

St. Nicholas, Vol. 5, No. 2, December, 1877 eBook

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Contents

St. Nicholas, Vol. 5, No. 2, December, 1877 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	7
Page 1.....	10
Page 2.....	12
Page 3.....	14
Page 4.....	16
Page 5.....	18
Page 6.....	20
Page 7.....	22
Page 8.....	23
Page 9.....	25
Page 10.....	27
Page 11.....	28
Page 12.....	30
Page 13.....	32
Page 14.....	34
Page 15.....	36
Page 16.....	38
Page 17.....	40
Page 18.....	42
Page 19.....	44
Page 20.....	46
Page 21.....	48
Page 22.....	49



[Page 23..... 51](#)

[Page 24..... 53](#)

[Page 25..... 55](#)

[Page 26..... 57](#)

[Page 27..... 59](#)

[Page 28..... 60](#)

[Page 29..... 62](#)

[Page 30..... 64](#)

[Page 31..... 66](#)

[Page 32..... 68](#)

[Page 33..... 70](#)

[Page 34..... 72](#)

[Page 35..... 74](#)

[Page 36..... 76](#)

[Page 37..... 78](#)

[Page 38..... 80](#)

[Page 39..... 82](#)

[Page 40..... 84](#)

[Page 41..... 86](#)

[Page 42..... 88](#)

[Page 43..... 90](#)

[Page 44..... 92](#)

[Page 45..... 94](#)

[Page 46..... 96](#)

[Page 47..... 98](#)

[Page 48..... 101](#)



[Page 49..... 103](#)

[Page 50..... 105](#)

[Page 51..... 107](#)

[Page 52..... 109](#)

[Page 53..... 111](#)

[Page 54..... 113](#)

[Page 55..... 115](#)

[Page 56..... 117](#)

[Page 57..... 119](#)

[Page 58..... 121](#)

[Page 59..... 123](#)

[Page 60..... 125](#)

[Page 61..... 127](#)

[Page 62..... 129](#)

[Page 63..... 131](#)

[Page 64..... 132](#)

[Page 65..... 134](#)

[Page 66..... 135](#)

[Page 67..... 137](#)

[Page 68..... 139](#)

[Page 69..... 141](#)

[Page 70..... 143](#)

[Page 71..... 145](#)

[Page 72..... 146](#)

[Page 73..... 147](#)

[Page 74..... 148](#)



[Page 75..... 150](#)

[Page 76..... 152](#)

[Page 77..... 153](#)

[Page 78..... 155](#)

[Page 79..... 157](#)

[Page 80..... 159](#)

[Page 81..... 161](#)

[Page 82..... 163](#)

[Page 83..... 165](#)

[Page 84..... 167](#)

[Page 85..... 169](#)

[Page 86..... 171](#)

[Page 87..... 173](#)

[Page 88..... 175](#)

[Page 89..... 177](#)

[Page 90..... 179](#)

[Page 91..... 181](#)

[Page 92..... 183](#)

[Page 93..... 185](#)

[Page 94..... 187](#)

[Page 95..... 189](#)

[Page 96..... 191](#)

[Page 97..... 193](#)

[Page 98..... 195](#)

[Page 99..... 197](#)

[Page 100..... 198](#)



[Page 101..... 200](#)

[Page 102..... 202](#)

[Page 103..... 204](#)

[Page 104..... 206](#)

[Page 105..... 208](#)

[Page 106..... 210](#)

[Page 107..... 212](#)

[Page 108..... 214](#)

[Page 109..... 216](#)

[Page 110..... 218](#)

[Page 111..... 220](#)

[Page 112..... 222](#)

[Page 113..... 224](#)

[Page 114..... 226](#)

[Page 115..... 228](#)

[Page 116..... 230](#)

[Page 117..... 232](#)

[Page 118..... 234](#)

[Page 119..... 235](#)

[Page 120..... 237](#)

[Page 121..... 239](#)

[Page 122..... 241](#)

[Page 123..... 243](#)

[Page 124..... 246](#)



Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
Title: St. Nicholas, Vol. 5, No. 2, December, 1877	1
ST. NICHOLAS.	1
THE THREE KINGS.	1
ROWING AGAINST TIDE.	2
A CHAPTER OF BUTTS.	5
THE LION-KILLER.	5
BRUNO'S REVENGE.	9
THE MOCKING-BIRD AND THE DONKEY.	19
THE FAMOUS HORSES OF VENICE.	20
CHRISTMAS CARD.	22
THE PETERKINS' CHARADES.	22
A DOUBLE RIDDLE.[A]	26
UNDER THE LILACS	26
CHAPTER 1	26
CHAPTER II.	32
CHAPTER III.	36
A CHAT ABOUT POTTERY.	40
POEMS BY TWO LITTLE AMERICAN GIRLS.	45
	46
JUNE.	46
SPRING SONG.	47
ASHES OF ROSES.	47
SUMMER IS COMING.	47
SWEET MARJORAM DAY.	48
NOW, OR THEN?	62
JACK'S CHRISTMAS	64
LEFT OUT.	70
MISS ALCOTT,	70
THE BOY WHO JUMPED ON TRAINS.	74
THE TOWER-MOUNTAIN	75
I.	75
SINGING PINS.	83
ABOUT THE PORPOISES.	84
THE WILD WIND.	85



THE MAGICIAN AND HIS BEE.	85
SCRUBBY'S BEAUTIFUL TREE.	88
I.	88
II.	89
III.	91
IV.	94
THE MINSTREL'S CAROL.	96
A WINDFALL.	101
KING ALFRED AND THE CAKES.	101
A LITTLE SCHOOLMA'AM.	101
ORANGE GROVES ON ST. JOHN'S RIVER.	102
BIRDS CAUGHT BY SALT.	103
A SPELL UPON KEROSENE.	104
SINCERE.	105
THE AUTHOR OF "HOME, SWEET HOME."	105
ARTHUR AND HIS PONY.	105
YOUNG CONTRIBUTORS' DEPARTMENT.	107
THE DEATH OF PRINCE WILLIAM.	110
ALLIE'S SUNSHINE.	110
THE LETTER BOX	111
THE GAME OF FAGOT-GATHERING.	113
SCIENCE AT HOME.	114
TABLEAUX FROM ST. NICHOLAS PICTURES.	116
NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.	118
THE RIDDLE-BOX	119
EASY NUMERICAL ENIGMA.	120
A PLEA FOR SANTA CLAUS.	120
BROKEN WORDS.	120
PICTORIAL QUADRUPLE-ACROSTIC.	121
CHRISTMAS ENIGMA.	121
AUTHORS' NAMES.	121
A RIMLESS WHEEL.	121
MAGIC DOMINO-SQUARE.	122
DIAGONAL PUZZLE.	122
PROVERB PUZZLE.	122
SEXTUPLE ACROSTIC.	123
EASY DIAMOND PUZZLE.	123
NUMERICAL ENIGMAS.	123
ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NOVEMBER NUMBER.	123



PICTORIAL NUMERICAL REBUS.

—

123

124



Page 1

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[Illustration: *The holy family.*]

ST. NICHOLAS.

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THE THREE KINGS.

By Henry W. Longfellow.

Three Kings came riding from far away,
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltazar;
Three Wise Men out of the East were they,
And they traveled by night and they slept by day,
For their guide was a beautiful, wonderful star.

The star was so beautiful, large and clear,
That all the other stars of the sky
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,
And the Wise Men knew that the coming was near
Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy.

Three caskets they bore on their saddle-bows,
Three caskets of gold with golden keys;



Their robes were of crimson silk, with rows
Of bells and pomegranates and furbelows,
Their turbans like blossoming almond-trees.

And so the Three Kings rode into the West,
Through the dusk of night over hills and dells,
And sometimes they nodded with beard on breast,
And sometimes talked, as they paused to rest,
With the people they met at the way-side wells.

“Of the child that is born,” said Baltazar,
“Good people, I pray you, tell us the news,
For we in the East have seen his star,
And have ridden fast, and have ridden far,
To find and worship the King of the Jews.”

And the people answered: “You ask in vain;
We know of no king but Herod the Great!”
They thought the Wise Men were men insane,
As they spurred their horses across the plain
Like riders in haste who cannot wait.

And when they came to Jerusalem,
Herod the Great, who had heard this thing,
Sent for the Wise Men and questioned them;
And said: “Go down into Bethlehem,
And bring me tidings of this new king.”

So they rode away; and the star stood still,
The only one in the gray of morn;
Yes, it stopped, it stood still of its own free will,
Right over Bethlehem on the hill,
The city of David where Christ was born.



Page 2

And the Three Kings rode through the gate and the guard,
Through the silent street, till their horses turned
And neighed as they entered the great inn-yard;
But the windows were closed, and the doors were barred,
And only a light in the stable burned.

And cradled there in the scented hay,
In the air made sweet by the breath of kine,
The little child in the manger lay,—
The child that would be king one day
Of a kingdom not human but divine.

His mother, Mary of Nazareth,
Sat watching beside his place of rest,
Watching the even flow of his breath,
For the joy of life and the terror of death
Were mingled together in her breast.

They laid their offerings at his feet;
The gold was their tribute to a king;
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,
Was for the priest, the Paraclete,
The myrrh for the body's burying.

And the mother wondered and bowed her head,
And sat as still as a statue of stone;
Her heart was troubled, yet comforted,
Remembering what the angel had said
Of an endless reign and of David's throne.

Then the Kings rode out of the city gate,
With the clatter of hoofs in proud array;
But they went not back to Herod the Great,
For they knew his malice and feared his hate,
And returned to their homes by another way.

ROWING AGAINST TIDE.

By Theodore Winthrop.

[The following hitherto-unprinted fragment by Theodore Winthrop, author of "John Brent," "The Canoe and the Saddle," "Life in the Open Air," and other works, was

intended by him for the first chapter of a story called “Steers Flotsam,” but it has an interest of its own, and is a complete narrative in itself.

Perhaps there are many of our young readers who do not know the history of that brave young officer who, one of the very first to fall in the late war, was killed at Great Bethel, Virginia, June 10, 1861. He was born at New Haven, Connecticut, in September, 1828. He was a studious and quiet boy, and not very robust. From early youth he had determined to become an author worthy of fame, but he tore himself away from his beloved work at the call of his country just as he was about to win that fame, leaving behind him a number of finished and unfinished writings, most of which were afterward published.

He could handle oars as well as write of them, could skate like his hero in “Love and Skates,” and was good at all manly sports. He traveled much, visited Europe twice, lived two years at the Isthmus of Panama, and returning from there across the plains (an adventurous trip at that time), learned in those far western wilds to manage and understand the half-tamed horses and untamed savages about whom he writes so well. This varied experience gave a freedom and power to his pen that the readers of the *st. Nicholas* are not too young to perceive and appreciate.]

Page 3

Almost sunset. I pulled my boat's head round, and made for home.

I had been floating with the tide, drifting athwart the long shadows under the western bank, shooting across the whirls and eddies of the rapid strait, grappling to one and another of the good-natured sloops and schooners that swept along the highway to the great city, near at hand.

For an hour I had sailed over the fleet, smooth glimmering water, free and careless as a sea-gull. Now I must 'bout ship and tussle with the whole force of the tide at the jaws of Hellgate. I did not know that not for that day only, but for life, my floating gayly with the stream was done.

I pulled in under the eastern shore, and began to give way with all my boyish force.

I was a little fellow, only ten years old, but my pretty white skiff was little, in proportion, and so were my sculls, and we were all used to work together.

As I faced about, a carriage came driving furiously along the turn of the shore. The road followed the water's edge. I was pulling close to the rocks to profit by every eddy. The carriage whirled by so near me that I could recognize one of the two persons within. No mistaking that pale, keen face. He evidently saw and recognized me also. He looked out at the window and signaled the coachman to stop. But before the horses could be pulled into a trot he gave a sign to go on again. The carriage disappeared at a turn of the shore.

This encounter strangely dispirited me. My joy in battling with the tide, in winning upward, foot by foot, boat's length after boat's length, gave place to a forlorn doubt whether I could hold my own—whether I should not presently be swept away.

The tide seemed to run more sternly than I had ever known it. It made a plaything of my little vessel, slapping it about most uncivilly. The black rocks, covered with clammy, unwholesome-looking sea-weed, seemed like the mile-stones of a nightmare, steadily to move with me. The water, bronzed by the low sun, poured mightily along, and there hung my boat, glued to its white reflection.

As I struggled there, the great sloops and schooners rustling by with the ebb, and eclipsing an instant the June sunset, gave me a miserable impression of careless unfriendliness. I had made friends with them all my life, and this evening, while I was drifting down-stream, they had been willing enough to give me a tow, and to send bluff, good-humored replies to my boyish hails. Now they rushed on, each chasing the golden wake of its forerunner, and took no thought of me, straining at my oar, apart. I grew dispirited, quite to the point of a childish despair.



Of course it was easy enough to land, leave my boat, and trudge home, but that was a confession of defeat not to be thought of. Two things only my father required of me—manliness and truth. My pretty little skiff—the “Aladdin,” I called it—he had given to me as a test of my manhood. I should be ashamed of myself to go home and tell him that I had abdicated my royal prerogative of taking care of myself, and pulling where I would in a boat with a keel. I must take the “Aladdin” home, or be degraded to my old punt, and confined to still water.



Page 4

The alternative brought back strength to my arms. I threw off the ominous influence. I leaned to my sculls. The clammy black rocks began deliberately to march by me downstream. I was making headway, and the more way I made, the more my courage grew.

Presently, as I battled round a point, I heard a rustle and a rush of something coming, and the bowsprit of a large sloop glided into view close by me. She was painted in stripes of all colors above her green bottom. The shimmer of the water shook the reflection of her hull, and made the edges of the stripes blend together. It was as if a rainbow had suddenly flung itself down for me to sail over.

I looked up and read the name on her headboards, "James Silt."

At the same moment a child's voice over my head cried, "Oh, brother Charles! what a little boy! what a pretty boat!"

The gliding sloop brought the speaker into view. She was a girl both little and pretty. A rosy, blue-eyed, golden-haired sprite, hanging over the gunwale, and smiling pleasantly at me.

"Yes, Betty," the voice of a cheerful, honest-looking young fellow at the tiller—evidently brother Charles—replied. "He's a little chap, but he's got a man into him. Hurrah!"

"Give way, 'Aladdin!' Stick to it! You're sure to get there."

The sloop had slid along by me now, so that I could read her name repeated on her stern—"James Silt, New Haven."

"Good-bye, little boy!" cried my cherubic vision to me, flitting aft, and leaning over the port davit.

"Good-bye, sissy!" I returned, and raising my voice, I hailed, "Good-bye, Cap'n Silt!"

Brother Charles looked puzzled an instant. Then he gave a laugh, and shouted across the broadening interval of burnished water, "You got my name off the stern. Well, it's right, and you're a bright one. You'll make a sailor! Good luck to you!"

He waved his cap, and the strong tide swept his craft onward, dragging her rainbow image with her.

As far as I could see, the fair-haired child was leaning over the stern watching me, and brother Charles, at intervals, turned and waved his cap encouragingly.

This little incident quite made a man of me again. I forgot the hard face I had seen, and brother Charles's frank, merry face took its place, while, leaning over brother Charles's shoulder, was that angelic vision of his sister.



Under the inspiring influence of Miss Betty's smiles—a boy is never so young as not to conduct such electricity—I pulled along at double speed. I no longer measured my progress by the rocks in the mud, but by the cottages and villas on the bank. Now that I had found friends on board one of the vessels arrowing by, it seemed as if all would prove freighted with sympathizing people if they would only come near enough to hail. But I was content with the two pleasant faces stamped on my memory, and only minded my business of getting home before dark.



Page 5

The setting sun drew itself a crimson path across the widening strait. The smooth water grew all deliciously rosy with twilight. The moon had just begun to put in a faint claim to be recognized as a luminary, when I pulled up to my father's private jetty.

Everything looked singularly sweet and quiet. June never, in all her dreams of perfection, could have devised a fairer evening. I was a little disappointed to miss my father from his usual station on the wharf. He loved to be there to welcome me returning from my little voyages, and to hail me gently: "Now then, Harry, a strong pull, and let me see how far you can send her! Bravo, my boy! We'll soon make a man of you. You shall not be a weakling all your life as your father has been, mind and body, for want of good strong machinery to work with."

He was absent that evening. I hurried to bestow my boat neatly in the boat-house. I locked the door, pocketed the key, and ran up the lawn, thinking how pleased my father would be to hear of my adventure with the sloop and its crew, and how he would make me sketch the sloop for him, which I could do very fairly, and how he would laugh at my vain attempts to convey to him the cheeks and the curls of Miss Betty.

A CHAPTER OF BUTTS.

[Illustration: "*I'll Butt it,*" Said the goat.

"*What! It Butts again.*"

"*I'll give it A good one, this time.*"

"*Perhaps I'd better get out of its way.*"

But he didn't.]

THE LION-KILLER.

(From the French of Duatyeff.)

By Mary Wager Fisher.

People in Tunis, Africa,—at least, some of the older people,—often talk of the wonderful exploits of a lion-killer who was famous there forty years ago. The story is this, and is said to be entirely true:

The lion-killer was called "The Sicilian," because his native country was Sicily; and he was known as "The Christian" among the people in Tunis, who were mostly Arabs, and, consequently, Mohammedans. He was also called "Hercules," because of his strength,



—that being the name of a strong demi-god of the ancient Greeks. He was not built like Hercules, however; he was tall, but beautifully proportioned, and there was nothing in his form that betrayed his powerful muscles. He performed prodigies of strength with so much gracefulness and ease as to astonish all who saw them.

He was a member of a traveling show company that visited Tunis,—very much as menagerie and circus troupes go about this country now from town to town. His part of the business was, not simply to do things that would display his great strength, but also to represent scenes by pantomime so that they would appear to the audience exactly as if the real scenes were being performed before their very eyes. In one of these scenes he showed the people how he had encountered and killed a lion with a wooden club in the country of Damascus. This is the manner in which he did it:



Page 6

After a flourish of trumpets, the Sicilian came upon the stage, which was arranged to represent a circle, or arena, and had three palm-trees in the middle. He was handsomely dressed in a costume of black velvet, trimmed with silver braid, and, as he looked around upon the audience with a grave but gentle expression, and went through with the Arabian salutation, which was to bear his right hand to his heart, mouth and forehead successively, there was perfect silence, so charmed were the people with his beauty and dignity.

Then an interpreter cried:

“The Christian will show you how, with his club, he killed a lion in the country of Damascus!”

Immediately following this came another flourish of trumpets and a striking of cymbals, as if to announce the entrance of the lion. Quickly the Sicilian sprang behind one of the three palms, whence to watch his enemy. With an attentive and resolute eye, leaning his body first to the right, and then to the left, of the tree, he kept his gaze on the terrible beast, following all its movements with the graceful motions of his own body, so naturally and suitably as to captivate the attention of the spectators.

“The lion surely is there!” they whispered. “We do not see him, but *he* sees him! How he watches his least motion! How resolute he is! He will not allow himself to be surprised——”

Suddenly the Sicilian leaps; with a bound he has crossed from one palm-tree to another, and, with a second spring, has climbed half-way up the tree, still holding his massive club in one hand. One understands by his movements that the lion has followed him, and, crouched and angry, stops at the foot of the tree. The Sicilian, leaning over, notes the slightest change of posture; then, like a flash of light, he leaps to the ground behind the trunk of the tree; the terrible club makes a whistling sound as it swings through the air, and the lion falls to the ground.

The scene was so well played that the wildest applause came from all parts of the audience.

Then the interpreter came in, and, throwing at the feet of the Hercules a magnificent lion’s skin, cried:

“Behold the skin of the lion that the Christian killed in the country of Damascus.”

The fame of the Sicilian reached the ears of the Bey of Tunis. But the royal dignity of the Bey, the reigning prince of that country, would not allow him to be present at exhibitions given to the common people. Finally, however, having heard so much about the handsome and strong Sicilian, he became curious to see him, and said:



“If this Christian has killed one lion with a club, he can kill another. Tell him that if he will knock down my grand lion with it, I will give him a thousand ducats”—quite a large sum in those days, a ducat being about equal to the American dollar.

At this time the Bey had several young lions that ran freely about in the court-yard or garden of his palace, and in a great pit, entirely surrounded by a high terrace, on a level with the ground-floor of the palace, a superb Atlas lion was kept in royal captivity. It was this lion that the Bey wished the Sicilian to combat. The proposition was sent to the Sicilian, who accepted it without hesitation, and without boasting what he would do.



Page 7

The combat was to take place a week from that time, and the announcement that the handsome Sicilian was to fight a duel with the grand lion was spread far and wide, even to the borders of the desert, producing a profound sensation. Everybody, old and young, great and small, desired to be present; moreover, the people would be freely admitted to the garden of the Bey, where they could witness the combat from the top of the terrace. The duel was to be early in the morning, before the heat of the day.

During the week that intervened, the Sicilian performed every day in the show, instead of two days a week, as had been his custom. Never was he more calm, graceful and fascinating in his performances. The evening before the eventful day, he repeated in pantomime his victory over the lion near Damascus, with so much elegance, precision and suppleness as to elicit round after round of enthusiastic cheers. Of course everybody who had seen him *play* killing a lion was wild with curiosity to see him actually fight with a *real* lion.

So, on the following morning, in the early dawn, the terrace around the lion's pit was crowded with people. For three days the grand lion had been deprived of food in order that he might be the more ferocious and terrible. His eyes shone like two balls of fire, and he incessantly lashed his flanks with his tail. At one moment he would madly roar, and, in the next, rub himself against the wall, vainly trying to find a chink between the stones in which to insert his claws.

Precisely at the appointed hour, the princely Bey and his court took the places that had been reserved for them on one side of the terrace. The Sicilian came a few steps behind, dressed in his costume of velvet and silver, and holding his club in his hand. With his accustomed easy and regular step, and a naturally elegant and dignified bearing, he advanced in front of the royal party and made a low obeisance to the Bey. The prince made some remark to him, to which he responded with a fresh salute; then he withdrew, and descended the steps which led to the lion's pit.

The crowd was silent. At the end of some seconds, the barred gate of the pit was opened, and gave entrance, not to the brave and powerful Hercules, but to a poor dog that was thrown toward the ferocious beast with the intention of still more exciting its ravenous appetite. This unexpected act of cruelty drew hisses from the spectators, but they were soon absorbed in watching the behavior of the dog. When the lion saw the prey that had been thrown to him, he stood motionless for a moment, ceased to beat his flanks with his tail, growled deeply, and crouched on the ground, with his paws extended, his neck stretched out, and his eyes fixed upon the victim.

The dog, on being thrown into the pit, ran at once toward a corner of the wall, as far as possible from the lion, and, trembling, yet not overcome by fear, fixed his eyes on the huge beast, watching anxiously, but intently, his every motion.



Page 8

With apparent unconcern, the lion creepingly advanced toward the dog, and then, with a sudden movement, he was upon his feet, and in a second launched himself into the air! But the dog that same instant bounded in an opposite direction, so that the lion fell in the corner, while the dog alighted where the lion had been.

For a moment the lion seemed very much surprised at the loss of his prey; with the dog, the instinct of self-preservation developed a coolness that even overcame his terror. The body of the poor animal was all in a shiver, but his head was firm, his eyes were watchful. Without losing sight of his enemy, he slowly retreated into the corner behind him.

Then the lion, scanning his victim from the corners of his eyes, walked sidewise a few steps, and, turning suddenly, tried again to pounce with one bound upon the dog; but the latter seemed to anticipate this movement also, and, in the same second, jumped in the opposite direction, as before, crossing the lion in the air.

At this the lion became furious, and lost the calmness that might have insured him victory, while the courage of the unfortunate dog won for him the sympathy of all the spectators.

As the lion, excited and terrible, was preparing a new plan of attack, a rope ending in a loop was lowered to the dog. The brave little animal, whose imploring looks had been pitiful to look upon, saw the help sent to him, and, fastening his teeth and claws into the rope, was immediately drawn up. The lion, perceiving this, made a prodigious leap, but the dog was happily beyond his reach. The poor creature, drawn in safety to the terrace, at once took flight, and was soon lost to view.

At the moment when the lion threw himself on the ground of the pit, roaring with rage at the escape of his prey, the Sicilian entered, calm and firm, superb in his brilliant costume, and with his club in his hand.

At his appearance in the pit, a silence like death came over the crowd of spectators. The Hercules walked rapidly toward a corner, and, leaning upon his club, awaited the onslaught of the lion, who, blinded by fury, had not yet perceived his entrance.

The waiting was of short duration, for the lion, in turning, espied him, and the fire that flashed from the eyes of the terrible beast told of savage joy in finding another victim.

Here, however, the animal showed for a moment a feeling of anxiety; slowly, as if conscious that he was in the presence of a powerful adversary, he retreated some steps, keeping his fiery eyes all the time on the man. The Sicilian also kept his keen gaze on the lion, and, with his body slightly inclined forward, marked every alteration of position. Between the two adversaries, it was easy to see that fear was on the side of the beast; but, in comparing the feeble means of the man—a rude club—with the



powerful structure of the lion, whose boundings made the very ground beneath him tremble, it was hard for the spectators to believe that courage, and not strength, would win the victory.



Page 9

The lion was too excited and famished to remain long undecided. After more backward steps, which he made as if gaining time for reflection, he suddenly advanced in a sidelong direction in order to charge upon his adversary.

[Illustration: "*The beast gave A mighty spring.*"]

The Sicilian did not move, but followed with his fixed gaze the motions of the lion. Greatly irritated, the beast gave a mighty spring, uttering a terrible roar; the man, at the same moment, leaped aside, and the lion had barely touched the ground, when the club came down upon his head with a dull, shocking thud. The king of the desert rolled heavily under the stroke, and fell headlong, stunned and senseless, but not dead.

The spectators, overcome with admiration, and awed at the exhibition of so much calmness, address and strength, were hushed into profound silence. The next moment, the Bey arose, and, with a gesture of his hand, asked mercy for his favorite lion.

"A thousand ducats the more if you will not kill him!" he cried to the Sicilian. "Agreed!" was the instant reply.

The lion lay panting on the ground. The Hercules bowed at the word of the Bey, and slowly withdrew, still keeping his eyes on the conquered brute. The two thousand ducats were counted out and paid. The lion shortly recovered.

With a universal gasp of relief, followed by deafening shouts and cheers, the spectators withdrew from the terrace, having witnessed a scene they could never forget, and which, as I said at the beginning, is still talked of in Tunis.

BRUNO'S REVENGE.

By the author of "Alice in Wonderland."

It was a very hot afternoon,—too hot to go for a walk or do anything,—or else it wouldn't have happened, I believe.

In the first place, I want to know why fairies should always be teaching *us* to do our duty, and lecturing *us* when we go wrong, and we should never teach *them* anything? You can't mean to say that fairies are never greedy, or selfish, or cross, or deceitful, because that would be nonsense, you know. Well, then, don't you agree with me that they might be all the better for a little scolding and punishing now and then?

I really don't see why it shouldn't be tried, and I'm almost sure (only *please* don't repeat this loud in the woods) that if you could only catch a fairy, and put it in the corner, and give it nothing but bread and water for a day or two, you'd find it quite an improved character; it would take down its conceit a little, at all events.



The next question is, what is the best time for seeing fairies? I believe I can tell you all about that.

The first rule is, that it must be a *very* hot day—that we may consider as settled; and you must be just a *little* sleepy—but not too sleepy to keep your eyes open, mind. Well, and you ought to feel a little—what one may call “fairish”—the Scotch call it “eerie,” and perhaps that’s a prettier word; if you don’t know what it means, I’m afraid I can hardly explain it; you must wait till you meet a fairy, and then you’ll know.



Page 10

And the last rule is, that the crickets shouldn't be chirping. I can't stop to explain that rule just now—you must take it on trust for the present.

So, if all these things happen together, you've a good chance of seeing a fairy—or at least a much better chance than if they didn't.

The one I'm going to tell you about was a real, naughty little fairy. Properly speaking, there were two of them, and one was naughty and one was good, but perhaps you would have found that out for yourself.

Now we really *are* going to begin the story.

It was Tuesday afternoon, about half-past three,—it's always best to be particular as to dates,—and I had wandered down into the wood by the lake, partly because I had nothing to do, and that seemed to be a good place to do it in, and partly (as I said at first) because it was too hot to be comfortable anywhere, except under trees.

The first thing I noticed, as I went lazily along through an open place in the wood, was a large beetle lying struggling on its back, and I went down directly on one knee to help the poor thing on its feet again. In some things, you know, you can't be quite sure what an insect would like; for instance, I never could quite settle, supposing I were a moth, whether I would rather be kept out of the candle, or be allowed to fly straight in and get burnt; or, again, supposing I were a spider, I'm not sure if I should be *quite* pleased to have my web torn down, and the fly let loose; but I feel quite certain that, if I were a beetle and had rolled over on my back, I should always be glad to be helped up again.

So, as I was saying, I had gone down on one knee, and was just reaching out a little stick to turn the beetle over, when I saw a sight that made me draw back hastily and hold my breath, for fear of making any noise and frightening the little creature away.

Not that she looked as if she would be easily frightened; she seemed so good and gentle that I'm sure she would never expect that any one could wish to hurt her. She was only a few inches high, and was dressed in green, so that you really would hardly have noticed her among the long grass; and she was so delicate and graceful that she quite seemed to belong to the place, almost as if she were one of the flowers. I may tell you, besides, that she had no wings (I don't believe in fairies with wings), and that she had quantities of long brown hair and large, earnest brown eyes, and then I shall have done all I can to give you an idea of what she was like.

Sylvie (I found out her name afterward) had knelt down, just as I was doing, to help the beetle; but it needed more than a little stick for *her* to get it on its legs again; it was as much as she could do, with both arms, to roll the heavy thing over; and all the while she was talking to it, half-scolding and half-comforting, as a nurse might do with a child that had fallen down.



Page 11

“There, there! You needn’t cry so much about it; you’re not killed yet—though if you were, you couldn’t cry, you know, and so it’s a general rule against crying, my dear! And how did you come to tumble over? But I can see well enough how it was,—I needn’t ask you that,—walking over sand-pits with your chin in the air, as usual. Of course if you go among sand-pits like that, you must expect to tumble; you should look.”

The beetle murmured something that sounded like “I *did* look,” and Sylvie went on again:

“But I know you didn’t! You never do! You always walk with your chin up—you’re so dreadfully conceited. Well, let’s see how many legs are broken this time. Why, none of them, I declare! though that’s certainly more than you deserve. And what’s the good of having six legs, my dear, if you can only kick them all about in the air when you tumble? Legs are meant to walk with, you know. Now, don’t be cross about it, and don’t begin putting out your wings yet; I’ve some more to say. Go down to the frog that lives behind that buttercup—give him my compliments—Sylvie’s compliments—can you say ‘compliments?’”

The beetle tried, and, I suppose, succeeded.

“Yes, that’s right. And tell him he’s to give you some of that salve I left with him yesterday. And you’d better get him to rub it in for you; he’s got rather cold hands, but you mustn’t mind that.”

I think the beetle must have shuddered at this idea, for Sylvie went on in a graver tone:

“Now, you needn’t pretend to be so particular as all that, as if you were too grand to be rubbed by a frog. The fact is, you ought to be very much obliged to him. Suppose you could get nobody but a toad to do it, how would you like that?”

There was a little pause, and then Sylvie added:

“Now you may go. Be a good beetle, and don’t keep your chin in the air.”

And then began one of those performances of humming, and whizzing, and restless banging about, such as a beetle indulges in when it has decided on flying, but hasn’t quite made up its mind which way to go. At last, in one of its awkward zigzags, it managed to fly right into my face, and by the time I had recovered from the shock, the little fairy was gone.

I looked about in all directions for the little creature, but there was no trace of her—and my “eerie” feeling was quite gone off, and the crickets were chirping again merrily, so I knew she was really gone.



And now I've got time to tell you the rule about the crickets. They always leave off chirping when a fairy goes by, because a fairy's a kind of queen over them, I suppose; at all events, it's a much grander thing than a cricket; so whenever you're walking out, and the crickets suddenly leave off chirping, you may be sure that either they see a fairy, or else they're frightened at your coming so near.

I walked on sadly enough, you may be sure. However, I comforted myself with thinking, "It's been a very wonderful afternoon, so far; I'll just go quietly on and look about me, and I shouldn't wonder if I come across another fairy somewhere."



Page 12

Peering about in this way, I happened to notice a plant with rounded leaves, and with queer little holes cut out in the middle of several of them. "Ah! the leaf-cutter bee," I carelessly remarked; you know I am very learned in natural history (for instance, I can always tell kittens from chickens at one glance); and I was passing on, when a sudden thought made me stoop down and examine the leaves more carefully.

Then a little thrill of delight ran through me, for I noticed that the holes were all arranged so as to form letters; there were three leaves side by side, with "B," "R" and "U" marked on them, and after some search I found two more, which contained an "N" and an "O."

By this time the "eerie" feeling had all come back again, and I suddenly observed that no crickets were chirping; so I felt quite sure that "Bruno" was a fairy, and that he was somewhere very near.

And so indeed he was—so near that I had very nearly walked over him without seeing him; which would have been dreadful, always supposing that fairies *can* be walked over; my own belief is that they are something of the nature of will-o'-the-wisps, and there's no walking over *them*.

Think of any pretty little boy you know, rather fat, with rosy cheeks, large dark eyes, and tangled brown hair, and then fancy him made small enough to go comfortably into a coffee-cup, and you'll have a very fair idea of what the little creature was like.

"What's your name, little fellow?" I began, in as soft a voice as I could manage. And, by the way, that's another of the curious things in life that I never could quite understand—why we always begin by asking little children their names; is it because we fancy there isn't quite enough of them, and a name will help to make them a little bigger? You never thought of asking a real large man his name, now, did you? But, however that may be, I felt it quite necessary to know *his* name; so, as he didn't answer my question, I asked it again a little louder. "What's your name, my little man?"

"What's yours?" he said, without looking up.

"My name's Lewis Carroll," I said, quite gently, for he was much too small to be angry with for answering so uncivilly.

"Duke of Anything?" he asked, just looking at me for a moment, and then going on with his work.

"Not Duke at all," I said, a little ashamed of having to confess it.

"You're big enough to be two Dukes," said the little creature. "I suppose you're Sir Something, then?"

"No," I said, feeling more and more ashamed. "I haven't got any title."



The fairy seemed to think that in that case I really wasn't worth the trouble of talking to, for he quietly went on digging, and tearing the flowers to pieces as fast as he got them out of the ground. After a few minutes I tried again:

"Please tell me what your name is."

"Bruno," the little fellow answered, very readily. "Why didn't you say 'please' before?"



Page 13

“That’s something like what we used to be taught in the nursery,” I thought to myself, looking back through the long years (about a hundred and fifty of them) to the time when I used to be a little child myself. And here an idea came into my head, and I asked him, “Aren’t you one of the fairies that teach children to be good?”

“Well, we have to do that sometimes,” said Bruno, “and a dreadful bother it is.”

As he said this, he savagely tore a heart’s-ease in two, and trampled on the pieces.

“What *are* you doing there, Bruno?” I said.

“Spoiling Sylvie’s garden,” was all the answer Bruno would give at first. But, as he went on tearing up the flowers, he muttered to himself, “The nasty c’oss thing—wouldn’t let me go and play this morning, though I wanted to ever so much—said I must finish my lessons first—lessons, indeed! I’ll vex her finely, though!”

“Oh, Bruno, you shouldn’t do that!” I cried. “Don’t you know that’s revenge? And revenge is a wicked, cruel, dangerous thing!”

“River-edge?” said Bruno. “What a funny word! I suppose you call it cooel and dangerous because, if you went too far and tumbled in, you’d get d’owned.”

“No, not river-edge,” I explained; “rev-enge” (saying the word very slowly and distinctly). But I couldn’t help thinking that Bruno’s explanation did very well for either word.

“Oh!” said Bruno, opening his eyes very wide, but without attempting to repeat the word.

“Come! try and pronounce it, Bruno!” I said, cheerfully. “Rev-enge, rev-enge.”

But Bruno only tossed his little head, and said he couldn’t; that his mouth wasn’t the right shape for words of that kind. And the more I laughed, the more sulky the little fellow got about it.

“Well, never mind, little man!” I said. “Shall I help you with the job you’ve got there?”

“Yes, please,” Bruno said, quite pacified. “Only I wish I could think of something to vex her more than this. You don’t know how hard it is to make her ang’y!”

“Now listen to me, Bruno, and I’ll teach you quite a splendid kind of revenge!”

“Something that’ll vex her finely?” Bruno asked with gleaming eyes.

“Something that’ll vex her finely. First, we’ll get up all the weeds in her garden. See, there are a good many at this end—quite hiding the flowers.”



“But *that* wont vex her,” said Bruno, looking rather puzzled.

“After that,” I said, without noticing the remark, “we’ll water the highest bed—up here. You see it’s getting quite dry and dusty.”

Bruno looked at me inquisitively, but he said nothing this time.

“Then, after that,” I went on, “the walks want sweeping a bit; and I think you might cut down that tall nettle; it’s so close to the garden that it’s quite in the way—”

“What *are* you talking about?” Bruno impatiently interrupted me. “All that wont vex her a bit!”



