

St. Nicholas Magazine for Boys and Girls, Vol. 5, May, 1878, No. 7. eBook

St. Nicholas Magazine for Boys and Girls, Vol. 5, May, 1878, No. 7.

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Page 1

HOW MANDY WENT ROWING WITH THE “CAP’N.”

By Mary Hallock Foote.

It was the month of May—the season of fresh shad and apple-blossoms on the Hudson River. “Bub” and “Mandy” Lewis knew more about the shad than they did about the apple-blossoms, for their father was a fisherman, and they lived in a little house built on a steep bank between the road above and the river below. Sometimes, on cool, damp spring evenings, the scent of the orchards came down to them from the hills above, but the smell of shad was much stronger and nearer.

Just in front of the house was an old wharf, where fishing-boats were moored, and nets spread for drying or mending. One morning, Bub and Mandy were sitting on the log which guards the edge of the wharf, watching their father and brother Jeff getting ready to spread the nets for next night’s “haul.” Jeff was busy with the buoy lines and sinkers, while the father bailed out the boat with an old tin pan. The children were rather subdued—Bub wondering how long it would be before he could “handle a boat” like Jeff and go out with his father? Mandy was expecting every moment to hear her mother’s voice calling from the house. It was Monday morning, and Mandy knew her mother would soon be starting for the Hillard’s, where she “helped” on Mondays and Saturdays.

These were the longest days of the week to Mandy, for then she had baby to tend all by herself and he was “such a bother!”

Yes, there it was: “Mandy!—Mandy!—Mandy *Lewis*! don’t you hear?” Mandy kept her eyes gloomily fixed on the curve of her father’s back, as it bent and rose in the boat below, in time with the scra-a-a-pe, swish, of the bailer.

“What’s the use makin’ b’l’ eve you don’t hear?” said Bub. “You know you’ve got to go!”

“I just wish mother’d make *you* tend baby once, and see how you’d like it!”—and Mandy rose with an impatient jerk of her bonnet-strings and slowly climbed the steep path to the house. Her mother, standing in the door-way with baby on one arm, shaded her eyes from the sun as she watched the cloudy face under the pink bonnet. It was always cloudy on Mondays and Saturdays.

“Seems as if you didn’t love your little brother, Mandy—such work as you make of tendin’ him! Just look how glad he is to see you,” as baby leaned forward and began pulling at the pink bonnet. “He’s just had his bread and milk, and if you set right there in the door, where he can watch the chickens, I shouldn’t wonder if he’d be real good for ever so long. Father and Jeff wont be home to dinner, but there’s plenty of bread and butter and cold beans in the closet for you and Bub. You can set the beans in the oven to warm, if you like—only be sure you put ’em on an old plate; and you can divide what’s left of the ginger-bread between you.”

“Oh, mother! can’t we eat it now?” said Bub, who had watched his father and Jeff off in the boat, and, now returning to the house, didn’t quite know what to do next.

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"Why, it aint an hour sence breakfast! But you can do as you like; only, if Mandy eats hers, baby'll want it, sure. Better wait till he's asleep."

"All right; Mandy can wait," said Bub, cheerfully, as his mother set the plate of cake on the table before leaving the house.

"Oh, Bub, I'm awful hungry, too!" said Mandy. "You cut the cake in halves,—mind you cut fair,—and hold my piece for me where baby can't see it. Sit right here behind me."

So Mandy on the door-step, and Bub on the floor, with his back against the door, which he gently tilted as he munched his cake, were very silent and comfortable for a minute or two.

The hens crawled and cackled, with cozy, gossipy noises, in the sun before the door; the baby blinked and cooed contentedly.

"Ready for another bite?" said Bub, holding out Mandy's cake close to her left ear.

"In a min-ute," said Mandy, with her mouth full. "Bub Lewis, aint you ashamed of yourself? You've been eatin' off my piece! I saw you just now!"

"Aint, either! You can see great things with the back of your head! Here's your piece 'n' here's mine. Yours is ever so much bigger!"

"Well, you've been gobbling yours's fast's you could, and I only had two little bites off mine."

"*Little* bites! I sh'd think so! Don't know what you call big ones, then! So chuck full you couldn't speak half a minute ago. Here, hold your own cake, and let baby grab it!"

"Well, I'd rather give it *all* to him, than have you eat it up on the sly!"

Bub walked down toward the water without deigning a reply, but thought of several things on his way which would have been more withering than silence.

Mandy did not enjoy the rest of her cake very much,—eating it furtively, so baby should not want it, and dropping crumbs on his little white head, which he kept twisting around, to see what she was doing. She began to think that perhaps she had been rather hasty in accusing Bub; but surely that was the right-hand piece, instead of the left, he was biting from? Well, anyway, it didn't much matter now the cake was all eaten. The old rooster had wandered round the corner of the house, where he was presently heard calling to his favorite hen. She ran, and all the others followed. Baby grew restless, and made little impatient noises, and the sun was getting very hot and bright on the door-step. What was Bub doing down there among the nets on the drying-ground? He

had been very still, with his head bent down and his hands moving about for ever so long.

Mandy felt that, after their late unpleasantness, it would be more dignified to take no notice of Bub for a while; but curiosity, and baby's restlessness, finally prevailed over pride, and rolling up her troublesome little burden in an old red shawl, she trotted with him down to the river.

"Bub," she said, after standing by him some time in silence, watching him driving a row of small sticks into the ground, "was it my piece you was bitin' off?"

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"I told you 't wasn't. If you don't b'l'eve me, what's the use o' my sayin' so again?"

"Well, I'm sorry, Bub. I just caught a sight of you as I turned my head, an' I thought—"

"Oh, well, never mind what you thought; we've heard enough 'bout that cake! Shove your foot one side a little? I want to drive another spile there. Them's the hitchin' spiles on the inside."

"What you buildin'?" asked Mandy.

"Can't you see for yourself? What's built on spiles, I'd like to know! Meetinghouses, may be you think. This is Lewis's dock; all the day boats and barges stop here!"

"Where's the water?" asked Mandy.

"Oh, you wait till high tide, 'bout four o'clock this afternoon, 'n' you'll see water enough!"

Just then, a boy in a blue blouse, with a basket of fish over his shoulder, came whistling along.

"Perry! Perry Kent! Where you goin'?" Bub called.

"Down to little cove, to clean fish."

"Oh, can't I go along and help? I can scale a herrin' first-rate; father said so."

"Aint herrin'; they're shad; got to be cleaned very partic'lar, too. But come along, if you want to."

