was the cherry-tree. The major *said* it was a cherry-tree when it was brought in. It was a leafless shrub, but its bare branches were full of fruit. This fruit was tied up in white tissue paper, with red and blue ribbons — a package on each branch.

Pickles at once guessed what the hatchets were for.

They took turns in choosing a branch and chopping it off; and it was really difficult to make a choice, for the packages were of different shapes and sizes, but everybody in the end seemed satisfied.

Frederick had enjoyed every minute of the party; but now that people were beginning to think of leaving, he had something on his mind. Miss Emerson said he ought to tell the major he was sorry he had written on his walk. She reminded him he had never said he was sorry.

Frederick was n't conscious of feeling sorry. It seemed to him enough had been said; still, the major was very good to him, so, plucking him by the coat as he passed, Frederick announced, "Say, I ain't never going to do it again."

"Do what?" asked the major.

"Write on your walk."

"Are n't you? I am glad to hear it; but on the whole I am not sorry you did it."

This was exactly the way Frederick himself felt about it.

The Washington's Birthday party furnished the children on our square with something to talk about for a long time. There were some grown people, too, who never forgot it. With it this story comes to an end, for it is simply to show how the two ends of the neighborhood happened to meet.

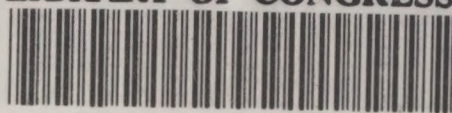
It really has nothing to do with a certain pretty wedding which took place in June, in the stone church around the corner, which interested the neighborhood beyond everything. Nor with how Jumps studied short-hand all summer, in order to be able to take a place in Mr. Aleck's office in the fall. Nor with how well the new trees grew.

Major Briggs was always wondering what would have happened if *Pickles* had not been written on his walk.

Pickles said she was glad, at any rate, that it had not meant her; and grandmamma hoped now the absurd nickname would be dropped; but Mr. Aleck declared that Pickles was engraved upon his heart, and that Elaine Rutherford could never mean the same to him.

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