Page 14

“Wont it?” I said, innocently. “Then, after that, suppose we put in some of these colored pebbles—just to mark the divisions between the different kinds of flowers, you know. That’ll have a very pretty effect.”

Bruno turned round and had another good stare at me. At last there came an odd little twinkle in his eye, and he said, with quite a new meaning in his voice:

“V’y well—let’s put ’em in rows—all the ’ed together, and all the blue together.”

“That’ll do capitally,” I said; “and then—what kind of flowers does Sylvie like best in her garden?”

Bruno had to put his thumb in his mouth and consider a little before he could answer. “Violets,” he said, at last.

“There’s a beautiful bed of violets down by the lake—”

“Oh, let’s fetch ’em!” cried Bruno, giving a little skip into the air. “Here! Catch hold of my hand, and I’ll help you along. The g’ass is rather thick down that way.”

I couldn’t help laughing at his having so entirely forgotten what a big creature he was talking to.

“No, not yet, Bruno,” I said; “we must consider what’s the right thing to do first. You see we’ve got quite a business before us.”

“Yes, let’s consider,” said Bruno, putting his thumb into his mouth again, and sitting down upon a stuffed mouse.

“What do you keep that mouse for?” I said. “You should bury it, or throw it into the lake.”

“Why, it’s to measure with!” cried Bruno. “How ever would you do a garden without one? We make each bed th’ee mice and a half long, and two mice wide.”

I stopped him, as he was dragging it off by the tail to show me how it was used, for I was half afraid the “eerie” feeling might go off before we had finished the garden, and in that case I should see no more of him or Sylvie.

“I think the best way will be for *you* to weed the beds, while *I* sort out these pebbles, ready to mark the walks with.”

“That’s it!” cried Bruno. “And I’ll tell you about the caterpillars while we work.”

“Ah, let’s hear about the caterpillars,” I said, as I drew the pebbles together into a heap, and began dividing them into colors.



And Bruno went on in a low, rapid tone, more as if he were talking to himself. “Yesterday I saw two little caterpillars, when I was sitting by the brook, just where you go into the wood. They were quite g’een, and they had yellow eyes, and they didn’t see *me*. And one of them had got a moth’s wing to carry—a g’eat b’own moth’s wing, you know, all d’y, with feathers. So he couldn’t want it to eat, I should think—perhaps he meant to make a cloak for the winter?”

“Perhaps,” I said, for Bruno had twisted up the last word into a sort of question, and was looking at me for an answer.

One word was quite enough for the little fellow, and he went on, merrily:

“Well, and so he didn’t want the other caterpillar to see the moth’s wing, you know; so what must he do but t’y to carry it with all his left legs, and he t’ied to walk on the other set. Of course, he toppled over after that.”



Page 15

“After what?” I said, catching at the last word, for, to tell the truth, I hadn’t been attending much.

“He toppled over,” Bruno repeated, very gravely, “and if *you* ever saw a caterpillar topple over, you’d know it’s a serious thing, and not sit g’inning like that—and I shan’t tell you any more.”

“Indeed and indeed, Bruno, I didn’t mean to grin. See, I’m quite grave again now.”

But Bruno only folded his arms and said, “Don’t tell *me*. I see a little twinkle in one of your eyes—just like the moon.”

“Am I like the moon, Bruno?” I asked.

“Your face is large and round like the moon,” Bruno answered, looking at me thoughtfully. “It doesn’t shine quite so bright—but it’s cleaner.”

I couldn’t help smiling at this. “You know I wash *my* face, Bruno. The moon never does that.”

“Oh, doesn’t she though!” cried Bruno; and he leaned forward and added in a solemn whisper, “The moon’s face gets dirtier and dirtier every night, till it’s black all ac’oss. And then, when it’s dirty all over—*so*—” (he passed his hand across his own rosy cheeks as he spoke) “then she washes it.”

“And then it’s all clean again, isn’t it?”

“Not all in a moment,” said Bruno. “What a deal of teaching you want! She washes it little by little—only she begins at the other edge.”

By this time he was sitting quietly on the mouse, with his arms folded, and the weeding wasn’t getting on a bit. So I was obliged to say:

“Work first and pleasure afterward; no more talking till that bed’s finished.”

After that we had a few minutes of silence, while I sorted out the pebbles, and amused myself with watching Bruno’s plan of gardening. It was quite a new plan to me: he always measured each bed before he weeded it, as if he was afraid the weeding would make it shrink; and once, when it came out longer than he wished, he set to work to thump the mouse with his tiny fist, crying out, “There now! It’s all ’ong again! Why don’t you keep your tail st’aight when I tell you!”

“I’ll tell you what I’ll do,” Bruno said in a half-whisper, as we worked: “I’ll get you an invitation to the king’s dinner-party. I know one of the head-waiters.”



I couldn't help laughing at this idea. "Do the waiters invite the guests?" I asked.

"Oh, not *to sit down!*" Bruno hastily replied. "But to help, you know. You'd like that, wouldn't you? To hand about plates, and so on."

"Well, but that's not so nice as sitting at the table, is it?"

"Of course it isn't," Bruno said, in a tone as if he rather pitied my ignorance; "but if you're not even Sir Anything, you can't expect to be allowed to sit at the table, you know."

I said, as meekly as I could, that I didn't expect it, but it was the only way of going to a dinner-party that I really enjoyed. And Bruno tossed his head, and said, in a rather offended tone, that I might do as I pleased—there were many he knew that would give their ears to go.



Page 16

“Have you ever been yourself, Bruno?”

“They invited me once last year,” Bruno said, very gravely. “It was to wash up the soup-plates—no, the cheese-plates I mean—that was g’and enough. But the g’andest thing of all was, *I* fetched the Duke of Dandelion a glass of cider!”

“That was grand!” I said, biting my lip to keep myself from laughing.

“Wasn’t it!” said Bruno, very earnestly. “You know it isn’t every one that’s had such an honor as *that!*”

This set me thinking of the various queer things we call “an honor” in this world, which, after all, haven’t a bit more honor in them than what the dear little Bruno enjoyed (by the way, I hope you’re beginning to like him a little, naughty as he was?) when he took the Duke of Dandelion a glass of cider.

I don’t know how long I might have dreamed on in this way if Bruno hadn’t suddenly roused me.

“Oh, come here quick!” he cried, in a state of the wildest excitement. “Catch hold of his other horn! I can’t hold him more than a minute!”

He was struggling desperately with a great snail, clinging to one of its horns, and nearly breaking his poor little back in his efforts to drag it over a blade of grass.

I saw we should have no more gardening if I let this sort of thing go on, so I quietly took the snail away, and put it on a bank where he couldn’t reach it. “We’ll hunt it afterward, Bruno,” I said, “if you really want to catch it. But what’s the use of it when you’ve got it?”

“What’s the use of a fox when you’ve got it?” said Bruno. “I know you big things hunt foxes.”

I tried to think of some good reason why “big things” should hunt foxes, and he shouldn’t hunt snails, but none came into my head: so I said at last, “Well, I suppose one’s as good as the other. I’ll go snail-hunting myself, some day.”

“I should think you wouldn’t be so silly,” said Bruno, “as to go snail-hunting all by yourself. Why, you’d never get the snail along, if you hadn’t somebody to hold on to his other horn!”

“Of course I sha’n’t go alone,” I said, quite gravely. “By the way, is that the best kind to hunt, or do you recommend the ones without shells?”



“Oh no! We never hunt the ones without shells,” Bruno said, with a little shudder at the thought of it. “They’re always so c’oss about it; and then, if you tumble over them, they’re ever so sticky!”

By this time we had nearly finished the garden. I had fetched some violets, and Bruno was just helping me to put in the last, when he suddenly stopped and said, “I’m tired.”

“Rest, then,” I said; “I can go on without you.”

Bruno needed no second invitation: he at once began arranging the mouse as a kind of sofa. “And I’ll sing you a little song,” he said as he rolled it about.

“Do,” said I: “there’s nothing I should like better.”

“Which song will you choose?” Bruno said, as he dragged the mouse into a place where he could get a good view of me. “‘Ting, ting, ting,’ is the nicest.”



Page 17

There was no resisting such a strong hint as this: however, I pretended to think about it for a moment, and then said, “Well, I like ‘Ting, ting, ting,’ best of all.”

“That shows you’re a good judge of music,” Bruno said, with a pleased look. “How many bluebells would you like?” And he put his thumb into his mouth to help me to consider.

As there was only one bluebell within easy reach, I said very gravely that I thought one would do *this* time, and I picked it and gave it to him. Bruno ran his hand once or twice up and down the flowers,—like a musician trying an instrument,—producing a most delicious delicate tinkling as he did so. I had never heard flower-music before,—I don’t think one can unless one’s in the “eerie” state,—and I don’t know quite how to give you an idea of what it was like, except by saying that it sounded like a peal of bells a thousand miles off.

When he had satisfied himself that the flowers were in tune, he seated himself on the mouse (he never seemed really comfortable anywhere else), and, looking up at me with a merry twinkle in his eyes, he began. By the way, the tune was rather a curious one, and you might like to try it for yourself, so here are the notes:

[Illustration]

“Rise, oh, rise! The daylight dies:
The owls are hooting, ting, ting, ting!
Wake, oh, wake! Beside the lake
The elves are fluting, ting, ting, ting!
Welcoming our fairy king
We sing, sing, sing.”

He sang the first four lines briskly and merrily, making the bluebells chime in time with the music; but the last two he sang quite slowly and gently, and merely waved the flowers backward and forward above his head. And when he had finished the first verse, he left off to explain.

“The name of our fairy king is Obberwon” (he meant Oberon, I believe), “and he lives over the lake—*there*—and now and then he comes in a little boat—and then we go and meet him—and then we sing this song, you know.”

“And then you go and dine with him?” I said, mischievously.

“You shouldn’t talk,” Bruno hastily said; “it interrupts the song so.”

I said I wouldn’t do it again.



“I never talk myself when I’m singing,” he went on, very gravely; “so you shouldn’t either.”

Then he tuned the bluebells once more, and sung:

“Hear, oh, hear! From far and near
A music stealing, ting, ting, ting!
Fairy bells adown the dells
Are merrily pealing, ting, ting, ting!
Welcoming our fairy king
We ring, ring, ring.

“See, oh, see! On every tree
What lamps are shining, ting, ting, ting!
They are eyes of fiery flies
To light our dining, ting, ting, ting!
Welcoming our fairy king
They swing, swing, swing.

“Haste, oh, haste! to take and taste
The dainties waiting, ting, ting, ting!
Honey-dew is stored—”



Page 18

“Hush, Bruno!” I interrupted, in a warning whisper. “She’s coming!”

Bruno checked his song only just in time for Sylvie not to hear him; and then, catching sight of her as she slowly made her way through the long grass, he suddenly rushed out headlong at her like a little bull, shouting, “Look the other way! Look the other way!”

“Which way?” Sylvie asked, in rather a frightened tone, as she looked round in all directions to see where the danger could be.

“*That way!*” said Bruno, carefully turning her round with her face to the wood. “Now, walk backward—walk gently—don’t be frightened; you sha’n’t t’ip!”

But Sylvie did “t’ip,” notwithstanding; in fact he led her, in his hurry, across so many little sticks and stones, that it was really a wonder the poor child could keep on her feet at all. But he was far too much excited to think of what he was doing.

I silently pointed out to Bruno the best place to lead her to, so as to get a view of the whole garden at once; it was a little rising ground, about the height of a potato; and, when they had mounted it, I drew back into the shade that Sylvie mightn’t see me.

I heard Bruno cry out triumphantly, “*Now you may look!*” and then followed a great clapping of hands, but it was all done by Bruno himself. Sylvie was quite silent; she only stood and gazed with her hands clasped tightly together, and I was half afraid she didn’t like it after all.

Bruno, too, was watching her anxiously, and when she jumped down from the mound, and began wandering up and down the little walks, he cautiously followed her about, evidently anxious that she should form her own opinion of it all, without any hint from him. And when at last she drew a long breath, and gave her verdict,—in a hurried whisper, and without the slightest regard to grammar,—“It’s the loveliest thing as I never saw in all my life before!” the little fellow looked as well pleased as if it had been given by all the judges and juries in England put together.

“And did you really do it all by yourself, Bruno?” said Sylvie. “And all for me?”

“I was helped a bit,” Bruno began, with a merry little laugh at her surprise. “We’ve been at it all the afternoon; I thought you ’d like—” and here the poor little fellow’s lip began to quiver, and all in a moment he burst out crying, and, running up to Sylvie, he flung his arms passionately round her neck, and hid his face on her shoulder.

There was a little quiver in Sylvie’s voice too, as she whispered, “Why, what’s the matter, darling?” and tried to lift up his head and kiss him.

But Bruno only clung to her, sobbing, and wouldn’t be comforted till he had confessed all.



“I tried—to spoil your garden—first—but—I ’ll never—never——” and then came another burst of tears which drowned the rest of the sentence. At last he got out the words, “I liked—putting in the flowers—for *you*, Sylvie—and I never was so happy before,” and the rosy little face came up at last to be kissed, all wet with tears as it was.



Page 19

Sylvie was crying too by this time, and she said nothing but “Bruno dear!” and “/ never was so happy before;” though why two children who had never been so happy before should both be crying was a great mystery to me.

[Illustration: “IT’S THE LOVELIEST THING AS I NEVER SAW IN ALL MY LIFE BEFORE!”]

I, too, felt very happy, but of course I didn’t cry; “big things” never do, you know—we leave all that to the fairies. Only I think it must have been raining a little just then, for I found a drop or two on my cheeks.

After that they went through the whole garden again, flower by flower, as if it were a long sentence they were spelling out, with kisses for commas, and a great hug by way of a full-stop when they got to the end.

“Do you know, that was my river-edge, Sylvie?” Bruno began, looking solemnly at her.

Sylvie laughed merrily.

“What *do* you mean?” she said, and she pushed back her heavy brown hair with both hands, and looked at him with dancing eyes in which the big tear-drops were still glittering.

Bruno drew in a long breath, and made up his mouth for a great effort.

“I mean rev—enge,” he said; “now you under’tand.” And he looked so happy and proud at having said the word right at last that I quite envied him. I rather think Sylvie didn’t “under’tand” at all; but she gave him a little kiss on each cheek, which seemed to do just as well.

So they wandered off lovingly together, in among the buttercups, each with an arm twined round the other, whispering and laughing as they went, and never so much as once looked back at poor me. Yes, once, just before I quite lost sight of them, Bruno half turned his head, and nodded me a saucy little good-bye over one shoulder. And that was all the thanks I got for *my* trouble.

I know you’re sorry the story’s come to an end—aren’t you?—so I’ll just tell you one thing more. The very last thing I saw of them was this: Sylvie was stooping down with her arms round Bruno’s neck, and saying coaxingly in his ear, “Do you know, Bruno, I’ve quite forgotten that hard word; do say it once more. Come! Only this once, dear!”

But Bruno wouldn’t try it again.



THE MOCKING-BIRD AND THE DONKEY.

(From the Spanish of the Mexican poet Jose Rosas.)

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

A mock-bird in a village
Had somehow gained the skill
To imitate the voices
Of animals at will.

And singing in his prison,
Once, at the close of day,
He gave, with great precision,
The donkey's heavy bray.

Well pleased, the mock-bird's master
Sent to the neighbors 'round,
And bade them come together
To hear that curious sound.

They came, and all were talking
In praise of what they heard,
And one delighted lady
Would fain have bought the bird.



Page 20

A donkey listened sadly,
And said: "Confess I must
That these are shallow people,
And terribly unjust.

"I'm bigger than the mock-bird,
And better bray than he,
Yet not a soul has uttered
A word in praise of me."

THE FAMOUS HORSES OF VENICE.

BY MARY LLOYD.

No doubt you all know something of Venice, that wonderful and fairy-like city which seems to rise up out of the sea; with its bridges and gondolas; its marble palaces coming down to the water's edge; its gay ladies and stately doges. What a magnificent pageant was that which took place every Ascension Day, when the doge and all his court sailed grandly out in the "Bucentaur," or state galley, with gay colors flying, to the tune of lively music, and went through the oft-repeated ceremony of dropping a ring into the Adriatic, in token of marriage between the sea and Venice! This was a custom instituted as far back as 1177. The Venetians having espoused the cause of the pope, Alexander III., against the emperor, Frederic Barbarossa, gained a great victory over the imperial fleet, and the pope, in grateful remembrance of the event, presented the doge with the ring symbolizing the subjection of the Adriatic to Venice.

But one of the most wonderful things about Venice is that, with the exception of those I intend to tell you about, there are no horses there. How charming it must be, you think, when you want to visit a friend, to run down the marble steps of some old palace, step into a gondola, and glide swiftly and noiselessly away, instead of jolting and rumbling along over the cobble-stones! And then to come back by moonlight, and hear the low splash of the oar in the water, and the distant voices of the boatmen singing some love-sick song,—oh, it's as good as a play!

Of course there are no carts in Venice; and the fish-man, the vegetable-man, the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker, all glide softly up in their boats to the kitchen door with their vendibles, and chaffer and haggle with the cook for half an hour, after the manner of market-men the world over.

So you see the little black-eyed Venetian boys and girls gaze on the brazen horses in St. Mark's Square with as much wonder and curiosity as ours when we look upon a griffin or a unicorn.



[Illustration: THE HORSES OF ST. MARK'S.]

These horses—there are four of them—have quite a history of their own. They once formed part of a group made by a celebrated sculptor of antiquity, named Lysippus. He was of such acknowledged merit that he was one of the three included in the famous edict of Alexander, which gave to Apelles the sole right of painting his portrait, to Lysippus that of sculpturing his form in any style, and to Pyrgoteles that of engraving it upon precious stones.

Lysippus executed a group of twenty-five equestrian statues of the Macedonian horses that fell at the passage of the Granicus, and of this group the horses now at Venice formed a part. They were carried from Alexandria to Rome by Augustus, who placed them on his triumphal arch. Afterward Nero, Domitian and Trajan, successfully transferred them to arches of their own.

Page 21

When Constantine removed the capital of the Roman empire to the ancient Byzantium, he sought to beautify it by all means in his power, and for this purpose he removed a great number of works of art from Rome to Constantinople, and among them these bronze horses of Lysippus.

In the early part of the thirteenth century the nobles of France and Germany, who were going on the fourth crusade, arrived at Venice and stipulated with the Venetians for means of transport to the Holy Land. But instead of proceeding to Jerusalem they were diverted from their original intention, and, under the leadership of the blind old doge, Dandolo, they captured the city of Constantinople. The fall of the city was followed by an almost total destruction of the works of art by which it had been adorned; for the Latins disgraced themselves by a more ruthless vandalism than that of the Vandals themselves.

But out of the wreck the four bronze horses were saved and carried in triumph to Venice, where they were placed over the central porch of St. Mark's Cathedral. There they stood until Napoleon Bonaparte in 1797 removed them with other trophies to Paris; but after his downfall they were restored, and, as Byron says in "Childe Harold":

"Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
Are they not bridled?"—

Apropos of the last two lines I have quoted, I must tell you an incident of history.

During the middle ages, when so many of the Italian cities existed as independent republics, there was a great deal of rivalry between Genoa and Venice, the most important of them. Both were wealthy commercial cities; both strove for the supremacy of the sea, upon which much of their prosperity depended, and each strove to gain the advantage over the other. This led to many wars between them, when sometimes one would gain the upper hand, and sometimes the other. At length, in the year 1379, the Genoese defeated the Venetians in the battle of Pola, and then took Chiozza, which commanded, as one might say, the entrance to Venice. The Venetians, alarmed beyond measure, sent an embassy to the Genoese commander, Pietro Doria, agreeing to any terms whatever, imploring only that he would spare the city. They also sent the chief of the prisoners they had taken in the war in order to appease the fierce anger of the general. "Take back your captives, ye gentlemen of Venice," was the too confident reply of the haughty Doria; "we will release them and their companions. On God's faith, ye shall have no peace till we put a curb into the mouths of those wild horses of St. Mark's. Place but the reins once in our hands, and we shall know how to bridle them for the future."



Page 22

Armed with the courage and energy which despair alone can give, the Venetians rallied for the defence of their city. Women and children joined in the preparations. All private feuds, jealousies and animosities were forgotten in the common danger. All were animated by the one feeling of implacable hatred of the Genoese. Pisani, an old commander, who had been unjustly imprisoned through the envy of his fellow-citizens, was released and put in command of the fleet. On coming out of his cell, he was surrounded by those who had injured him, who implored him to forget the injustice with which he had been treated. He partook of the sacrament with them in token of complete forgetfulness and forgiveness, and then proceeded against the enemy. The confidence of the republic had not been misplaced. His bravery, skill and foresight, together with the aid of another brave captain, Carl Zeno, saved the city, retook Chiozza, and completely humiliated the Genoese, who were now willing to sue for peace. So that, after all, Doria's angry menace was the means of saving the independence of the city, and the proud possession of the bronze horses of St. Mark's.

CHRISTMAS CARD.

(SEE "LETTER-BOX.")

[Illustration: A greeting by my page I send To thee on Christmas Day, my friend.]

THE PETERKINS' CHARADES.

BY LUCRETIA P. HALE.

Ever since they had come home from the great Centennial at Philadelphia, the Peterkins had felt anxious to have "something." The little boys wanted to get up a "great Exposition," to show to the people of the place who had not been able to go to Philadelphia. But Mr. Peterkin thought it too great an effort, and it was given up.

There was, however, a new water-trough needed on the town-common, and the ladies of the place thought it ought to be something handsome,—something more than a common trough,—and they ought to work for it.

Elizabeth Eliza had heard at Philadelphia how much women had done, and she felt they ought to contribute to such a cause. She had an idea, but she would not speak of it at first, not until after she had written to the lady from Philadelphia. She had often thought, in many cases, if they had asked her advice first, they might have saved trouble.

Still, how could they ask advice before they themselves knew what they wanted? It was very easy to ask advice, but you must first know what to ask about. And again: Elizabeth Eliza felt you might have ideas, but you could not always put them together. There was this idea of the water-trough, and then this idea of getting some money for it.

So she began with writing to the lady from Philadelphia. The little boys believed she spent enough for it in postage-stamps before it all came out.



Page 23

But it did come out at last that the Peterkins were to have some charades at their own house for the benefit of the needed water-trough,—tickets sold only to especial friends. Ann Maria Bromwich was to help act, because she could bring some old bonnets and gowns that had been worn by an aged aunt years ago, and which they had always kept. Elizabeth Eliza said that Solomon John would have to be a Turk, and they must borrow all the red things and Cashmere scarfs in the place. She knew people would be willing to lend things.

Agamemnon thought you ought to get in something about the Hindoos, they were such an odd people. Elizabeth Eliza said you must not have it too odd, or people would not understand it, and she did not want anything to frighten her mother. She had one word suggested by the lady from Philadelphia in her letters,—the one that had “Turk” in it,—but they ought to have two words.

“Oh yes,” Ann Maria said, “you must have two words; if the people paid for their tickets, they would want to get their money’s worth.”

Solomon John thought you might have “Hindoos”; the little boys could color their faces brown to look like Hindoos. You could have the first scene an Irishman catching a hen, and then paying the water-taxes for “dues,” and then have the little boys for Hindoos.

A great many other words were talked of, but nothing seemed to suit. There was a curtain, too, to be thought of, because the folding doors stuck when you tried to open and shut them. Agamemnon said the Pan-Elocutionists had a curtain they would probably lend John Osborne, and so it was decided to ask John Osborne to help.

If they had a curtain they ought to have a stage. Solomon John said he was sure he had boards and nails enough, and it would be easy to make a stage if John Osborne would help put it up.

All this talk was the day before the charades. In the midst of it Ann Maria went over for her old bonnets and dresses and umbrellas, and they spent the evening in trying on the various things,—such odd caps and remarkable bonnets! Solomon John said they ought to have plenty of bandboxes; if you only had bandboxes enough, a charade was sure to go off well; he had seen charades in Boston. Mrs. Peterkin said there were plenty in their attic, and the little boys brought down piles of them, and the back parlor was filled with costumes.

Ann Maria said she could bring over more things if she only knew what they were going to act. Elizabeth Eliza told her to bring anything she had,—it would all come of use.

The morning came, and the boards were collected for the stage. Agamemnon and Solomon John gave themselves to the work, and John Osborne helped zealously. He said the Pan-Elocutionists would lend a scene also. There was a great clatter of



bandboxes, and piles of shawls in corners, and such a piece of work in getting up the curtain! In the midst of it, came in the little boys, shouting, "All the tickets are sold at ten cents each!"

Page 24

“Seventy tickets sold!” exclaimed Agamemnon.

“Seven dollars for the water-trough!” said Elizabeth Eliza.

“And we do not know yet what we are going to act!” exclaimed Ann Maria.

But everybody’s attention had to be given to the scene that was going up in the background, borrowed from the Pan-Elocutionists. It was magnificent, and represented a forest.

“Where are we going to put seventy people?” exclaimed Mrs. Peterkin, venturing, dismayed, into the heaps of shavings and boards and litter.

The little boys exclaimed that a large part of the audience consisted of boys, who would not take up much room. But how much clearing and sweeping and moving of chairs was necessary before all could be made ready! It was late, and some of the people had already come to secure good seats even before the actors had assembled.

“What are we going to act?” asked Ann Maria.

“I have been so torn with one thing and another,” said Elizabeth Eliza, “I haven’t had time to think!”

“Haven’t you the word yet?” asked John Osborne, for the audience was flocking in, and the seats were filling up rapidly.

“I have got one word in my pocket,” said Elizabeth Eliza, “in the letter from the lady from Philadelphia. She sent me the parts of the word. Solomon John is to be a Turk, but I don’t yet understand the whole of the word.”

“You don’t know the word and the people are all here!” said John Osborne, impatiently.

“Elizabeth Eliza!” exclaimed Ann Maria, “Solomon John says I’m to be a Turkish slave, and I’ll have to wear a veil. Do you know where the veils are? You know I brought them over last night.”

“Elizabeth Eliza! Solomon John wants you to send him the large cashmere scarf,” exclaimed one of the little boys, coming in. “Elizabeth Eliza! you must tell us what kind of faces to make up!” cried another of the boys.

And the audience were heard meanwhile taking their seats on the other side of the thin curtain.

“You sit in front, Mrs. Bromwich, you are a little hard of hearing; sit where you can hear.”



“And let Julia Fitch come where she can see,” said another voice.

“And we have not any words for them to hear or see!” exclaimed John Osborne behind the curtain.

“Oh, I wish we’d never determined to have charades!” exclaimed Elizabeth Eliza. “Can’t we return the money!”

“They are all here; we must give them something!” said John Osborne, heroically.

“And Solomon John is almost dressed,” reported Ann Maria, winding a veil around her head.

“Why don’t we take Solomon John’s word ‘Hindoos’ for the first?” said Agamemnon.

John Osborne agreed to go in the first, hunting the “hin,” or anything, and one of the little boys took the part of the hen, with the help of a feather duster. The bell rang, and the first scene began.

It was a great success. John Osborne’s Irish was perfect. Nobody guessed it, for the hen crowed by mistake; but it received great applause.



Page 25

Mr. Peterkin came on in the second scene to receive the water-rates, and made a long speech on taxation. He was interrupted by Ann Maria as an old woman in a huge bonnet. She persisted in turning her back to the audience, and speaking so low nobody heard her; and Elizabeth Eliza, who appeared in a more remarkable bonnet, was so alarmed, she went directly back, saying she had forgotten something. But this was supposed to be the effect intended, and it was loudly cheered.

Then came a long delay, for the little boys brought out a number of their friends to be browned for Hindoos. Ann Maria played on the piano till the scene was ready. The curtain rose upon five brown boys done up in blankets and turbans.

"I am thankful that is over," said Elizabeth Eliza, "for now we can act my word. Only I don't myself know the whole."

"Never mind, let us act it," said John Osborne, "and the audience can guess the whole."

"The first syllable must be the letter P," said Elizabeth Eliza, "and we must have a school."

Agamemnon was master, and the little boys and their friends went on as scholars. All the boys talked and shouted at once, acting their idea of a school by flinging peanuts about, and scoffing at the master.

"They'll guess that to be 'row,'" said John Osborne in despair; "they'll never guess 'P'!"

The next scene was gorgeous. Solomon John, as a Turk, reclined on John Osborne's army-blanket. He had on a turban, and a long beard, and all the family shawls. Ann Maria and Elizabeth Eliza were brought in to him, veiled, by the little boys in their Hindoo costumes.

This was considered the great scene of the evening, though Elizabeth Eliza was sure she did not know what to do,—whether to kneel or sit down; she did not know whether Turkish women did sit down, and she could not help laughing whenever she looked at Solomon John. He, however, kept his solemnity. "I suppose I need not say much," he had said, "for I shall be the 'Turk who was dreaming of the hour.'" But he did order the little boys to bring sherbet, and when they brought it without ice, insisted they must have their heads cut off, and Ann Maria fainted, and the scene closed.

"What are we to do now?" asked John Osborne, warming up to the occasion.

"We must have an 'inn' scene," said Elizabeth Eliza, consulting her letter; "two inns if we can."

"We will have some travelers disgusted with one inn, and going to another," said John Osborne.



“Now is the time for the bandboxes,” said Solomon John, who, since his Turk scene was over, could give his attention to the rest of the charade.

Elizabeth Eliza and Ann Maria went on as rival hostesses, trying to draw Solomon John, Agamemnon and John Osborne into their several inns. The little boys carried valises, hand-bags, umbrellas and bandboxes. Bandbox after bandbox appeared, and when Agamemnon sat down upon his, the applause was immense. At last the curtain fell.



Page 26

“Now for the whole,” said John Osborne, as he made his way off the stage over a heap of umbrellas.

“I can’t think why the lady from Philadelphia did not send me the whole,” said Elizabeth Eliza, musing over the letter.

“Listen, they are guessing,” said John Osborne. “‘*D-ice-box.*’ I don’t wonder they get it wrong.”

“But we know it can’t be that!” exclaimed Elizabeth Eliza, in agony. “How can we act the whole if we don’t know it ourselves!”

“Oh, I see it!” said Ann Maria, clapping. “Get your whole family in for the last scene.”

Mr. and Mrs. Peterkin were summoned to the stage, and formed the background, standing on stools; in front were Agamemnon and Solomon John, leaving room for Elizabeth Eliza between; a little in advance, and in front of all, half kneeling, were the little boys in their India rubber boots.

The audience rose to an exclamation of delight, “the Peterkins!”

It was not until this moment that Elizabeth Eliza guessed the whole.

“What a tableau!” exclaimed Mr. Bromwich; “the Peterkin family guessing their own charade.”

A DOUBLE RIDDLE.[A]

BY J.G.H.

There is a word of music’s own
That lifts the soul to see and do,—
A happy word, that leaps alone
From lips by pleasure touched anew,

Which, if it join thy parted name,
O Blessed Virgin! bears a curse,
Than which the fatal midnight flame,
Or fateful war, holds nothing worse!

What is this word, with baleful charm,
To change the sweetest name we know
To one surcharged with subtile harm?—
And what the strange, new name of woe?



And if you guess this riddle well,
And speak this word in answer true,
How may it lift—I pray you tell—
The tuneful soul to see and do?

[Footnote A: The answer will be given in “Letter-Box” of January number.]

UNDER THE LILACS

BY LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

CHAPTER 1

A MYSTERIOUS DOG.

The elm-tree avenue was all overgrown, the great gate was never unlocked, and the old house had been shut up for several years. Yet voices were heard about the place, the lilacs nodded over the high wall as if they said, “We could tell fine secrets if we chose,” and the mullein outside the gate made haste to reach the keyhole that it might peep in and see what was going on.

If it had suddenly grown up like a magic bean-stalk, and looked in on a certain June day, it would have seen a droll but pleasant sight, for somebody evidently was going to have a party.



Page 27

From the gate to the porch went a wide walk, paved with smooth slabs of dark stone, and bordered with the tall bushes which met overhead, making a green roof. All sorts of neglected flowers and wild weeds grew between their stems, covering the walls of this summer parlor with the prettiest tapestry. A board, propped on two blocks of wood, stood in the middle of the walk, covered with a little plaid shawl much the worse for wear, and on it a miniature tea service was set forth with great elegance. To be sure, the tea-pot had lost its spout, the cream-jug its handle, the sugar-bowl its cover, and the cups and plates were all more or less cracked or nicked; but polite persons would not take notice of these trifling deficiencies, and none but polite persons were invited to this party.

On either side of the porch was a seat, and here a somewhat remarkable sight would have been revealed to any inquisitive eye peering through the aforesaid key-hole. Upon the left-hand seat lay seven dolls, upon the right-hand seat lay six, and so varied were the expressions of their countenances, owing to fractures, dirt, age and other afflictions, that one would very naturally have thought this a doll's hospital, and these the patients waiting for their tea. This, however, would have been a sad mistake; for, if the wind had lifted the coverings laid over them, it would have disclosed the fact that all were in full dress, and merely reposing before the feast should begin.

There was another interesting feature of the scene which would have puzzled any but those well acquainted with the manners and customs of dolls. A fourteenth rag baby, with a china head, hung by her neck from the rusty knocker in the middle of the door. A sprig of white and one of purple lilac nodded over her, a dress of yellow calico, richly trimmed with red flannel scallops, shrouded her slender form, a garland of small flowers crowned her glossy curls, and a pair of blue boots touched toes in the friendliest, if not the most graceful, manner. An emotion of grief, as well as of surprise, might well have thrilled any youthful breast at such a spectacle, for why, oh! why, was this resplendent dolly hung up there to be stared at by thirteen of her kindred? Was she a criminal, the sight of whose execution threw them flat upon their backs in speechless horror? Or was she an idol, to be adored in that humble posture? Neither, my friends. She was blonde Belinda, set, or rather hung, aloft, in the place of honor, for this was her seventh birthday, and a superb ball was about to celebrate the great event.

[Illustration: "A RAG-BABY HUNG FROM THE RUSTY KNOCKER."]



Page 28

All were evidently awaiting a summons to the festive board, but such was the perfect breeding of these dolls that not a single eye out of the whole twenty-seven (Dutch Hans had lost one of the black beads from his worsted countenance) turned for a moment toward the table, or so much as winked, as they lay in decorous rows, gazing with mute admiration at Belinda. She, unable to repress the joy and pride which swelled her sawdust bosom till the seams gaped, gave an occasional bounce as the wind waved her yellow skirts or made the blue boots dance a sort of jig upon the door. Hanging was evidently not a painful operation, for she smiled contentedly, and looked as if the red ribbon around her neck was not uncomfortably tight; therefore, if slow suffocation suited *her*, who else had any right to complain? So a pleasing silence reigned, not even broken by a snore from Dinah, the top of whose turban alone was visible above the coverlet, or a cry from baby Jane, though her bare feet stuck out in a way that would have produced shrieks from a less well-trained infant.

Presently voices were heard approaching, and through the arch which led to a side path came two little girls, one carrying a small pitcher, the other proudly bearing a basket covered with a napkin. They looked like twins, but were not—for Bab was a year older than Betty, though only an inch taller. Both had on brown calico frocks, much the worse for a week's wear, but clean pink pinafores, in honor of the occasion, made up for that, as well as the gray stockings and thick boots. Both had round rosy faces rather sunburnt, pug noses somewhat freckled, merry blue eyes, and braided tails of hair hanging down their backs like those of the dear little Kenwigses.

"Don't they look sweet?" cried Bab, gazing with maternal pride upon the left-hand row of dolls, who might appropriately have sung in chorus, "We are seven."

"Very nice; but my Belinda beats them all. I do think she is the splendor child that ever was!" And Betty set down the basket to run and embrace the suspended darling, just then kicking up her heels with joyful abandon.

"The cake can be cooling while we fix the children. It does smell perfectly delicious!" said Bab, lifting the napkin to hang over the basket, fondly regarding the little round loaf that lay inside.

"Leave some smell for me!" commanded Betty, rushing back to get her fair share of the spicy fragrance.

The pug noses sniffed it up luxuriously, and the bright eyes feasted upon the loveliness of the cake, so brown and shiny, with a tipsy-looking B in pie-crust staggering down one side, instead of sitting properly atop.

"Ma let me put it on the very last minute, and it baked so hard I couldn't pick it off. We can give Belinda that piece, so it's just as well," observed Betty, taking the lead, as her child was queen of the revel.

“Let’s set them round, so they can see too,” proposed Bab, going, with a hop, skip and jump, to collect her young family.

Page 29

Betty agreed, and for several minutes both were absorbed in seating their dolls about the table, for some of the dear things were so limp they wouldn't sit up, and others so stiff they wouldn't sit down, and all sorts of seats had to be contrived to suit the peculiarities of their spines. This arduous task accomplished, the fond mammas stepped back to enjoy the spectacle, which, I assure you, was an impressive one. Belinda sat with great dignity at the head, her hands genteelly holding a pink cambric pocket-handkerchief in her lap. Josephus, her cousin, took the foot, elegantly arrayed in a new suit of purple and green gingham, with his speaking countenance much obscured by a straw hat several sizes too large for him; while on either side sat guests of every size, complexion and costume, producing a very gay and varied effect, as all were dressed with a noble disregard of fashion.