"Bub," said Mandy, in an eager whisper, "oh, Bub, wait for me! Baby's fast asleep. I'll lay him right down here, in his shawl; the nets'll keep the sun off, 'n' he'll be real cozy 'n' nice till we get back."

"Why don't you take him up to the house?" said Perry, looking with some interest at Mandy's bundle. "'Taint a very good place for him here. You'll find us at the cove, all right."

"He'll wake up sure, if I try to carry him up the hill. See how nice he lays; and I'll hang the end of the shawl over this net-pole. I can see it plain enough from the cove. If he wakes up, he'll be tumblin' round and pull it off, so I'll know when to come back for him."

"Well, it takes a girl for contrivance," Perry said; and it was something in his manner rather than the words which made Mandy, as she followed the two boys, vaguely feel she was disapproved of.



The cove was a half-circle of pebble beach, washed by the ripples of a slowly rising tide, with a wall of gray slate rock at the back. Hemlock-trees leaned from the steep wooded cliff above, the shadows of their boughs moving with the wind across the sunny face of the rock.

It was very warm and still and bright. Mandy climbed to a perch high up in the twisted roots of an old hemlock, who, having ventured too far over the edge of the cliff, was clinging there, desperately driving his tough toes into the crevices of the rock, and wildly waving his boughs upward and backward as if imploring help from his comrades, safe in the dark wood above.

The river spread broad and bright below her. Mandy listened, in happy silence, to all the mysterious rustlings and twitterings and cracklings in the wood above, and the sounds, far and near, from the river below. Now and then she looked to see if the shawl still fluttered from the net-pole. She was glad she came, and it seemed but a very little while before the fish were all cleaned, and the boys, sitting on a rock, skipping pebbles, and watching for Perry Kent's father, who was coming in his boat to take the fish up to the hotel.

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Perry's father was always called Cap'n Kent. He kept a kind of floating restaurant. One end of his boat was boarded over into a closet, with shelves filled with a supply of fresh fruit and berries in the season, cider, cakes, pies, root-beer, lemons, crackers, *etc.* His customers were chiefly the "hands" on board sloops becalmed opposite the landing, or passing barges and canal-boats, slowly trailed in the wake of a panting propeller, or escorted by dingy little "tugs," struggling along like lively black beetles.

The "Cap'n" was a very tall man, and his arms were so long that, as he rowed, he sat quite upright, only stretching his arms back and forth, scarcely bending his body at all. This gave great dignity to his appearance in a boat. His feet were very long too, and when he walked he lifted the whole foot at once, and put it down flat. Of course he could not walk very fast; but so important a person as the "Cap'n" could never be in a hurry.

As he held his boat against a rock while Perry lifted in the basket of fish, he saw the wistful faces of the children standing on the beach. Now, the "Cap'n" considered himself a very good-natured man, and good-natured men are always fond of children. So he called out in a loud voice:

"Whose little folks are you?"

"Bub and Mandy Lewis," Mandy answered quickly.

Bub nudged her with his elbow.

"He spoke to *me*, Mandy!"

"Want to take a little row up to the hotel? Let's see—your folks live by the old fishin' dock, don't they? Wal, I can leave ye there comin' back. You can tell your Pa that Cap'n Kent took ye out rowin'."

"I'd like to go, if you please," said Bub, who was ready with an answer this time; "but Mandy, she's got to tend to the baby."

"The baby! What baby?" said the "Cap'n," while Mandy whispered, crossly, "Bub, I think you're real mean!"

"Oh, sir, baby's fast asleep up on the dryin'-ground, where the nets are! I could go as far as that, if you'd let me get out there,—if it wouldn't be too much trouble, sir."

"Course it would!" said Bub, emphatically.

But the "Cap'n," who was not so good-natured that he liked to have small boys answer for him, gravely considered the matter while he settled his oars in the rowlocks.

“Wal, it’s some trouble, perhaps; but I don’t mind puttin’ myself out once in a while for a nice little gal. Step lively now, young man! Come along, sissy!”

Mandy sat radiant in the little bow-seat, as the boat pushed off. A great Albany “tow” was passing,—a whole fleet of barges and canal-boats lashed together,—with calves and sheep bellowing and bleating, cables creaking, clothes flapping on the lines; a big steamboat, with a freight-barge under each wing, plowing the water on ahead, and sending the waves chasing each other in shore.

The little boat danced gayly on the “rollers.” A fresh wind blew toward them, and brought with it a shout of “Boat ahoy! Hello, Cap’n! Got any good stuff aboard?”

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“Got some good *cider*,” the “Cap’n” called in reply, with strong emphasis on the last word.

“Come alongside, then!”

The “Cap’n” condescended to lean a little on his oars in pursuit of a bargain, and sent the little boat spinning over the water toward one of the barges in the rear part of the “tow.”

Some men in a row were lounging over the rail; one of them threw a rope, which hissed and splashed close to the boat. Perry caught it, and they were soon under the lee of the floating village.

While the store was unlocked, and its wares handed out, Mandy noticed, on the deck above, a woman washing a little boy three or four years old. He stood in an old wooden pail, with a rope tied to the handle,—his little white body, all naked and slippery, shining in the sun. One could hardly help noticing him, he screamed so lustily as the water was dashed over his head and shoulders.

Mandy saw how his face showed red and flushed with crying, under the dripping yellow locks.

She thought uneasily of the baby, lying all alone on the old dock; wondered if the sun had got round so as to shine in his face, and how long the “Cap’n” would stand there, talking with those men. She was happy again when the boat dropped behind and the “Cap’n” turned toward the shore.

“Perry,” he said, “just look at my watch—there in my weskit-pocket on the starn-seat. What time’s it got to be?”

“Twenty minutes to one,” said Perry.

“What time’d I say we’d have them shad up there? One o’clock? Wal, one o’clock it’ll be, then. Only we can’t leave this little gal ashore till we come back.”

“Oh, please——” Mandy began, in great dismay as she saw they were passing the fishing-dock. “The baby! He’s there all alone, and—oh, Bub, the shawl’s gone! I *must* go ashore, Cap’n Kent—please!”

“Never mind, sissy; baby’s all right. Bless my soul! who’d want to carry off a baby? There aint no wild beasts roamin’ round, and most of us’s got babies enough o’ our own to hum, without borryin of the neighbors. You’ll find him there all safe enough when we get back. Them shad, ye see, was promised at one o’clock up to the hotel. Cap’n Kent, ye know, he never breaks his word.”

“But you said——?” Mandy began, in a distressed voice, when Bub interrupted her.

“You’d better keep quiet, Mandy. You would come, ‘n’ now I hope you’ll get enough of it!”