"They will like to see us get tea. Did you forget the buns?" inquired Betty, anxiously.

"No; got them in my pocket." And Bab produced from that chaotic cupboard two rather stale and crumbly ones, saved from lunch for the fete. These were cut up and arranged in plates, forming a graceful circle around the cake, still in its basket.

"Ma couldn't spare much milk, so we must mix water with it. Strong tea isn't good for children, she says." And Bab contentedly surveyed the gill of skim-milk which was to satisfy the thirst of the company.

"While the tea draws and the cake cools let's sit down and rest; I'm so tired!" sighed Betty, dropping down on the door-step and stretching out the stout little legs which had been on the go all day; for Saturday had its tasks as well as its fun, and much business had preceded this unusual pleasure.

Bab went and sat beside her, looking idly down the walk toward the gate, where a fine cobweb shone in the afternoon sun.

"Ma says she is going over the house in a day or two, now it is warm and dry after the storm, and we may go with her. You know she wouldn't take us in the fall, 'cause we had whooping-cough and it was damp there. Now we shall see all the nice things; wont it be fun?" observed Bab, after a pause.

"Yes, indeed! Ma says there's lots of books in one room, and I can look at 'em while she goes round. May be I'll have time to read some, and then I can tell you," answered Betty, who dearly loved stories and seldom got any new ones.

"I'd rather see the old spinning-wheel up garret, and the big pictures, and the queer clothes in the blue chest. It makes me mad to have them all shut up there when we might have such fun with them. I'd just like to bang that old door down!" And Bab twisted round to give it a thump with her boots. "You needn't laugh; you know you'd like it as much as me," she added, twisting back again, rather ashamed of her impatience.



“I didn’t laugh.”

“You did! Don’t you suppose I know what laughing is?”



Page 30

"I guess I know I didn't."

"You did laugh! How darst you tell such a fib?"

"If you say that again I'll take Belinda and go right home; then what will you do?"

"I'll eat up the cake."

"No, you wont! It's mine, ma said so, and you are only company, so you'd better behave or I wont have any party at all, so now."

This awful threat calmed Bab's anger at once, and she hastened to introduce a safer subject.

"Never mind; don't let's fight before the children. Do you know ma says she will let us play in the coach-house next time it rains, and keep the key if we want to."

"Oh, goody! that's because we told her how we found the little window under the woodbine, and didn't try to go in, though we might have just as easy as not," cried Betty, appeased at once, for after a ten years' acquaintance she had grown used to Bab's peppery temper.

"I suppose the coach will be all dust and rats and spiders, but I don't care. You and the dolls can be the passengers, and I shall sit up in front and drive."

"You always do. I shall like riding better than being horse all the time with that old wooden bit in my mouth, and you jerking my arms off," said poor Betty, who was tired of being horse all the time.

"I guess we'd better go and get the water now," suggested Bab, feeling that it was not safe to encourage her sister in such complaints.

"It is not many people who would dare to leave their children all alone with such a lovely cake, and know they wouldn't pick at it," said Betty proudly, as they trotted away to the spring, each with a little tin pail in her hand.

Alas, for the faith of these too confiding mammas! They were gone about five minutes, and when they returned a sight met their astonished eyes which produced a simultaneous shriek of horror. Flat upon their faces lay the fourteen dolls, and the cake, the cherished cake, was gone!

[Illustration: BAB AND BETTY ON THEIR WAY TO THE TEA-PARTY.]

For an instant the little girls could only stand motionless, gazing at the dreadful scene. Then Bab cast her water-pail wildly away, and doubling up her fist, cried out fiercely:



“It was that Sally! She said she’d pay me for slapping her when she pinched little Mary Ann, and now she has. I’ll give it to her! You run that way. I’ll run this. Quick! quick!”

Away they went, Bab racing straight on, and bewildered Betty turning obediently round to trot in the opposite direction as fast as she could, with the water splashing all over her as she ran, for she had forgotten to put down her pail. Round the house they went, and met with a crash at the back door, but no sign of the thief appeared.

“In the lane!” shouted Bab.

“Down by the spring!” panted Betty, and off they went again, one to scramble up a pile of stones and look over the wall into the avenue, the other to scamper to the spot they had just left. Still nothing appeared but the dandelions’ innocent faces looking up at Bab, and a brown bird scared from his bath in the spring by Betty’s hasty approach.



Page 31

Back they rushed, but only to meet a new scare, which made them both cry “Ow!” and fly into the porch for refuge.

A strange dog was sitting calmly among the ruins of the feast, licking his lips after basely eating up the last poor bits of bun when he had bolted the cake, basket and all.

“Oh, the horrid thing!” cried Bab, longing to give battle but afraid, for the dog was a peculiar as well as a dishonest animal.

“He looks like our China poodle, doesn’t he?” whispered Betty, making herself as small as possible behind her more valiant sister.

He certainly did; for, though much dirtier than the well-washed China dog, this live one had the same tassel at the end of his tail, ruffles of hair round his ankles, and a body shaven behind and curly before. His eyes, however, were yellow, instead of glassy black, like the other’s, his red nose worked as he cocked it up, as if smelling for more cakes in the most impudent manner, and never during the three years he had stood on the parlor mantel-piece had the China poodle done the surprising feats with which this mysterious dog now proceeded to astonish the little girls almost out of their wits.

First he sat up, put his fore-paws together, and begged prettily; then he suddenly flung his hind legs into the air, and walked about with great ease. Hardly had they recovered from this shock when the hind legs came down, the fore legs went up, and he paraded in a soldierly manner to and fro, like a sentinel on guard. But the crowning performance was when he took his tail in his mouth and waltzed down the walk, over the prostrate dolls, to the gate and back again, barely escaping a general upset of the ravaged table.

Bab and Betty could only hold each other tight and squeal with delight, for never had they seen anything so funny; but when the gymnastics ended, and the dizzy dog came and stood on the step before them barking loudly, with that pink nose of his sniffing at their feet and his queer eyes fixed sharply upon them, their amusement turned to fear again, and they dared not stir.

“Whish, go away!” commanded Bab.

“Scat!” meekly quavered Betty.

To their great relief the poodle gave several more inquiring barks, and then vanished as suddenly as he appeared. With one impulse the children ran to see what became of him, and after a brisk scamper through the orchard saw the tasseled tail disappear under the fence at the far end.

“Where *do* you s’pose he came from?” asked Betty, stopping to rest on a big stone.



“I’d like to know where he’s gone, too, and give him a good beating, old thief,” scolded Bab, remembering their wrongs.

“Oh dear, yes! I hope the cake burnt him dreadfully if he did eat it,” groaned Betty, sadly remembering the dozen good raisins she chopped up, and the “lots of ’lasses” Ma put into the dear lost loaf.

“The party’s all spoilt, so we may as well go home,” and Bab mournfully led the way back.



Page 32

Betty puckered up her face to cry, but burst out laughing in spite of her woe, "It was so funny to see him spin round and walk on his head! I wish he'd do it all over again; don't you?"

"Yes; but I hate him just the same. I wonder what ma will say when—why! why!"—and Bab stopped short in the arch, with her eyes as round and almost as large as the blue saucers on the tea-tray.

"What is it? oh, what is it?" cried Betty, all ready to run away if any new terror appeared.

"Look! there! it's come back!" said Bab in an awe-stricken whisper, pointing to the table.

Betty did look and her eyes opened even wider,—as well they might,—for there, just where they first put it, was the lost cake, unhurt, unchanged, except that the big B. had coasted a little further down the gingerbread hill.

CHAPTER II.

WHERE THEY FOUND HIS MASTER.

Neither spoke for a minute, astonishment being too great for words; then, as by one impulse, both stole up and touched the cake with a timid little finger, quite prepared to see it fly away in some mysterious and startling manner. It remained sitting tranquilly in the basket, however, and the children drew a long breath of relief, for, though they did not believe in fairies, the late performances did seem rather like witchcraft.

"The dog didn't eat it!"

"Sally didn't take it!"

"How do you know?"

"*She* never would have put it back."

"Who did?"

"Can't tell, but I forgive 'em."

"What shall we do now?" asked Betty, feeling as if it would be very difficult to settle down to a quiet tea-party after such unusual excitement.

"Eat that cake up just as fast as ever we can," and Bab divided the contested delicacy with one chop of the big knife, bound to make sure of her own share at all events.



It did not take long, for they washed it down with sips of milk and ate as fast as possible, glancing round all the while to see if the queer dog was coming again.

“There! now I’d like to see any one take *my* cake away,” said Bab, defiantly crunching her half of the pie-crust B.

“Or mine either,” coughed Betty, choking over a raisin that wouldn’t go down in a hurry.

“We might as well clear up, and play there had been an earthquake,” suggested Bab, feeling that some such convulsion of nature was needed to explain satisfactorily the demoralized condition of her family.

“That will be splendid. My poor Linda was knocked right over on her nose. Darlin’ child, come to your mother and be fixed,” purred Betty, lifting the fallen idol from a grove of chickweed, and tenderly brushing the dirt from Belinda’s heroically smiling face.

“She’ll have croup to-night as sure as the world. We’d better make up some squills out of this sugar and water,” said Bab, who dearly loved to dose the dollies all round.



Page 33

"P'r'aps she will, but you needn't begin to sneeze yet awhile. I can sneeze for my own children, thank you, ma'am," returned Betty, sharply, for her usually amiable spirit had been ruffled by the late occurrences.

"I didn't sneeze! I've got enough to do to talk and cry and cough for my own poor dears without bothering about yours," cried Bab, even more ruffled than her sister.

"Then who did? I heard a real, live sneeze just as plain as anything," and Betty looked up to the green roof above her, as if the sound came from that direction.

A yellow-bird sat swinging and chirping on the tall lilac-bush, but no other living thing was in sight.

"Birds don't sneeze, do they?" asked Betty, eying little Goldy suspiciously.

"You goose! of course they don't."

"Well, I should just like to know who is laughing and sneezing round here. May be it is the dog," suggested Betty, looking relieved.

"I never heard of a dog's laughing, except Mother Hubbard's. This is such a queer one, may be he can, though. I wonder where he went to?" and Bab took a patient survey down both the side paths, quite longing to see the funny poodle again.

"I know where *I'm* going to," said Betty, piling the dolls into her apron with more haste than care. "I'm going right straight home to tell Ma all about it. I don't like such actions, and I'm afraid to stay."

"I aint; but I guess it is going to rain, so I shall have to go anyway," answered Bab, taking advantage of the black clouds rolling up the sky, for *she* scorned to own that she was afraid of anything.

Clearing the table in a summary manner by catching up the four corners of the cloth, Bab put the rattling bundle into her apron, flung her children on the top, and pronounced herself ready to depart. Betty lingered an instant to pick up odds and ends that might be spoilt by the rain, and when she turned from taking the red halter off the knocker, two lovely pink roses lay on the stone steps.

"Oh, Bab, just see! Here's the very ones we wanted. Wasn't it nice of the wind to blow 'em down?" she called out, picking them up and running after her sister, who had strolled moodily along, still looking about her for her sworn foe, Sally Folsom.

The flowers soothed the feelings of the little girls, because they had longed for them, and bravely resisted the temptation to climb up the trellis and help themselves, since

their mother had forbidden such feats, owing to a fall Bab got trying to reach a honeysuckle from the vine which ran all over the porch.

Home they went and poured out their tale, to Mrs. Moss's great amusement, for she saw in it only some playmate's prank, and was not much impressed by the mysterious sneeze and laugh.

"We'll have a grand rummage Monday, and find out what is going on over there," was all she said.



Page 34

But Mrs. Moss could not keep her promise, for on Monday it still rained, and the little girls paddled off to school like a pair of young ducks, enjoying every puddle they came to, since India rubber boots made wading a delicious possibility. They took their dinner, and at noon regaled a crowd of comrades with an account of the mysterious dog, who appeared to be haunting the neighborhood, as several of the other children had seen him examining their back yards with interest. He had begged of them, but to none had he exhibited his accomplishments except Bab and Betty, and they were therefore much set up, and called him "our dog" with an air. The cake transaction remained a riddle, for Sally Folsom solemnly declared that she was playing tag in Mamie Snow's barn at that identical time. No one had been near the old house but the two children, and no one could throw any light upon that singular affair.

It produced a great effect, however; for even "teacher" was interested, and told such amazing tales of a juggler she once saw that doughnuts were left forgotten in dinner-baskets, and wedges of pie remained suspended in the air for several minutes at a time, instead of vanishing with miraculous rapidity as usual. At afternoon recess, which the girls had first, Bab nearly dislocated every joint of her little body trying to imitate the poodle's antics. She had practiced on her bed with great success, but the wood-shed floor was a different thing, as her knees and elbows soon testified.

"It looked just as easy as anything; I don't see how he did it," she said, coming down with a bump after vainly attempting to walk on her hands.

"My gracious, there he is this very minute!" cried Betty, who sat on a little wood-pile near the door.

There was a general rush, and sixteen small girls gazed out into the rain as eagerly as if to behold Cinderella's magic coach, instead of one forlorn dog trotting by through the mud.

"Oh, do call him in and make him dance!" cried the girls, all chirping at once, till it sounded as if a flock of sparrows had taken possession of the shed.

"I will call him, he knows *me*," and Bab scrambled up, forgetting how she had chased the poodle and called him names two days ago.

He evidently had not forgotten, for though he paused and looked wistfully at them, he would not approach, but stood dripping in the rain with his frills much bedraggled, while his tasseled tail wagged slowly, and his pink nose pointed suggestively to the pails and baskets, nearly empty now.

"He's hungry; give him something to eat, and then he'll see that we don't want to hurt him," suggested Sally, starting a contribution with her last bit of bread and butter.



Bab caught up her new pail, and collected all the odds and ends, then tried to beguile the poor beast in to eat and be comforted. But he only came as far as the door, and sitting up, begged with such imploring eyes that Bab put down the pail and stepped back, saying pitifully:



Page 35

“The poor thing is starved; let him eat all he wants and we wont touch him.”

The girls drew back with little clucks of interest and compassion, but I regret to say their charity was not rewarded as they expected, for, the minute the coast was clear, the dog marched boldly up, seized the handle of the pail in his mouth, and was off with it, galloping down the road at a great pace. Shrieks arose from the children, especially Bab and Betty, basely bereaved of their new dinner-pail; but no one could follow the thief, for the bell rang, and in they went, so much excited that the boys rushed tumultuously forth to discover the cause.

By the time school was over the sun was out, and Bab and Betty hastened home to tell their wrongs and be comforted by mother, who did it most effectually.

“Nevermind, dears, I’ll get you another pail, if he doesn’t bring it back as he did before. As it is too wet for you to play out, you shall go and see the old coach-house as I promised. Keep on your rubbers and come along.”

This delightful prospect much assuaged their woe, and away they went, skipping gayly down the graveled path, while Mrs. Moss followed, with skirts well tucked up, and a great bunch of keys in her hand, for she lived at the Lodge and had charge of the premises.

The small door of the coach-house was fastened inside, but the large one had a padlock on it, and this being quickly unfastened, one half swung open, and the little girls ran in, too eager and curious even to cry out when they found themselves at last in possession of the long-coveted old carriage. A dusty, musty concern enough, but it had a high seat, a door, steps that let down, and many other charms which rendered it most desirable in the eyes of children.

Bab made straight for the box and Betty for the door, but both came tumbling down faster than they went up, when, from the gloom of the interior came a shrill bark, and a low voice saying quickly: “Down, Sancho, down!”

“Who is there?” demanded Mrs. Moss, in a stern tone, backing toward the door with both children clinging to her skirts.

The well-known curly white head was popped out of the broken window, and a mild whine seemed to say, “Don’t be alarmed, ladies; we wont hurt you.”

“Come out this minute, or I shall have to come to get you,” called Mrs. Moss, growing very brave all of a sudden as she caught sight of a pair of small, dusty shoes under the coach.

“Yes ’m, I’m coming as fast as I can,” answered a meek voice, as what appeared to be a bundle of rags leaped out of the dark, followed by the poodle, who immediately sat



down at the bare feet of his owner with a watchful air, as if ready to assault any one who might approach too near.

“Now, then, who are you, and how did you get here?” asked Mrs. Moss, trying to speak sternly, though her motherly eyes were already full of pity as they rested on the forlorn little figure before her.



Page 36

CHAPTER III.

BEN.

"Please 'm, my name is Ben Brown, and I'm traveling."

"Where are you going?"

"Anywheres to get work."

"What sort of work can you do?"

"All kinds. I'm used to horses."

"Bless me! such a little chap as you?"

"I'm twelve, ma'am, and can ride anything on four legs;" and the small boy gave a nod that seemed to say, "Bring on your Cruisers. I'm ready for 'em."

"Haven't you got any folks?" asked Mrs. Moss, amused but still anxious, for the sunburnt face was very thin, the eyes big with hunger or pain, and the ragged figure leaned on the wheel as if too weak or weary to stand alone.

"No,'m, not of my own; and the people I was left with beat me so, I—run away." The last words seemed to bolt out against his will, as if the woman's sympathy irresistibly won the child's confidence.

"Then I don't blame you. But how did you get here?"

"I was so tired I couldn't go any further, and I thought the folks up here at the big house would take me in. But the gate was locked, and I was so discouraged, I jest lay down outside and give up."

"Poor little soul, I don't wonder," said Mrs. Moss, while the children looked deeply interested at mention of *their* gate.

The boy drew a long breath, and his eyes began to twinkle in spite of his forlorn state as he went on, while the dog pricked up his ears at mention of his name:

"While I was restin' I heard some one come along inside, and I peeked, and saw them little girls playin'. The vittles looked so nice I couldn't help wantin' 'em; but I didn't take nothin',—it was Sancho, and he took the cake for me."

Bab and Betty gave a gasp and stared reproachfully at the poodle, who half closed his eyes with a meek, unconscious look that was very droll.



“And you made him put it back?” cried Bab.

“No; I did it myself. Got over the gate when you was racin’ after Sanch, and then clim’ up on the porch and hid,” said the boy, with a grin.

“And you laughed?” asked Bab.

“Yes.”

“And sneezed?” added Betty.

“Yes.”

“And threw down the roses?” cried both.

“Yes; and you liked ’em, didn’t you?”

“Course we did! What made you hide?” said Bab.

“I wasn’t fit to be seen,” muttered Ben, glancing at his tatters as if he’d like to dive out of sight into the dark coach again.

“How came you *here*?” demanded Mrs. Moss, suddenly remembering her responsibility.

“I heard them talk about a little winder and a shed, and when they’d gone I found it and come in. The glass was broke, and I only pulled the nail out. I haven’t done a mite of harm sleepin’ here two nights. I was so tuckered out I couldn’t go on nohow, though I tried a Sunday.”



Page 37

“And came back again?”

“Yes, 'm; it was so lonesome in the rain, and this place seemed kinder like home, and I could hear 'em talkin' outside, and Sanch he found vittles, and I was pretty comfortable.”

“Well, I never!” ejaculated Mrs. Moss, whisking up a corner of her apron to wipe her eyes, for the thought of the poor little fellow alone there for two days and nights with no bed but musty straw, no food but the scraps a dog brought him, was too much for her. “Do you know what I'm going to do with you?” she asked, trying to look calm and cool, with a great tear running down her wholesome, red cheek, and a smile trying to break out at the corners of her lips.

“No, ma'am; and I dunno as I care. Only don't be hard on Sanch; he's been real good to me, and we're fond of one another; aint us, old chap?” answered the boy, with his arm around the dog's neck, and an anxious look which he had not worn for himself.

[Illustration: GETTING BEN'S SUPPER. (SEE NEXT PAGE.)]

“I'm going to take you right home, and wash and feed and put you in a good bed, and to-morrow—well, we'll see what'll happen then,” said Mrs. Moss, not quite sure about it herself.

“You're very kind, ma'am. I'll be glad to work for you. Aint you got a horse I can see to?” asked the boy, eagerly.

“Nothing but hens and a cat.”

Bab and Betty burst out laughing when their mother said that, and Ben gave a faint giggle, as if he would like to join in if he only had the strength to do it. But his legs shook under him, and he felt a queer dizziness; so he could only hold on to Sancho, and blink at the light like a young owl.

“Come right along, child. Run on, girls, and put the rest of the broth to warming, and fill the kettle. I'll see to the boy,” commanded Mrs. Moss, waving off the children, and going up to feel the pulse of her new charge, for it suddenly occurred to her that he might be sick and not safe to take home.

The hand he gave her was very thin, but clean and cool, and the black eyes were clear though hollow, for the poor lad was half starved.

“I'm awful shabby, but I aint dirty. I had a washin' in the rain last night, and I've jest about lived on water lately,” he explained, wondering why she looked at him so hard.

“Put out your tongue.”



He did so, but took it in again to say quickly:

“I aint sick—I’m only hungry; for I haven’t had a mite but what Sanch brought for three days, and I always go halves; don’t I, Sanch?”

The poodle gave a shrill bark, and vibrated excitedly between the door and his master as if he understood all that was going on, and recommended a speedy march toward the promised food and shelter. Mrs. Moss took the hint, and bade the boy follow her at once and bring his “things” with him.

“I aint got any. Some big fellers took away my bundle, else I wouldn’t look so bad. There’s only this. I’m sorry Sanch took it, and I’d like to give it back if I knew whose it was,” said Ben, bringing the new dinner pail out from the depths of the coach where he had gone to housekeeping.

Page 38

“That’s soon done; it’s mine, and you’re welcome to the bits your queer dog ran off with. Come along, I must lock up,” and Mrs. Moss clanked her keys suggestively.

Ben limped out, leaning on a broken hoe-handle, for he was stiff after two days in such damp lodgings, as well as worn out with a fortnight’s wandering through sun and rain. Sancho was in great spirits, evidently feeling that their woes were over and his foraging expeditions at an end, for he frisked about his master with yelps of pleasure, or made playful darts at the ankles of his benefactress, which caused her to cry, “Whish!” and “Scat!” and shake her skirts at him as if he were a cat or hen.

A hot fire was roaring in the stove under the broth-skillet and tea-kettle, and Betty was poking in more wood, with a great smirch of black on her chubby cheek, while Bab was cutting away at the loaf as if bent on slicing her own fingers off. Before Ben knew what he was about, he found himself in the old rocking-chair devouring bread and butter as only a hungry boy can, with Sancho close by gnawing a mutton-bone like a ravenous wolf in sheep’s clothing.

While the new-comers were thus happily employed, Mrs. Moss beckoned the little girls out of the room, and gave them both an errand.

“Bab, you run over to Mrs. Barton’s, and ask her for any old duds Billy don’t want; and Betty, you go to the Cutters, and tell Miss Clarindy I’d like a couple of the shirts we made at last sewing circle. Any shoes, or a hat, or socks, would come handy, for the poor dear hasn’t a whole thread on him.”

Away went the children full of anxiety to clothe their beggar, and so well did they plead his cause with the good neighbors, that Ben hardly knew himself when he emerged from the back bedroom half an hour later, clothed in Billy Barton’s faded flannel suit, with an unbleached cotton shirt out of the Dorcas basket, and a pair of Milly Cutter’s old shoes on his feet.

Sancho also had been put in better trim, for, after his master had refreshed himself with a warm bath, he gave his dog a good scrub, while Mrs. Moss set a stitch here and there in the new old clothes, and Sancho re-appeared, looking more like the china poodle than ever, being as white as snow, his curls well brushed up, and his tassely tail waving proudly over his back.

Feeling eminently respectable and comfortable, the wanderers humbly presented themselves, and were greeted with smiles of approval from the little girls and a hospitable welcome from “Ma,” who set them near the stove to dry, as both were decidedly damp after their ablutions.

“I declare I shouldn’t have known you!” exclaimed the good woman, surveying the boy with great satisfaction; for, though still very thin and tired, the lad had a tidy look that



pleased her, and a lively way of moving about in his clothes, like an eel in a skin rather too big for him. The merry black eyes seemed to see everything, the voice had an honest sound, and the sun-burnt face looked several years younger since the unnatural despondency had gone out of it.

Page 39

"It's very nice, and me and Sanch are lots obliged, ma'am," murmured Ben, getting red and bashful under the three pairs of friendly eyes fixed upon him.

Bab and Betty were doing up the tea-things with unusual dispatch, so that they might entertain their guest, and just as Ben spoke Bab dropped a cup. To her great surprise no smash followed, for, bending quickly, the boy caught it as it fell, and presented it to her on the back of his hand with a little bow.

"Gracious! how could you do it?" asked Bab, looking as if she thought there was magic about it.

"That's nothing; look here," and taking two plates Ben sent them spinning up into the air, catching and throwing so rapidly that Bab and Betty stood with their mouths open, as if to swallow the plates should they fall, while Mrs. Moss, with her dish-cloth suspended, watched the antics of her crockery with a housewife's anxiety.

"That does beat all!" was the only exclamation she had time to make, for, as if desirous of showing his gratitude in the only way he could, Ben took several clothes-pins from a basket near by, sent several saucers twirling up, caught them on the pins, balanced the pins on chin, nose, forehead, and went walking about with a new and peculiar sort of toad-stool ornamenting his countenance.

[Illustration: "BEN PRESENTED IT TO HER ON THE BACK OF HIS HAND."]

The children were immensely tickled, and Mrs. Moss was so amused she would have lent her best soup-tureen if he had expressed a wish for it. But Ben was too tired to show all his accomplishments at once, and he soon stopped, looking as if he almost regretted having betrayed that he possessed any.

"I guess you've been in the juggling business," said Mrs. Moss, with a wise nod, for she saw the same look on his face as when he said his name was Ben Brown,—the look of one who was not telling the whole truth.

"Yes, 'm. I used to help Senior Pedro, the Wizard of the World, and I learned some of his tricks," stammered Ben, trying to seem innocent.

"Now, look here, boy, you'd better tell me the whole story, and tell it true, or I shall have to send you up to Judge Allen. I wouldn't like to do that, for he is a harsh sort of a man; so, if you haven't done anything bad, you needn't be afraid to speak out, and I'll do what I can for you," said Mrs. Moss, rather sternly, as she went and sat down in her rocking-chair, as if about to open the court.

"I *haven't* done anything bad, and I *aint* afraid, only I don't want to go back; and if I tell, may be you'll let 'em know where I be," said Ben, much distressed between his longing to confide in his new friend and his fear of his old enemies.



“If they abused you, of course I wouldn’t. Tell the truth and I’ll stand by you. Girls, you go for the milk.”

“Oh, Ma, do let us stay! We’ll never tell, truly, truly!” cried Bab and Betty, full of dismay at being sent off when secrets were about to be divulged.



Page 40

"I don't mind 'em," said Ben, handsomely.

"Very well, only hold your tongues. Now, boy, where did you come from?" said Mrs. Moss, as the little girls hastily sat down together on their private and particular bench opposite their mother, brimming with curiosity and beaming with satisfaction at the prospect before them.

(To be continued.)

A CHAT ABOUT POTTERY.

BY EDWIN C. TAYLOR.

"Did you see those funny little china figures at the Centennial when you were there?" asked Willie of his cousin Al on their way home from school one day.

"What figures, Will? Do you mean those large red clay things from England, or the Chinese figures that Mr. Wu had at his place?" said Al.

"I don't mean either; I said small figures. Don't you remember a splendid show of pottery near the music-stand in the main building?" asked Will.

"Yes," said Al. "Well, there was a lot of figures of London street people, and some were the funniest-looking things you ever saw."

"I saw so much china and 'pottery,' as you call it, that I hardly recollect any of it. But 'pottery,' I thought, meant merely flower-pots and other ordinary stone-ware?"

[Illustration: LONDON CABMAN (ROYAL WORCESTER PORCELAIN)]

"Why, no," said Willie; "it means anything that is formed of earth and hardened by fire. I heard Uncle Jack say so, and he knows, doesn't he?" said Willie, decidedly.

"Of course; but people do call these things 'china' or 'porcelain' as well as 'pottery,' don't they?"

"Yes; but Uncle Jack says 'pottery' means all those together, and 'porcelain,' 'majolica,' and other names like that are names of different kinds of pottery," answered Willie.

"Well," said Al, "let's ask Uncle Jack to tell us all about it. What do you say?"

"Yes; let's ask him this very night."



When the lads reached home they told their plan to Willie's sister Matie, and then all three determined to carry it out.

"Rap-a-tap, tap," sounded briskly at the library door after supper. "Come in," was the response, and in bounded the three children, their faces lighted up with smiles at the prospect of spending an evening with Uncle Jack.

"Welcome, youngsters," said he, in a cheery tone. "But you look as if you were expecting something; what is it?"

"Oh, Uncle Jack, we want you to tell us all about pottery," cried the boys.

"Yes, please do," chimed in Matie.

"All about pottery? Why, my dear children, that's very like asking me to tell you all about the whole civilized world, for a complete history of one would be almost a history of the other; and I could hardly do that, you know," said Uncle Jack, with a smile.

"Willie said you could talk about pottery all night," cried Matie.

"And so I might, dear, and not get further than the ABC of its history, after all," answered Uncle Jack.



Page 41

“But how many kinds are there, uncle?” asked Will.

“That question demands an answer that must teach something,” said Uncle Jack. “There are two general kinds.”

“Why, I saw a thousand kinds at the Centennial,” interrupted Al, with a wise look.

[Illustration: CHINESE DOG (ROYAL WORCESTER PORCELAIN)]

“That may be,” said his uncle. “But then, too, you saw a thousand kinds of people, and yet all those people were either men or women; so all pottery comes under the two general classes of ‘hard paste’ and ‘soft paste.’”

“Why, none of it was soft, Uncle Jack, was it? I thought it was all baked hard,” said Will, looking incredulous.

[Illustration: TEA-STAND (ROYAL WORCESTER PORCELAIN)]

“So all pottery *is* baked hard, for, until it is made hard by firing, it is only wet clay and sand,—in pretty shapes, perhaps, but not fit for any use or ornament,—and is not yet pottery.”

“Then why is it called ‘soft?’”

“You’ve seen pieces of stone that you could grind to powder under your heel? You’d call them ‘soft.’ Other pieces you couldn’t crush, and you’d call them ‘hard.’ That is something like what is meant by ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ applied to pottery,—at least, ‘soft’ doesn’t mean soft like putty.”

“But if it’s all baked, why isn’t it all hard alike?” asked Will.

“Because different clays are used, and different degrees of heat applied. At one time we get a kind of pottery that can be scratched with a knife, at another a ware too hard to be so scratched; the one is called ‘soft paste’ and the other ‘hard paste.’”

The boys seemed to be satisfied with this explanation.

“Uncle, didn’t you see at the Centennial some funny little figures representing all sorts of London street-people?” asked Will.

“Yes, and I brought one with me, I think. Ah! here’s one,” he said, showing them a droll little man about four inches high, “and it looks very like a London cabman—or ‘cabby,’ as he is called.”

“He’s very homely,” said Matie. “Where was he made, Uncle Jack?”



Her uncle turned the figure over, and, looking at a small round impression on the under side, answered: "At the Royal Worcester Works in England, where some of the best of modern porcelain has been made."

"Is that hard paste or soft, Uncle Jack?" asked Willie, while Al, as if inclined to test the matter, began a search in his pockets for a knife.

"This is hard paste porcelain; it is 'translucent,'—that is, it shows the light through," and he held the little cabman before the lamp.

"Here's another piece from the same factory," continued he, selecting a second specimen from the cabinet. "This is a copy of the Chinese 'conventional dog,' made of blue 'crackle-ware.' You see, the glaze is cracked all over the surface," he added.

"Who ever saw a blue dog?" cried Matie.



Page 42

“In life, no one, my dear; but there are many things in Chinese art that are not much like living objects.”

[Illustration: DRESDEN CHINA.]

“I suppose you have all heard of Dresden china,” presently continued her uncle.

“Oh yes, sir!” cried Al. “Aunt Susie had a Dresden tea-pot that belonged to her grandmother, and she said the tea always tasted better out of it than from anything else.”

“Well, here is an excellent French copy of an old Dresden figure. It is a pretty flower-girl. See how gracefully she reaches for a nosegay from her basket. I have seen bouquets of Dresden porcelain that you could hardly distinguish from real flowers,” said Uncle Jack.

“You’d hardly think that such a beautiful thing was made from common earth,” said Will.

“Nor is it,” said his uncle. “This kind of china is made from a very fine and very rare clay that, for a long time, was found only in China and the Korean islands; but about a hundred and sixty years ago, a noted chemist of Meissen, in Saxony, named Boettcher, discovered a bed of it there, and manufactured the first true porcelain made in Europe,” said Uncle Jack.

[Illustration: TERRA COTTA VASE.]

“Why couldn’t they get the fine clay from China and make their porcelain anywhere?” asked Will.

“Because the Chinese jealously kept all their clay to themselves,” answered Uncle Jack.

“How did that man come to discover where the clay was, and if it was of the right kind?” asked Al.

“By a strange chance. According to the fashion of the time, men powdered their hair, using wheat flour for that purpose. One day a neighbor of the chemist, in traveling an unfrequented part of the country, observed on his horse’s hoofs some white sticky clay, and it occurred to him that this white clay, dried and powdered, would make an excellent and cheap substitute for wheat flour as a hair powder. So he carried a little home with him, and some of it finally reached Boettcher. The chemist found it extremely heavy, and, fearing the presence of some metal hurtful to the skin, he tested the clay in his laboratory. To his surprise and joy this white hair-powder proved itself possessed of the same qualities as the veritable Chinese *kaolin*, as their clay is called.”

[Illustration: MARK OF DRESDEN CHINA.]

[Illustration: MARK OF WORCESTER PORCELAIN.]

“Why, that sounds like a story,” said Matie.

“Here now,” said Uncle Jack, “is a vase; that might carry the mind back thousands of years, to the time when bodies were burned instead of buried, and the ashes kept in just such urns as this.”

“Is that vase thousands of years old?” asked Matie.

“No, dear; this vase is only modeled after the ancient cinerary urns, as they were called, and was made a year or two ago by Ipsen, of Copenhagen.”

“That isn’t porcelain, is it, uncle?” asked Al.



Page 43

“No, this is ‘terra cotta,’ which is Italian for ‘earth cooked.’ Those beautiful lines of color and gilding are painted on the surface.”

“Did you ever see any real antique vases, uncle?” asked Willie.

“Why, certainly. There are some in the Cesnola collection at our Metropolitan Museum of Art in Fourteenth street that are known to have been made 1,400 years before the Christian era. They were found on the island of Cyprus, in the Mediterranean Sea, by General Di Cesnola, who dug up a great many articles,—statues, ornaments of gold, silver and bronze, beautiful glass bottles, and many domestic utensils. I saw a cullender made of such earthenware as we have in the kitchen at this day; it had been used as a milk-strainer, and particles of dried milk were still clinging to its sides, after lying buried more than three thousand years.”

“Oh, we must go and see them!” cried Matie and the boys.

“Yes, you certainly should go,” said their uncle. “You would see some very curious things there, and the elegant forms of many of the articles would show you that a love for beauty has existed almost as long as man has lived.”

“You were thinking of ancient times when you said the history of pottery was almost that of the civilized world; weren’t you, uncle?” asked Will.

[Illustration: JEWELLED PORCELAIN.]

“Yes,” answered his uncle, taking from his cabinet a small jug covered with rich gilding, and glistening as if set with precious stones.

“Oh, isn’t that lovely?” cried Matie.

“Well, yes; some people think that this jeweled porcelain, as it is called, is among the choicest of Copeland’s works.”

“Whose, sir?”

“Copeland, of Stoke-upon-Trent, where are some of the largest potteries in England.”

“But don’t you like it, uncle?” asked Matie.

“I do admire it very much, Matie; but not so much as some more simple objects that I have. Here is something that will explain my meaning,” he added, taking from the cabinet a little vase of grayish-brown with darker indented lines drawn in the form of small animals, flowers and foliage.



“Oh, I’ve seen ever so many pieces like that, and I thought they were common stone-ware, the same as the kitchen dishes,” said Al.

“They are of common clay, it is true, but look at the drawing of the figures,” said his uncle, pointing to the tracery upon the surface of the vase.

“Why, yes; it almost seems as if that little rabbit would run away, it is so life-like,” said Willie.

“It was not only for its beauty that I valued this vase, but for the story that it tells,” said Uncle Jack. “In the first place it tells that the simple earth we walk upon can be made by man into works of enduring beauty.”

“Where was that vase made, uncle?” asked Willie.

“At the Doulton Works, Lambeth, England.”

“What is the rest of the story about it?” inquired Al.



Page 44

“For many years, common drain-pipes and building-tiles were the only things made at the Doulton works; but some of the pottery people went to an art school, and they thought it would be a good idea to ornament some of the common things they made with the designs they had learned to draw at school. So, with a bit of pointed stick, they made some of their favorite pictures on the soft clay objects; and when these were fired, the glaze flowed into the lines, making them darker than the other parts, and thus the drawings showed plainly.”

[Illustration: DOULTON WARE.]

“And since they found that out, have they given up making common pipes and tiles?” asked Willie, with a look of interest.

“They still make quantities of those things at the Doulton works, but the young men and women who had received drawing lessons and applied their knowledge so well are the authors, I might almost say, of a new style of artistic pottery,” said Uncle Jack, in reply.

“Why, that was splendid, wasn’t it?” cried Matie.