That was a very long twenty minutes to Mandy, while they drew slowly nearer and nearer to the steamboat-landing, and the little white and brown houses of the fishermen, scattered along shore, one by one were left behind.

“Now, Perry,” the “Cap’n” said, as he unshipped his oars, while the children clambered out of the boat, “just look at that ere watch again. See if the Cap’n aint as good as his word. Five minutes to one, eh? Didn’t I tell ye? Hello, sissy! Where’s that gal goin’ to now? What’s your hurry? I’ll take ye back in half an hour.”

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But Mandy was off, running like a young fox along the edge of the wharf.

“Cap’n,” said Bub, “we’re much obliged to you, sir, and I guess I’ll go on too. Mandy’s awful scared about the baby, and—”

“Lord, what a fuss ’bout a baby!” the “Cap’n” broke in with his loud voice, “Babies aint so easy got rid of. Wal, may be you’ll go rowin’ with the Cap’n again, some day. Tell yer Ma I’ve got some first-class lemons, if she wants to make pies for Sunday. Can’t get no such lemons at the store.”

But the “Cap’n’s” last words were wasted, for Bub was already speeding off after Mandy.

When he reached the fishing-dock, there she sat, a dismal little heap, on the ground between the net-poles. She had lost her bonnet; she had fallen down and rubbed dust in her hair. Now she sat rocking herself to and fro, and sobbing.

“Oh, Bub! The baby!” was all she could say.

“Look here, Mandy! Stop cryin’ a minute, will you?” said Bub. “It’s after one o’clock; may be mother had only half a day at Hillard’s, and come home ‘n’ found the baby down here; she could see the shawl from the house.”

Mandy jumped up, “Let’s go see. Quick!” she cried. But the string of one shoe was broken, and the shoe slipped at every step. She stooped to fasten it. “Don’t wait, Bub. Go on, please!” Then she felt so tired and breathless with running and crying, that she dropped down on the ground again to wait for Bub’s return.

She heard his feet running down the hill, and wondered if they brought good news.

No; the house was empty. No baby or mother there!

“I must go to Hillard’s,” said Bub. “You’d better stay, Mandy; you look ’most beat out.”

His voice was very gentle, and Mandy could not bear it.

“Oh, Bub! don’t be good to me. I’m a horrid wicked girl! What will mother say? How *can* I tell her?” Then she broke into sobs again.

It was dreadful, sitting there alone, after Bub’s footsteps died away in the distance, thinking and wondering hopelessly about the baby. Mandy remembered how his little head, heavy with sleep, had drooped lower and lower, and tired her arms. How gladly would she feel that ache if she could only hold the warm little body in her arms again!

How still it was! She could hear the children at McNeal’s, down the road, laughing and calling after their father as he went away to his work. There was fresh trouble in the

thought of *her* father coming home at night. Would it not be better that she should go away and hide herself, where no reproachful eyes could reach her? Would they miss her, and feel sorry for poor little Mandy? Would her mother go about looking pale and quiet, thinking of her gently?

Hark! What noise was that under the drooping curtain of nets? Now she does not hear it; but presently it comes again—a soft, happy little baby voice, cooing and talking to itself.

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With joyful haste, Mandy lifted the heavy festoon of nets, and crawled under. There, in the warm, sunny gloom, lying all rosy and tumbled, with his clothes around his neck, and the old red shawl hopelessly tangled round the bare and active legs, lay baby, cramming his fists in his mouth or tossing them about, while he talked stories to the gleams of sunlight that flickered down through the meshes of the nets.

How he had managed to roll so far, Mandy did not stop to wonder about. She scooped him up into her arms, the bare legs kicking and struggling, and crawled with him into the open air.

There she sat, hugging him close, with her cheek resting on his head, when the tired, anxious mother, hurrying on ahead of Bub, came running down the hill.

Many times after that, the baby was a “bother” to Mandy, but she was never heard to call him so.

THE SILLY GOOSE.

(An Old Story Re-told.)

BY E.A. SMULLER.

[Illustration]

There's a queer old story which you shall hear.
It happened, once on a time, my dear,
That a goose went swimming on a pond,
A pleasure of which all geese are fond.
She sailed about, and to and fro,
The waves bent under her breast of snow,
And her red feet paddled about below,
But she wasn't a happy goose—oh no!

It troubled her more than she could tell,
That in the town where she chanced to dwell,
The saying of “stupid as a goose,”
Was one that was very much in use.
For sneers and snubbing are hard to bear,
Be he man or beast I do not care,
Or pinioned fowl of the earth or air,
We're all of the same opinion there.

Now, as she pondered the matter o'er,
A fox came walking along the shore;



With a pleasant smile he bowed his head,
“Good-evening, Mrs. Goose!” he said.
“Good-evening, Mr. Fox!” quoth she,
Looking across at him tremblingly,
And, fearing he had not had his tea,
Pushed a trifle farther out to sea.

She had little harm to fear from him;
For, with all his tricks, he could not swim,
And, indeed, his voice was sweet and kind.
“Dear Mrs. Goose, you’ve a troubled mind;
I only wish I could help you through,
There’s nothing I would not gladly do
For such a beautiful bird as you.”
Which sounded nice, and was really true.

“Well, then, Mr. Fox,” the goose replied,
“It hurts my feelings, and wounds my pride,
That in these days my sisters and I,
Who saved old Rome by our warning cry,
Should be called the *silly geese*. Ah, me!
If I could learn something fine, you see,
Like writing, or reading the A, B, C,
What a happy, happy goose I’d be!”

“Now, would you, indeed!” Renard replied
As the floating fowl he slyly eyed;
“I hardly know what ’tis best to say,
Let’s think about it a moment, pray,
I may help you yet, my dear, who knows?”
So he struck a meditative pose,
And thoughtfully laid his small, red toes,
Up by the side of his pointed nose.

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"Ah, yes!" he cried, "I have it at last:
Your troubles, dear Mrs. Goose, are past;
There is a school-master, wise and good,
I know where he lives in yonder wood,
To-morrow evening, you shall see
In yon broad meadow his school will be,
He'll bring you a book with the A, B, C,
And he'll give his little lesson free."

But now just listen, and you shall hear
About that fox; he went off, my dear,
And he bought a coat, and a beaver hat,
And a pair of specs, and a black cravat.
Next evening he came dressed up to charm,
With the little "Reader" under his arm,
Where the goose stood waiting without alarm,
For, indeed, she hadn't a thought of harm.

Had she looked at all, you would have thought
She need not have been so quickly caught,
For the long red bushy fox's tail,
Swept over the meadow like a trail.
But 'twas rather dark, for night was near,
And another thing, I greatly fear.
She felt too anxious to see quite clear;
She was simply *a goose of one idea*.