“Indeed it was a triumph not only for them, but for art itself, and it shows what a good influence art has on even the humblest people,” said Uncle Jack. “Now can you see why I did not value my little vase most for its beauty?”

“Oh yes, sir! for when you see it, you think of the potters who became artists,” said Will.

“Yes, and I never see any work of art or of patient industry without trying to understand the meaning its maker meant it to carry, and to remember the toils that were perhaps endured in its production,” replied his uncle. Then, turning to Matie, he said: “I brought this little ‘English pug-dog’ for you, Matie. He doesn’t bite, and you’ll not need to give him any food,” and he put upon the table a comical little porcelain dog with a wry nose.

“Oh! isn’t it funny? What an ugly black nose it has!” cried Matie. “Will the black come off?”

“Oh, no!”

“Why not?” asked Al.

“Because it’s fired; that is, after having been painted, the dog was placed in a furnace and heated so as to melt the coloring matter, which had been mixed with other ingredients, so that it flowed on the surface, and cooled hard like glass.”

[Illustration: MAJOLICA PLATE FROM CASTELLANI COLLECTION.]

“Are the colors like those I have in my paint-box?” asked Willie.



“No. They put the color on, worked up with what is called a flux, and the mixture has the appearance of thin mud, showing no color at all; the different tints are seen only after ‘firing.’”

[Illustration: ENGLISH PUG IN PORCELAIN.]

“How can they tell what it’s going to look like, if they don’t see the color?”

“That is one of the nice points of the ‘ceramic art,’ and much skill and fine imagination are required to produce some of the wonderful combinations of color seen upon Italian majolica.”

“Why do they call it majolica?” asked Al.



Page 45

“The name is derived from the Spanish island of Majorca in the Mediterranean Sea, one of the places in Europe where glazed pottery was first made. About the twelfth century, some Moorish potters had settled there and carried their art with them.”

“Did you ever see any of the old Italian majolica, uncle?” asked Al.

“Yes; in the splendid Castellani collection there are some of the very best specimens of the finest majolica ever made,—that produced in the fifteenth century by Giorgio Andreoli of Gubbio, and others who followed him.”

“Where is Gubbio?” asked Al.

“In Italy.”

“Is the Castellani collection in Italy?”

“No, it’s at the Metropolitan Museum, too; but only on loan at present, though an effort is being made to purchase and keep it in this country forever. I hope it will be successful, for it is a grand collection. But I must tell you that when the French came to manufacture majolica, most of which by that time was made in the little Italian town of Faenza, they called the ware *faience*, after it. This name is applied to most soft paste glazed pottery, while majolica is a ware that has a peculiar luster, and in different lights displays all the colors of the rainbow. Much ordinary glazed, unlustered pottery is incorrectly called majolica, however.”

“How do they make the luster, uncle?”

“By coating the ware with certain metallic oxides, which, at the last of the many necessary firings, diffuses a glaze over the surface.”

“You said the painting was one of the ‘nice points of the ceramic art,’ uncle. What does ‘ceramic’ mean?” asked Willie.

“It is sometimes spelled K-e-r-a-m-i-c, *keramic*, and comes from the Greek word *cheramos*, signifying ‘potters’ clay,’ and hence, in a general sense, pottery of every kind and methods of producing it.”

Here Matie, who had been hugging her little pug for some time, began to grow very sleepy, so Uncle Jack dismissed the children with a “good-night” all around.

The door closed softly, and the little ones ran off to their beds, while Uncle Jack leaned back in his easy chair in a pleasant reverie, which we will leave him to enjoy.



POEMS BY TWO LITTLE AMERICAN GIRLS.

[ELAINE AND DORA READ GOODALE, the two sisters some of whose poems are here given for the benefit of the readers of ST. NICHOLAS, are children of thirteen and ten years of age.

Their home, where their infancy and childhood have been passed, is on a large and isolated farm, lying upon the broad slopes of the beautiful Berkshire hills of western Massachusetts, and is quaintly called "Sky Farm."

Here, in a simple country life, divided between books and nature, they began, almost as soon as they began to talk, to express in verse what they saw and felt, rhyme and rhythm seeming to come by instinct. Living largely out-of-doors, vigorous and healthful in body as in mind, they draw pleasure and instruction from all about them.



Page 46

One of their chief delights is to wander over the lovely hills and meadows adjoining Sky Farm. Peeping into mossy dells, where wild flowers love to hide, hunting the early arbutus, the queen harebell, or the blue gentian, they learn the secrets of nature, and these they pour forth in song as simply and as naturally as the birds sing.]

SOME VERSES, WRITTEN BY DORA, ON A HUMMING-BIRD'S NEST, WHICH SHE FOUND OVER HER STOCKING ON CHRISTMAS MORNING.

When June was bright with roses fair,
And leafy trees about her stood,
When summer sunshine filled the air
And flickered through the quiet wood,
There, in its shade and silent rest,
A tiny pair had built their nest.

And when July, with scorching heat,
Had dried the meadow grass to hay,
And piled in stacks about the field
Or fragrant in the barn it lay,
Within the nest so softly made
Two tiny, snowy eggs were laid.

But when October's ripened fruit
Had bent the very tree-tops down,
And dainty flowers faded, drooped,
And stately forests lost their crown,
Their brood was hatched and reared and flown—
The mossy nest was left alone.

And now the hills are cold and white,
'T is sever'd from its native bough;
We gaze upon it with delight;
Where are its cunning builders now?
Far in the sunny south they roam,
And leave to us their northern home.

THE GRUMBLER.

His Youth.

His coat was too thick and his cap was too thin,
He couldn't be quiet, he hated a din;
He hated to write, and he hated to read,
He was certainly very much injured indeed;



He must study and work over books he detested,
His parents were strict, and he never was rested;
He knew he was wretched as wretched could be,
There was no one so wretchedly wretched as he.

His Maturity.

His farm was too small and his taxes too big,
He was selfish and lazy, and cross as a pig;
His wife was too silly, his children too rude;
And just because he was uncommonly good,
He never had money enough or to spare,
He had nothing at all fit to eat or to wear;
He knew he was wretched as wretched could be,
There was no one so wretchedly wretched as he.

His Old Age.

He finds he has sorrows more deep than his fears,
He grumbles to think he has grumbled for years;
He grumbles to think he has grumbled away
His home and his fortune, his life's little day.
But, alas! 't is too late,—it is no use to say
That his eyes are too dim, and his hair is too gray.
He knows he is wretched as wretched can be,
There *is* no one more wretchedly wretched than he.

DORA.

JUNE.



Page 47

For stately trees in rich array,
For sunlight all the happy day,
For blossoms radiant and rare,
For skies when daylight closes,
For joyous, clear, outpouring song
From birds that all the green wood throng,
For all things young, and bright, and fair,
We praise thee, Month of Roses!

For blue, blue skies of summer calm,
For fragrant odors breathing balm,
For quiet, cooling shades where oft
The weary head reposes,
For brooklets babbling thro' the fields
Where Earth her choicest treasures yields,
For all things tender, sweet and soft,
We love thee, Month of Roses!

ELAINE.

SPRING SONG.

Oh, the little streams are running,
Running, running!—
Oh, the little streams are running
O'er the lea;
And the green soft grass is springing,
Springing, springing!—
And the green soft grass is springing,
Fair to see.

In the woods the breezes whisper,
Whisper, whisper!—
In the woods the breezes whisper
To the flowers;
And the robins sing their welcome,
Welcome, welcome!—
And the robins sing their welcome,—
Happy hours!

Over all the sun is shining,
Shining, shining!—
Over all the sun is shining,



Clear and bright,—
Flooding bare and waiting meadows,
Meadows, meadows!—
Flooding bare and waiting meadows
With his light.

Sky Farm, March, '76. ELAINE.

[Grown people often write in sympathy with children, but here is a little poem by a child written in sympathy with grown folks:]

ASHES OF ROSES.

Soft on the sunset sky
Bright daylight closes,
Leaving, when light doth die,
Pale hues that mingling lie—
Ashes of roses.

When love's warm sun is set,
Love's brightness closes;
Eyes with hot tears are wet,
In hearts there linger yet
Ashes of roses.

ELAINE.

SUMMER IS COMING.

"Summer is coming!" the soft breezes whisper;
"Summer is coming!" the glad birdies sing.
Summer is coming—I hear her quick footsteps;
Take your last look at the beautiful Spring.

Lightly she steps from her throne in the woodlands:
"Summer is coming, and I cannot stay;
Two of my children have crept from my bosom:
April has left me but lingering May.

"What tho' bright Summer is crowned with roses.
Deep in the forest Arbutus doth hide;
I am the herald of all the rejoicing;
Why must June always disown me?" she cried.

Down in the meadow she stoops to the daisies,
Plucks the first bloom from the apple-tree's bough:

“Autumn will rob me of all the sweet apples;
I will take one from her store of them now.”



Page 48

Summer is coming! I hear the glad echo;
Clearly it rings o'er the mountain and plain.
Sorrowful Spring leaves the beautiful woodlands,
Bright, happy Summer begins her sweet reign.

DORA.

SWEET MARJORAM DAY.

(A Fairy Tale.)

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON.

It was a very delightful country where little Corette lived. It seemed to be almost always summer-time there, for the winters were just long enough to make people glad when they were over. When it rained, it mostly rained at night, and so the fields and gardens had all the water they wanted, while the people were generally quite sure of a fine day. And, as they lived a great deal out-of-doors, this was a great advantage to them.

The principal business of the people of this country was the raising of sweet marjoram. The soil and climate were admirably adapted to the culture of the herb, and fields and fields of it were to be seen in every direction. At that time, and this was a good while ago, very little sweet marjoram was raised in other parts of the world, so this country had the trade nearly all to itself.

The great holiday of the year was the day on which the harvest of this national herb began. It was called "Sweet Marjoram Day," and the people, both young and old, thought more of it than of any other holiday in the year.

On that happy day everybody went out into the fields. There was never a person so old, or so young, or so busy that he or she could not go to help in the harvest. Even when there were sick people, which was seldom, they were carried out to the fields and staid there all day. And they generally felt much better in the evening.

[Illustration: THE BABIES IN THE SWEET MARJORAM BEDS.]

There were always patches of sweet marjoram planted on purpose for the very little babies to play in on the great day. They must be poor, indeed, these people said, if they could not raise sweet marjoram for their own needs and for exportation, and yet have enough left for the babies to play in.

So, all this day the little youngsters rolled, and tumbled, and kicked and crowed in the soft green and white beds of the fragrant herb, and pulled it up by the roots, and

laughed and chuckled, and went to sleep in it, and were the happiest babies in the world.

They needed no care, except at dinner-time, so the rest of the people gave all their time to gathering in the crop and having fun. There was always lots of fun on this great harvest day, for everybody worked so hard that the whole crop was generally in the sweet marjoram barns before breakfast, so that they had nearly the whole day for games and jollity.

In this country, where little Corette lived, there were fairies. Not very many of them, it is true, for the people had never seen but two. These were sisters, and there were never fairies more generally liked than these two little creatures, neither of them over four inches high. They were very fond of the company of human beings, and were just as full of fun as anybody. They often used to come to spend an hour or two, and sometimes a whole day, with the good folks, and they seemed always glad to see and to talk to everybody.



Page 49

These sisters lived near the top of a mountain in a fairy cottage. This cottage had never been seen by any of the people, but the sisters had often told them all about it. It must have been a charming place.

The house was not much bigger than a bandbox, and it had two stories and a garret, with a little portico running all around it. Inside was the dearest little furniture of all kinds,—beds, tables, chairs, and everything that could possibly be needed.

Everything about the house and grounds was on the same small scale. There was a little stable and a little barn, with a little old man to work the little garden and attend to the two little cows. Around the house were garden-beds ever so small, and little graveled paths; and a kitchen-garden, where the peas climbed up little sticks no bigger than pins, and where the little chickens, about the size of flies, sometimes got in and scratched up the little vegetables. There was a little meadow for pasture, and a grove of little trees; and there was also a small field of sweet marjoram, where the blossoms were so tiny that you could hardly have seen them without a magnifying glass.

It was not very far from this cottage to the sweet marjoram country, and the fairy sisters had no trouble at all in running down there whenever they felt like it, but none of the people had ever seen this little home. They had looked for it, but could not find it, and the fairies would never take any of them to it. They said it was no place for human beings. Even the smallest boy, if he were to trip his toe, might fall against their house and knock it over; and as to any of them coming into the fairy grounds, that would be impossible, for there was no spot large enough for even a common-sized baby to creep about in.

On Sweet Marjoram Day the fairies never failed to come. Every year they taught the people new games, and all sorts of new ways of having fun. People would never have even thought of having such good times if it had not been for these fairies.

One delightful afternoon, about a month before Sweet Marjoram Day, Corette, who was a little girl just old enough, and not a day too old (which is exactly the age all little girls ought to be), was talking about the fairy cottage to some of her companions.

“We never can see it,” said Corette, sorrowfully.

“No,” said one of the other girls, “we are too big. If we were little enough, we might go.”

“Are you sure the sisters would be glad to see us, then?” asked Corette.

“Yes, I heard them say so. But it doesn’t matter at all, as we are not little enough.”

“No,” said Corette, and she went off to take a walk by herself.



She had not walked far before she reached a small house which stood by the sea-shore. This house belonged to a Reformed Pirate who lived there all by himself. He had entirely given up a sea-faring life so as to avoid all temptation, and he employed his time in the mildest pursuits he could think of.



Page 50

When Corette came to his house, she saw him sitting in an easy-chair in front of his door near the edge of a small bluff which overhung the sea, busily engaged in knitting a tidy.

When he saw Corette, he greeted her kindly, and put aside his knitting, which he was very glad to do, for he hated knitting tidies, though he thought it was his duty to make them.

“Well, my little maid,” he said, in a sort of a muffled voice, which sounded as if he were speaking under water, for he tried to be as gentle in every way as he could, “how do you do? You don’t look quite as gay as usual. Has anything run afoul of you?”

“Oh no!” said Corette, and she came and stood by him, and taking up his tidy, she looked it over carefully and showed him where he had dropped a lot of stitches and where he had made some too tight and others a great deal too loose. He did not know how to knit very well.

When she had shown him as well as she could how he ought to do it, she sat down on the grass by his side, and after a while she began to talk to him about the fairy cottage, and what a great pity it was that it was impossible for her ever to see it.

“It *is* a pity,” said the Reformed Pirate. “I’ve heard of that cottage and I’d like to see it myself. In fact, I’d like to go to see almost anything that was proper and quiet, so as to get rid of the sight of this everlasting knitting.”

“There are other things you might do besides knit,” said Corette.

“Nothing so depressing and suitable,” said he, with a sigh.

“It would be of no use for you to think of going there,” said Corette. “Even I am too large, and you are ever and ever so much too big. You couldn’t get one foot into one of their paths.”

“I’ve no doubt that’s true,” he replied; “but the thing might be done. Almost anything can be done if you set about it in the right way. But you see, little maid, that you and I don’t know enough. Now, years ago, when I was in a different line of business, I often used to get puzzled about one thing or another, and then I went to somebody who knew more than myself.”

“Were there many such persons?” asked Corette.

[Illustration: THE REFORMED PIRATE.]

“Well, no. I always went to one old fellow who was a Practicing Wizard. He lived, and still lives, I reckon, on an island about fifty miles from here, right off there to the sou’-



sou'-west. I've no doubt that if we were to go to him he'd tell us just how to do this thing."

"But how could we get there?" asked Corette.

"Oh! I'd manage that," said the Reformed Pirate, his eyes flashing with animation. "I've an old sail-boat back there in the creek that's as good as ever she was, I could fix her up, and get everything all ship-shape in a couple of days, and then you and I could scud over there in no time. What do you say? Wouldn't you like to go?"

"Oh, I'd like to go ever so much!" cried Corette, clapping her hands, "if they'd let me."



Page 51

“Well, run and ask them,” said he, rolling up his knitting and stuffing it under the cushion of his chair, “and I’ll go and look at that boat right away.”

So Corette ran home to her father and mother and told them all about the matter. They listened with great interest, and her father said:

“Well now, our little girl is not looking quite as well as usual. I have noticed that she is a little pale. A sea-trip might be the very thing for her.”

“I think it would do her a great deal of good,” said her mother, “and as to that Reformed Pirate, she’d be just as safe with him as if she was on dry land.”

So it was agreed that Corette should go. Her father and mother were always remarkably kind.

The Reformed Pirate was perfectly delighted when he heard this, and he went hard to work to get his little vessel ready. To sail again on the ocean seemed to him the greatest of earthly joys, and as he was to do it for the benefit of a good little girl, it was all perfectly right and proper.

When they started off, the next day but one, all the people who lived near enough, came down to see them off. Just as they were about to start, the Reformed Pirate said:

“Hello! I wonder if I hadn’t better run back to the house and get my sword! I only wear the empty scabbard now, but it might be safer, on a trip like this, to take the sword along.”

So he ran back and got it, and then he pushed off amid the shouts of all the good people on the beach.

The boat was quite a good-sized one, and it had a cabin and everything neat and comfortable. The Reformed Pirate managed it beautifully, all by himself, and Corette sat in the stern and watched the waves, and the sky, and the sea-birds, and was very happy indeed.

As for her companion, he was in a state of ecstasy. As the breeze freshened, the sails filled, and the vessel went dashing over the waves, he laughed and joked, and sang snatches of old sea-songs, and was the jolliest man afloat.

[Illustration: THE REFORMED PIRATE IS THE JOLLIEST MAN AFLOAT]

After a while, as they went thus sailing merrily along, a distant ship appeared in sight. The moment his eyes fell upon it, a sudden change came over the Reformed Pirate. He sprang to his feet and, with his hand still upon the helm, he leaned forward and gazed at the ship. He gazed and he gazed, and he gazed without saying a word. Corette spoke



to him several times, but he answered not. And as he gazed he moved the helm so that his little craft gradually turned from her course, and sailed to meet the distant ship.

As the two vessels approached each other, the Reformed Pirate became very much excited. He tightened his belt and loosened his sword in its sheath. Hurriedly giving the helm to Corette, he went forward and jerked a lot of ropes and hooks from a cubby-hole where they had been stowed away. Then he pulled out a small, dark flag, with bits of skeleton painted on it, and hoisted it to the top-mast.



Page 52

By this time he had nearly reached the ship, which was a large three-masted vessel. There seemed to be a great commotion on board; sailors were running this way and that; women were screaming; and officers could be heard shouting, "Put her about! Clap on more sail!"

But steadily on sailed the small boat, and the moment it came alongside the big ship, the Reformed Pirate threw out grapnels and made the two vessels fast together. Then he hooked a rope-ladder to the side of the ship, and rushing up it, sprang with a yell on the deck of the vessel, waving his flashing sword around his head!

"Down, dastards! varlets! hounds!" he shouted. "Down upon your knees! Throw down your arms! SURRENDER!"

Then every man went down upon his knees, and threw down his arms and surrendered.

"Where is your Captain?" roared their conqueror.

The Captain came trembling forward.

"Bring to me your gold and silver, your jewels and your precious stones, and your rich stuffs!"

The Captain ordered these to be quickly brought and placed before the Reformed Pirate, who continued to stride to and fro across the deck waving his glittering blade, and who, when he saw the treasures placed before him, shouted again:

"Prepare for scuttling!" and then, while the women got down on their knees and begged that he would not sink the ship, and the children cried, and the men trembled so that they could hardly kneel straight, and the Captain stood pale and shaking before him, he glanced at the pile of treasure, and touched it with his sword.

"Aboard with this, my men!" he said. "But first I will divide it. I will divide this into,—into, —into *one* part. Look here!" and then he paused, glanced around, and clapped his hand to his head. He looked at the people, the treasure and the ship. Then suddenly he sheathed his sword, and stepping up to the Captain, extended his hand.

"Good sir," said he, "you must excuse me. This is a mistake. I had no intention of taking this vessel. It was merely a temporary absence of mind. I forgot I had reformed, and seeing this ship, old scenes and my old business came into my head, and I just came and took the vessel without really thinking what I was doing. I beg you will excuse me. And these ladies,—I am very sorry to have inconvenienced them. I ask them to overlook my unintentional rudeness."



“Oh, don’t mention it!” cried the Captain, his face beaming with joy as he seized the hand of the Reformed Pirate. “It is of no importance, I assure you. We are delighted, sir, delighted!”

“Oh yes!” cried all the ladies. “Kind sir, we are charmed! We are charmed!”

“You are all very good indeed,” said the Reformed Pirate, “but I really think I was not altogether excusable. And I am very sorry that I made your men bring up all these things.”

“Not at all! not at all!” cried the Captain. “No trouble whatever to show them. Very glad indeed to have the opportunity. By the by, would you like to take a few of them, as a memento of your visit?”



Page 53

“Oh no, I thank you,” replied the Reformed Pirate, “I would rather not.”

“Perhaps, then, some of your men might like a trinket or a bit of cloth—”

“Oh, I have no men! There is no one on board but myself—excepting a little girl, who is a passenger. But I must be going. Good-by, Captain!”

“I am sorry you are in such a hurry,” said the Captain. “Is there anything at all that I can do for you?”

“No, thank you. But stop!—there may be something. Do you sail to any port where there is a trade in tidies?”

“Oh yes! To several such,” said the Captain.

“Well, then, I would be very much obliged to you,” said the Reformed Pirate, “if you would sometimes stop off that point that you see there, and send a boat ashore to my house for a load of tidies.”

“You manufacture them by the quantity, then?” asked the Captain.

“I expect to,” said the other, sadly.

The Captain promised to stop, and, after shaking hands with every person on deck, the Reformed Pirate went down the side of the ship, and taking in his ladder and his grapnels, he pushed off.

As he slowly sailed away, having lowered his flag, the Captain looked over the side of his ship, and said:

“If I had only known that there was nobody but a little girl on board! I thought, of course, he had a boat-load of pirates.”

Corette asked a great many questions about everything that had happened on the ship, for she had heard the noise and confusion as she sat below in the little boat; but her companion was disposed to be silent, and said very little in reply.

When the trip was over, and they had reached the island, the Reformed Pirate made his boat fast, and taking little Corette by the hand, he walked up to the house of the Practicing Wizard.

This was a queer place. It was a great rambling house, one story high in some places, and nine or ten in other places; and then, again, it seemed to run into the ground and re-appear at a short distance—the different parts being connected by cellars and basements, with nothing but flower-gardens over them.



Corette thought she had never seen such a wonderful building; but she had not long to look at the outside of it, for her companion, who had been there before, and knew the ways of the place, went up to a little door in a two-story part of the house and knocked. Our friends were admitted by a dark cream-colored slave, who informed them that the Practicing Wizard was engaged with other visitors, but that he would soon be at leisure.

So Corette and the Reformed Pirate sat down in a handsome room, full of curious and wonderful things, and, in a short time, they were summoned into the Practicing Wizard's private office.

"Glad to see you," said he, as the Reformed Pirate entered. "It has been a long time since you were here. What can I do for you, now? Want to know something about the whereabouts of any ships, or the value of any cargoes?"



Page 54

“Oh, no! I’m out of that business now,” said the other. “I’ve come this time for something entirely different. But I’ll let this little girl tell you what it is. She can do it a great deal better than I can.”

So Corette stepped up to the Practicing Wizard, who was a pleasant, elderly man, with a smooth white face, and a constant smile, which seemed to have grown on his face instead of a beard, and she told him the whole story of the fairy sisters and their cottage, of her great desire to see it, and of the difficulties in the way.

“I know all about those sisters,” he said; “I don’t wonder you want to see their house. You both wish to see it?”

“Yes,” said the Reformed Pirate; “I might as well go with her, if the thing can be done at all.”

“Very proper,” said the Practicing Wizard, “very proper, indeed. But there is only one way in which it can be done. You must be condensed.”

“Does that hurt?” asked Corette.

“Oh, not at all! You’ll never feel it. For the two it will be one hundred and eighty ducats,” said he, turning to the Reformed Pirate; “we make a reduction when there are more than one.”

“Are you willing?” asked the Reformed Pirate of Corette, as he put his hand in his breeches’ pocket.

“Oh yes!” said Corette, “certainly I am, if that’s the only way.”

Whereupon her good friend said no more, but pulled out a hundred and eighty ducats and handed them to the Practicing Wizard, who immediately commenced operations.

Corette and the Reformed Pirate were each placed in a large easy-chair, and upon each of their heads the old white-faced gentleman placed a little pink ball, about the size of a pea. Then he took a position in front of them.

“Now then,” said he, “sit perfectly still. It will be over in a few minutes,” and he lifted up a long thin stick, and, pointing it toward the couple, he began to count: “One, two, three, four——”

As he counted, the Reformed Pirate and Corette began to shrink, and by the time he had reached fifty they were no bigger than cats. But he kept on counting until Corette was about three and a half inches high and her companion about five inches.



Then he stopped, and knocked the pink ball from each of their heads with a little tap of his long stick.

“There we are,” said he, and he carefully picked up the little creatures and put them on a table in front of a looking-glass, that they might see how they liked his work.

It was admirably done. Every proportion had been perfectly kept.

“It seems to me that it couldn’t be better,” said the Condensed Pirate, looking at himself from top to toe.

“No,” said the Practicing Wizard, smiling rather more than usual, “I don’t believe it could.”

“But how are we to get away from here?” said Corette to her friend. “A little fellow like you can’t sail that big boat.”



Page 55

“No,” replied he, ruefully, “that’s true; I couldn’t do it. But perhaps, sir, you could condense the boat.”

“Oh no!” said the old gentleman, “that would never do. Such a little boat would be swamped before you reached shore, if a big fish didn’t swallow you. No, I’ll see that you get away safely.”

So saying, he went to a small cage that stood in a window, and took from it a pigeon.

“This fellow will take you,” said he. “He is very strong and swift, and will go ever so much faster than your boat.”

[Illustration: “‘IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT COULDN’T BE BETTER,’ SAID THE CONDENSED PIRATE.”]

Next he fastened a belt around the bird, and to the lower part of this he hung a little basket, with two seats in it. He then lifted Corette and the Condensed Pirate into the basket, where they sat down opposite one another.

“Do you wish to go directly to the cottage of the fairy sisters?” said the old gentleman.

“Oh yes!” said Corette.

So he wrote the proper address on the bill of the pigeon, and, opening the window, carefully let the bird fly.

“I’ll take care of your boat,” he cried to the Condensed Pirate, as the pigeon rose in the air. “You’ll find it all right, when you come back.”

And he smiled worse than ever.

The pigeon flew up to a great height, and then he took flight in a straight line for the Fairy Cottage, where he arrived before his passengers thought they had half finished their journey.

The bird alighted on the ground, just outside of the boundary fence; and when Corette and her companion had jumped from the basket, he rose and flew away home as fast as he could go.

The Condensed Pirate now opened a little gate in the fence, and he and Corette walked in. They went up the graveled path, and under the fruit-trees, where the ripe peaches and apples hung, as big as peas, and they knocked at the door of the fairy sisters.

When these two little ladies came to the door, they were amazed to see Corette.



“Why, how did you ever?” they cried. “And if there isn’t our old friend the Reformed Pirate!”

“Condensed Pirate, if you please,” said that individual. “There’s no use of my being reformed while I’m so small as this. I couldn’t hurt anybody if I wanted to.”

“Well, come right in, both of you,” said the sisters, “and tell us all about it.”

So they went in, and sat in the little parlor, and told their story. The fairies’ were delighted with the whole affair, and insisted on a long visit, to which our two friends were not at all opposed.

They found everything at this cottage exactly as they had been told. They ate the daintiest little meals off the daintiest little dishes, and they thoroughly enjoyed all the delightful little things in the little place. Sometimes, Corette and the fairies would take naps in little hammocks under the trees, while the Condensed Pirate helped the little man drive up the little cows, or work in the little garden.



Page 56

On the second day of their visit, when they were all sitting on the little portico after supper, one of the sisters, thinking that the Condensed Pirate might like to have something to do, and knowing how he used to occupy himself, took from her basket a little half-knit tidy, with the needles in it, and asked him if he cared to amuse himself with that.

“No, MA’AM!” said he, firmly but politely. “Not at present. If I find it necessary to reform again, I may do something of the kind, but not now. But I thank you kindly, all the same.”

After this, they were all very careful not to mention tidies to him.

Corette and her companion stayed with the fairies for more than a week. Corette knew that her father and mother did not expect her at home for some time, and so she felt quite at liberty to stay as long as she pleased.

As to the sisters, they were delighted to have their visitors with them.

But, one day, the Condensed Pirate, finding Corette alone, led her, with great secrecy, to the bottom of the pasture field, the very outskirts of the fairies’ domain.

“Look here,” said he, in his lowest tones. “Do you know, little Corette, that things are not as I expected them to be here? Everything is very nice and good, but nothing appears very small to me. Indeed, things seem to be just about the right size. How does it strike you?”

“Why, I have been thinking the same thing,” said Corette. “The sisters used to be such dear, cunning little creatures, and now they’re bigger than I am. But I don’t know what can be done about it.”

“I know,” said the Condensed Pirate.

“What?” asked Corette.

“Condense ’em,” answered her companion, solemnly.

“Oh! But you couldn’t do that!” exclaimed Corette.

“Yes, but I can—at least, I think I can. You remember those two pink condensing balls?”

“Yes,” said Corette.

“Well, I’ve got mine.”

“You have!” cried Corette. “How did you get it?”



“Oh! when the old fellow knocked it off my head, it fell on the chair beside me, and I picked it up and put it in my coat-pocket. It would just go in. He charges for the balls, and so I thought I might as well have it.”

“But do you know how he works them?”

“Oh yes!” replied the Condensed Pirate. “I watched him. What do you say? Shall we condense this whole place?”

“It wont hurt them,” said Corette, “and I don’t really think they would mind it.”

“Mind it! No!” said the other. “I believe they’d like it.”

So it was agreed that the Fairy Cottage, inmates, and grounds should be condensed until they were, relatively, as small as they used to be.

That afternoon, when the sisters were taking a nap and the little man was at work in the barn, the Condensed Pirate went up into the garret of the cottage and got out on the roof. Then he climbed to the top of the tallest chimney, which overlooked everything on the place, and there he laid his little pink ball.



Page 57

He then softly descended, and, taking Corette by the hand (she had been waiting for him on the portico), he went down to the bottom of the pasture field.

When he was quite sure that he and Corette were entirely outside of the fairies' grounds, he stood up, pointed to the ball with a long, thin stick which he had cut, and began to count: "One, two, three——"

And as he counted the cottage began to shrink. Smaller and smaller it became, until it got to be very little indeed.

"Is that enough?" said the Condensed Pirate, hurriedly between two counts.

"No," replied Corette. "There is the little man, just come out of the barn. He ought to be as small as the sisters used to be. I'll tell you when to stop."

So the counting went on until Corette said, "Stop!" and the cottage was really not much higher than a thimble. The little man stood by the barn, and seemed to Corette to be just about the former size of the fairy sisters; but, in fact, he was not quite a quarter of an inch high. Everything on the place was small in proportion, so that when Corette said "Stop!" the Condensed Pirate easily leaned over and knocked the pink ball from the chimney with his long stick. It fell outside of the grounds, and he picked it up and put it in his pocket.

Then he and Corette stood and admired everything! It was charming! It was just what they had imagined before they came there. While they were looking with delight at the little fields, and trees, and chickens,—so small that really big people could not have seen them,—and at the cute little house, with its vines and portico, the two sisters came out on the little lawn.

When they saw Corette and her companion they were astounded.

"Why, when did you grow big again?" they cried. "Oh! how sorry we are! Now you cannot come into our house and live with us any longer."

Corette and the Condensed Pirate looked at each other, as much as to say, "They don't know they have been made so little."

Then Corette said: "We are sorry too. I suppose we shall have to go away now. But we have had a delightful visit."

"It has been a charming one for us," said one of the sisters, "and if we only had known, we would have had a little party before you went away; but now it is too late."



The Condensed Pirate said nothing. He felt rather guilty about the matter. He might have waited a little, and yet he could not have told them about it. They might have objected to be condensed.

“May we stay just a little while and look at things?” asked Corette.

“Yes,” replied one of the fairies; “but you must be very careful not to step inside the grounds, or to stumble over on our place. You might do untold damage.”

So the two little big people stood and admired the fairy cottage and all about it, for this was indeed the sight they came to see; and then they took leave of their kind entertainers, who would have been glad to have them stay longer, but were really trembling with apprehension lest some false step or careless movement might ruin their little home.



Page 58

As Corette and the Condensed Pirate took their way through the woods to their home, they found it very difficult to get along, they were so small. When they came to a narrow stream, which Corette would once have jumped over with ease, the Condensed Pirate had to make a ferry-boat of a piece of bark, and paddle himself and the little girl across.

“I wonder how the fairies used to come down to us,” said Corette, who was struggling along over the stones and moss, hanging on to her companion’s hand.

“Oh! I expect they have a nice smooth path somewhere through the woods, where they can run along as fast as they please; and bridges over the streams.”

“Why didn’t they tell us of it?” asked Corette.

“They thought it was too little to be of any use to us. Don’t you see?—they think we’re big people and wouldn’t need their path.”

“Oh, yes!” said Corette.

In time, however, they got down the mountain and out of the woods, and then they climbed up on one of the fences and ran along the top of it toward Corette’s home.

When the people saw them, they cried out: “Oh, here come our dear little fairies, who have not visited us for so many days!” But when they saw them close at hand, and perceived that they were little Corette and the Pirate who had reformed, they were dumbfounded.

Corette did not stop to tell them anything; but still holding her companion’s hand, she ran on to her parents’ house, followed by a crowd of neighbors.

Corette’s father and mother could hardly believe that this little thing was their daughter, but there was no mistaking her face and her clothes, and her voice, although they were all so small; and when she had explained the matter to them, and to the people who filled the house, they understood it all. They were filled with joy to have their daughter back again, little or big.

When the Condensed Pirate went to his house, he found the door locked, as he had left it, but he easily crawled in through a crack. He found everything of an enormous size. It did not look like the old place. He climbed up the leg of a chair and got on a table, by the help of the tablecloth, but it was hard work. He found something to eat and drink, and all his possessions were in order, but he did not feel at home.

Days passed on, and while the Condensed Pirate did not feel any better satisfied, a sadness seemed to spread over the country, and particularly over Corette’s home. The people grieved that they never saw the fairy sisters, who indeed had made two or three



visits, with infinite trouble and toil, but who could not make themselves observed, their bodies and their voices being so very small.

And Corette's father and mother grieved. They wanted their daughter to be as she was before. They said that Sweet Marjoram Day was very near, but that they could not look forward to it with pleasure. Corette might go out to the fields, but she could only sit upon some high place, as the fairies used to sit. She could not help in the gathering. She could not even be with the babies; they would roll on her and crush her. So they mourned.



Page 59

It was now the night before the great holiday. Sweet Marjoram Eve had not been a very gay time, and the people did not expect to have much fun the next day. How could they if the fairy sisters did not come? Corette felt badly, for she had never told that the sisters had been condensed, and the Condensed Pirate, who had insisted on her secrecy, felt worse. That night he lay in his great bed, really afraid to go to sleep on account of rats and mice.

He was so extremely wakeful that he lay and thought, and thought, and thought for a long time, and then he got up and dressed and went out.

It was a beautiful moonlight night, and he made his way directly to Corette's house. There, by means of a vine, he climbed up to her window, and gently called her. She was not sleeping well, and she soon heard him and came to the window.

He then asked her to bring him two spools of fine thread.

Without asking any questions, she went for the thread, and very soon made her appearance at the window with one spool in her arms, and then she went back for another.

"Now, then," said the Condensed Pirate, when he had thrown the spools down to the ground, "will you dress yourself and wait here at the window until I come and call you?"

Corette promised, for she thought he had some good plan in his head, and he hurried down the vine, took up a spool under each arm, and bent his way to the church. This building had a high steeple which overlooked the whole country. He left one of his spools outside, and then, easily creeping with the other under one of the great doors, he carried it with infinite pains and labor up into the belfry.

There he tied it on his back, and, getting out of a window, began to climb up the outside of the steeple.

[Illustration: THE CONDENSED PIRATE CLIMBS UP THE OUTSIDE OF THE STEEPLE.]

It was not hard for him to do this, for the rough stones gave him plenty of foot-hold, and he soon stood on the very tip-top of the steeple. He then took tight hold of one end of the thread on his spool and let the spool drop. The thread rapidly unrolled, and the spool soon touched the ground.

Then our friend took from his pocket the pink ball, and passing the end of the thread through a little hole in the middle of it, he tied it firmly. Placing the ball in a small depression on the top of the steeple, he left it there, with the thread hanging from it, and rapidly descended to the ground. Then he took the other spool and tied the end of its thread to that which was hanging from the steeple.



He now put down the spool and ran to call Corette. When she heard his voice she clambered down the vine to him.

“Now, Corette.” he said, “run to my house and stand on the beach, near the water, and wait for me.”



Page 60

Corette ran off as he had asked, and he went back to his spool. He took it up and walked slowly to his house, carefully unwinding the thread as he went. The church was not very far from the sea-shore, so he soon joined Corette. With her assistance he then unwound the rest of the thread, and made a little coil. He next gave the coil to Corette to hold, cautioning her to be very careful, and then he ran off to where some bits of wood were lying, close to the water's edge. Selecting a little piece of thin board he pushed it into the water, and taking a small stick in his hand, he jumped on it, and poled it along to where Corette was standing. The ocean here formed a little bay where the water was quite smooth.