The school-master opens wide his book,
The goose makes a long, long neck, to look,
He opens his mouth, as if to cough,
When, snippety-snap! her head flies off.
Now, cackle loudly her sisters fond,
Who are watching proudly from the pond,
While off to the town that lies beyond,
The whole of the frightened flock abscond.

That day, the geese made a solemn vow,
Which their faithful children keep till now,
That, never shall goose or gosling look
At any school-master or his book.
So, if ever you should chance to hear
Them talking of school, don't think it queer
If they say some hard things, or appear

To show a certain degree of fear;
It is always so with geese, my dear.

[Illustration: "LADY-BIRD, FLY AWAY HOME!"]

PARISIAN CHILDREN.

BY HENRY BACON.

[Illustration]

Parisians adore the sunshine. On a sunny day the many squares and parks are peopled by children dressed in gay costumes, always attended by parents or nurses. The old gingerbread venders at the gates find a ready sale for chunks of coarse bread (to be thrown to the sparrows and swans), hoops, jump-ropes, and wooden shovels,—for the little ones are allowed to dig in the public walks as if they were on private grounds and heirs of the soil. Here the babies build their miniature forts, while the sergents-de-ville (or policemen), who are old soldiers, look kindly on, taking special care not to trample the fortifications as they pass to and fro upon their rounds.

Here future captains and admirals sail their miniature fleet, and are as helplessly horror-stricken when the graceful swans sally out and attack their little vessels, as when from Fortress Monroe the spectators watched the "Merrimac" steam down upon the shipping in the roads.

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[Illustration: EXTREMES MEET.]

Here the veterans, returned again to childhood, bask in the sun, and, watching the fort-building, forget their terrible campaigns amidst snows and burning sands, delighting to turn an end of the jumping rope or to trot a long-robed heiress on, perhaps, the only knee they have left.

[Illustration: THE STAFF OF LIFE.]

Parisians are very fond of uniforms, and so begin to employ them in the dress of citizens as soon as they make their entry into the world, even before they are registered at the mayor's office; for the caps and cradles of a boy (or *citoyen*) are decorated with blue ribbons, and the girl (or *citoyenne*) with pink.

Every boys' or girls' school of any pretension has a distinctive mark in the dress, and so has each employment or trade,—the butcher's boy, always bareheaded, with a large basket and white apron; the grocer's apprentice, with calico over-sleeves and blue apron; and the pastry-cook's boy, dressed in white with white linen cap, who despises and ridicules the well-blackened chimney-sweep, keeping the while at a respectful distance. And we must not forget the beggars, with their carefully studied costumes of rags, or the little Italians, born in Paris, but wearing their so-called native costume, which has been cut and made within the city walls.

The little ones of the outskirts of the city are generally independent and self-reliant youngsters, and sometimes, before they are quite steady on their feet, we meet them already doing the family errands, trudging along, hugging a loaf of bread taller than themselves. But the rosy plumpness of the fields is wanting; for children are like chameleons, and partake of the color of the locality they inhabit, so these poor little ones are toned down by the smoke and dust of the workshops. Their play-ground is under the dusty, dingy trees of the wide avenues; but they have the same games of romps their peasant mothers brought from their country homes, and above the noise of the passing vehicles we often hear their voices as they dance round in a circle, and sing verses of some old provincial song.

[Illustration: THE VETERAN AND HIS CHARGE.]

The delightful hours spent in boyhood, going to and from school, are unknown in the gay French capital to children of well-to-do parents. Instead of starting early and lingering on the way, they watch from the window until a black one-horse omnibus arrives, when a sub-master takes charge of the pupil, and the omnibus goes from house to house, collecting all the scholars, who are brought home in the same manner, the sub-master sitting next the door, giving no chance to slip out to ride on top, or to beg the driver to trust a fellow with the reins; and as it is the custom to obey all in authority, the

master is respected. Girls are either sent to boarding-school or go to a day-school; in the latter case, always accompanied by one of their parents or a trusty servant.

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But the parents, if their means will not permit them to send their boys to schools that support a one-horse omnibus, or if they have not a servant to go with them, perform that task themselves. In the schools for the poorer classes, when teaching is over, the children file out, two by two, the older children being appointed monitors, and the little processions disappear in different directions; the teachers standing at the gate until they are lost from sight, for they have not far to go, as there is a free school in each quarter.

[Illustration: THE ENEMY.]

But I pity the charity-school girls. Although always neatly and cleanly dressed, they are all alike, with white caps, and dresses which might have been cut from the same piece. They file through the streets or public gardens, under the charge of the “good sisters,” and perhaps they stop to play or rest sometimes, but I never saw them do so. Perhaps there is no real reason to pity these charity-children, boys or girls; but I remember my own free and happy school-days in America, and so I pity them.

[Illustration]

THE PETERKINS ARE OBLIGED TO MOVE.

BY LUCRETIA P. HALE.

Agamemnon had long felt it an impropriety to live in a house that was called a “semi-detached” house, when there was no other “semi” to it. It had always remained wholly detached as the owner had never built the other half. Mrs. Peterkin felt this was not a sufficient reason for undertaking the terrible process of a move to another house, when they were fully satisfied with the one they were in.

But a more powerful reason forced them to go. The track of a new railroad had to be carried directly through the place, and a station was to be built on that very spot.

Mrs. Peterkin so much dreaded moving that she questioned whether they could not continue to live in the upper part of the house and give up the lower part to the station. They could then dine at the restaurant, and it would be very convenient about traveling, as there would be no danger of missing the train, if one were sure of the direction.

But when the track was actually laid by the side of the house, and the steam-engine of the construction train puffed and screamed under the dining-room windows, and the engineer calmly looked in to see what the family had for dinner, she felt indeed that they must move.



But where should they go? It was difficult to find a house that satisfied the whole family. One was too far off, and looked into a tan-pit, another was too much in the middle of the town, next door to a machine shop. Elizabeth Eliza wanted a porch covered with vines, that should face the sunset, while Mr. Peterkin thought it would not be convenient to sit there looking toward the west in the late afternoon, (which was his only leisure time) for the sun would shine in his face. The little boys wanted a house with a great many doors, so that they could go in and out often. But Mr. Peterkin did not like so much slamming, and felt there was more danger of burglars with so many doors. Agamemnon wanted an observatory, and Solomon John a shed for a workshop. If he could have carpenters' tools and a work-bench, he could build an observatory, if it were wanted.

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But it was necessary to decide upon something, for they must leave their house directly. So they were obliged to take Mr. Finch's at the Corners. It satisfied none of the family. The porch was a piazza, and was opposite a barn. There were three other doors,—too many to please Mr. Peterkin, and not enough for the little boys. There was no observatory, and nothing to observe, if there were one, as the house was too low, and some high trees shut out any view. Elizabeth Eliza had hoped for a view, but Mr. Peterkin consoled her by deciding it was more healthy to have to walk for a view, and Mrs. Peterkin agreed that they might get tired of the same every day.

And everybody was glad a selection was made, and the little boys carried their India rubber boots the very first afternoon.

Elizabeth Eliza wanted to have some system in the moving, and spent the evening in drawing up a plan. It would be easy to arrange everything beforehand, so that there should not be the confusion that her mother dreaded, and the discomfort they had in their last move. Mrs. Peterkin shook her head, she did not think it possible to move with any comfort. Agamemnon said a great deal could be done with a list and a programme.

Elizabeth Eliza declared if all were well arranged a programme would make it perfectly easy. They were to have new parlor carpets, which could be put down in the new house the first thing. Then the parlor furniture could be moved in, and there would be two comfortable rooms, in which Mr. and Mrs. Peterkin could sit, while the rest of the move went on. Then the old parlor carpets could be taken up for the new dining-room and the down-stairs bedroom, and the family could meanwhile dine at the old house. Mr. Peterkin did not object to this, though the distance was considerable, as he felt exercise would be good for them all. Elizabeth Eliza's programme then arranged that the dining-room furniture could be moved the third day, by which time one of the old parlor carpets would be down in the new dining-room, and they could still sleep in the old house. Thus there would always be a quiet, comfortable place in one house or the other. Each night when Mr. Peterkin came home, he would find some place for quiet thought and rest, and each day there should be moved only the furniture needed for a certain room. Great confusion would be avoided and nothing misplaced. Elizabeth Eliza wrote these last words at the head of her programme—"Misplace nothing." And Agamemnon made a copy of the programme for each member of the family.

The first thing to be done was to buy the parlor carpets. Elizabeth Eliza had already looked at some in Boston, and the next morning she went by an early train, with her father, Agamemnon, and Solomon John, to decide upon them.

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They got home about eleven o'clock, and when they reached the house were dismayed to find two furniture wagons, in front of the gate, already partly filled! Mrs. Peterkin was walking in and out of the open door, a large book in one hand, and a duster in the other, and she came to meet them in an agony of anxiety. What should they do? The furniture carts had appeared soon after the rest had left for Boston, and the men had insisted upon beginning to move the things. In vain had she shown Elizabeth Eliza's programme, in vain had she insisted they must take only the parlor furniture. They had declared they must put the heavy pieces in the bottom of the cart, and the lighter furniture on top. So she had seen them go into every room in the house, and select one piece of furniture after the other, without even looking at Elizabeth Eliza's programme; she doubted if they could have read it, if they had looked at it.

Mr. Peterkin had ordered the carters to come, but he had no idea they would come so early, and supposed it would take them a long time to fill the carts.

But they had taken the dining-room sideboard first,—a heavy piece of furniture,—and all its contents were now on the dining-room tables. Then, indeed, they selected the parlor book-case, but had set every book on the floor. The men had told Mrs. Peterkin they would put the books in the bottom of the cart, very much in the order they were taken from the shelves. But by this time Mrs. Peterkin was considering the carters as natural enemies, and dared not trust them; besides, the books ought all to be dusted. So she was now holding one of the volumes of Agamemnon's Encyclopedia, with difficulty in one hand, while she was dusting it with the other. Elizabeth Eliza was in dismay. At this moment, four men were bringing down a large chest of drawers from her father's room and they called to her to stand out of the way. The parlors were a scene of confusion. In dusting the books, Mrs. Peterkin neglected to restore them to the careful rows in which they were left by the men, and they lay in hopeless masses in different parts of the room. Elizabeth Eliza sunk in despair upon the end of a sofa.

"It would have been better to buy the red and blue carpet," said Solomon John.

"Is not the carpet bought?" exclaimed Mrs. Peterkin. And then they were obliged to confess they had been unable to decide upon one, and had come back to consult Mrs. Peterkin.

"What shall we do?" asked Mrs. Peterkin.

Elizabeth Eliza rose from the sofa and went to the door, saying, "I shall be back in a moment."

Agamemnon slowly passed round the room, collecting the scattered volumes of his Encyclopedia. Mr. Peterkin offered a helping hand to a man lifting a wardrobe.

Elizabeth Eliza soon returned. "I did not like to go and ask her. But I felt that I must in such an emergency. I explained to her the whole matter and she thinks we should take the carpet at Makillan's."

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“Makillan’s” was a store in the village, and the carpet was the only one all the family had liked without any doubt; but they had supposed they might prefer one from Boston.

The moment was a critical one. Solomon John was sent directly to Makillan’s to order the carpet to be put down that very day. But where should they dine? where should they have their supper? where was Mr. Peterkin’s “quiet hour?” Elizabeth Eliza, was frantic—the dining-room floor and table were covered with things.

It was decided that Mr. and Mrs. Peterkin should dine at the Bromwiches, who had been most neighborly in their offers, and the rest should get something to eat at the baker’s.

Agamemnon and Elizabeth Eliza hastened away to be ready to receive the carts at the other house, and direct the furniture as they could. After all, there was something exhilarating in this opening of the new house, and in deciding where things should go. Gayly Elizabeth Eliza stepped down the front garden of the new home, and across the piazza, and to the door. But it was locked, and she had no keys!

“Agamemnon, did you bring the keys?” she exclaimed.

No, he had not seen them since the morning—when—ah—yes, the little boys were allowed to go to the house for their India rubber boots, as there was a threatening of rain. Perhaps they had left some door unfastened—perhaps they had put the keys under the door-mat. No, each door, each window was solidly closed, and there was no mat!

“I shall have to go to the school to see if they took the keys with them,” said Agamemnon; “or else go home to see if they left them there.” The school was in a different direction from the house, and far at the other end of the town for Mr. Peterkin had not yet changed the boys’ school, as he proposed to do, after their move.

“That will be the only way,” said Elizabeth Eliza; for it had been arranged that the little boys should take their lunch to school and not come home at noon.

She sat down on the steps to wait, but only for a moment, for the carts soon appeared turning the corner. What should be done with the furniture? Of course, the carters must wait for the keys, as she should need them to set the furniture up in the right places. But they could not stop for this. They put it down upon the piazza, on the steps, in the garden, and Elizabeth Eliza saw how incongruous it was! There was something from every room in the house! even the large family chest, which had proved too heavy for them to travel with, had come down from the attic, and stood against the front door.