"Now, Corette," said the Condensed Pirate, "we must be very careful. I will push this ashore and you must step on board, letting out some of the thread as you come. Be sure not to pull it tight. Then I will paddle out a little way, and as I push, you must let out more thread."

Corette did as she was directed, and very soon they were standing on the little raft a few yards from shore. Then her companion put down his stick, and took the coil of thread.

"What are you going to do?" asked Corette. She had wanted to ask before, but there did not seem to be time.

"Well," said he, "we can't make ourselves any bigger—at least, I don't know how to do it, and so I'm going to condense the whole country. The little pink ball is on top of the steeple, which is higher than anything else about here, you know. I can't knock the ball off at the proper time, so I've tied a thread to it to pull it off. You and I are outside of the place, on the water, so we won't be made any smaller. If the thing works, everybody will be our size, and all will be right again."

"Splendid!" cried Corette. "But how will you know when things are little enough?"

"Do you see that door in my house, almost in front of us? Well, when I was of the old size, I used just to touch the top of that door with my head, if I didn't stoop. When you see that the door is about my present height, tell me to stop. Now then!"

The Condensed Pirate began to count, and instantly the whole place, church, houses, fields, and of course the people who were in bed, began to shrink! He counted a good while before Corette thought his door would fit him. At last she called to him to stop. He glanced at the door to feel sure, counted one more, and pulled the thread. Down came the ball, and the size of the place was fixed!

The whole of the sweet marjoram country was now so small that the houses were like bandboxes, and the people not more than four or five inches high—excepting some very tall people who were six inches.



Drawing the ball to him, the Condensed Pirate pushed out some distance, broke it from the thread, and threw it into the water.

“No more condensing!” said he. He then paddled himself and Corette ashore, and running to his cottage, threw open the door and looked about him. Everything was just right! Everything fitted! He shouted with joy.



Page 61

It was just daybreak when Corette rushed into her parents' house. Startled by the noise, her father and mother sprang out of bed.

"Our daughter! Our darling daughter!" they shouted, "and she has her proper size again!!"

In an instant she was clasped in their arms.

When the first transports of joy were over, Corette sat down and told them the whole story—told them everything.

"It is all right," said her mother, "so that we are all of the same size," and she shed tears of joy.

Corette's father ran out to ring the church-bell, so as to wake up the people and tell them the good news of his daughter's restoration. When he came in, he said:

"I see no difference in anything. Everybody is all right."

There never was such a glorious celebration of Sweet Marjoram Day as took place that day.

The crop was splendid, the weather was more lovely than usual, if such a thing could be, and everybody was in the gayest humor.

But the best thing of all was the appearance of the fairy sisters. When they came among the people they all shouted as if they had gone wild. And the good little sisters were so overjoyed that they could scarcely speak.

"What a wonderful thing it is to find that we have grown to our old size again! We were here several times lately, but somehow or other we seemed to be so very small that we couldn't make you see or hear us. But now it's all right. Hurrah! We have forty-two new games!"

And at that, the crop being all in, the whole country, with a shout of joy, went to work to play.

There were no gayer people to be seen than Corette and the Condensed Pirate. Some of his friends called this good man by his old name, but he corrected them.

"I am reformed, all the same," he said, "but do not call me by that name, I shall never be able to separate it from its associations with tidies. And with *them* I am done for ever. Owing to circumstances, I do not need to be depressed."



The captain of the ship never stopped off the coast for a load of tidies. Perhaps he did not care to come near the house of his former captor, for fear that he might forget himself again, and take the ship a second time. But if the captain had come, it is not likely that his men would have found the cottage of the Condensed Pirate, unless they had landed at the very spot where it stood.

And it so happened that no one ever noticed this country after it was condensed. Passing ships could not come near enough to see such a very little place, and there never were any very good roads to it by land.

But the people continued to be happy and prosperous, and they kept up the celebration of Sweet Marjoram Day as gayly as when they were all ordinary-sized people.

In the whole country there were only two persons, Corette and the Pirate, who really believed that they were condensed.



Page 62

“SING-A-SING!”

BY S.C. STONE.

[Illustration]

Listen! and hear the tea-kettle sing:

“Sing a-sing a-sing a-sing!”

It matters not how hot the fire,
It only sends its voice up higher:

“Sing a-sing a-sing a-sing!
Sing a-sing a-sing a-sing!”

Listen! and hear the tea-kettle sing:

“Sing a-sing a-sing a-sing!”

As if 't were task of fret and toil
To bring cold water to a boil!

“Sing a-sing a-sing a-sing!
Sing a-sing a-sing a-sing!”

NOW, OR THEN?

BY GAIL HAMILTON.

I suppose the wise young women—fourteen, fifteen, sixteen years old—who read ST. NICHOLAS, who understand the most complex vulgar fractions, who cipher out logarithms “just for fun,” who chatter familiarly about “Kickero” and “Iuliuise Kiser,” and can bang a piano dumb and helpless in fifteen minutes—they, I suppose, will think me frivolous and unambitious if I beg them to lay aside their science,—which is admirable,—and let us reason together a few minutes about such unimportant themes as little points of good manners.

A few months ago I had the pleasure of talking with a gentleman who thought he remembered being aroused from his midnight sleep by loud rejoicings in the house and on the streets over the news that Lord Cornwallis had surrendered the British to the American forces. He was only two years old at that time; but, he said, he had a very strong impression of the house being full of light, of many people hurrying hither and yon, and of the watchman's voice in the street penetrating through all the din with the cry—“Past twelve o'clock and Cornwallis is taken!”

Among many interesting reminiscences and reflections, this dignified and delightful old gentleman said he thought the young people of to-day were less mannerly than in the olden time, less deferential, less decorous. This may be true, and I tried to be sufficiently deferential to my courtly host, not to disagree with him. But when I look



upon the young people of my own acquaintance, I recall that William went, as a matter of course, to put the ladies in their carriage; Jamie took the hand luggage as naturally as if he were born for nothing else; Frank never failed to open a door for them; Arthur placed Maggie in her chair at table before he took his own; Nelly and Ruth came to my party just as sweet and bright as if they did not know that the young gentlemen whom they had expected to meet were prevented from attending; while Lucy will run herself out of breath for you, and Mary sits and listens with flattering intentness, and Anne and Alice and—well, looking over *my* constituency, I find the young people charming.



Page 63

It is true that all manners are less formal, that etiquette is less elaborate, now than a hundred years ago. Our grandfathers and grandmothers—some, indeed, of our fathers and mothers—did not sit at breakfast with their fathers and mothers, but stood through the meal, and never spoke except when spoken to. I cannot say I think we have deteriorated in changing this. The pleasant, familiar, affectionate intercourse between parent and child seems to me one of the most delightful features of domestic life. The real, fond intimacy which exists between parents and children seems a far better and safer thing than the old fashion of keeping children at arm's length.

But in casting aside forms we are, perhaps, somewhat in danger of losing with them some of that inner kindness of which form is only the outward expression. Without admitting that we are an uncivil people, insisting even that we compare favorably with other nations, I wish our boys and girls would resolve that the courtesy of the Republic shall never suffer in their hands!

Does this seem a trivial aim for those who are bending their energies to attain a high standing in classics and mathematics? There is perhaps no single quality that does as much to make life smooth and comfortable—yes, and successful—as courtesy. Logarithms are valuable in their way, but there are many useful and happy people who are not very well versed even in the rule of three. A man may not know a word of Latin, or what is meant by “the moon's terminator,” or how much sodium is in Arcturus, and yet be constantly diffusing pleasure. But no man can be agreeable without courtesy, and every separate act of incivility creates its little, or large, and ever enlarging circle of displeasure and unhappiness.

One does not wish to go through life trying to be agreeable; but life is a great failure if one goes through it disagreeable.

Yes, little friends, believe me, you may be very learned, very skillful, very accomplished. I trust you are: I hope you will become more so. You may even have sound principles and good habits; but if people generally do not like you, it is because there is something wrong in yourself, and the best thing you can do is to study out what it is and correct it as fast as possible. Do not for a moment fancy it is because you are superior to other people that they dislike you, for superiority never, of itself, made a person unlovely. It is invariably a defect of some sort. Generally it is a defect arising from training, and therefore possible to overcome.

For instance: two girls in the country have each a pony phaeton. One drives her sisters, her family, her guests, her equals, and never thinks of going outside that circle. Another does the same; but, more than this, she often takes the cook, the laundress, or the one woman who often is cook, laundress, housemaid, all in one. And to them the drive is a far greater luxury than to her own comrades, who would be playing



Page 64

croquet or riding if they were not with her. Now and then she invites some poor neighbor, she takes some young sempstress or worsted-worker to town to do her shopping, she carries the tired housewife to see her mother, she asks three little girls—somewhat crowded but rapturously happy—three miles to see the balloon that has alighted on the hill; she drives a widowed old mother-in-Israel to a tea-drinking of which she would otherwise be deprived. These are not charities. They are courtesies, and this bright-faced girl is sunshine in her village home and, by and by, when her box of finery is by some mistake left at the station, a stalwart youngster, unbidden, shoulders it and bears it, panting and perspiring, to her door-step, declaring that he would not do it for another person in town but Miss Fanny! And perhaps he does not even say *Miss Fanny*—only Fanny. Now she could get on very well without the villager's admiring affection, and even without her box of finery; yet the goodwill of your neighbors is exceeding pleasant.

Another thing Fanny excels in is the acknowledgment of courtesy, which is itself as great a courtesy as the performance of kindness. If she is invited to a lawn party or a boating picnic, whether she accept or not, she pays a visit to her hostess afterward and expresses her pleasure or her regrets; and she pays it with promptness, and not with tardy reluctance, as if it were a burden. If she has been making a week's visit away from home, she notifies her hostess of her safe return and her enjoyment of the visit, as soon as she is back again. If a bouquet is sent her,—too informal for a note,—she remembers to speak of it afterward. You never can remember? No; but Fanny does. That is why I admire her. If she has borrowed a book, she has an appreciative word to say when she returns it; and if she has dropped it in the mud, she does not apologize and offer to replace it. She replaces it first and apologizes afterward, though she has to sacrifice a much-needed pair of four-button gloves to do it! Indeed, no person has as little apologizing to do as Fanny, because she does everything promptly; and you may notice that what we apologize for chiefly is delay. We perform our little social duties, only not in good season, and so rob them of half their grace. It takes no longer to answer a letter to-day than it will take to-morrow. But if the letter requires an answer instantly, and you put it off day after day, your correspondent is vexed, and your tardy answer will never be quite a reparation. Remember that no explanation, no apology, is quite as good as to have done the thing exactly as it should be in the first place.

JACK'S CHRISTMAS

BY EMMA K. PARRISH.

Jack had just heard of Christmas for the first time! Ten years old, and never knew about Christmas before! Jack's mother was a weary, overworked woman, and had no heart to

tell the children about merry times and beautiful things in which they could have no share.



Page 65

His parents were very poor. When I tell you that they lived in a log-house you might think so, although some people live very comfortably in log-houses. But when I say that the snow drifted through the cracks in the roof until the chamber floor was fit to go sleighing on, and that it was so cold down-stairs that the gravy froze on the children's plates while they were eating breakfast, and that the little girls had no shoes but cloth ones which their mother sewed to their stockings, you will see that they were poor indeed. Mrs. Boyd, Jack's mother, generally went about her work with a shawl tied around her, and a comforter over her ears, on account of the ear-ache; and on the coldest days she kept Jack's little sisters wrapped up from head to foot and perched on chairs near the stove, so they wouldn't freeze. No; she didn't feel much like telling them about Christmas, when she didn't know but they would freeze to death, or, may be, starve, before that time. But Jack found out. He was going to school that winter, and one learns so much at school! He came home one night brimful of the news that Christmas would be there in three weeks, and that Santa Claus would come down chimneys and say, "I wish you Merry Christmas!" and then put lots of nice things in all the stockings.

Mrs. Boyd heard him talking, and was glad the children were enjoying themselves, but hoped from her heart that they wouldn't expect anything, only to be bitterly disappointed. Most of that evening little Janey, the youngest girl, sat singing:

"Wis' you Melly Kitsmas!
Wis' you Melly Kitsmas!"

in a quaint, little minor key, that wasn't plaintive enough to be sad, nor merry enough to be jolly, but only a sweet monotony of sounds and words showing that she was contented, and didn't feel any of the dreadful aches and pains which sometimes distressed her so.

For a week, Jack wondered and mused within himself how he could get something for Christmas presents for his little sisters. He couldn't make anything at home without their seeing it, nor at school without the teacher's seeing it, or else the big boys plaguing him about it. Besides, he would rather buy something pretty, such as they had never seen before—china dolls in pink dresses, or something of that kind. One morning, however, Jack discovered some quail-tracks in the snow near the straw-stack, and he no longer wondered about ways and means, but in a moment was awake to the importance of this discovery. That very evening he made a wooden trap, and the next morning early set it near the stack, and laid an inviting train of wheat quite up to it, and scattered a little inside. He told his sisters, Mary and Janey, about the trap, but not about what he meant to do with the quails when he caught them. That afternoon Jack went to his trap, and to his unbounded joy found an imprisoned quail, frozen quite stiff. He quickly set the trap again, and ran to the house with his bird. All that evening he worked at quail-traps and made three more.

Page 66

It was so much warmer that their mother let the children stay up a little later than usual; and Mary ventured to bring out her playthings and Janey's. These were two dolls, some bits of broken dishes, and a few little pine blocks. Mary watched her mother's face until she was sure she was "feeling good," before she ventured to begin a play, because on days when mother was very discouraged, it made her feel worse if the children were noisy, and so they would keep quiet and speak in whispers.

"Does Santa Claus bring dolls?" asked Mary, suddenly, of Jack.

"Oh yes; dolls with pretty dresses on; and little bunnits and pink shoes; and little cubberds to keep their clothes in, and chairs, and everything," said Jack, enthusiastically.

"Oh, my!" sighed Mary, as she looked dolefully at their poor little heap of toys.

Reader, their dolls were cobs, with square pieces of calico tied around them for dresses; and after hearing what Jack said, it wasn't so much fun playing, and the little girls soon went to bed. After they were asleep, Mrs. Boyd said, reproachfully:

"Jack, I wish you wouldn't say anything more about Christmas to the children."

"Why, is it bad?" asked Jack, so astonished that he stopped whittling.

"No, of course not; but you're getting their heads full of notions about fine things they never can have."

Jack's eyes twinkled.

"Oh, but you don't understand, mother," said he; "may be Santy Claus will come this year."

His mother shook her head.

"You know I caught one quail to-day?" whispered Jack.

"Well!" said his mother.

"Well, I'm going to save 'em all the week, and Saturday take 'em to the meat-man in the village. I guess he'll buy 'em. I heard that quails were fetching two cents apiece. And I'm going to get enough money to buy the girls something nice, and you must make 'em hang up their stockings, mother, and then we'll put the things in after they get asleep."

His mother smiled quite cheerfully. "Well," said she, "do the best you can."



Their father was away that evening. He was generally away evenings, because most of the neighbors had cozier firesides than his, besides apples, and sometimes cider; and so he passed many a pleasant hour in gossip and farm-talk, while his own little family shivered gloomily at home.

By Saturday morning Jack had ten quails. The four traps had not been as fruitful as they ought to have been, perhaps, but this was doing very well, and he trudged joyfully to town with his game hanging on a stick over his shoulder. The meat-man did indeed give two cents apiece for quails, and he invited Jack to bring as many more as he could get.

Page 67

The next Saturday was only two days before Christmas, and how beautiful were all the stores on the village street! Even the groceries had Christmas toys and Christmas trees. A good many boys and girls stood around the store windows pointing out the things they most admired, and wondering what Santa Claus would bring them. Jack had fifteen quails, which brought him thirty cents; so he was now the owner of half a dollar, which was more money than he had ever possessed in all his life before. But when two dolls were bought, and they weren't very fine dolls either, there were only twenty cents left. Jack *did* mean to buy something for his mother too, but he had to give that up, and after looking over the bright colored toy-books in the show-case, he selected two little primers, one with a pink cover and one with a blue one, and with a big ache in his throat, parted with his last ten cents for candy. How very, very little he was buying after all, and not one thing for his dear mother who had sat up till two o'clock the night before, mending his ragged clothes for him.

Jack's heart was very heavy as he walked out of the gay store with such a little package, but it sank still lower when his father's tall form loomed up suddenly before him right in front of the door.

"What you doing here?" he asked, sternly.

"Been buying a few things," said Jack.

"Let me see 'em," said his father.

[Illustration: "LET ME SEE 'EM,' SAID HIS FATHER."]

Jack tremblingly opened his package.

"Where'd you get the money?"

"With quails," said Jack, meekly.

His father fumbled over the things with his big, mittened hand, and said quite gently: "For the girls, I s'pose."

"Yes, sir," answered Jack, beginning to feel relieved.

"Well, run along home."

Jack was only too happy to do so. There wasn't much sympathy between him and his father, nor, indeed, between his father and any of the family—that is, there didn't seem to be; but I guess the stream was frozen over, and only needed a few gleams of sunshine to make it bubble on, laughing and gurgling as in the best of hearts.



Jack related his adventures to his mother in whispers, and hid the Christmas articles in the wash-boiler until such time as they should be wanted for certain small stockings. He told his mother how sorry he was not to have a present for her, and that little speech went a long way toward making her happy. That night she sat up—I wouldn't dare tell you how late—making cookies,—something that hadn't been in the house before that winter. She cut them out in all manner of shapes that feminine ingenuity and a case-knife could compass, not forgetting a bird for Janey, with a remarkably plump bill, and a little girl for Mary, with the toes turned out. She also made some balls of brown sugar (the Boyds never thought of such a luxury as white sugar), to make believe candy, for she didn't know Jack had bought any candy.



Page 68

Now I am going to tell what Mr. Boyd did after he met Jack by the toy-store. He had gone to the village to have a “good time.” That didn’t mean, as it does with some men, to get tipsy; but it meant he was going to Munger’s grocery, where he could meet people, and talk and joke, and keep warm.

Mr. Boyd had been chopping wood for a farmer, and had received his pay; but instead of going dutifully home and consulting with his wife about what he should buy, he was going to “look around” and see what Munger had. He was touched at the sight of Jack’s poor little package of gifts, but I doubt if it would have made much impression on his mind if somebody hadn’t walked in to Munger’s and asked in a brisk, loud voice: “Got any Brazil nuts, Munger?”

The man with the brisk voice bought I don’t know how many quarts of Brazil nuts, and walnuts, and filberts, and almonds, with all the loungers looking on, very much interested in the spectacle. Then he bought raisins, and candy, and oranges, Mr. Munger growing more smiling every minute.

“Going to keep Christmas, I guess,” said he, rubbing his hands together.

“That I am; ‘Christmas comes but once a year,’ and there are little folks up at our house who’ve been looking for it with all their eyes for a fortnight.”

Then he bought a bushel of apples, and, filling a peck measure with them, passed them around among the men who sat and stood about the stove.

“Take ’em home to your little folks if you don’t want ’em,” he said, when any one hesitated.

There were three or four apples apiece, and Mr. Boyd put all his in his pockets, with a slight feeling of Christmas warmth beginning to thaw his heart.

After this cheery purchaser had gone, some one asked: “Who is that chap?”

“He’s the new superintendent of the Orphan Asylum,” answered Mr. Munger, rubbing his hands again; “and a mighty nice man he is, too. Pays for all them things out of his own pocket. Very fond of children. Always likes to see ’em happy.”

There were two or three men around that stove who hung their heads, and Mr. Boyd was one of them. He hung his the lowest, perhaps because he had the longest neck. I don’t know what the other men did,—something good and pleasant, I hope,—but Mr. Boyd thought and thought. First he thought how the “orphans” were going to have a brighter and merrier Christmas than his own children, who had both father and mother. Then he thought about sweet, patient little Janey, and quiet Mary, and generous Jack, who had taken so much pains to give pleasure to his sisters, and a great rush of shame filled his heart. Now, when Mr. Boyd was once thoroughly aroused, he was alive



through the whole of his long frame. He thumped his knee with his fist, then arose and walked to the counter, where he dealt out rapid orders to the astonished grocer for nuts, candies and oranges; not in such large quantities, to be sure, as the “orphants”



Page 69

friend had done, but generous enough for three children. And he bought a calico dress for his wife, a pair of shoes for each of the little girls, and a cap for Jack. That store contained everything, from grind-stones to slate-pencils, and from whale-oil to peppermint-drops. These purchases, together with some needful groceries, took all Mr. Boyd's money, except a few pennies, but a Christmas don't-care feeling pervaded his being, and he borrowed a bag, into which he stowed his goods, and set out for home.

It was a pretty heavy bagful, but its heaviness only made Mr. Boyd's heart the lighter. When he reached home, he stood the bag up in one corner, as if it held turnips, and said, "Don't meddle with that, children." Then he went out and spent the rest of the short day in chopping wood, which was very cheering to his wife. So many Sundays had dawned with just wood enough to cook breakfast, that Mrs. Boyd began to dread that day particularly, for her husband was almost sure to go right away after breakfast and spend the whole day at the neighbors' houses, while his own family shivered around a half-empty stove.

Mr. Boyd said never a word about the bag, and the unsuspecting household thought it contained corn or some other uninteresting vegetable, and paid little attention to it. It also stood there all the next day, and the children grew quite used to the sight of it.

Sunday went by quietly, and, to the surprise of all, Mr. Boyd stayed at home, making it his especial business to hold Janey on his lap, and keep the stove well filled with wood. Janey wasn't feeling well that day, and this unusual attention to her made the family very kindly disposed toward their father, whom of late they had come to regard almost as an alien.

Jack, whose shoes were not yet worn out, went to Sunday-school, and after his return the winter day was soon gone. Then he began to fidget, and was very desirous that his mother should put the little girls to bed; while, strange to say, his father was desirous that the whole family should go to bed, except himself. In course of time the little girls were asleep in their trundle bed, with their little red stockings hanging behind the door. Mr. Boyd sat with his back to the door, so Jack slipped in his presents without his father's seeing him, and went to his cold bed upstairs.

"Aint you going to hang up your stocking, mother?" asked Mr. Boyd after Jack had gone.

Mrs. Boyd looked startled.

"Why, no," she answered, hesitatingly, not knowing whether the question was asked in irony or in earnest.



“You better,” said Mr. Boyd, going to the bag in the corner, and beginning to untie the strings.

He laid out package after package on the floor. His wife knelt down by them in a maze of astonishment. Then, with a great deal of enjoyment, Mr. Boyd untied them one by one, showing candy, nuts, oranges, shoes, and all the rest, except the calico dress, which he kept out of sight.



Page 70

Aladdin felt very fine when he found the cave-full of precious stones, but I don't believe he was much happier than Mrs. Boyd. Her eyes were so full of tears that there seemed to be about eight pairs of shoes, ten bags, and half a dozen Mr. Boyds; but she managed to lay hands on the real one, and him she embraced fervently. Then she brought out the cookies and sugar balls she had made, and said to her husband, in a very shame-faced way:

"See my poor presents; I didn't know the children would have anything nice, and I made these. I guess I wont put 'em in their stockings though, now."

But Mr. Boyd insisted on their going in with the other things, and I think they were prized by the children a little more dearly, if such a thing could be possible, than those which they called their "boughten" presents.

Now, I can't begin to describe the joyful time they had the next morning, and particularly, the utter astonishment of Jack, who didn't expect a thing, and hadn't even hung up a stocking. When that devoted boy recognized one of his own gray socks crammed full of knobs and bunches, with a beautiful plush cap on top, he was almost out of his wits. Likewise, Mrs. Boyd's surprise was great at the discovery of her new dress. The little girls were too happy that day to do much else but count and arrange and re-arrange their delightful Christmas presents.

Mr. Boyd killed a chicken, and Jack contributed four quails which he had caught since market-day, and the festival of Christmas was kept with much hilarity by the Boyd family.

The neighbors, one by one, were surprised that Mr. Boyd hadn't dropped in, as he usually did on Sundays and holidays. But Mr. Boyd was engaged elsewhere. And this was only the beginning of good days for that family, for, somehow, the Christmas feeling seemed to last through all the year with Mr. Boyd, and through many other years; and the little ball set rolling by Jack with his quail-traps, grew to be a mighty globe of happiness for the whole family.

LEFT OUT.

By A.G.W.

One day, St. Nicholas made a complaint:
"I think it's quite plain why they call me a saint.
I wonder if any one happens to see
That nobody ever makes presents to me;
That I, who make presents to ever so many,
Am the only poor fellow who never gets any!"



MISS ALCOTT,

THE FRIEND OF LITTLE WOMEN AND OF LITTLE MEN.

BY F.B.S.

[Illustration]



Page 71

Would the readers of ST. NICHOLAS, who are all admirers of Miss Louisa Alcott, like to hear more than they now know about this kind friend of theirs, who has been giving them so much pleasure by her stories, and never writes so well as when she writes for boys and girls? Then, let me tell you something about her own family and childhood, and how she became the well-known writer that she is. She not only tells you pleasant stories about “little women” and “old-fashioned girls,” “eight cousins,” and children “under the lilacs,”—but she shows you how good it is to be generous and kind, to love others and not to be always caring and working for yourselves. And the way she can do this is by first being noble and unselfish herself. “Look into thine own heart and write,” said a wise man to one who had asked how to make a book. And it is because Miss Alcott looks into her own heart and finds such kindly and beautiful wishes there that she has been able to write so many beautiful books. They tell the story of her life; but they tell many other stories also. So let me give you a few events and scenes in her life, by themselves.

Miss Alcott’s father was the son of a farmer in Connecticut, and her mother was the daughter of a merchant in Boston. After growing up in a pretty, rural town, among hardy people who worked all day in the fields or the woods, and were not very rich, Mr. Alcott went down into Virginia and wandered about among the rich planters and the poor slaves who then lived there; selling the gentlemen and ladies such fine things as they would buy from his boxes,—for he was a traveling merchant, or peddler,—staying in their mansions sometimes, and sometimes in the cabins of the poor; reading all the books he could find in the great houses, and learning all that he could in other ways. Then, he went back to Connecticut and became a school-master. So fond was he of children, and so well did he understand them, that his school soon became large and famous, and he was sent for to go and teach poor children in Boston. Miss May, the mother of Miss Alcott, was then a young lady in that city. She, too, was full of kind thoughts for children, the poor and the rich, and when she saw how well the young school-master understood his work, how much good he was seeking to do, and how well he loved her, why, Miss May consented to marry Mr. Alcott, and then they went away to Philadelphia together, where Mr. Alcott taught another school.

Close by Philadelphia, and now a part of that great city, is Germantown, a quiet and lovely village then, which had been settled many years before by Germans, for whom it was named, and by Quakers, such as came to Philadelphia with William Penn. Here Louisa May Alcott was born, and she spent the first two years of her life in Germantown and Philadelphia. Then, her father and mother went back to Boston, where Mr. Alcott taught a celebrated school in a fine large building called the Temple, close by Boston Common, and about



Page 72

this school an interesting book has been written, which, perhaps, you will some day read. The little Louisa did not go to it at first, because she was not old enough, but her father and mother taught her at home the same beautiful things which the older children learned in the Temple school. By and by people began to complain that Mr. Alcott was too gentle with his scholars, that he read to them from the New Testament too much, and talked with them about Jesus, when he should have been making them say their multiplication-table. So his school became unpopular, and all the more so because he would not refuse to teach a poor colored boy who wanted to be his pupil. The fathers and mothers of the white children were not willing to have a colored child in the same school with their darlings. So they took away their children, one after another, until, when Louisa Alcott was between six and seven years old, her father was left with only five pupils, Louisa and her two sisters ("Jo," "Beth" and "Meg"), one white boy, and the colored boy whom he would not send away. Mr. Alcott had depended for his support on the money which his pupils paid him, and now he became poor, and gave up his school.

There was a friend of Mr. Alcott's then living in Concord, not far from Boston,—a man of great wisdom and goodness, who had been very sad to see the noble Connecticut school-master so shabbily treated in Boston,—and he invited his friend to come and live in Concord. So Louisa went to that old country town with her father and mother when she was eight years old, and lived with them in a little cottage, where her father worked in the garden, or cut wood in the forest, while her mother kept the house and did the work of the cottage, aided by her three little girls. They were very poor, and worked hard; but they never forgot those who needed their help, and if a poor traveler came to the cottage door hungry, they gave him what they had, and cheered him on his journey. By and by, when Louisa was ten years old, they went to another country town not far off, named Harvard, where some friends of Mr. Alcott had bought a farm, on which they were all to live together, in a religious community, working with their hands, and not eating the flesh of slaughtered animals, but living on vegetable food, for this practice, they thought, made people more virtuous. Miss Alcott has written an amusing story about this, which she calls "Transcendental Wild Oats." When Louisa was twelve years old, and had a third sister ("Amy"), the family returned to Concord, and for three years occupied the house in which Mr. Hawthorne, who wrote the fine romances, afterward lived. There Mr. Alcott planted a fair garden, and built a summer-house near a brook for his children, where they spent many happy hours, and where, as I have heard, Miss Alcott first began to compose stories to amuse her sisters and other children of the neighborhood.



Page 73

When she was almost sixteen, the family returned to Boston, and there Miss Alcott began to teach boys and girls their lessons. She had not been at school much herself, but she had been instructed by her father and mother. She had seen so much that was generous and good done by them that she had learned it is far better to have a kind heart and to do unselfish acts than to have riches or learning or fine clothes. So, mothers were glad to send her their children to be taught, and she earned money in this way for her own support.

But she did not like to teach so well as her father did, and thought that perhaps she could write stories and be paid for them, and earn more money in that way. So she began to write stories. At first nobody would pay her any money for them, but she kept patiently at work, making better and better what she wrote, until in a few years she could earn a good sum by her pen. Then the great civil war came on, and Miss Alcott, like the rest of the people, wished to do something for her country. So she went to Washington as a nurse, and for some time she took care of the poor soldiers who came into the hospital wounded or sick, and she has written a little book about these soldiers which you may have read. But soon she grew ill herself from the labor and anxiety she had in the hospital, and almost died of typhoid fever; since when she has never been the robust, healthy young lady she was before, but was more or less an invalid while writing all those cheerful and entertaining books. And yet to that illness all her success as an author might perhaps be traced. Her "Hospital Sketches," first published in a Boston newspaper, became very popular, and made her name known all over the North. Then she wrote other books, encouraged by the reception given to this, and finally, in 1868, five years after she left the hospital in Washington, she published the first volume of "Little Women." From that day to this she has been constantly gaining in the public esteem, and now perhaps no lady in all the land stands higher. Several hundred thousand volumes of her books have been sold in this country, and probably as many more in England and other European countries.

Twenty years ago, Miss Alcott returned to Concord with her family, who have ever since resided there. It was there that most of her books were written, and many of her stories take that town for their starting-point. It was in Concord that "Beth" died, and there the "Little Men" now live. Miss Alcott herself has been two or three years in Europe since 1865, and has spent several winters in Boston or New York, but her summers are usually passed in Concord, where she lives with her father and mother in a picturesque old house, under a warm hill-side, with an orchard around it and a pine-wood on the hill-top behind. Two aged trees stand in front of the house, and in the rear is the studio of Miss May Alcott ("Amy"), who has become an artist of renown, and had a painting

Page 74

exhibited last spring in the great exhibition of pictures at Paris. Close by is another house, under the same hill-side, where Mr. Hawthorne lived and wrote several of his famous books, and it was along the old Lexington road in front of these ancient houses that the British Grenadiers marched and retreated on the day of the battle of Concord in April, 1775. Instead of soldiers marching with their plumed hats, you might have seen there last summer great plumes of asparagus waving in the field; instead of bayonets, the poles of grape-vines in ranks upon the hill; while loads of hay, of strawberries, pears and apples went jolting along the highway between hill and meadow.

The engraving shows you how Miss Alcott looks,—only you must recollect that it does not flatter her; and if you should see her, you would like her face much better than the picture of it. She has large, dark-blue eyes, brown clustering hair, a firm but smiling mouth, a noble head, and a tall and stately presence, as becomes one who is descended from the Mays, Quincys and Sewalls, of Massachusetts, and the Alcotts and Bronsons of Connecticut. From them she has inherited the best New England traits,—courage and independence without pride, a just and compassionate spirit, strongly domestic habits, good sense, and a warm heart. In her books you perceive these qualities, do you not? and notice, too, the vigor of her fancy, the flowing humor that makes her stories now droll and now pathetic, a keen eye for character, and the most cheerful tone of mind. From the hard experiences of life she has drawn lessons of patience and love, and now with her, as the apostle says, “abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” There have been men, and some women too, who could practice well the heavenly virtue of charity toward the world at large, and with a general atmospheric effect, but could not always bring it down to earth, and train it in the homely, crooked paths of household care. But those who have seen Miss Alcott at home know that such is not her practice. In the last summer, as for years before, the citizen or the visitor who walked the Concord streets might have seen this admired woman doing errands for her father, mother, sister, or nephews, and as attentive to the comfort of her family as if she were only their housekeeper. In the sick-room she has been their nurse, in the excursion their guide, in the evening amusements their companion and entertainer. Her good fortune has been theirs, and she has denied herself other pleasures for the satisfaction of giving comfort and pleasure to them.

“So did she travel on life’s common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet her heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.”

THE BOY WHO JUMPED ON TRAINS.

BY MARY HARTWELL.



There was a boy whose name was Dunn,
And he was one
As full of fun
As any boy could walk or run!



Page 75

His cheeks were plump, his eyes were bright,
He stepped as light
As a camel might,
And bounced and played from morn till night.

And whether he was here or there,
His parents' care—
Unseen like air—
Followed and held him everywhere.

[Illustration: "HE WOULD JUMP ON THE CARS TO RIDE."]

He really was their joy and pride—
Was good beside;
But woe betide—
He *would* jump on the cars to ride!

There, hanging to a brake or step,
Tight hold he kept,
And onward swept,
Yelling with all his might, "Git-tep!"

Dunn's father learned that he did so,
And told him to
Decline to go
Where trains were running to and fro.

As for his mother, she turned white,
And gasped with fright
To think Dunn might
Come home a pancake some fine night!

[Illustration: "HIS FATHER'S STERN COMMAND."]

But his relations often said,
With shaking head,
That boy was led
To have his way if it killed him dead!

[Illustration: "THE FREIGHT-CARS DECKED WITH BOYS DID SLIDE."]

And sure enough when school was out,
And boys about
The trains flocked out,
Dunn followed too, with plunge and shout.



He did not mean to grab a ride,
But by his side,
With tempting glide,
The freight-cars decked with boys did slide!

Where was his father's stern command?
Out went his hand;
He gained a stand—
At least he *planned* to gain a stand!

What is it? Crash! His head is blind!
That wheel behind—
He hears it grind!
And he is paralyzed in mind!

On cork and crutches now goes Dunn!
Whole boys may run—
Grab rides for fun—
But, as I said, *this* boy is *Dunn*!

THE TOWER-MOUNTAIN

BY GUSTAVUS FRANKENSTEIN.

I.

Many years ago, I was roving in a land strange and wonderful to me. It was a tropical country, and I was wandering alone among the grand scenery of the mountains, and the luxuriant vegetation of the hill-sides and valleys.

I had with me but few implements, and these, such as were light and easy to carry. A hunting-knife, a small hatchet, a canteen and a few marching necessaries made up my kit.

One day while rambling about, living on the bountiful supplies of fruit nature provides in that charming region, I came to a deep lake surrounded by steep hills. On the opposite side of this lake I could see a narrow gap or cleft, which seemed to lead to the higher ground. I therefore made a raft,—not without considerable trouble,—and paddled it across the lake. I found the gap quite narrow at its entrance, but it soon became wider, while far forward, at the end of the chasm, there appeared to be a series of rude steps.



Page 76

I fastened the raft to the rock, in doing which I had the ill luck to drop my hatchet into the deep water, and, notwithstanding the evil omen, made my way into the crevice. I passed over the rough bottom of the chasm until I came to the steps; these I ascended. At a height of about a hundred feet I came to a wall of rock, the top of which I could just reach with the ends of my fingers. By a great effort, I got a good hold of the edge of the rock, and drew myself up.

When I stood at last upon the upper ground, I saw before me the most beautiful trees and flowers I had yet met with. On either side the rocks retreated and rose steeply to the summits I had partially seen from the lake below. As I passed on and surveyed the plateau, I found it to be a valley about a mile in diameter, encompassed by precipices more or less abrupt. With but little trouble I found a place of easy ascent, and soon climbed to the top of the rocky wall.

The delight I now experienced surpassed everything I had ever known. Spread out before me, as I stood upon an eminence somewhat above the general level, was a vast expanse overflowing with vegetation and extending for miles in every direction, whilst all round about rose the mighty domes and pinnacles of snow-clad mountains. I stood in the midst of the sublimest mountain scenery in the world. I could look down upon the beautiful lake, and up at the giant peaks, and all about me upon the fruitful verdure, whilst the atmosphere was charged with delightful odors, and a pleasant breeze tempered the sweet warm air.