And Solomon John appeared with the carpet woman, and a boy with a wheelbarrow bringing the new carpet. And all stood and waited. Some opposite neighbors appeared

to offer advice, and look on, and Elizabeth Eliza groaned inwardly that only the shabbiest of their furniture appeared to be standing full in view.

It seemed ages before Agamemnon returned, and no wonder; for he had been to the house, then to the school, then back to the house, for one of the little boys had left at home the keys, in the pocket of his clothes. Meanwhile, the carpet woman had waited, and the boy with the wheelbarrow had waited, and when they got in they found the parlor must be swept and cleaned. So the carpet woman went off in dudgeon, for she was sure there would not be time enough to do anything.

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And one of the carts came again, and in their hurry the men set the furniture down anywhere. Elizabeth Eliza was hoping to make a little place in the dining-room where they might have their supper and go home to sleep. But she looked out, and there were the carters bringing the bedsteads, and proceeding to carry them upstairs.

In despair Elizabeth Eliza went back to the old house. If she had been there she might have prevented this. She found Mrs. Peterkin in an agony about the entry oil-cloth. It had been made in the house, and how could it be taken out of the house? Agamemnon made measurements; it certainly could not go out of the front door! He suggested it might be left till the house was pulled down, when it could easily be moved out of one side. But Elizabeth Eliza reminded him that the whole house was to be moved without being taken apart. Perhaps it could be cut in strips narrow enough to go out. One of the men loading the remaining cart disposed of the question by coming in and rolling up the oil-cloth and carrying it off on top of his wagon.

Elizabeth Eliza felt she must hurry back to the new house. But what should they do?—no beds here, no carpets there! The dining-room table and sideboard were at the other house, the plates and forks and spoons here. In vain she looked at her programme. It was all reversed, everything was misplaced. Mr. Peterkin would suppose they were to eat there and sleep here, and what had become of the little boys?

Meanwhile, the man with the first cart had returned. They fell to packing the dining-room china. They were up in the attic, they were down in the cellar. Even one of them suggested to take the tacks out of the parlor carpets, as they should want to take them next. Mrs. Peterkin sunk upon a kitchen chair.

“Oh, I wish we had decided to stay and be moved in the house!” she exclaimed.

Solomon John urged his mother to go to the new house, for Mr. Peterkin would be there for his “quiet hour.” And when the carters at last appeared carrying the parlor carpets on their shoulders she sighed and said, “There is nothing left,” and meekly consented to be led away.

They reached the new house to find Mr. Peterkin sitting calmly in a rocking-chair on the piazza, watching the oxen coming into the opposite barn. He was waiting for the keys, which Solomon John had taken back with him. The little boys were in a horse-chestnut tree, at the side of the house.

Agamemnon opened the door. The passages were crowded with furniture, the floors were strewn with books, the bureau was upstairs that was to stand in a lower bedroom, there was not a place to lay a table, there was nothing to lay upon it; for the knives and plates and spoons had not come, and although the tables were there, they were covered with chairs and boxes.

At this moment came a covered basket from the lady from Philadelphia. It contained a choice supper, and forks and spoons, and at the same moment appeared a pot of hot tea from an opposite neighbor. They placed all this on the back of a book-case lying upset, and sat around it. Solomon John came rushing from the gate:

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"The last load is coming. We are all moved!" he exclaimed, and the little boys joined in a chorus, "We are moved, we are moved!"

Mrs. Peterkin looked sadly round; the kitchen utensils were lying on the parlor lounge, and an old family gun on Elizabeth Eliza's hat-box. The parlor clock stood on a barrel; some coal-scuttles had been placed on the parlor table, a bust of Washington stood in the door-way, and the looking-glasses leaned against the pillars of the piazza. But they were moved! Mrs. Peterkin felt indeed that they were very much moved.

[Illustration: GET UP!]

[Illustration: GOT DOWN!]

THE SING-AWAY BIRD.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

[Illustration]

O Say, have you heard of the sing-away bird,
That sings where the Runaway River
Runs down with its rills from the bald-headed hills
That stand in the sunshine and shiver?
"O sing! sing-away! sing-away!"
How the pines and the birches are stirred
By the trill of the sing-away bird!

And the bald-headed hills, with their rocks and their rills,
To the tune of his rapture are ringing.
And their faces grow young, all their gray mists among,
While the forests break forth into singing,
"O sing! sing-away! sing-away!"
And the river runs singing along;
And the flying winds catch up the song.

It was nothing but—hush! a wild white-throated thrush,
That emptied his musical quiver
With a charm and a spell over valley and dell
On the banks of the Runaway River.
"O sing! sing-away! sing-away!"
Yet the song of the wild singer had
The sound of a soul that is glad.



And, beneath the glad sun, may a glad-hearted one
Set the world to the tune of his gladness.
The rivers shall sing it, the breezes shall wing it,
Till life shall forget its long sadness.
 "O sing! sing-away! sing-away!"
Sing, spirit, who knowest joy's Giver,—
Sing on, by time's Runaway River!

OLD SOUP

BY MRS. E.W. LATIMER.

The following curious anecdote is from a book about elephants, written by a French gentleman, named Jacolliot, and we will let the author tell his own story:

In the autumn of 1876 I was living in the interior of Bengal, and I went to spend Christmas with my friend, Major Daly. The major's bungalow was on the banks of the Ganges near Cawnpore. He had lived there a good many years, being chief of the quartermaster's department at that station, and had a great many natives, elephants, bullock-carts, and soldiers under his command.

On the morning after my arrival, after a cup of early tea (often taken before daylight in India), I sat smoking with my friend in the veranda of his bungalow, looking out upon the windings of the sacred river. And, directly, I asked the major about his children (a boy and a girl), whom I had not yet seen, and begged to know when I should see them.

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"Soupramany has taken them out fishing," said their father.

"Why, isn't Soupramany your great war-elephant?" I cried.

"Exactly so. You cannot have forgotten Soupramany!"

"Of course not. I was here, you know, when he had that fight with the elephant who went mad while loading a transport with bags of rice down yonder. I saw the mad elephant when he suddenly began to fling the rice into the river. His 'mahout' tried to stop him, and he killed the mahout. The native sailors ran away to hide themselves, and the mad elephant, trumpeting, charged into this inclosure. Old Soupramany was here, and so were Jim and Bessy. When he saw the mad animal, he threw himself between him and the children. The little ones and their nurses had just time to get into the house when the fight commenced."

"Yes," said the major. "Old Soup was a hundred years old. He had been trained to war, and to fight with the rhinoceros, but he was too old to hunt then."

"And yet," said I, becoming animated by the recollections of that day, "what a gallant fight it was! Do you remember how we all stood on this porch and watched it, not daring to fire a shot lest we should hit Old Soupramany? Do you remember too, his look when he drew off, after fighting an hour and a half, leaving his adversary dying in the dust, and walked straight to the 'corral,' shaking his great ears which had been badly torn, with his head bruised, and a great piece broken from one of his tusks?"

"Yes, indeed," said the major. "Well, since then, he is more devoted to my dear little ones than ever. He takes them out whole days, and I am perfectly content to have them under his charge. I don't like trusting Christian children to the care of natives; but with Old Soup I know they can come to no harm."

[Illustration: "BESIDE THE CHILDREN STOOD OLD SOUP WITH A LARGE BAMBOO ROD IN HIS TRUNK."]

"What! you trust children under ten years of age to Soup, without any other protection?"

"I do," replied the major. "Come along with me, if you doubt, and we will surprise them at their fishing."

I followed Major Daly, and, after walking half a mile along the wooded banks of the river, we came upon the little group. The two children—Jim, the elder, being about ten—both sat still and silent, for a wonder, each holding a rod, with line, cork, hook and bait, anxiously watching the gay corks bobbing in the water. Beside them stood Old Soup with an extremely large bamboo rod in his trunk, with line, hook, bait, and cork, like the children's. I need not say I took small notice of the children, but turned all my attention

to their big companion. I had not watched him long before he had a bite; for, as the religion of the Hindoos forbids them to take life, the river swarms with fishes.

The old fellow did not stir; his little eyes watched his line eagerly; he was no novice in “the gentle craft.” He was waiting till it was time to draw in his prize.

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At the end of his line, as he drew it up, was dangling one of those golden tench so abundant in the Ganges.

When Soupramany perceived what a fine fish he had caught, he uttered one of those long, low gurgling notes of satisfaction by which an elephant expresses joy; and he waited patiently, expecting Jim to take his prize off the hook and put on some more bait for him. But Jim, the little rascal, sometimes liked to plague Old Soup. He nodded at us, as much as to say, "Look out, and you'll see fun, now!" Then he took off the fish, which he threw into a water-jar placed there for the purpose, and went back to his place without putting any bait on Old Soup's hook. The intelligent animal did not attempt to throw his line into the water. He tried to move Jim by low, pleading cries. It was curious to see what tender tones he seemed to try to give his voice.

Seeing that Jim paid no attention to his calls, but sat and laughed as he handled his own line, Old Soup went up to him, and with his trunk tried to turn his head in the direction of the bait-box. At last, when he found that all he could do would not induce his willful friend to help him, he turned round as if struck by a sudden thought, and, snatching up in his trunk the box that held the bait, came and laid it down at the major's feet; then picking up his rod, he held it out to his master.

"What do you want me to do with this, Old Soup?" said the major.

The creature lifted one great foot after the other, and again began to utter his plaintive cry. Out of mischief, I took Jimmy's part, and, picking up the bait-box, pretended to run with it. The elephant was not going to be teased by *me*. He dipped his trunk into the Ganges, and in an instant squirted a stream of water over me with all the force and precision of a fire-engine, to the immense amusement of the children.

The major at once made Soup a sign to stop, and, to make my peace with the fine old fellow, I baited his hook myself. Quivering with joy, as a baby does when it gets hold at last of a plaything some one has taken from it, Old Soupramany hardly paused to thank me by a soft note of joy for baiting his line for him, before he went back to his place, and was again watching his cork as it trembled in the ripples of the river.

Four little houses, blue and round,
Hidden away from sight and sound.
What is in them? The leaves never tell,
But they know the secret very well.
The daisies know, and the clover knows;
So does the pretty, sweet wild rose.
Don't be impatient, only wait
Just outside, at the leafy gate;
Soon a fairy will open the door,
And let out birdies—one, two, three, four!

UNDER THE LILACS.

BY LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

CHAPTER XII.

GOOD TIMES.

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Every one was very kind to Ben when his loss was known. The Squire wrote to Mr. Smithers the boy had found friends and would stay where he was. Mrs. Moss consoled him in her way, and the little girls did their very best to “be good to poor Benny.” But Miss Celia was his truest comforter and completely won his heart, not only by the friendly words she said and the pleasant things she did, but by the unspoken sympathy which showed itself, just at the right minute, in a look, a touch, a smile, more helpful than any amount of condolence. She called him “my man,” and Ben tried to be one, bearing his trouble so bravely that she respected him, although he was only a little boy, because it promised well for the future.

Then she was so happy herself, it was impossible for those about her to be sad, and Ben soon grew cheerful again in spite of the very tender memory of his father laid quietly away in the safest corner of his heart. He would have been a very unboyish boy if he had *not* been happy, for the new place was such a pleasant one, he soon felt as if for the first time he really had a home.

No more grubbing now, but daily tasks which never grew tiresome, they were so varied and so light. No more cross Pats to try his temper, but the sweetest mistress that ever was, since praise was oftener on her lips than blame, and gratitude made willing service a delight.

At first it seemed as if there was going to be trouble between the two boys, for Thorny was naturally masterful, and illness had left him weak and nervous, so he was often both domineering and petulant. Ben had been taught instant obedience to those older than himself, and if Thorny had been a man Ben would have made no complaint; but it was hard to be “ordered round” by a boy, and an unreasonable one into the bargain.

A word from Miss Celia blew away the threatening cloud, however, and for her sake her brother promised to try to be patient; for her sake Ben declared he never would “get mad” if Mr. Thorny did fidget, and both very soon forgot all about master and man and lived together like two friendly lads, taking each other’s ups and downs good-naturedly, and finding mutual pleasure and profit in the new companionship.

The only point on which they never *could* agree was legs, and many a hearty laugh did they give Miss Celia by their warm and serious discussion of this vexed question. Thorny insisted that Ben was bow-legged; Ben resented the epithet, and declared that the legs of all good horsemen must have a slight curve, and any one who knew anything about the matter would acknowledge both its necessity and its beauty. Then Thorny would observe that it might be all very well in the saddle, but it made a man waddle like a duck when afoot; whereat Ben would retort that for his part he would rather waddle like a duck than tumble about like a horse with the staggers. He had his opponent there, for poor Thorny did look very like

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a weak-kneed colt when he tried to walk; but he would never own it, and came down upon Ben with crushing allusions to centaurs, or the Greeks and Romans, who were famous both for their horsemanship and fine limbs. Ben could not answer that, except by proudly referring to the chariot-races copied from the ancients in which *he* had borne a part, which was more than *some folks* with long legs could say. Gentlemen never did that sort of thing, nor did they twit their best friends with their misfortunes, Thorny would remark, casting a pensive glance at his thin hands, longing the while to give Ben a good shaking. This hint would remind the other of his young master's late sufferings and all he owed his dear mistress, and he usually ended the controversy by turning a few lively somersaults as a vent for his swelling wrath, and come up with his temper all right again. Or, if Thorny happened to be in the wheeled chair, he would trot him round the garden at a pace which nearly took his breath away, thereby proving that if "bow-legs" were not beautiful to some benighted being, they *were* "good to go."