As here was a delightful climate, fruit in abundance, and scenery soul-exalting, of whose glory one could never grow tired, I felt rather pleased with the thought "Why not stay here? Why not remain in this beautiful place as long as circumstances will permit?"

All nature seemed here so lovely that I resolved to wander no further.

While gazing around at all this grandeur and beauty, my attention was particularly drawn to a group of lofty peaks which rose in the midst of this smiling garden. The sides of the towering eminences seemed almost perpendicular, and they were about three or four thousand feet high.

I soon gave up all hope of ever reaching the top, but in examining the rock I found at its base a great cavern, so high and wide that a very large building might have stood in it, with plenty of room to spare. The sides and roof sparkled with crystals of all hues, and were singularly and picturesquely variegated with differently colored veins running through them; and, as the cave opened toward the east, with a large clear space in front of it, nothing could have been more splendid than when the morning sun shone full into the vast chamber and lighted it up with dazzling brilliancy.

In that chamber I made my humble home.



Page 77

Near one of the streams that flowed over the precipice into the lake, grew several species of very tall grasses, with great bushy heads of long silky fibers that adorned and protected their flowers and fruit. Of these fine strong threads I made a hammock, which I suspended from a strong frame bound together with these tough fibers, placing it a few feet back from the mouth of the cavern. Thus, I had an excellent bed, and if I should need covering there were plenty of palm-leaves at hand for the purpose. But in that torrid climate there was little need of extra protection; the air of the cavern was of just that delightful coolness which refreshes but does not chill.

Now, imagine me waking in the morning just as the dawn tinted the rosy east, refreshed with sweet slumbers and rejoicing to behold the light, rocking myself gently in my pretty hammock, and hailing the uprising sun with a merry song,—and would you not suppose there was one happy man in this great world?

While the day was yet young I would take a bath in the clear, soft water of a little stream near by. Then, when all was sparkling and bright in my humble house, I would partake with keen appetite of the precious fruits of my unlimited and self-producing garden.

In the neighboring streams were many kinds of fishes, some of which I knew to be very good eating, and I could have caught and eaten as many birds as I wished; but the fruits and nuts were so plentiful, and of so many different sorts, that I cared for, and, indeed, needed, no other kind of food.

Thus, several months passed away, and I was not weary of this paradise. There was enough to occupy my mind in the examination of the structure and mode of growth of a vast number of species of plants. Their flowering, their fruitage, and their decay offered a boundless field for thought, and kept up a never-flagging interest.

For the first four months the sun traced his course through the heavens to the north of me; I knew, therefore, that I was almost immediately under the equator. For several days at the end of the four months, the sun rose directly in the east, passing through the sky in a line dividing it almost exactly into halves north and south. After that, for six months, I had the great luminary to the south of me.

In all this time there was but little change in the weather. A short period without rain was the exception. Otherwise, the mornings and evenings were invariably clear, with a refreshing rain of about two hours' duration in the middle of the day. In the afternoon the sun was, of course, away from my cavern, shining upon the opposite side of the mountain of solid rock, which rendered my abode delightfully cool in the greatest heat of the day. Toward the end of the short dry period, magnificent thunder-showers passed over my domain. Nothing could be more glorious than these electrical displays of an equatorial sky, as I sat snug and safe within the rocky shelter. The heaviest shower could not wet me, the water without ran with a swift descent, from the cave, and over the precipice into the lake below. It was not likely that the lightning would take the



trouble to creep in under the rock and there find me out. And as for the thunder, I was not in the least afraid of it, but gloried in its loud peals and distant reverberations among the encompassing mountains.



Page 78

It was during the violence of one of these tempests that a parrot flew into my comfortable quarters.

“Hallo! my fine fellow!” said I. “Where do you come from, and what do you want here?”

It flew about the room looking for a place to perch, trying to find a footing against the wall, slipping down, and flying up again.

I left it free to find its own roosting-place, or fly out of the cavern, as it liked. I had seen a few parrots of the same kind, outside in my garden, had heard them chattering and shrieking amidst the foliage, and had always been very much amused with their odd ways, and pleased with the brilliance and the glitter of their splendid plumage. But I never tried or cared to capture the gorgeous, noisy birds, or any other of the creatures that were always to be seen around me. Indeed, from the very first, the living things in this lovely valley appeared to be uncommonly tame; and in time no bird or other animal showed the least fear on my approach, regarding me no more than any other creature that never did them harm. Of course, this came of my never molesting them. But I never thought of getting on familiar terms with any of them, although scarcely a day passed that some of these animals did not come and eat of the fruit by the side of that which I was plucking. I never laid hands on them, but always let them go about their own business. They soon became accustomed to my umbrella even, for I early made one of these necessities of a torrid climate; and although at first when I had occasion to walk in the sun my appearance shaded by the portable roof caused unusual chattering and commotion, I speedily took on a familiar look to them. In the same way I became an object of curiosity when I plucked a leaf and made of it a cup to drink from. But at length all signs of strangeness vanished, and there even came to be a kind of friendship between us.

[Illustration: THE VIEW FROM THE LEDGE.]

I therefore concerned myself no more about the parrot, thinking that, of course, as soon as the rain should stop, the bird would fly away.

I had made a small table of three slabs of rock, where I frequently placed fruits, nuts, roots and the like, that I might have in case I should feel hungry when in my house, and yet not care to eat the fruit directly from the plant, which I most generally preferred. Of course, too, it was always desirable to have provisions on hand when it rained.

The next morning, when I awoke, the rain was still descending, for it was just at this time that it rained for three or four days together.

I always had a healthy relish for the good things of this world, and, as there was no rosy dawn to look at, my eyes immediately went in search of the breakfast-table.



“What!” I exclaimed; and I sat upright in my hammock.

There was the parrot on the table.

I eyed him for some time, and then I cried out:



Page 79

“You little thief! Stealing my food, are you?”

The parrot sat there, but said never a word. He merely raised one of his claws and sleeked up the feathers on the back of his neck, in the way his family know so well. Then, raising the feathers of his crest, he gave utterance to a very faint shriek.

“Get out of this, you rascal!” I cried and immediately got up and went toward him with the purpose of putting him out.

I approached the table very rapidly, expecting that the bird would fly away. But he remained motionless. I was about to lay rude hands on him, but I desisted.

“Why do violence to the creature? Why mar the serenity of this peaceful vale?” I said to myself. “And why make such ado about a little fruit when there is abundance on every hand?”

Happening just then to glance at the fruit, it seemed to me that it had not been disturbed.

I examined it more closely, and began to feel I had done the parrot great injustice. There it lay, just as I had left it the night before; there was no evidence whatever of its having been picked at, and I came to the comforting conclusion that the handsome bird had broken no moral law.

The parrot rose greatly in my esteem at this happy discovery.

“Friend Parrot,” said I, “I beg pardon for having so rashly jumped to the conclusion that you had been guilty of theft. I believe that you have touched nothing of the things which belong to me. Indeed, I am sure that you have not. That you have so scrupulously regarded the rights of property is to me the source of infinite gratification, and fills me with the highest admiration of your character. To show you that I am disinclined to let virtue go unrewarded, I accord you my permission to stay here while I am eating my breakfast, and when I have finished, you too may eat some, if you like.”

Then, having arranged my toilet, I began to partake of the good things that lay on the table, the parrot all the while looking at me with lively interest. I could not help being amused at his significant performances. He turned his knowing head one way, and then another, now sidewise toward the fruits, and then obliquely up at me, as I sat enjoying the repast, enlivening his gestures with gentle prattle, and yet never making a single demonstration in the direction of my food. He put me in such good humor that I was impelled to say to him:

“Friend Parrot, I don’t mind being sociable; and if you are inclined to do me the favor of honoring me with your company, I most respectfully invite you to partake of this humble



collation.” And, taking up one of the choicest nuts in the collection, I handed it to him forthwith.

He took it promptly, and proceeded to crack and munch it in regular parrot fashion.

“You must excuse me,” I resumed, “that my viands are not of the choicest cooking, and that I have no servants to wait upon my highly esteemed guest, and that there are no silver knives and forks and spoons to eat with in the latest civilized style, but I have rid myself of all those things, and am glad of it.”



Page 80

The parrot nodded his head approvingly, as much as to say, "Right, quite right."

The poor bird was very hungry, and I let him eat his fill.

Breakfast over, my guest flew upon my shoulder and was disposed to be affectionate. He delicately pecked at my lips, drew his bill gently across my cheeks, and pulled my hair with his claws.

"Come, come! friend Parrot, none of your soft billing and cooing. Leave that to women and children."

So I gave my friend politely to understand that I did not care for such pretty endearments; and, soon comprehending the force of my objection, he very sensibly desisted from bestowing further attention upon me, and thenceforth kept his handsome person reasonably aloof.

I entertained my friend two days, during which I gave him much valuable advice, and, which was more to the purpose and perhaps better appreciated, plenty to eat.

On the morning of the third day, the sun rose in all his beauty again, and I fully expected the bird would fly away. He was in no hurry to go, however. I went out, wandered about, and toward noon returned home. Still the parrot was there. So it was the next day, and the next. I did not want to resort to force and drive him away.

Finally I said to him one day:

"Friend Parrot; since I see you are in no hurry to leave my humble home, and that it evidently grieves you to lose the pleasure of my society, I shall not eject you forcibly from the premises. Stay, therefore, as long as it shall please you. I will share with you food, and shelter from the sun and rain. And whenever you grow weary of this my society, tired of this plain habitation, or disgusted generally with civilization, and wish to return to the freedom of savage life, you are at liberty to go. 'Tis a large door, always open, out of which you can fly; and when you are gone I shall shed no tears over your departure."

The bird seemed really to comprehend the drift of my discourse, and from that time forward we lived upon the most intimate terms, which, however, never passed the bounds of mutual respect.

Now, if we were to live in such close ties of friendship, it was necessary that my friend should have a name, and that he, too, should be able to address me by mine. The title, "Friend Parrot," was rather too formal, and his screeching at me in some unmeaning way every time he wanted me could not for long be tolerated.

So, "Mr. Parrot" said I, "you are Mr. Parrot no longer. Your name is 'Pippity.'"



He soon learned his new name, and then said I:

“Pippity! my name is ‘Frank.’”

It was incredible how rapidly he learned mine.

“Further, Pippity,” I continued, “you must learn the names of the things round about us.”

Instruction began at once. For several days he had to be told the names of things many times before he was able to repeat them correctly; but after that, and apparently all of a sudden, he seemed to have caught a bright idea and to thoroughly understand my method of teaching.

Page 81

From that time on, when the name of a thing was made plain to him, he seemed to grasp it immediately and never forgot it. This expedited matters wonderfully, for I liked to talk to him and observe his efforts to repeat what I said, so there was ample conversation, though somewhat one-sided, going on in our ancient dwelling. I marveled at the parrot's extraordinary power; but what astonished me above all was his wonderful memory, and his unlimited capacity for taking in new ideas. Sometimes I would ask him, after an interval of weeks, some name of a thing I had taught him, and the answer was invariably correct. On such occasions I would say to him:

"Pippity, what's that?"

He would tell me immediately; and I laughed outright when, one day, as we were strolling through the forest, I stumbled over a stone, and the parrot, perching on it, pecked it with his bill, and then, looking up at me askance, asked:

"What's that?"

That was a phrase I had unwittingly taught him. And now I began more than ever to perceive his extraordinary genius.

Thenceforth it was "What's that?" and "What's that?" and actually the fellow wanted to learn more quickly than I could teach.

Once, after this intelligent bird had been with me for some months, we were sitting quietly in our domicile, shaded from the afternoon sun by our lofty rock-built palace, enjoying the beauties of creation, when all at once he broke out in his clear, melodious voice:

"Tell me something new!"

I looked at him in amazement. I had never taught him to say that; but undoubtedly he must have heard me say, at some time or other, "Pippity, now I will tell you something new." Yet how the bird had managed to turn the phrase grammatically to himself puzzled me not a little.

However, I soon began to teach him something else that was new, for I had been thinking that it was time that he should learn the names of the plants,—at least of the most interesting and useful. So it was not long before Pippity had a fair acquaintance with botany.

Nearly a year had now rolled round, when one day Pippity was missing. What could have happened to him? Had he grown tired of my society? Did he begin to think that, after all, savage freedom was to be preferred to dull, systematic civilization? Had he come to the conclusion that much learning is, at best, but vanity? Did he want to go babbling again in chaotic gibberish rather than to talk smoothly by rote?



Two days passed, in which to drive away any natural feeling of loneliness at the parrot's absence, I set down notes as concisely as possible of what had occurred to me so far. For this purpose I used the point of my knife and thin slabs of mica, wishing to save the small stock of memorandum paper in my note-book and journals as much as I could. At other times I had used bark and similar things to write on, but the mica was more durable, and more easily stowed away. It was my intention to make a still more condensed series of notes on the paper I had by me, whenever I should feel like undertaking the task. The juice of berries would serve for ink, and a feather or light reed would make as good a pen as I should want. This plan I carried out afterward.



Page 82

[Illustration]

On the third day Pippity returned, and, as he came flying into the palace, "Pippity, Pippity!" I cried, "I thought you were never coming back. Have you been to see your old friends?" He hung his head demurely, and said nothing.

Although I had told Pippity, when he had first sought my hospitality, that I would shed no tears over his departure, if at any time he might see fit to leave me, I must confess that I was very glad when he came back. His society was agreeable. He was a good listener, and he was by no means an idler, as far as that kind of honorable work is concerned which consists in keeping body and soul together. For example, strolling through our fertile garden, if I should happen to see some fine fruit high on a tree, Pippity would fly up to it at my bidding, and, cutting its stem with his bill, would quickly bring it to the ground.

"Pippity," I would say, "do you see that extra fine bunch of bananas up there? Now, do you go up and cut the stalk, while I stand below and catch the luscious treasure on this soft bed of leaves."

And, before I would be done speaking, Pippity would already be pretty well advanced with his work. For getting nuts, and such fruit as it was desirable to take carefully from plants at great heights, his services were invaluable.

It is a remarkable fact that, although we had such an abundance of tropical fruits, as well as a large proportion of temperate productions, on our domain, the cocoa-nut was not one of them. I remembered that, in coming up from the lake, I had seen large numbers of cocoa-nut trees growing on the small flat at which I first arrived about nine hundred feet below the level of our palace plateau.

It would be an agreeable diversion, I thought, to go down there and get some of those nuts, and it undoubtedly would be quite a treat to Pippity to share them with me.

"So," said I, "Pippity, I am going down this narrow gorge to the lake; cocoa-nuts grow there, and I mean that you and I shall have some. Keep house while I am gone. I shall start with the first peep of dawn, while it is cool, and be back some time in the afternoon."

I had made some baskets, in which we hung up the fruit we gathered. One of these I took, and went down the declivity. I soon filled the basket with good cocoa-nuts, saw plenty of monkeys, and was much amused at their lively antics, and at their astonishment at seeing one so much like them, and yet so different. I then returned—not, however, without being obliged to throw away quite a number of the nuts before reaching the top, in order to lessen the burden, which was light enough at first, but which seemed to grow heavier and heavier as I proceeded.



As soon as Pippity saw me, he cried out:

“Cocoa-nuts! Cocoa-nuts!”

We relished them so much that I went down after them quite often, always leaving Pippity at home to mind the house.



Page 83

On one occasion, while I was gathering these nuts, I was startled by a loud shrieking not far off, and, looking in the direction of the noise, I saw that there was a great commotion among the monkeys—about a hundred of them squealing and yelling and gesticulating at once. It was on the ground, where the monkey-crowd swayed to and fro like any civilized mob. I ran up to see what the fracas was about, but not without some misgivings as to the risk of meddling in other people's business.

(To be continued.)

SINGING PINS.

BY HARLAN H. BALLARD.

It has been said, you know, that all the millions of pins which are lost every year are picked up by fairies and hammered out on elfin anvils into notes of music. There are some who say that this statement must be received with caution, although they admit that the half and quarter notes do bear a very singular resemblance to pins.

I confess that I shared the doubts of this latter class of persons until a few evenings since; for although I knew well enough that pins were bright and sharp enough in their way, I never had been able to discover one of a musical turn of mind.

But having on a certain evening heard a choir of pins singing "Yankee Doodle" till you would have thought that their heads must ache forever after, I hereby withdraw all my objections, and express my decided opinion that the above-named theory of the future life of pins is fully as accurate as any other with which I am acquainted.

The chorus of pins who were singing "Yankee Doodle" were standing at the time on a piece of pine-board, and were evidently very much stuck up.

One of their number, however, when asked if they were not rather too self-important, bent his head quickly downward, and replied that he couldn't see the point, which was exceedingly brassy for a pin.

They looked for all the world as if they were a line of music which, impatient of being forever kept under key and behind bars, had revolted under the leadership of an intrepid staff-officer, and marched right out of Sister Mary's instruction-book.

[Illustration: TUNING THE PINS.]

Indeed, from a remark which the staff-officer let fall, to the effect that if they did not all see sharp they would soon be flat again, nothing else would be natural than to accept that supposition as the truth.



Pins they were of all papers and polish.

They were not ranged according to height, as good soldiers should be, nor did they all stand erect, but each seemed bent on having his own way.

Their heads varied greatly from an even line, and on the whole they looked far more like the notes of music which they had been, than like the orderly row of singing-pins which they aspired to be. They had a scaly appearance.

My small brother had assumed the management of this curious chorus, and I was much amused at the manner in which he drilled them. For he coolly picked up the splendid staff-officer by his head and poked the first bass with his point, as if to say, "Time—sing!" Whereupon that pin set up a deep, twanging growl, to express his disapprobation of that method of drill.



Page 84

In like manner did my brother treat each of the pins in succession. Then it appeared that each had a different voice, and was capable of producing but one sound. Moreover, they had been so arranged that, as they uttered each one his peculiar note, the sounds followed each other in such a manner as to produce the lively and patriotic air of "Yankee Doodle." This was very wonderful and pleasing.

"Well, Johnny," said I, as soon as I could stop laughing, "that's pretty good. Where did you pick that up?"

"Oh, a feller told me," said he. "'T aint nothing to do. All there is of it is to get a tune in your head, and then drive a pin down in a board, and keep a-driving, and trying it till it sounds like the first note in the tune. Then stick up another for the second note, and so on."

"How can you raise a pin to a higher note?" said I.

"Hammer her down farther," said he.

"And to make a lower note?" I asked.

"Pull her up a little," said he.

"How do you manage the time?"

"Oh, when you want to go slow, you put the pins a good ways apart; and when you want to go fast, you plant 'em thicker."

The next day I found that this ridiculous brother of mine had set up a pin-organ in a circular form. He had made one of those little whirligigs which spin around when they are held over the register or by a stove-pipe, and then had connected it by a string with a wheel. This wheel, as it turned, set an upright shaft in motion, and from this there projected a stick armed at the end with a pin. This was arranged, as is shown in the cut, so that when it revolved, the pin in the stick played upon the pins in the circle, and rattled off the "Mulligan Guards" at a tremendous pace.

[Illustration: THE PIN-ORGAN.]

Johnny says that he invented the circular arrangement, and that all the boys he knows are making these pin-organs for themselves, which I am not at all surprised to hear.

ABOUT THE PORPOISES.

BY J. D.



The porpoise is a long, sleek fish without scales, black on the back, and white and gray beneath. He is from four to ten feet in length, and his sociability and good-nature are proverbial among seamen of all nations.

A porpoise is rarely seen alone, and if he by chance wanders from his friends, he acts in a very bewildered and foolish manner, and will gladly follow a steamer at full speed rather than be left alone. He is a very inquisitive fish, and is always thrusting his funny-looking snout into every nook that promises diversion or sport.

[Illustration: A SCHOOL OF PORPOISES.]



Page 85

A very familiar spectacle at sea is a school of porpoises—or “porpusses,” as the sailors call them. As soon as a school catches sight of a ship, they immediately make a frantic rush for it, as if their life depended upon giving it a speedy welcome. After diving under the vessel a few times to inspect it and try its speed, they take their station under the bows, just ahead, and proceed to cut up every antic that a fish is capable of. They jump, turn over, play “leap-frog” and “tag” in the most approved fashion. Their favorite antic is to dive a few feet and then come to the surface, showing their backs in a half circle, and then, making a sound like a long-drawn sigh, disappear again. Sailors call them “sea-clowns,” and never allow them to be harmed.

They are met with in schools of from two or three to thousands. They often get embayed in the inlets and shallow rivers which their curiosity leads them to investigate. A porpoise once came into the Harlem River and wandered up and down for a week seeking a way out. One day he suddenly made his appearance amid some bathers and scattered them by his gambols.

When they change their feeding-places, the sea is covered for acres with a tumultuous multitude of these “sea-clowns,” all swimming along in the same direction.

When one of these droves is going against the wind (or to windward), their plungings throw up little jets of water, which, being multiplied by thousands of fish, present a very curious appearance.

THE WILD WIND.

BY CLARA W. RAYMOND.

Oh, the wind came howling at our house-door,
Like a maddened fiend set free;
He pushed and struggled with gasp and roar,
For an angry wind was he!

He dashed snow-wreaths at our window-panes,
The casements rattled and creaked;
Then up he climbed to the chimney tops,
And down through the flues he shrieked.

He found Jack's sled by the garden fence,
And tumbled it down in his spite;
And heaped the snow till he covered it up,
And hid it from poor Jack's sight.

He tore down the lattice and broke the house
Ned built for the birds last week;



And he bent the branches and bowed the trees,
Then rushed off fresh wrath to wreak.

And oh! how he frightened poor little Nell,
And made her tremble and weep,
Till mother came up and soothed the wee maid,
And lulled her with songs to sleep!

Her tiny hand nestled, content and still,
In her mother's, so soft and warm;
While with magical power of low, sweet tones
The mother-love hushed the storm.

THE MAGICIAN AND HIS BEE.

BY P.F.



Page 86

It was a spelling bee. The magician had never had one, but he thought it was better late than never, and so he sent word around that he would have his bee just outside of the town, on the green grass. Everybody came, because they had to. When the magician said they must do a thing, there was no help for it. So they all marched in a long procession, the magician at the head with his dictionary open at the “bee” page. Every now and then he turned around and waved his wand, so as to keep the musicians in good time. The cock-of-the-walk led the band and he played on his own bill, which had holes in it, like a flute. The rabbit beat the drum, and the pig blew the horn, while old Mother Clink, who was mustered in to make up the quartette, was obliged to play on the coffee-mill, because she understood no other instrument.

[Illustration]

The king came, with his three body-guards marching in front. The first guard was a wild savage with bare legs, and a gnat stung him on the knee, which made the second guard laugh so much that the third one who carried the candles had a chance to eat a penny-dip, without any person seeing him. The king rode in his chariot, drawn by two wasps. He was a very warm gentleman, and not only carried a parasol to keep off the sun, but the head ninny-hammer squirted water on the small of his back to keep him cool.

[Illustration]

The court tailor rode on a goat, and he carried his shears and the goose he ironed with. He balanced himself pretty well until a bird sat on his queue, and that bent him over backward so that he nearly fell off.

The queen also came; she was bigger than the king and had to have cats to draw her chariot. The cats fought a good deal, but the driver, who was a mouse, managed to get them along. The footman was also a mouse, and the queen had two pet mice that sat at her feet or played with her scepter. After the queen came the chief jumping jack, who did funny tricks with bottles as he danced along.

[Illustration]

Then came the ladies of the court. They sat in nautilus shells, which were each borne by two bearers. The first shell went along nicely, but the men who carried the second were lazy and the lady beat them with a hair-brush. As for the bearers of the last shell, they had a fight and took their poles to beat each other, leaving their shell, with the lady in it, on the ground. She didn't mind, for she thought that if they went off and left her, she wouldn't have to do any spelling. So she stayed in her shell and smiled very contentedly.

[Illustration]



The town bell-man walked along in grand state ringing his bell, and the cock-who-could-n't-walk rode on a wheelbarrow and crowed by note. The old ram wheeled the barrow, in which was also a basket containing the hen and chickens. The smallest chicken tried to crow in tune with his father, but nobody could hear whether he crowed right or wrong—and what is more, nobody cared.



Page 87

The monkey didn't walk, but was carried in a bucket by a mountaineer, and he blew peas through a tube at the palace steward who was having his hair combed by the court barber. It was so late that the barber had to hurry, and so he used a rake instead of a comb. The steward did not like this, but there was so little time that nothing else could be done, for the procession was already moving.

[Illustration]

There was a lion who lived at the Town-hall. He was very wise, and his business was to bite criminals. When he heard about the bee he thought he would have to go, but the moment he showed himself in the street all the relatives of the criminals got after him. The wasps stung him, a game-cock pecked at him, a beetle nipped him, a dog barked at him, an old woman ran after him with a broom, a wooden-legged soldier pursued him with a sword, a rat gave chase to him, while a rabbit took down his shot-gun and cried out, fiercely, that he would blow the top of that old lion's head off, if he could only get a fair crack at him.

[Illustration]

Two of the liveliest animals in the town were the donkey and the old cow. They went to the bee, but they danced along as if they didn't care at all whether they spelled cat with a c or a k. They each had two partners. The donkey had two regular danseuses, but the cow had to content herself with the court librarian and the apothecary.

[Illustration]

Out in the green grass where the company assembled there were a lot of grasshoppers and little gnats. The grasshoppers said to each other, "We can't put letters together to make words, so let us dance for a spell," which they did,—all but one poor young creature who had no partner, and who sat sorrowfully on one side, while the others skipped gayly about.

[Illustration]

As soon as the people and the chickens and donkeys and wasps and cows and all the others were seated, side by side, in two long rows, the magician gave out the first word. It was "Roe-dough-mon-taide"—at least that was the way he pronounced it. The king and the queen were at the heads of the two lines, and it was their duty to begin,—first the king, and then the queen, if he missed.

But neither of them had ever heard of the word, and so they didn't try. Then one of the wasps tried, and afterward a ram, a rabbit, and the head ninny-hammer; but they made sad work of it. Then each one of the company made an effort and did his, her or its very best, but it was of no use; they could not spell the word.



Uprose then the little chicken that had stood on his mother's back and tried to crow in tune with his father, and he cried out: "Give it up!"

"Wrong!" said the magician. "That's not it. You are all now under the influence of a powerful spell. Here you will remain until some one can correctly answer my question."

They are all there yet. How long would you, my reader, have to sit on the grass before you could spell that word?



Page 88

[Illustration]

SCRUBBY'S BEAUTIFUL TREE.

BY J.C. PURDY.

I.

"Papa!"

"Well, dear!"

"Wont to-morrow be Kissmuss?"

"Why, no, darling! We had Christmas-day long ago. Don't you remember?"

"Yes; but you said we'd have another Kissmuss in a year, and then I'd have such a pitty tree. I'm sure it's a year. It *is* a year, papa; and it takes so awful long to wait for some time—it's jess a noosance. I fink ole Kriss was drefful mean not to let me have a tree only cos we'd got poor. Wasn't we ever poor before, papa? Don't he give trees to *any* poor little girls? I *do* want a tree—sech a pitty one, like I used to have!"

It was little Scrubby said all that. She was only four years old, but she could say what she had to say in her own fashion. When she saw her father's sorrowful face, she thought she had said rather too much this time; so she gave him a hug and put up her mouth for a kiss.

"I dess I can wait, papa," she said. "But he will bring me a tree *next* Kissmuss, wont he? Jess like I used to have? And then wont that be nice! There's my baby waked up. She'll be cryin' in a minute, I s'pose."

Old Lucy, the dearest baby of all in this little girl's large family, was taken up and quieted; and then something happened that was really wonderful. Scrubby, with her poor torn and tangled doll in her arms, sat very still for at least five minutes. The little maid was thinking all that time. She did not think very straight, perhaps, but she thought over a great deal of ground, and settled a good many things in that busy little head of hers; then she sang them all over to good old Lucy.

"Hush, my dear!" she sang. "Don't stay long, for it beats my heart when the winds blow; and come back soon to your own chickabiddy, and then Kissmuss'll be here. S'umber on, baby dear. Kriss is coming with such a booful tree; then wont you be s'prised? She went to the hatter's to get him a coffin, and when she come back he was fixin' my Kissmuss-tree!"



The little singer grew so enthusiastic when she came to the tree that she could not wait to sing any more; so she just danced Lucy up and down and chattered to her as fast as her tongue could go.

“It’ll be for me and for you, Lucy, and for all the babies, and then wont you be glad! And for mamma too, and for papa, cos we’s all good little chillen, if we *is* poor. Yes, indeed, Ole Kriss is coming with his reindeer. And he’ll bring me a horse with pink shoes on; and you’ll have a piano—a *really* piano, ye know; and mamma, she’ll have two little glass s’ippers, and—and—”

Little Scrubby stopped chattering just there, and laid her head down on poor old Lucy’s kind bosom.

“Oh dear!” she sighed, “I do *wish* ole Kriss’d come with that pitty tree!”



Page 89

The kitten curled up on the hearth, and the little broken dog that lay tipped over in the corner, and good old Lucy, and the three dolls tucked up in mamma's basket, all heard the wish of the poor little disappointed child.

II.

Everybody has noticed that the kittens and the dogs take a great many naps in the day-time, and that the dolls and toy-animals let the children do the most of the playing. That is because the pets and the toys are tired out and sleepy after their doings the night before, when the children were asleep and the grown people out of the way. They have rare sprees all by themselves, but just as soon as any person comes about, the fun stops,—the cat and the dog are sound asleep, the dolls drop down anywhere still as a wood-pile, and the rocking-horse don't even switch the ten hairs left in his tail.

As for talking, though, they might chatter all the time and nobody be the wiser. People hear them, but not a soul knows what it is. Mamma sticks paper into the key-hole to keep out the wind that whistles so, papa takes medicine for the cold that makes such a ringing in his head, and Bridget sets a trap to catch the mouse that "squares and scrabbles about so, a body can't slape at all, 'most;" and all the while it is the dolls and pets laughing and talking among themselves.

The bird in the cage and the bird out-of-doors know what it is. Very tame squirrels and rabbits understand it; and the poor little late chicken, which was brought into the kitchen for fear of freezing, soon spoke the language like a native.

Scrubby understood all that any of them said, and they all understood her and liked her immensely. Even the plants in the window would nod and wink and shake out their leaves whenever she came about.

After little Scrubby and everybody else in the house had gone to bed that night, Minx, the kitten, came out from behind the broom, and prancing up to the little pasteboard and wool dog that lay tipped over in the corner, pawed him about until he was as full of fun as herself. Then she jumped upon the table and clawed the three dolls out of mamma's work-basket, sending them all sprawling on the floor.

[Illustration: "OLE KRISS IS COMING WITH HIS REINDEER."]

They were a sad-looking lot of babies, anyway. There was Peg, knit out of blue, red and yellow worsted, and with black beads for eyes. She was a good deal raveled out, but there was plenty of fun in her yet, after all.

Then there was Francaise. She was a French girl, who had been brought from Paris for Scrubby before that bad time when papa "got poor." She had been very elegant, but now her laces were torn, her hair would never curl again, one arm swung loose, and her



head wobbled badly; but, for all that, she was still full of lively French airs. Lyd was the last of the lot. Poor thing! She had been such a lovely wax blonde: but now the wax had all melted off her cheeks, she was as bald as a squash, one eye had been knocked out, and, worst of all, she had not a stitch of clothes on. Scrubby had brought her to this plight; but, for all that, Lyd loved the very ground Scrubby tumbled over; and so did all the rest of them, for that matter, never caring how much she abused them in her happy, loving way.



Page 90

Very soon high fun was going on in that room, and it is a wonder the neighbors did not come in to see what the uproar meant; but nobody heard it.

Yes, Ned, the bird, heard it, took his head out from under his wing, and laughed at the fun until he almost tumbled out of his cage. The lively dog, Spot, heard it out in his shed, too, and whined at the door until Jumping Jack contrived to undo the latch and let him in. The little late chicken heard it also, hopped out of his snug basket, and was soon enjoying himself as much as if they were all chickens and it was a warm spring day.

Lucy heard it, too; but Scrubby had taken Lucy to bed with her, and had her hugged up so tightly that the kind old baby couldn't get away, and had to lie there and listen and wait.

They were having a good time in that room. The rocking-horse had been hitched to the little wagon, and Jumping Jack was driver; Miss Francaise had climbed into the wagon, and was sitting there as gracefully as she could, trying to hold her head steady; she had the pasteboard dog for a lap-dog, while Peg and Lyd sprawled on the wagon-bottom, and Minx stood upon the horse's back like a circus-rider.

And so they went tearing around the room in fine style, Spot racing with them and wagging his tail till it looked like a fan. Ned fairly shouted in his cage, and the chicken jumped on a chair and tried his best to crow.

After a while, Spot grabbed up a piece of paper from one corner, and began to worry it. The fine Francaise saw that and tumbled out of the wagon in a minute, as if she were only a very quick-tempered little girl. She snatched the paper away from Spot and snapped out: "You sha'n't spoil that! It's Scrubby's letter!"

The horse had stopped now, Jumping Jack jerked himself up to the astonished dog, and said, very severely: "Spot, aint you ashamed to worry anything that belongs to our Scrubby? I'll put you out if there's any more of it."

"It's too bad, so it is," said Peg.

Lyd began to cry with her one eye, while Ned stopped laughing and went to scolding; the chicken put his claw before his face, as if ashamed of such a dog, and even the horse shook his head.

Poor Spot was under a cloud.

"I didn't know it was anything Scrubby cared for, and I don't believe it is, either," he snapped.



“I saw Scrubby write it,” said Minx, “and she stuck the pencil in my ear when she’d finished.”

“She was sitting on us when she wrote it,” said Peg and Lyd together.

“Yes, and she held me on her lap and read it to me when it was done,” put in Francaise.

“Of course it’s her letter,” spoke up the rocking-horse. “Don’t you remember, Fran, she hitched it to my bridle and told you to ride right off and give it to old Kriss when he came around?”

“You’re a nice crowd!” growled Spot. “Every one of you knew all about this, and left it kicking around on the floor! You *are* a nice crowd! I’ll take charge of it myself now, and see that old Kriss gets it. He can’t read it, of course. Nobody could read that; but it shows how much *you* all think of Scrubby.”



Page 91

Spot had the best of it now; but the French lady spoke up in a way that put the others in good spirits right off, and made honest Spot feel as if he had been sat down upon.

“Perhaps some people can read, if you cant,” she said, “*I* can read that letter for you, and for old Kriss too, if he wants me to.”

She could not read a word, but she opened out the scribbled sheet in fine style, and just repeated what she had heard Scrubby say. And this is what Scrubby tried to put in the letter:

OLE KRISS: I want a tree, please, ole Kriss, *right away*. And lots of pitty things. And glass s’ippers for mamma. And moss under it, and animals, jess like I used to have. And a pink coat for papa, and not wait for some time, cos that’s a noosance.

It was very queer how they all acted when they heard the letter. There was not another cross word said—or a word of any kind for that matter. Not one of them even looked at the others, and it was not until poor Spot gave a big snuff that each of them found out that the rest were crying.

“Well, I know what *I’m* going to do,” said Minx, at last. “I’m just going to get that child a tree; that’s what I’m going to do.”

“And I’m going to help you,” Francaise said, as heartily as if she were not a fine lady at all. “She ruined my dress, and tore my lace, and put my hair in such a state as never was; but I don’t care. She wants a tree, and she’s going to have it.”

“You ought to have heard how she talked to her papa and old Luce to-night,” sobbed the one-eyed baby. “It was enough to break a body’s heart.”

“We did hear her,” they all snuffled.

Then they wiped their eyes, and a minute afterward, with much chatter, they began to make preparations for getting the tree.

All but Spot. Scrubby had used him the worst of all, she loved him so. She had pulled every hair on him loose, and had twisted his tail until it hung crooked; and yet Spot could not speak or do anything for crying over little Scrubby’s grief.

III.

Pretty soon, Lucy, who had listened to as much of this talk as she could, heard the whole party go out of the back door and start off somewhere. She was in a great state of mind about it. Not for anything in the world would she waken Scrubby; but oh! how she longed to tumble down-stairs and rush off after the rest!



What a party it was that did go out of that back door! And in what style they went! Ned, the canary, was the only one left behind; and those who couldn't walk, rode. For they had hitched the horse to Scrubby's little battered sled, and made a grand sleighing party of it.

Jumping Jack drove, of course. The French lady had the seat of honor on the sled, and much trouble she had to keep it, for there was nothing to hold on by, and her head was so loose that it nearly threw her over.



Page 92

Lyd had wrapped a dish-towel about her, and felt very comfortable and well-dressed; while Peg had come just as she was, and they both rolled about on the sled in a very dangerous fashion.

The late chicken held on with his claws to the curl of the runner, and flapped his wings and squawked every time the sled plunged a little in the snow. Minx rode horseback as before, while Spot went afoot, jumping and barking, and snapping up a mouthful of snow every few minutes.

But not one of them knew where they were going, or what they were going to do. They meant to get Scrubby a tree somehow, and that was all they knew about it.

At last, Peg said (Peg was a very sensible baby, if she was raveled out):

“What are we going to do, anyhow?”

“Why, we’re going to get a tree for Scrubby,” they all answered.

“Well, what kind of a tree?—and where?”

That was a poser. None of them had thought so far as that. At last, Minx said:

“Why, any kind—somewhere.”

“There are plenty of trees in France,” said Francaise.

“Then that’s the place for us to go,” said Jumping Jack; and at once they raced off to the end of the garden, on their way to France.

“This aint the way, after all,” Minx said, when they got to the fence. “The world comes to an end just over there. I got up on the fence one day, and there was nothing beyond but a great, deep hole.”

“There’s no use going off this other way,” Spot put in, “for there’s nothing over there but a big lot of water with a mill standing by it. I was over there one day.”

“Then that is our way,” said the French lady, decisively. “That is the ocean. I know they brought me across the ocean, and I was awfully sick all the way.”

That last rather discouraged them, for nobody wanted to get awfully sick if there was any other way to find Scrubby’s tree; so they concluded not to go to France.

“Well, let’s go somewhere, for I’m getting cold,” peeped the chicken; and then there was a great discussion. At last, Spot said:



“We *are* a stupid lot! There’s that sparrow comes about the door every day—he could tell us all about trees in a minute if we could find him.”

Minx knew where the sparrow kept himself, for she always watched him with an eye to business.

“But,” she said, “some of the rest of you will have to talk to him, for he’ll never let me come near him.”

So then the chicken called to the sparrow, and the sparrow answered. The matter was explained to him, and the bird fluttered down among them as much excited as anybody.

“It’s for little Scrubby, eh?” he said. “What in the world does she want a tree for? I know. It’s because she is half bird herself—bless her heart!—and she likes trees just like any other bird. And don’t she come to the door every morning and give me crumbs and talk to me so friendly? Of course, I’ll help find a tree for her.”



Page 93

But he had not found one yet, and so the chicken told him.

"I don't know," he said. "Suppose I call Mrs. Squirrel. She can tell." And off he flew, and had the gray squirrel there in a minute, cold as it was.

Then they had to tell the story over again to Mrs. Squirrel and to Mr. Rabbit, who had also hopped along to see what the fuss was all about.

"Scrubby's got to have a tree, and that's all about it," chattered Mrs. Squirrel, as she whisked about in a state of great excitement. "I didn't know old Kriss could be so mean as that. Call *him* a saint! And all because Scrubby's poor! Humph! Don't seem to *me* she is so very poor. Didn't I give her those eyes she has? And didn't the robin give her his own throat? And hasn't she a sunbeam inside, that shines all through? And didn't Miss June roll up all the flowers she had, and a dozen birds beside, and wrap the whole bundle up in Scrubby's brown skin? I don't call that being so very poor, do you? Anyhow, she is not so poor but that she could make me feel jolly every time she came out-doors last summer to run after me and chatter to me."

The rabbit had been standing all this time with one cold foot wrapped up in his ear. He unfolded his ear now, and wiped his eyes with it.

"She almost cried," he said. "Just think of one of my little bunnies wanting anything she couldn't get, and crying about it! It just breaks my heart."

"Tree!" chirped the chicken.

"Yes," said Mrs. Squirrel, "why don't you go and get a tree for Scrubby? What do you all stand here for, chattering and doing nothing? I'd give her mine, only that great beech couldn't be got into the house."

"We wanted your advice," the sparrow suggested.

"Advice! You don't need any advice. Why don't you give her your own tree? That little Norway spruce is just the thing. Come along, and don't be so selfish!"

"I'm not selfish; but really Norway is not fit, and, besides, I don't believe he'll go."

"Nonsense! He's a beautiful tree, only there isn't much green on him; and of course he'll go, for we'll make him go," answered the very decided Mrs. Squirrel.

So they all whisked away to the sparrow's roosting-place. Norway was not in good health, that was evident. He was very thin, and his temper was in bad condition too; for when the sparrow asked him if he would please step out and come with them, he answered:



“Not much I want! It’s bad enough standing here in the ground, poorly as I am, without coming out there in the snow; and I’ll not do it for anybody.”

“Oh dear! Scrubby will be so disappointed! What will she do?” they all cried out at once.

“What’s that about Scrubby? What has Scrubby got to do with my catching my death-cold, anyhow?” asked Norway.

And then they told him the whole story. He hardly waited for them to get through before he broke out talking very fast.



Page 94

“Why didn’t you say so? How should I know it was for Scrubby? Of course, I’ll go! I’d do anything for her. She did enough for me, I should think,”—and, as quickly as he could, he pulled his one foot out of the ground and hopped into the snow beside the horse. Then he went on talking. “You see if it hadn’t been for Scrubby I wouldn’t be alive at all. She heard somebody say that I needed to have the dirt loosened about my roots, and to have plenty of water. So she dug around me at a great rate, and watered me until I was almost drowned. She cut off a good many of my roots, and once she threw hot water all down this side of me; but she didn’t know. I’m not much of a tree, I confess; but Scrubby did what *she* could, and if she wants me she shall have me.”

“Come on, then,” said the chicken, “for I’m so cold my bill chatters.” And they went.

It was a very funny procession they made going back to the house,—the horse prancing along with the sled, the three dolls taking a sleigh-ride in their queer way, Spot racing about everywhere with Minx on his back, and the tree hopping along after the sled as fast as his one foot could go. The chicken rode back on one of Norway’s branches, and fluttered and squawked more than ever.

When they started, they looked about and called for the sparrow, Mrs. Squirrel, and Mr. Rabbit, but they had all disappeared; so the rest went back without them, shouting, laughing and singing.

IV.

It was a brave sight they saw when Jumping Jack opened the door to let the party in.

Luce had got away from her little bedfellow at last without waking her. She knew that the others had gone to get a tree for little Scrub, and she knew that a tree was just no tree at all without plenty of things to hang upon it. So she went to work, and by the time Jack opened the door she had a great deal done. It was astonishing how many things she had found to put on that tree; but then she had been rummaging among Scrubby’s old playthings up in the garret.

There were old dolls, little and big; there were old toys of all sorts; there were pretty little pictures, and quantities of flowers made of bright paper. A great many of the things Scrubby had thrown aside so long ago they would be new to her now; and some of them mamma had put away very carefully, so that the little girl should not altogether spoil them.

Lucy had found them all and had brought them down-stairs; and now she had them in a heap on the floor, trying to keep them in order, for they were all very lively at being brought out again.

“Well, Luce, you *have* done it!” Jack said.



“Of course, I have,” answered Lucy. “Do keep that horse away, Jack, and not let him run over these babies.”

“Oh dear!” squawked the chicken, and fluttered under the table, for these new-comers were all strangers to him.



Page 95

Spot tried not to bark his astonishment and delight; Minx began to claw all the old dolls and toys about; the French lady walked away into a corner and waited to be introduced, while Lyd and Peg shook hands with their old cronies until it seemed as though they never would stop.

The tree had hopped into the room and stood there, not knowing what to do with himself. Lucy did not see him at first, being so busy with the rest; but as soon as she did see him, she gave him such a hug as nearly pulled him over.

“Oh, you dear old Norway! Did *you* come? You’re so good, and I’m so glad! Come up to the fire and get warm. Here, Jack, and Lyd, and Francaise, help me get this big foot-stool into the corner. It’s getting awful late.”

Lucy flew about in a ragged kind of way until she had all the rest flying about too, doing an amount of work nobody would have believed possible. They were all glad enough to do the work, but they needed just such a driving, thoughtful old body as Lucy to show them what to do and keep them at it.

[Illustration: SCRUBBY’S FRIENDS ARRANGING HER CHRISTMAS-TREE.]

The big foot-stool was put where Lucy wanted it, and Norway warmed his foot and hopped upon the stool, pushing himself as far back in the corner as he could get, to make sure that he would not fall.

Then Lucy climbed upon a chair in front of him, ready for business. She took Francaise up on the chair beside her to help arrange the things, for the French girl had excellent taste, and nobody could deny it. Lyd and Peg, and Minx and Spot, and even the chicken, brought the things to go on the tree, and faster, too, than they could possibly be used, while Ned shouted all manner of directions.

Poor Norway fairly bowed his head under the weight of all the things that were hung upon him. And it was astonishing how pretty those battered old dolls, broken toys, and torn flowers looked when upon the tree. There were so many, and they had been arranged so nicely, that they really did make a splendid show.

“But, oh dear!” Lucy sighed, when it was all done. “It’s not your fault I know, Norway, and you are just as good as you can be; but if you only were not quite so thin, and were just a little bit greener! And then we’ve no moss to put under you. But we haven’t any nice little animals to put on the moss, if we had it.”

Just then, Jumping Jack heard a queer kind of noise outside, and opened the door to see what it was. In whisked Mrs. Squirrel; the sparrow hopped in close beside her, and Mr. Rabbit jumped along right after them.



“How are you getting on?” asked the gray lady. “I brought this along because I thought it might come handy. We laid in a great deal more than we needed for our nest last fall, and we could just as well spare it as not.”

It was a big bundle of beautiful green moss she had brought, enough to spread all around under the tree and make a fine carpet.



Page 96

“Oh, you dear, good old thing!” said Luce. “That is just exactly what we wanted. Here, Lyd! Peg! Help me spread this down.”

“Chick,” said the sparrow, “will you please take charge of this?”

And there was a great long vine of shining green ivy which the sparrow had dragged in with him from some place in the woods. Lucy was so delighted that she fairly clapped her brown leather hands.

“Quick, Francaise!” she cried. “Take this and twist it around the tree. Just the thing to hide poor old Norway’s bare places. Oh, it’s just lovely!”

All this time Mr. Rabbit had been holding his ears very straight up, and now he shook a couple of button-balls and some acorn-cups out of one, and a lot of mountain-ash berries out of the other.

“Do to hang around on the tree. Look kind of odd and nice,” he said.

“Well, I should think so!” Luce answered. “I never did see such good creatures as you are; and we all thought you had gone home to bed.”

Speaking of bed made the chicken gape a little, and they all remembered how late it was. They never stopped chattering and laughing for a minute; but they went to work harder than ever, and soon had all the moss spread down, the ivy twined over the tree, and the button-balls, acorn-cups, and berries hung up where they would show best.

Then Mr. Rabbit got up on the stool and nearly covered himself with moss; Mrs. Squirrel got under the tree and stood up on her hind-feet, with an acorn in her paws; Minx curled herself up in the funniest way on the moss; the sparrow flew up into the tree and began pecking at the mountain-ash berries; Francaise and Lyd and Peg all sat down as well as they could near the squirrel and the rabbit; Jumping Jack mounted the horse and rode around beside the tree, to stand guard; Spot stood up on his hind-legs just in front of the stool, with Scrubby’s letter in his mouth, and the chicken hopped up on Spot’s head.

Then good old Lucy started to go upstairs after Scrubby, but she got no further than the door. Scrubby had waked up and missed her dear old doll, so she had come down to look for her, and there she stood now, just inside the door, with her bright brown eyes wide open.

A minute before there had been only the scraggy little tree she had taken care of, the battered old toys, the torn dolls and the little pets she had played with and loved so well, the bird and the wild creatures she had fed and chattered to, and a little bit of ivy and green moss. But just as soon as she looked at them all, there was the most beautiful Christmas-tree that ever was seen.



It was very curious; but it was the light that did it—the light of her own happy eyes. It dies out of eyes that are older.

THE MINSTREL'S CAROL.

A CHRISTMAS COLLOQUY.

MR. and MRS. BURTON.

TOMMY, *aged seven.*

MAY, *aged five.*

LUCY, *aged eighteen.*



Page 97

MR. and MRS. REMSEN.
HARRY, } *Twins, aged*
SADIE, } *six.*
PATRICK, *a hired man.*

Scene: The Burtons' parlor on Christmas Eve.

Mr. B. Tommy! stop making such a noise.

Tommy. Oh, I can't have any fun at all!

Mr. B. Why, yes you can. Look at all your toys scattered about. Play something quietly.

Tommy. Nobody to play with.

Mr. B. Play with your little sister.

Tommy. She's sitting in mamma's lap; besides, she's a girl. Oh, papa [*running to his father*] I wish the Remsens would come! I want to play with Harry.

Mr. B. [*hastily*]. Never mind, never mind! The Remsens will not come.

May. Why wont the Remsens come?

Tommy. Oh, dear me, there isn't anything nice to do!

Mr. B. Tommy, stop your whining. Don't say another word. May, don't speak of the Remsens again. They are not coming, and that's an end of it.

[*Enter LUCY.*]

Lucy. What! tears on Christmas Eve, little May! And Tommy pouting! Oh, that'll never do! Come, cheer up! You'll have plenty of fun soon with Harry and Sadie.—It must be nearly time to send for the Remsens, father.

Mr. B. [*vexed*]. Don't speak of them again. They're not coming, and I don't want them. Why *will* every one keep talking about them?

[*Enter PATRICK.*]

Mrs. B. [*aside to Lucy*]. Mr. Remsen and your father have quarreled about a piece of land; so the Remsens are not to come this year.

Mr. B. Well, Patrick, what is it?

Patrick. Shure, the horse is ready, sir.



Mr. B. Horse ready? What for?

Patrick. To be goin' for the Rimsins, shure!

Mr. B. [angrily]. We are not going for the Remsens! What do you mean by acting without orders? Take the horse out at once!

Patrick. Widout orthers, is it? An' it's mesilf, thin, that hitched up the crather every Christmas Ave I've lived wid yous for to go for them same.

Mr. B. Don't answer, sir; do as I bid you.

Patrick [aside]. It's plain the masther's rin his nose forninst something harrud. [*Exit.*]

Mrs. B. [going to Mr. B. and putting her arm about him, he sitting]. Dear John, send for the Remsens, please. See how everything conspires to ask it of you, from the prattle of the children to old Patrick himself. It is Christmas Eve, dear! How can we teach the dear chicks to be kind to each other unless we set the example? Send for our old friends, John. They've been with us every Christmas Eve these many years. You'll settle your affair with Mr. Remsen all the better, afterward.

Mr. B. Why, Mary, would you have me crawl at the feet of a man who tries to overreach me?



Page 98

Mrs. B. No, John! But stand on your own feet, and say: "Come, neighbor, let us do something better and wiser than hate each other."

Mr. B. I'll not do it. He has—

Lucy. Hark! What's that?

[Music outside—the sound of a harp, or of a concealed piano played very softly. Then, to its accompaniment, is sung the following carol:]

"Be merry all, be merry all!
With holly dress the festive hall,
Prepare the song, the feast, the ball,
To welcome Merry Christmas.

"And, oh! remember, gentles gay,
To you who bask in fortune's ray
The year is all a holiday:—
The poor have only Christmas.

"When you the costly banquet deal
To guests who never famine feel,
Oh spare one morsel from your meal
To cheer the poor at Christmas.

"So shall each note of mirth appear
More sweet to heaven than praise or prayer,
And angels, in their carols there,
Shall bless the poor at Christmas."

Lucy. Oh, what a beautiful carol! I'll call in the minstrel.

Mrs. B. Yes, run Lucy! *[Exit LUCY.]*

Mr. B. Set a chair by the fire, Tommy.

[Enter LUCY, with old minstrel carrying harp.]

Minstrel. Good even, gentle folks, and a merry Christmas to you all!

Mrs. B. Come sit by the fire. Tommy placed the chair for you. It is cold outside.

Minstrel. Thank you kindly, ma'am. So Tommy set the chair for the old man? Where is Master Tommy? Ah, there's my little man! Come here, Tommy. That's right. So, up, on my knee. Why, that's a bright face now! And it ought to be bright, too; for this is



Christmas Eve, merry Christmas Eve, the children's happy time. Tommy, I remember when I was as young as you are. I had a little sister.

Tommy. I have a little sister, too.

Minstrel. Oh, you have a little sister, eh! Where is she, then?

Tommy [pointing]. Over there, in the corner.

Minstrel. Bless my old eyes, so she is! Run and bring her, Tommy.

[TOMMY runs, and returns leading and coaxing MAY.]

Minstrel [setting one on each knee]. Now, good folks, if you'll let me, I'll tell these little people a story of Jesus when he was a little boy. It is called "The Holy Well."

[They group themselves about the minstrel.]



Page 99

Early one bright May morning, Jesus, then a little boy of ten or twelve years, awoke, and at once remembered that it was a holiday. His eyes, bright with the morning light, sparkled yet more brightly at the thought. There would be no school, no work. All the people would keep the feast. He knew, too, that on that day, the boys of his age would assemble betimes to play together at The Holy Well. So, brimful of joyful expectation, he ran to ask his mother's leave to go and join in the merry games. Soon he was on his way, and he quickened his steps when he came in sight of the troops of happy children running hither and thither in their sports. Drawing nearer, he stood still a little while, watching the games with pleased and eager eyes. Then he called out: "Little children, shall I play with you, and will you play with me?" Now, these boys and girls were the children of rich parents, and lived in much finer houses than the one Jesus had for a home. They had handsome clothes, too, and everything of the best. So they looked on the plainly dressed stranger, the son of a poor carpenter, and bade him begone, saying: "We will not play with you, or with any such as you!" What a rebuff was that! The poor, sensitive little lad had not expected it, and his tender feelings were hurt. His eyes filled with tears; and running home as fast as he could, he laid his head in his mother's lap, and sobbed out to her the whole story. Then Mary was angry with the ill-natured children, and told her son to go back and destroy them all by his word; for she believed that her beautiful boy could do such things. But, surely, if he could have harbored that thought, he would not have been beautiful; and so, when his mother spoke, her words drew away his thoughts from himself to the children who had grieved him. He knew that they had never really known him, and so could not have understood what they were doing. Therefore he said to his mother that he must be helpful and gentle to people, and not destroy them. And that was the way with him to the very end. For when, years after, the people (perhaps among them some of those same children grown-up) were putting him to death on a cross, he bethought him again that they did not really know him, and prayed: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." And, even before then, he had told all people to love their enemies, and forgive and be good to one another. If he had not done all that, Christmas would not be so happy a time for us.

Mrs. B. [approaching her husband and laying her hand on his shoulder]. John, is not he right?

Mr. B. [who has been lost in thought, starting and abruptly walking aside]. He is right! So are they all. [*Turning about.*] Dear wife, Lucy, Tommy, May, you shall be happy! We'll have the Remsens! I say, we'll have our dear old friends. Patrick shall harness the horse at once, and—[*The Minstrel suddenly strips off his disguise and reveals himself as MR. REMSEN.*] What! Remsen! Is that you?



Page 100

Mr. R. No need to harness up, old friend. Here I am! Ah! I knew how it would be.

Tommy [*capering about*]. Hi! Hi! Ho! Isn't it great, May? I shall have Harry to play with.

May [*clapping*]. And I shall have Sadie.

Lucy. Oh, what a delightful surprise! Oh, Mr. Remsen, I am glad, so very glad, that you have come. We will send for the others at once.

Mr. R. Why, they're all here, too. You may be sure we all came together. [*Opening the door.*] Come! come in! It's all right, as we knew it would be.

[*Enter MRS. REMSEN and her children, HARRY and SADIE, who immediately run to TOMMY and MAY.*]

Mrs. B. [*to Mrs. R.*] Welcome, welcome, dear friend! This *is* kind.

Lucy. Now Christmas Eve is what it ought to be.

Mrs. R. Oh, Mrs. Burton, I am happy again now. I was afraid that Christmas would not bring love and joy for us this year. We could not help coming. Old memories were too strong for us.

Mr. R. to Mr. B. Ah! neighbor, it's a sad thing to interrupt that "peace on earth" of which the angels sung. There's my hand; take it kindly.

Mr. B. And there's mine, with all my heart. We'll not let a bit of land divide old friends.

Mr. R. Aye, aye! We'd better divide the land.

Mr. B. It seems easy to settle now. But no more of that to-night. Come, let us sing our Christmas carol. It will be sweeter than ever. Take your harp, friend, and turn minstrel again for the occasion.

[*Illustration*]

With wond'ring awe,
Tho wise men saw
The star in Heaven springing,
And with delight
In peaceful night,
They heard the angels singing,
Hosanna, Hosanna
Hosanna to His name!



By light of star,
They traveled far
To seek the lowly manger;
A humble bed
Wherein was laid
The wondrous little stranger.
Hosanna, hosanna,
Hosanna to His name!

And still is found,
The world around,
The old and hallowed story;
And still is sung
In every tongue
The angels' song of glory:
Hosanna, hosanna,
Hosanna to His name!

The heavenly star
Its ray afar
On every land is throwing
And shall not cease
Till holy peace,
In all the earth is glowing.
Hosanna, hosanna,
Hosanna to His name!

[Illustration]

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS to you, my darlings! It's cold weather—too cold for any but a Scribner Jack-in-the-Pulpit to be out-of-doors—but our hearts are green, and there's a fine bracing air.



Page 101

Christmas will not be here when you first get the December magazine, I know, but ST. NICHOLAS likes to get a good start. He has Dutch blood in his veins, and he knows well that in Holland St. Nicholas' Day comes on the 6th of December.

So, just think of the dear Dutch youngsters, and what a happy holiday they keep on the 6th,—for that is their season of gift-giving,—and when the 25th comes to you, with its holy, beautiful light, and its home joys, you'll be all the more ready to give it welcome.

Now for

A WINDFALL.

Here is a copy of a printed scrap thrown to me by a high wind the other day. It isn't of very much use to a Jack-in-the-Pulpit; so I hand it over to you, my chicks. It strikes me that it has the gist of some of Deacon Green's remarks, and that somehow it doesn't come under the head of what is called "pernicious reading":

"GOOD ADVICE FOR THE YOUNG.—Avoid all boastings and exaggerations, backbiting, abuse, and evil speaking; slang phrases and oaths in conversation; depreciate no man's qualities, and accept hospitalities of the humblest kind in a hearty and appreciative manner; avoid giving offense, and if you do offend, have the manliness to apologize; infuse as much elegance as possible into your thoughts as well as your actions; and, as you avoid vulgarities, you will increase the enjoyment of life, and grow in the respect of others."

KING ALFRED AND THE CAKES.

Here is a story which I heard a girl tell her little sister the other day, but I don't believe the girl told it altogether right. Can any of my youngsters straighten it out? This is the story:

King Alfred, after his fatal defeat at Marston Moor, having taken refuge in an oak-tree, was so absorbed in watching a spider which had tried to weave its web eleven times and succeeded on the twelfth, that he allowed the cakes to burn; whereupon, the herdsman's wife, rushing in, exclaimed:

"Oh, Diamond! Diamond! what mischief hast thou done?"

To which he meekly replied: "I cannot tell a lie; I did it with my little hatchet."

"Take away," cried she, "that bauble!"

"I have done my duty, thank heaven!" said he, but he never smiled again.



A LITTLE SCHOOLMA'AM.

DEAR JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT: I should like to tell the Little Schoolma'am about *our* little schoolma'am.

She is a young lady of about twenty-one years, and looks too delicate to govern such a school. But she does it; and though as fond of fun as any of us at the right time, yet in school she insists on attention to business, and will not tolerate idleness or disobedience. She is very kind and gentle, but firm and decided, and we all know that she means what she says, and must



Page 102

be obeyed implicitly. She says she wants us to love and trust her as a friend, and we do. Out of school she seems as young as we do, for she is full of fun and likes us to have a good time. She tries to make school pleasant to us, and a while ago she put a box on her desk, and said, when we had any questions to ask, or complaints to make, we might write them on a slip of paper and put it in that box, which was locked and had a hole in the top. Sometimes she answers the questions publicly, and sometimes she writes them and puts them in the "letter-box." The scholar who has the best record for a month keeps the key the next month, and once a week opens the box and distributes the contents. It is quite an honor to be "postmistress," but no one can have it two months at a time. She lets us make suggestions if we think of any improvements in the school, and sometimes adopts them. Another of her plans is to allow five minutes at the end of each hour when we may whisper, but not talk out loud. If we wish to speak to any one we can leave our seat and walk to them, if they are not near to us. But any one who whispers, or communicates in any way at any other time, forfeits this chance. I forgot to say that we put notes to each other in the letter-box. We do like our little schoolma'am so much!—Yours truly,

ALLIE BERTRAM.

AS IDLE AS A BIRD.

It is not so very long since I heard a little girl say that she "wished she could only be as idle as a bird."

Now, this was not a very lazy sort of wish, if she had but known it. There are very few little girls, or boys,—or grown-ups either, for the matter of that,—who are as industrious as the birds. How many people would be willing to begin their daily labors as early as the birds begin theirs—at half-past three o'clock in the morning—and keep on toiling away until after eight in the evening?

Think of it, my youngsters,—almost eighteen hours of constant work!

And the birds do it willingly, too; for it is a labor of love to bring dainty bits to their hungry little ones and keep the home-nest snug and warm.

One pair of birds that had been patiently watched from the first to the last of their long, long day, made no less than four hundred and seventy-five trips, of about one hundred and fifty yards each, in search of food for their darling chicks!

As idle as a bird, indeed!—with all that hunting, and fetching, and carrying, and feeding to do!

"OWN FIRST COUSINS."



Talking of birds, would you ever have thought it? The lovely and brilliant Bird of Paradise, I'm told, is "own first cousin" to the—Crows. And the Crows are not one bit ashamed to own the relationship! Very condescending of them, isn't it?

ORANGE GROVES ON ST. JOHN'S RIVER.

Ocala, Marion County, Fla., 1877.



Page 103

DEAR JACK: I was on the St. John's River at work with my father about three years ago. There were real wild-orange groves there, and the trees bore sour and bitter-sweet fruit. I will now tell you what I was doing on that river. I was pressing out the juice of the sour oranges and boiling it, for making citric acid. We used a cider press for pressing out the juice, and a copper cauldron for boiling it. We shipped the acid to Philadelphia, and I do not know what was done with it next.

These groves were inhabited by wild beasts, such as opossums, wild cats, raccoons, deer, and, occasionally, bears and panthers.

The groves were situated on high mounds, made ages and ages ago, by people of an ancient race known as "mound-builders." There were always shells on the mounds, which in some instances appeared to be made entirely of shells. Some mounds were fifty feet, or more, above the surrounding country, and from two hundred to four hundred yards in length. Now, I dare say, you would like me to say of what kind these shells were; but, as I never could find out for myself, I cannot tell you what kind they were. They are unlike any that I have seen elsewhere, and I think they do not belong to any living species of to-day. Farewell, dear Jack!—Yours truly,

TROPIC.

THE BLIND CLERK.

DEAR JACK: Ever so many millions of letters are dropped into the London Post-Office every year, but some are so badly addressed that they never get out again. When a direction is so ill-written that the sorters can't make it out, the letter is taken to a man they call the "Blind Clerk," and he generally deciphers it. Why they call him "blind" I don't know, for few addresses are beyond the power of his sharp eyes to make out. Here is one that did not give him much trouble; but can any of your young folks tell what it means?

Sarvingle
Num for te Quins prade
Lunon.

I'll send you the "blind" man's solution next month. Meantime, here is a puzzle for your merry crowd. You shall have an answer in that same postscript; but I should like to have the Little Schoolma'am and the rest work it out for themselves:

"I am constrained to plant a grove
To satisfy the girl I love;
And in this grove I must compose
Just nineteen trees in nine straight rows,



And in each row five trees must place,
Or never more behold her face.

Ye sons of art, lend me your aid
To please this most exacting maid.”

This puzzle is so old that it probably will be new to thousands of
your young folks.—Yours truly,

M. B. T.

BIRDS CAUGHT BY SALT.



Page 104

Yes. It's so; though I must say I felt inclined to laugh the first time I heard one boy tell another to put salt on a bird's tail by way of catching it. Now, however, word comes, all the way from California, that there is a lake there, called "Deep Spring Lake," whose waters are very salt; and that during certain conditions of the weather the water-fowl of the lake become so encrusted with salt that they cannot fly, and the Indians wade into the water and simply catch the birds with their hands. The coating taken from one duck weighed six pounds,—enough to have drowned it, even if its eyes and bill had not been so covered as to blind and choke it. When the weather is favorable for the formation of this crust upon the birds, the Indians do their best with fires and noise to keep them away from the few fresh-water streams where the poor things would be safe from the salt. Besides this, the savages imitate the cries and calls of the birds, so as to entice them to the dangerous part of the lake.

It seems to me that men must be very mean as well as very hungry to take advantage of the birds in that way. However, "circumstances alter cases," as the school-boy said when he had been "punished for his good" by mistake.

A SPELL UPON KEROSENE.

Bridgeport, Conn.

Dear Little Schoolma'am: One would think that the word "kerosene" could not be a very difficult one for the average inhabitant to write correctly; but it is. From the *New York Independent* I learn that the following versions of the word have actually been received by the Portland Kerosene Oil Company in its correspondence: Caracine, carecane, caroziene, carocine, cursene, carozyne, coriseen, carosyne, caricien, carsine, caresene, carozine, carocene, carosean, carycene, caresien, caraseen, caroscene, crosen, carecene, carizoein, keriscene, karosin, kerocine, kersesean, keriseene, kerase, kerosen, kereseen, kerison, kerriseen, kerricene, kerosen, kerosine, karosina, keresene, kerrsein, keroscene, keros, kerseseen, keroson kerocene, kerozene, kerrisene, kerryseen, kerissien, kersien, kerossein, keriscene.

Now isn't that astonishing?—Yours sincerely,

MARY N.G.

THE EYEBROW WORD.

What do you think this is? It is neither more nor less than the word "supercilious," which is derived from *supercilium*, the Latin for "eyebrow," as I heard the Little Schoolma'am tell the children not long ago.

When she had said this, one of the little girls, in a rather scornful, superior way, said, "I don't see any sense in that." Whereat the Little Schoolma'am and two or three of the



bigger girls laughed, for the little girl had raised her eyebrow in a most “supercilious” expression, giving the best possible proof of the appropriateness of the word. For, certainly, it is hard for one’s face to express a supercilious feeling without raising the eyebrow, or at least changing that part of the countenance which is over the eyelid.



Page 105

SINCERE.

Here's one more derivation, while we are about it. I heard the other day that the bees, with the aid of Latin, have given us a beautiful word: "Sincere"—which is made of the words *sine-cera*, meaning "honey without wax."

Remember this, my chicks, and let your kind words and good actions be truly sincere, —pure honey, *sine cera*.

THE AUTHOR OF "HOME, SWEET HOME."

Dear Jack: My grandfather knew a gentleman who was a very intimate friend of the author of "Home, Sweet Home"—John Howard Payne. Mr. Payne told this gentleman, Mr. C., how he came to write the song. He said that a play or operetta called "The Maid of Milan," that he had adapted from the French, was about to be played in London. In this play was a very pretty scene for which he had an air in his mind. He had to conjure up some words to suit the tune, and so he wrote the verses of "Home, Sweet Home." He also said that the very next day after the song had been brought out at the theater it was all over London. Everybody was singing it. Grandfather says that Mr. Payne got really very tired of hearing about this song, and at length said he supposed he would hereafter be known only as the author of "Home, Sweet Home." Mr. Robert S. Chilton wrote this beautiful verse about Mr. Payne's death:

Sure, when thy gentle spirit fled
To realms beyond the azure dome,
With arms outstretched God's angels said:
"Welcome to heaven's 'Home, Sweet Home!'"

I believe this verse was inscribed on Mr. Payne's tomb-stone in Tunis, Africa; but I am not sure. Can any one tell me?—Yours truly,

KATIE T.M.

BABY-BO.

[Illustration]

How many toes has the tootsy foot?
One, two, three, four, five!
Shut them all up in the little red sock,
Snugger than bees in a hive.



How many fingers has little wee hand?
Four, and a little wee thumb!
Shut them up under the bed-clothes tight,
For fear Jack Frost should come.

How many eyes has the Baby Bo?
Two, so shining and bright!
Shut them up under the little white lids,
And kiss them a loving good-night.

ARTHUR AND HIS PONY.

About the middle of the summer, little Arthur, who lived in the country, went to see his grandmother, whose house was three or four miles away from Arthur's home. He staid there a week, and when he came home and had been welcomed by all the family, his father took him out on the front piazza and said to him:

"Now, Arthur, if you are not tired, how would you like to take a ride?"

"Oh! I'm not tired," said Arthur. "I'd like a ride ever so much. Will you take me?"

"No," said his father. "I meant for you to take a ride by yourself."



Page 106

“But I can’t drive,” said little Arthur.

“I know that,” his father said, with a smile, “but I think we can manage it. Here, Joseph!” he called out to the hired man, “hurry and bring Arthur’s horse.”

“Oh, papa!” cried Arthur, “I don’t want my horse. I can’t take a real ride on him. He’s wooden, and I was tired of him long ago. I thought you meant for me to take a real ride,” and the little fellow’s eyes filled with tears.

“So I do, my son,” said his father, “and here comes the horse on which you are to take it. Is that animal real enough for you, sir?”

Around the corner came Joseph, leading a plump little black pony, with a long tail and mane, and a saddle, and bridle, and stirrups.

Arthur was so astonished and delighted that at first he could not speak.

“Well, what do you think of him?” said his father.

“Is that my horse?” said Arthur.

“Yes, all your own.”

Arthur did not go to look at his pony. He turned and ran into the house, screaming at the top of his voice:

“Mother! mother! I’ve got a pony! Come quick! I’ve got a pony—a real pony! Aunt Rachel! I’ve got a pony, Laura! Laura! come, I’ve got a pony!”

When he came out again, his father said: “Come now, get on and try your new horse. He has been waiting here long enough.”

But Arthur was so excited and delighted, and wanted so much to run around his pony and look at him on all sides, and kept on telling his father how glad he was to get it, and how ever so much obliged he was to him for it, and what a good man he was, and what a lovely pony the pony was, that his father could hardly get him still enough to sit in the saddle.

However, he quieted down after a while, and his father put him on the pony’s back, and shortened the stirrups so that they should be the right length for him, and put the reins in his hands. Now he was all ready for a ride, and Arthur wanted to gallop away.

“No, no!” said his father, “you cannot do that. You do not know how to ride yet. At first your pony must walk.”



So Arthur's father took hold of the pony's bridle and led him along the carriage-way in front of the house, and as the little boy rode off, sitting up straight in the saddle, and holding proudly to the reins, his mother and his aunt and his sister Laura clapped their hands, and cheered him; and this made Arthur feel prouder than ever.

He had a good long ride, up and down, and up and down, and the next day his father took him out again, and taught him how to sit and how to guide his pony.

In a week or two Arthur could ride by himself, even when the pony was trotting gently; and before long he rode all over the grounds, trotting or cantering or walking, just as he pleased.

The pony was a very gentle, quiet creature, and Arthur's father felt quite willing to trust his little boy to ride about on him, provided he did not go far from home.



Page 107

Only once was there any trouble on the pony's account. As Arthur was riding in a field, one afternoon, there came along a party of gentlemen, who were hunting a fox. When they galloped away, over the smooth grass, Arthur whipped up his pony, and went after them as fast as he could go.

He went on and on, trying to keep up with the hunters, but he was soon left behind, for his pony could not gallop half as fast as the large, strong horses of the hunters.

Then he turned to come back, but he got into the wrong field, and soon found that he did not know the way home.

Arthur began to be very much frightened, for the sun was setting, and he could see no one of whom he could ask his way home. He first turned his pony this way and then that way, but the little horse was now hungry and tired, and he would not turn as Arthur wanted him to.

Then the pony resolutely started off and trotted along, paying no attention to Arthur's pulls and tugs, and did not stop until he had trotted right up to the door of Arthur's home.

You see, he knew the way well enough. Horses and dogs seldom lose their way, unless they are very far from home.

Arthur's parents were frightened at their little boy's long absence, and he was not allowed to ride again for three days, for he had been told not to go out of the field in which he was when he saw the hunters.

[Illustration: ARTHUR ON HIS PONY.]

Arthur rode that pony until he became quite a big boy, and his feet nearly touched the ground as he sat in the saddle. Then he gave the good little animal to a young cousin.

But he never liked any horse so much as this pony, which was his own, real horse, when he was such a little boy.

YOUNG CONTRIBUTORS' DEPARTMENT.

[Illustration: TWO YOUNG MARTYRS. (Drawn by a Young-Contributor.)]

"TOO-LOO!"

The Blue Jay courted the Yellow Cuckoo;
'Neath its nest he would stay all day long,
Smoothing his feathers of silver and blue,
Telling his love in a song:



“Too-loo! too-loo!
Oh, fly with me,
My sweet Cuckoo,
Across the sea!”

The Cuckoo came gayly forth from her nest;
But just then an arrow flew by,
Piercing the bird’s soft yellow breast,
Who died with a single sigh.

“Too-loo! too-loo!”
The Blue Jay said;
“What shall I do?
My love is dead!”

The Cuckoo lay cold and still on the ground—
Dead, past all help to save;
And by a Bird-defender was found,
Who dug her a little grave.

“Too-loo! too-loo!”
Was the sorrowful lay,
For the gentle Cuckoo
Sung by the Jay.

AMY R.

“MARY AND HER LAMB.”

(A Critique.)

“Mary had a little lamb.”



Page 108

In this poem each stanza, we may say each line, is unalloyed gold. Let us examine the first line.

“Mary.” The name strikes us at once as belonging to one pure as the inside of an apple-bloom; and the rest of the poem assures us, that by making Mary’s name an index to Mary’s character, we have not been misled. A master’s hand is visible from the first word.

“A little lamb.” The poet does not take for granted, as one of less genius would, that because a lamb is mentioned the reader necessarily sees in his mind’s eye one of the frolicsome, gentle, confiding creatures commonly accepted as an emblem of meekness. Not at all. The lamb is not only a lamb—it is a *little* lamb. Thus never in the whole course of the poem can we by any oversight look upon Mary’s treasure as a sheep; it retains its infantile sweetness and grace through the entire narration. The poet thus draws our attention to the youth of the animal, in order to palliate the little creature’s after-guilt. This is done with such grace and delicacy, that it is scarcely perceptible.

The line, as a whole, shows a touch of high art seldom seen in so short a poem. The writer knows human nature—that, we see at a glance. Else, would he not have entered into a detailed account of Mary’s parentage, her appearance, place of residence, or, at least, the manner in which she became possessed of the lamb. But no; all is left to the imagination. Mary may be as blonde as the “Fair one with golden locks,” as dark as “Black Agnes.” Each reader has a heroine after his own heart, and each is satisfied.

“Its fleece was white as snow.”

No black sheep (or lamb) could we in any way imagine as a companion of Mary—gentle, affectionate, pure little Mary. All her associates must be pure as herself.

“And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go.”

Does not this suit the character given to Mary by her name? We can image to ourselves the lost lamb, the mournful bleating for its mother, its hunger and cold. In the depth of its misery we see Mary’s sweet face bending pityingly over it; she raises it, takes it home, it revives, and loves her; she loves it in return. Can we wonder that it follows in her footsteps wherever she goes? Those two lines tell more than many a volume; but they must be read feelingly, or all is lost.

Now follows a tale of wrong-doing and of subsequent punishment. This is, indeed, a master-stroke; for this climax we were not prepared.

“It followed her to school one day,
Which was against the rule.”



Page 109

Although the lamb follows its mistress everywhere, school is a tabooed place. Yet the little creature cannot live without Mary, who has departed fair and fresh as Overbury's "Happy Milkmaid." Long are the hours that must elapse ere Mary's return, and the lamb tires of the waiting. "It followed her to school one day." How innocent an act that seems!—how natural! Then we read the next line,—“Which was against the rule,” and the lamb's action is turned from innocence to guilt. Mary's favorite, that we have seen heretofore in only a good light, violates deliberately a rule of the school which Mary attends. The short sight of the animal's spiritual eyes prevents it from knowing the extent of the disgrace to which it is to be subjected. At present the end justifies the means in its little heart, and it leaves its pleasant home to wander schoolward, and we are left to imagine its thoughts on the way.

A scene in the school-house bursts upon us, and

“It makes the children laugh and play
To see a lamb at school.”

This is another instance in which we are shown the poet's knowledge of human nature. At anything less than the sight of a lamb the little scholars are too well trained to laugh. This has no precedent. They have been told how to behave should a dog enter the room, or should a ludicrous error in lessons occur; but when a lamb trots soberly in,—not gamboling now; conscience already whispers; remorse eats at the little creature's peace of mind,—it is not to be expected that order can be longer maintained, and the school, with the exception of Mary, runs riot. Mary is perhaps, meanwhile, reproaching her pet with a look “more in sorrow than in anger;” she is too gentle to scold, but that glance completely fills the lamb's cup of sorrow; it is yet to overrun, and the drop is soon poured in—the deep beneath “the lowest deep” is soon reached.

“For this the teacher turned him out.”

It was his duty, reader; judge him not harshly.

“But still he lingered near.”

This, at least, was not forbidden,—to wait for his little mistress.

“And waited patiently about
Till Mary did appear.”

How fraught with significance is that one word, “patiently!” All too eager before, that was the lamb's fault, “and grievously hath [he] answered it.” He has turned over a new leaf, and wandering aimlessly about, now nibbling a cowslip, now rolling in the young grass to still the remorse gnawing at his heart, we can imagine him resolving to be a better lamb in the future,—to grow more worthy Mary's love.



“‘What makes the lamb love Mary so?’
The eager children cry.”

All have noticed this devotion—all wonder at it. The teacher answers in words that prove how well we read Mary’s affectionate nature:

“‘Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know,’
The teacher did reply.”



Page 110

What could be a more worthy ending to so fine a poem than that the loves of the two, human and brute, should be recognized by all Mary's little world, her school-mates and her teacher. More poems like this, sentiments so pure clad in plain Saxon words, would make our world—wonderful and beautiful, as it now is—a fitter place of dwelling for “men and the children of men.” We regret but one point about this gem,—that its author is “A Great Unknown.”

C. McK.

THE DEATH OF PRINCE WILLIAM.

There was a prince named William,
And he had a sister, too;
He was sailing o'er the English Channel,
Over the Channel so blue.

His father had gone ahead;
And he made the boat go fast,
But soon it struck upon a rock;
There was a shock to the very mast!

And everybody did wail,
And everybody did cry,
Because everybody thought
That everybody must die!

Prince William rushed into a boat,—
Several lords and he,—
And he was steering for the land,
Across the dark blue sea.

In the midst of the general weeping,
He heard his sister's cry,
And he made the boat go back,
For he would not let her die!

When he got near the ship,
When he was touching her side,
Down the side of the big ship
Everybody did glide.

Down went the little boat,
Too frail for such a load;



Down went the people in it,
And the people that rowed.

Down went the big ship,
Her topmast in the air,
And, if a person were near enough,
He might see a man clinging there.

The name of this man was Berold,
And he was a butcher by trade,
And by the help of a buff garment
On the top of the water he stayed.

In the morning some fishermen came
And delivered him from the mast;
And after he was recovered,
His tale he told at last.

When the king heard of the death of his children,
He fainted away for a while,
And from that day he was never,
Never was seen to smile!

H.W.

ALLIE'S SUNSHINE.

"A snowy, windy day. Oh, how dismal!" sighed Allie. "I wish it would clear off, so that I could go out-doors and play."

With this, Allie, who had been standing by the window gazing out at the gray sky, sat down and commenced to read that beautiful book, "May Stanhope." After reading quietly for more than an hour, she laid down the book, exclaiming: "I *can* and will try to be of some use in the world. I do nothing but mope when it rains, or when anything goes wrong. I will try to help others who need my help. I will ask mamma if I can carry something to Miss Davies. I am sure she needs some help."



Page 111

“Oh, the sun is shining!” Allie jumped up, and ran out of the room to ask her mother if she would let her go to Miss Davies’s. While she is gone I will tell you briefly who she is. Her name is Allie Harris, and she is a bright little girl, only apt to be dull on dark days.

Her mother gave the desired permission, and after wrapping herself up warmly, she took the well-filled basket that her mother had prepared, and set out on her errand of mercy. She soon reached Miss Davies’s tiny cottage. She knocked, and a cheery voice bade her enter. She walked into a neat room, barely but cleanly furnished. At one end of it, beside a window, around which an ivy was growing, sat a bright-faced little woman sewing. She looked up and greeted Allie pleasantly. Allie shyly made known her errand, and stayed with Miss Davies all the afternoon, singing and reading aloud while Miss Davies sewed.

When it began to grow dark she bade Miss Davies a cheerful good-by, and went merrily home. She said to her mother, “I have learned the *true* secret of happiness at last.” By doing *good* to others you will forget your *own* unhappiness, and be made happy in return; while, if you *mope* and try to be disagreeable, you will be miserable.

F.H.

[Illustration: “H’M! DOES YOUR MOTHER KNOW YOU’RE OUT?” (Drawn by a Young Contributor.)]

THE LETTER BOX

Our beautiful new cover was designed and drawn by Walter Crane, of London, who made all those lovely pictures in “The Baby’s Opera.” Our readers will remember what we said of him last month, and that, though a great artist in other ways also, he has done his best and most famous work in drawing for the little folks. It would have been impossible, therefore, to find a hand more skillful in the kind of art desired, or better fitted to put upon the cover of ST. NICHOLAS just the things to suit the best tastes and fancies; and of Mr. Crane’s success we think that no one who really studies the new cover can have a doubt. It seems to us fully worthy both of the artist and the magazine; and, believing that our young readers will all agree with us, we leave them the delight of discovering and enjoying for themselves its special beauties.

* * * * *

There is a beautiful custom in England—which is to be hoped will yet become general in America—of sending around Christmas cards, dainty things with lovely pictures and hearty verses upon them. Friends and lovers send them to one another, children send



them to their parents, parents to their children, and the postman, as he flies from house to house, fairly glows with loving messages.

And now ST. NICHOLAS presents to one and all the sweet little card on page 91, which was drawn by Miss L. Greenaway, a London artist, who has drawn many beautiful pictures of child-life. A companion card will be given next month.



Page 112

* * * * *

We are sure all our readers will appreciate the very comical pictures on pages 144 and 145, which illustrate the funny story of "The Magician and His Bee." But some of our older boys and girls may be able to put them to another use,—which, also, would cause much fun and merriment,—for these pictures would form an admirable series of magic-lantern slides. And all that is needed to make them is a little skill with the brush and—patience.

Take an *outline* tracing of each figure; arrange all the tracings for each slide on the glass strip, according to their positions in the picture; then, by a slight touch of mucilage, or by holding each one with the forefinger, secure them in their places until the outlines can be traced on the glass. Fill up all the space outside the tracings with black paint, and, this done, put in the shadings of the figures (lines of features, costumes, *etc.*) with touches of the brush, according to the lines in the printed pictures, until the reproductions upon the slide are true and complete.

Once done, the pictures, enlarged and thrown upon a screen, would be very funny indeed; and if, when they are exhibited, some one will read the story aloud, so as to describe the slides as they succeed each other, you may count upon having a jolly time.

* * * * *

Kiukiang, China, August 18, 1877.

Dear St. Nicholas: I am not so far out of the world but that I can receive and read your excellent magazine. I look forward to mail day with much pleasure, especially the mail which brings the ST. NICHOLAS. I read every number through. I enjoy reading the letters from the little boys and girls, I suppose, because I am a little boy myself. There are no American boys here except my three little brothers. We would like to have a play with some of the boys who write for your magazine. The little boys of China have no such magazine as yours. I wish they had; it would make better boys of them. The children of the better class of Chinese go to school. There they learn to commit to memory the Chinese characters. In repeating the characters, they sway back and forth; it's real comical to see them. They repeat in a sing-song tone. They go to school at six in the morning. They have a rest at noon, after which they remain in the evening until eight o'clock. They have no idea of what we have in America; they are even stupid enough to ask if we have a sun and moon, and all such questions. My home is on the banks of the great river Yang-tse; nine miles back from the river are the Lu-Say Mountains, five thousand feet high. The foreign people find it very cool up in the mountains. There are several large pools of water where they bathe. I have written more than I expected to.

—Good-by, dear ST. NICHOLAS, from your reader,

EVANSTON HART.

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Page 113

Readers who were interested in Professor Proctor's letter about the Sea-Serpent in ST. NICHOLAS for August last, may like to read also these little extracts on the same subject:

From the New York "Independent."

A sea-monster was seen by the officers of H.M.S. "Osborne," on June 2, off the coast of Sicily, which is sketched by Lieut. Haynes and figured in the London *Graphic*. The first sketch is merely of a long row of fins just appearing above the water, of irregular height, and extending, says Lieutenant Osborne, from thirty to forty feet in length. The other sketch is of the creature as seen "end on," and shows only the head, which was "bullet-shaped and quite six feet thick," and a couple of flappers, one on each side. The creature was, says Lieutenant Osborne, at least fifteen or twenty feet wide across the back, and "from the top of the head to the part of the back where it became immersed I should consider about fifty feet, and that seemed about a third of its whole length." Thus it is certainly much longer than any fish hitherto known to the zoologists, and is, at least, as remarkable a creature as most of the old wonder-makers ever alleged.

From the "National Teachers' Monthly," September.

Mr. John Kieller Webster says he has seen the sea-serpent in the Straits of Malacca. Its body was fifty feet in length, the head twelve feet, and the tail one hundred and fifty. It seemed to be a huge salamander. The Chinese on board the ship were so frightened, they set up a howl,—a circumstance very remarkable.

* * * * *

THE GAME OF FAGOT-GATHERING.

There is a jolly in-door game, for the winter, called "Fagot-Gathering," which has been described in print before, but it makes so much fun that many who have never heard of it will be glad if we tell about it here.

First you take some slips of paper,—as many as there are players,—and on one of them you write "Fagot-Gatherer;" on each of the rest you write either "good wood" or "snapper," making three times as many "good woods" as "snappers." Of course, anybody who knows about wood-fires will see that this is because some sticks will burn quietly and brightly while others will crack and snap and fly without the least warning. You put the papers into a hat, and each player takes one, telling nobody what is written on it. Every one then sits as near to the wall as possible, leaving a clear space in the middle of the room, and the player who has chosen the "Fagot-Gatherer" slip proceeds in a serious, business-like way to bundle the fagots. He, or she, chooses four or five girls and boys, standing them together to represent a fagot, and then makes similar



groups of the rest in other parts of the room. This done, he begins to “bind the fagots” by walking slowly around each group, making with his arms such motions as a real fagot-binder would make.



Page 114

The “sticks” are quiet until the binder lets his arms fall, but then comes a sudden change; the “good woods” run to their seats, but the “snappers” chase the “binder” and try to touch him before he can begin to bind another “fagot;” failing in this, they have to go and mourn among the “good woods.” Then the binding of the second “fagot” goes on, like that of the first. But when a “fagot-gatherer” is touched, the “snapper” takes the place of the “gatherer,” who goes and rests himself. The game ends when all the “fagots” have been used up in this way, and is then begun again by another selection of papers from the hat. The fun is in the frights and surprises of the “fagot-gatherer,” who, of course, does not know who is a “good wood” and who a “snapper;” and all do their best to avoid betraying themselves. If you have a good big room and lots of players you will find this game as full of fun as you can wish.

* * * * *

Philadelphia, September 16, 1877.

Dear ST. NICHOLAS: I was looking over your September number, and happened to read a letter addressed to the “Little Schoolma’am,” and signed “Father of two school-girls;” it was about school lunches, and told of a visit to the new Normal school of Philadelphia; he said that in the lunch hall there is a long table on which there was nothing but cakes of all sorts. Now, being a member of the school, I was a little hurt at the injustice done to our school. I know there is something else but cake,—fruit, milk, soup, sandwiches, *etc.*, being among the other things that are spread on the lunch-table, provided by the janitor, and sold to the girls at very low rates. So you see I had reason to be a little indignant at the discredit done to our school, and set about repairing it as far as possible; and you, too, can help repair the harm done to this fine public school by kindly printing this note. But I must close, for my letter is getting too long.

—Your true friend,

A MEMBER OF THE MODEL CLASSES PRIMARY DEPARTMENT. (Aged eleven years.)

* * * * *

SCIENCE AT HOME.

Brooklyn.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I am an old boy, but not too old to be one of your most delighted readers; and I am glad of the present chance to send you my good wishes, and say my say. Here it is:



Be sure and tell your youngsters to bear in mind that opportunities for home study on their own accounts are multiplying around them day by day, and that in taking advantage of them they will not only find great enjoyment and add to their stock of knowledge, but also will come upon hundreds of ways in which to amuse their friends, both old and young. Here, for instance, come Professor Mayer, and your frequent contributor, Mr. Charles Barnard,



Page 115

with a little book about "Light." They are not content with merely telling the dry facts about their subject, but, with pictures and plain speech, they explain how almost any boy or girl may, at small cost, make his or her own apparatus, and with it verify by actual trial what the book says. Some of the experiments are positively beautiful, and the hardest is not very difficult. Then, too, Professor Tyndall has written out his lectures to young people, given before the Royal Institution at London during 1875-76, in a little work called "Lessons in Electricity,"—most interesting and beautiful of scientific studies,—in which he tells how to make the instruments and conduct the experiments yourself. And, as if that were not enough, Mr. Curt W. Meyer, of the Bible House, New York, has arranged to supply a complete set of instruments, to suit this book of Professor Tyndall's, at a total cost of \$55, packing-case and all; the various articles being obtainable separately at proportionate prices. I only wish we had had such chances fifty years ago; for, if our older friends had not made presents of such things to us,—as no doubt many oldsters will to your young folks this coming Christmas,—we'd have saved up our pocket money and gone ahead alone. I know that I made all my own electrical apparatus; but there was good fun in doing it, and it worked well, and made splendid times for our circle of young folks on cozy winter evenings.

I hope you will read this letter through, although it is as long as most old men's memories.—Yours still affectionately,

GRAN'THER HORTON.

* * * * *

Jamaica, L.I.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I read Jack-in-the-Pulpit's inquiry in the August number about the "Fiery Tears of St. Lawrence." Yesterday I was reading a book, and in it there was an article headed "Showers of Stars." I read it, and at the end of it was a piece which seemed to be an answer to Jack's question. I copied word for word from the book. Here it is: "Another writer suggests the theory that a stream or group of innumerable bodies, comparatively small, but of various dimensions, is sweeping around the solar focus in an orbit, which periodically cuts the orbit of the earth, thus explaining the actual cause of shooting stars, aerolites, and meteoric showers."

This is all I have been able to find out, and I hope it is correct.—Believe me to be yours very truly,

C.A.R.

C.A.R., and others who wish to know more of this subject, will find all the latest information in "Appleton's Cyclopaedia," under the items "Aerolite" and "Meteor," where

admirably clear and condensed accounts are given of all that is known about these bodies. C.A.R.'s extract states the theory most generally held.

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Page 116

TABLEAUX FROM ST. NICHOLAS PICTURES.

Brooklyn, November, 1877.

DEAR OLD ST. NICHOLAS: My little sisters and my brother love you, and so do I, for your monthly visits make our house brighter and pleasanter to us all. I am fifteen, not yet too old to be one of your children, you see. What I want to tell you is how easily some of your pictures can be turned into *tableaux-vivants*, or even acted. There was "Pattikin's House;" I am sure we had the greatest fun with those pictures, we being so many girls: and "The man all tattered and torn that married the maiden all forlorn;" that was on p. 652 of the volume for 1876: "The Minuet," in January, 1877: "Hagar in the Desert," in June, 1877; my aunty did that, and it was lovely: the little girl in "The Owl That Stared," in November, 1876; and "Leap-Year," in the same number. All these we had at our own home, but there are lots of others that might suit some folks better than they would suit us. This winter some of your pictures will be used in a series of grand tableaux for our Sunday-school entertainments. A number of people belonging to the school can paint scenes, get up costumes, and all that. It is going to be splendid.

I thought that your other children, you dear old ST. NICHOLAS, would surely like to know about this, and I hope I have not made my letter too long. From yours lovingly,

MINA B.H.

* * * * *

MARY C. WARREN answered correctly all the puzzles in the October "Riddle-Box," but her answers came too late for acknowledgment in the November number.

* * * * *

Black Oak Ridge, Passaic County, N.J.

MRS. EDITOR: Excuse me writing to you, but I want to ask you if you think it is right to be killing cats all the time, for my brother Eddie has killed fifteen this year, and whenever I scold him about it, he begins to sing pilly willy winkum bang dow diddle ee ing ding poo poo fordy, pilly willy winkum bang. There, there he stands now behind the barn with his hands full of lumps of coal watching for one that killed his chicken a month ago. O dear, if he would only stop killing cats what a good boy he would be! He always gives me half of his candy, and he raises such nice melons in his garden. O, O, as true as I live there he goes now after the poor cat. Good, good, good—neither piece of coal hit her. What can I do to stop his bad habit. I think it is too bad even if they do kill his chicks once in a while. I have only got two cats left, Dick and Mizy, and he watches them awful close.—Your friend,

KATIE BAKER.

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New York.

DEAR ST NICHOLAS: I want to send this story to The letter box that I wrote when I was 6 years old this is it



Page 117

LITTLE MAY

Once upon a time there lived a little girl whose father and mother were very rich, so the little girl had lovely dresses, but she had a very bad temper and was very proud so nobody loved her. One day this little girl I might as well tell you her name it was May was sitting in her mothers lap Mama said she what makes everybody act so to me? Dear said her mother it is because you are so proud and get angry so easily then said May if I should try to be good would they like me Yes said her mother so after that May was a better child and every body liked her even her mother loved her better than before and so did her father and after that the little girl was no more saying Oh dear nobody loves me but lived happy and contented.

ELISE L. LATHROP.

* * * * *

Geneva, N.Y.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I notice in a chapter of "His Own Master" for September a mistake which I can correct. In describing the Cincinnati suspension bridge, it says that trains go across on it. This is a mistake, as that bridge is only used for carriages, horse-cars and pedestrians, the steam-cars going across on another bridge above. There is now building a new railroad bridge below for the new Southern Railroad.—Yours respectfully,

W.S.N.

* * * * *

San Leandro, Cal., Sept. 3, 1877.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I tried the Little Schoolma'am's way of pressing flowers, and I think it is ever so nice. I pressed a wall-flower; it retained all its brightness and looked just like a fresh flower. Last spring we discovered a humming-bird's nest in one of the trees in our orchard. It was very pretty, being no larger than half of a hen's egg. The first time I saw it the little mother was on it; she sat as still as a stone, and looked as if she would not budge an inch for me or anybody else. I am always very glad when the ST. NICHOLAS comes.—Your affectionate little reader,

SUSIE R. IRWIN.

* * * * *

Princeton, N.J.



DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I would like to tell you of the interesting expedition I made last August to the college observatory here for the purpose of seeing the three planets, Jupiter, Mars and Saturn. Through the telescope we were shown Mars burning with a ruddy glow, and having on the rim of one side a bright white spot, which the professor told us was the ice piled up around the north pole; Saturn with its rings, seen with wonderful clearness, and shining pale and far off in comparison with Mars; Jupiter with its two dark bands around the center, and three of its satellites plainly visible; and, last, the moon with its curiously indented surface and ragged edge. The telescope was small, so we could not, of course, see the newly discovered satellites of Mars, the professor saying that there were only two instruments in this country that would show them. Hoping that you may have as good an opportunity to see these splendid heavenly bodies as I have had, I remain, your friend,

B.H.S.



Page 118

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

BABY DAYS, a selection of Songs, Stories and Pictures for Very Little Folks, with an introduction by the Editor of ST. NICHOLAS, and 300 illustrations. Scribner & Co.—This large and very handsome book has been made up from ST. NICHOLAS, and nearly all from the pages devoted to the “Very Little Folks,” and although the readers of this magazine know that there have been many good things in that department, they can have no idea, until they see it gathered together in this book, what a wealth of pictures, stories, funny little poems and jingles have been offered the little ones in ST. NICHOLAS. To children who have never read ST. NICHOLAS, this book, with its three hundred pictures,—to say nothing of its other contents,—will be a revelation; to children who take the magazine, it will bring up many pleasant recollections of good things they have enjoyed.

ABOUT OLD STORY-TELLERS—of How and When they Lived, and what Stories they Told. By Donald G. Mitchell. Published by Scribner, Armstrong & Co.—When any one comes late to dinner nothing can be kinder than to bring back for him some of the good things which may have been removed before his arrival,—and something very like this has here been done by Mr. Mitchell for the boys and girls who came into this world too late to hear in their original freshness all the good stories that were the delight of their fathers and mothers when they were children. And these fine old stories are all so nicely warmed up (if we may so express it) by the author of the book, and so daintily and attractively presented to our boys and girls, that some older folks may be in doubt whether or not they would have lost anything in this respect if they, too, had happened to come a little late to the feast furnished by Defoe, Dean Swift, Miss Edgeworth, Oliver Goldsmith, the man who wrote the “Arabian Nights,” and other good old story-tellers.

Our little housekeepers, especially those who have put into practice Marion Harland’s admirable recipes which we gave in our third and fourth volumes, will be delighted with a little book published by Jansen, McClurg & Co., of Chicago. It is called SIX LITTLE COOKS; or, Aunt Jane’s Cooking-Class,—and, while it is really an interesting narrative in itself, it delightfully teaches girls just how to follow practically its many recipes. The only fault we have to find with it is the great preponderance of cakes and pastry and sweets over healthful dishes and the more solid kinds of cookery.

A very pleasant little book is THE WINGS OF COURAGE, adapted from the French for American boys and girls by Marie E. Field, and published by the Putnams. The three stories which make up the book will delight fairy-loving boys and girls. They are illustrated by Mrs. Lucy G. Morse, the author of “The Ash-Girl,” well known to ST. NICHOLAS readers. The pictures all are pretty, but to our mind the best of all is “Margot and Neva,” illustrating “Queen Coax.”

Page 119

BETTY AND HER COUSIN HARRY. By Miss Sarah E. Chester. American Tract Society, N.Y. Price, \$1; postage, 7 cents.—This book tells in a bright and lively way about the pranks of a merry little girl and her boy-cousin. There is plenty of good fun and goodwill throughout, especially in the parts that tell of the doings of the two young madcaps on April Fools' Day and the Fourth of July, and of the queer way in which Toby, the pet crow, becomes peace-maker between them.

THE BODLEYS TELLING STORIES. Hurd & Houghton.—None of our young friends who have read "The Doings of the Bodley Family" will need to be told that this new volume is filled with stories bright, interesting, and helpful; and the Bodley folks have already gained so many friends and admirers that the book will be sure to make its way. We said of the former volume that it was charming, but the new one is even more exquisitely printed, and has a cover even more quaint and beautiful. So we cordially commend it to our young friends as a book which will both satisfy their interest and benefit their tastes.

THE CHRISTMAS STORY-TELLER, published by Scribner, Welford & Armstrong, is a well-illustrated collection of excellent Christmas stories by English writers. It is meant for papas and mammas rather than little folks, but some of our older boys and girls may enjoy the Christmas tales by such authors as Mark Lemon, Edmund Yates, Tom Hood, Shirley Brooks, and that very funny man, F.C. Burnand.

THE RIDDLE-BOX

A CHESS PUZZLE.

Our readers will here find a "knight's move" problem, similar to the one published in the "Riddle-Box" of ST. NICHOLAS for February, 1874. By beginning at the right word and going from square to square as a knight moves, you will find an eight-line quotation from an old poet. The verse is quoted in one of "Elia's Essays." M.

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---+-----+
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| gad- | me | oh | age | chain | your | I | en |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```



---+-----+

	O		vines;		Do		through		so		silk-		cles		too,	

+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----

---+-----+

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--



Coming with merry feet to young and old,
Where snow and ice would block his onward way;
Strive they in vain his eager step to stay,
For Santa Claus is curious as bold.
Why should he *not* know what the ovens hold?
Such odors tempt him, and he must obey!
School-boys and matrons, grandsires, maidens gay,
Forgive him if he warm his fingers cold
While waiting: Arrows from his mystic pack—
Wise fellow! see him choose! "*These* (from *my* bows),
With shaft of silver, tipped with jewel rare,
Aimed with the skill which Love can well impart,
Shall strike the center of the coyest heart!
Lest Santa Claus be slighted, then, beware!"

B.

BROKEN WORDS.

In each sentence, fill the first two blanks with two words which, joined together, will form a word to fill the remaining blank.



Page 121

1. "Do you buy paper — — or reams?" — — one school-girl of another.
2. — — Puritans do not regard it as you free — — men might. 3. He built — — when in — —, and lived like the natives themselves.

B.

PICTORIAL QUADRUPLE-ACROSTIC.

The initials and finals of the words represented by the small pictures name two objects to be seen in the central picture. Two other words relating to the central picture may also be found in succession, by taking one letter from each of the words represented by the small pictures.

L.J.

[Illustration]

CHRISTMAS ENIGMA.

The answer is a proverb relating to Christmas. Forty-four letters. My 2 30 9 8 24 38 15 22 32 27, and also 25 20 11 38 31 25, and 6 13 17 35 25 9 18 29 2 are used in Christmas decorations. 36 1 26 42 9 16 are rung, 44 41 7 38 39 31 16 are told, 24 4 6 2 12 are played, 10 11 33 26 21 2 5 12 is laid aside, 19 9 43 38 35 37 16 are brightened by yule logs, 34 23 14 11 20 25 salutations are exchanged, 28 22 4 8 35 44 gladdened, and 3 7 11 38 27 winged, all at the good old Christmas-time.

B.

AUTHORS' NAMES.

The answers will give respectively the names of sixteen authors.

1. A cat's cry and a Scotch lake.
2. The value of the rim
3. A rough or clumsy cut between a sunbeam and the old ladies' beverage.
4. A man's name and an island.
5. A teacher commanding one of his male scholars to perform his task.
6. A bun and a hotel.
7. A light, and a "k," and a measure of length.
8. Strong and well.
9. Two-thirds of an eye; a Scotch title prefixed;
With a shoe-maker's tool nicely put in betwixt:



If you look at it closely, I think you will find
An essayist, poet, historian, combined.

10. Conqueror, embrace O. 11. Indispensable to printers, and a little bed. 12. A bit, and a horse's cry. 13. A small nail and a Spanish title. 14. A boy's nickname and an humble dwelling. 15. The patriarch Jacob between "D" and myself.

16. If two pretty girl-names together you tie
(Some E's you must lose, for "I can't tell a lie"),
The name of two poets at once you'll descry.

M.M.

A RIMLESS WHEEL.

The wheel is made of four words of seven letters each, with a common central letter. The first word is written vertically, the second horizontally, the third diagonally from left to right, and the fourth diagonally from right to left. The half of each word, from the outside to the central letter (but not including that letter), forms a smaller word. The whole line of dots from 1_a_ to 1_b_ including the central letter, indicates the first of the four principal words, while 1_a_ indicates the first of the small words belonging to it, and 1_b_ indicates its second small word. This numbering and lettering applies also to the other words. The central letter is given, and all the words are defined below.



Page 122

1a

3a. . .4a

...

...

2a . . . A . . . 2b

...

...

4b. . .3b

1b

1. A wall of defense. 2. A brilliant bird of South America. 3. An enthusiast. 4. The noise of a drum.

1_a_. Equal value. 1_b_. A fondling. 2_a_. The human race. 2_b_. A relative. 3_a_. An article of summer use. 3_b_. Involuntary muscular motion. 4_a_. To chafe. 4_b_. To entitle.

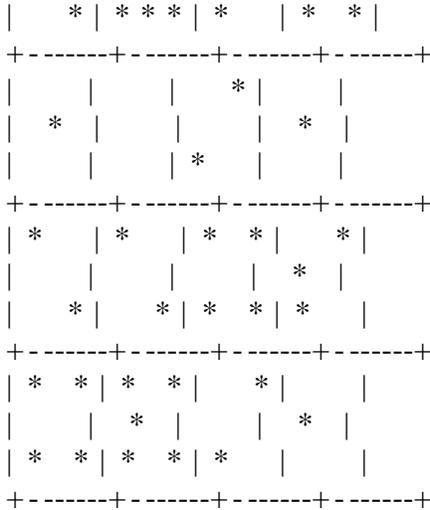
B.

MAGIC DOMINO-SQUARE.

Eight dominoes placed together form a square composed of sixteen half-dominoes, as shown in the diagram below. But, in the diagram, each row of four half-dominoes contains a different number of spots from any of the other rows. Thus the topmost row, counting horizontally, contains eighteen spots; the one below it only four; the first row to the left, counting vertically, ten; the diagonal row, downward from left to right, eight, *etc.* It is required to make a square of eight dominoes of the same set, in which each vertical, horizontal, and diagonal row of half dominoes shall contain exactly sixteen spots. Who can do it?

M.D.





DIAGONAL PUZZLE.

The puzzle contains ten words of ten letters each. Fill the blanks with words suited to the sense, and arrange these one above another in the order in which they occur in the sentences. They will then form a square, and the diagonal letters, read downward from left to right, will name a friend we all like.

—— (the same person as the diagonal, with another name) boys, and the children may well put —— in a friend who can —— so much to their happiness. No ordinary person is —— to him; and the legend —— us to the belief that he is well-nigh —— that tells of the —— exercise of his power in a —— —— manner, and on account of which he deserves to be called the “——” patron.

B.

PROVERB PUZZLE.

Supply the blanks with words to complete the sense, and transpose them into an appropriate proverb, with no letter repeated.



Page 123

When Santa Claus, laughing at Christmas cold,
 Leaps gayly out from his —— of gold,
 No clattering —— disturb the house,
 But down the —— as still as a ——
 He glides to lighten his burdened back,
 By tossing treasures from out his pack;
 Then up and off, with no —— behind
 But the “Merry Christmas” you all shall find.

SEXTUPLE ACROSTIC.

Initials, read downward, a man; read upward, a biblical locality. Centrals, read downward, a portion; read upward, a snare. Finals, read downward, something seen at night; read upward, small animals.

1. Stupid persons.
2. Toward the stern of a ship.
3. An insect in a caterpillar state.
4. To come in.

N.T.M.

EASY DIAMOND PUZZLE.

In work, but not in play; a domestic animal; a singing bird; a light carriage; in night, but not in day.

ISOLA.

NUMERICAL ENIGMAS.

1. She is such a sweet, 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 child, I feel sure that I can soon 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 of her love.
2. “Will you 1 2 3 4 5 6 row?” said the 1 2 3 4 5 6.
3. If you do 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 about the stem of, the vase, choose the delicate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11.
4. Shall you 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 for robbing the poor little 12 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12’s nest?
5. My 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 a house to the 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 of ten children.



6. Shall it be a sail, 1 2 3, 4 5 6 7 8,—1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8? Whichever it is to be, we must prepare for it to-day, Tom.

7. 1 2 3 4! 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4, I shall always be interested in your 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8.

O.B.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NOVEMBER NUMBER.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—Franklin, Herschel.

F —rit— H
R —os— E
A —lde— R
N —autilu— S
K —ennebe— C
L —arc— H
I —sl— E
N —icke— L

BROKEN WORDS.—1. Forgotten—forgot ten. 2. Offences—of fences. 3. Significant—sign if I can't. 4. Firmament—firm ament.

PICTORIAL NUMERICAL REBUS.—

4,002,063
83,080,010
76,094
89,000,000,011

89,087,158,178

HOURLY-GLASS PUZZLE.—

PERPETUAL
TRIVIAL
ABODE
OLD
U
ATE
THINK
ARMORER
FLOUNDERS

NUMERICAL ENIGMA—Cleopatra—ale, top, car.



BEHEADINGS AND CURTAILINGS.—1. Shame, Sham, Ham, Ha, A. 2. White, Whit, Hit, It, I. 3. Coral, Cora, Ora, Or, R. 4. Spine, Pine, Pin, In, I. 5. Honey, Hone, One, On, O.

EASY DIAMOND PUZZLE.—D, Cid, Clara, Diamond, Droit, Ant, D.



Page 124

CHARADE.—Stratagem.

PUZZLE BOUQUET.—1. Foxglove. 2. Hawkweed. 3. Tuberoses. 4. Candytuft. 5. Snapdragon. 6. Wall-flower. 7. Sweet-pea. 8. Balsam (Ball Sam). 9. Snowdrop. 10. Marigold (Marry Gold).

TRANSPOSITIONS.—1. Earth, heart. 2. Oder, rode. 3. Wells, swell. 4. Evil, Levi. 5. Edges, sedge.

LETTER ANAGRAMS.—1. L over P—Plover. 2. R after S—Rafters. 3. S and T—Stand. 4. P under L—Plunder. 5. Et upon Ic—Unpoetic.

HIDDEN DRESS GOODS.—1. Calico. 2. Gingham. 3. Cotton. 4. Linen. 5. Serge. 6. Merino. 7. Silk. 8. Satin. 9. Muslin.

PICTORIAL PROVERB-ACROSTIC.—“The longest day must have an end.”

1. T —e Deu— M
2. H —yosciam— U
3. E -----ye----- S
4. L -----as----- T
5. O ----- H
6. N —ux Vomic— A
7. G —love(—e—) V
8. E ----y----- E
9. S ----e----- A
10. T ----uree----- N
11. D ----rup----- E
12. A ---ndiro----- N
13. Y -----ar----- D

THE ANSWERS TO THE PICTORIAL PUZZLES IN THE OCTOBER “RIDDLE-BOX” were accidentally omitted from the November number, and are given here. REBUS: “Liars are not to be believed or respected.” PICTORIAL PROVERB-ANAGRAM: “Listeners never hear any good of themselves.”

ANSWERS TO ALL THE PUZZLES IN THE OCTOBER NUMBER have been received from Harry H Neill, George J. Fiske, Eddie Vultee, John W. Riddle, Marion Abbott, Harriet M. Hall, Grant Squires, George Herbert White, William Kiersted, Maxwell W. Turner, Emma Elliott, H.V. Wurdemann, Alice B. Moore, “Clarinet,” Sophie Owen Smith, Julia Abbott, Alice M. King, Mary W. Ovington, “Maudie,” Edith Merriam, Eddie H. Eckel, “Bessie and her Cousin,” Alice Bertram, M.W. Collet, and “A.B.C.”



ANSWERS TO SPECIAL PUZZLES were also received, previous to October 18th, from Georgietta N. Congdon, Bessie Dorsey, Fred M. Pease, T.M. Ware, A.G. Cameron, "May," Rosie S. Palmer, Julia Lathers, Florence Wilcox, Edwin R. Garsia, Lizzie M. Knapp, Alice B. McNary, May Danforth, Katie Earl, W. Creighton Spencer, W. Irving Spencer, Carrie M. Hart, Edna A. Hart, Olive E. Hart, B.P. Emery, Gertrude Eager, and Alice T. Booth.