Thorny liked that, and would drop the subject for the time by politely introducing some more agreeable topic; so the impending quarrel would end in a laugh over some boyish joke, and the word "legs" be avoided by mutual consent till accident brought it up again.

The spirit of rivalry is hidden in the best of us, and is a helpful and inspiring power if we know how to use it. Miss Celia knew this, and tried to make the lads help one another by means of it,—not in boastful or ungenerous comparison of each other's gifts, but by interchanging them, giving and taking freely, kindly, and being glad to love what was admirable wherever they found it. Thorny admired Ben's strength, activity, and independence; Ben envied Thorny's learning, good manners, and comfortable surroundings; and, when a wise word had set the matter rightly before them, both enjoyed the feeling that there was a certain equality between them, since money could not buy health; and practical knowledge was as useful as any that can be found in books. So they interchanged their small experiences, accomplishments, and pleasures, and both were the better, as well as the happier, for it, because in this way only can we truly love our neighbor as ourself and get the real sweetness out of life.

There was no end to the new and pleasant things Ben had to do, from keeping paths and flower-beds neat, feeding the pets, and running errands, to waiting on Thorny and being right-hand man to Miss Celia. He had a little room in the old house, newly papered with hunting scenes, which he was never tired of admiring. In the closet hung several out-grown suits of Thorny's, made over for his valet, and, what Ben valued infinitely more, a pair of boots, well blacked and ready for grand occasions when he rode abroad, with one old spur, found in the attic, brightened up and merely worn for show, since nothing would have induced him to prick beloved Lita with it.

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Many pictures, cut from illustrated papers, of races, animals and birds, were stuck round the room, giving it rather the air of a circus and menagerie. This, however, made it only the more home-like to its present owner, who felt exceedingly rich and respectable as he surveyed his premises; almost like a retired showman who still fondly remembers past successes, though now happy in the more private walks of life.

In one drawer of the quaint little bureau which he used, were kept the relics of his father; very few and poor, and of no interest to any one but himself,—only the letter telling of his death, a worn-out watch-chain, and a photograph of Senor Jose Montebello, with his youthful son standing on his head, both airily attired, and both smiling with the calmly superior expression which gentlemen of their profession usually wear in public. Ben's other treasures had been stolen with his bundle; but these he cherished and often looked at when he went to bed, wondering what heaven was like, since it was lovelier than California, and usually fell asleep with a dreamy impression that it must be something like America when Columbus found it,—“a pleasant land, where were gay flowers and tall trees, with leaves and fruit such as they had never seen before.” And through this happy hunting-ground “father” was forever riding on a beautiful white horse with wings, like the one of which Miss Celia had a picture.

Nice times Ben had in his little room poring over his books, for he soon had several of his own; but his favorites were Hammerton's “Animals” and “Our Dumb Friends,” both full of interesting pictures and anecdotes such as boys love. Still nicer times working about the house, helping get things in order; and best of all were the daily drives with Miss Celia and Thorny, when weather permitted, or solitary rides to town through the heaviest rain, for certain letters *must* go and come, no matter how the elements raged. The neighbors soon got used to the “antics of that boy,” but Ben knew that he was an object of interest as he careered down the main street in a way that made old ladies cry out and brought people flying to the window, sure that some one was being run away with. Lita enjoyed the fun as much as he, and apparently did her best to send him heels over head, having rapidly learned to understand the signs he gave her by the touch of hand and foot, or the tones of his voice.

These performances caused the boys to regard Ben Brown with intense admiration, the girls with timid awe, all but Bab, who burned to imitate him, and tried her best whenever she got a chance, much to the anguish and dismay of poor Jack, for that long-suffering animal was the only steed she was allowed to ride. Fortunately, neither she nor Betty had much time for play just now, as school was about to close for the long vacation, and all the little people were busy finishing up, that they might go to play with free minds. So the “lilac-parties,” as they called them, were deferred till later, and the lads amused themselves in their own way, with Miss Celia to suggest and advise.

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It took Thorny a long time to arrange his possessions, for he could only direct while Ben unpacked, wondering and admiring as he worked, because he had never seen so many boyish treasures before. The little printing-press was his especial delight, and leaving everything else in confusion, Thorny taught him its use and planned a newspaper on the spot, with Ben for printer, himself for editor, and "Sister" for chief contributor, while Bab should be carrier and Betty office-boy. Next came a postage-stamp book, and a rainy day was happily spent in pasting a new collection where each particular one belonged, with copious explanations from Thorny as they went along. Ben did not feel any great interest in this amusement after one trial of it, but when a book containing patterns of the flags of all nations turned up, he was seized with a desire to copy them *all*, so that the house could be fitly decorated on gala occasions. Finding that it amused her brother, Miss Celia generously opened her piece-drawer and rag-bag, and as the mania grew till her resources were exhausted, she bought bits of gay cambric and many-colored papers, and startled the storekeeper by purchasing several bottles of mucilage at once. Bab and Betty were invited to sew the bright strips or stars, and pricked their little fingers assiduously, finding this sort of needle-work much more attractive than piecing bed-quilts.

Such a snipping and pasting, planning and stitching as went on in the big back room, which was given up to them, and such a noble array of banners and pennons as soon decorated its walls, would have caused the dullest eye to brighten with amusement, if not with admiration. Of course, the Stars and Stripes hung highest, with the English lion ramping on the royal standard close by; then followed a regular picture-gallery, for there was the white elephant of Siam, the splendid peacock of Burmah, the double-headed Russian eagle and black dragon of China, the winged lion of Venice, and the prancing pair on the red, white and blue flag of Holland. The keys and miter of the Papal States were a hard job, but up they went at last, with the yellow crescent of Turkey on one side and the red full moon of Japan on the other; the pretty blue and white flag of Greece hung below and the cross of free Switzerland above. If materials had held out, the flags of all the United States would have followed; but paste and patience were exhausted, so the busy workers rested awhile before they "flung their banner to the breeze," as the newspapers have it.

A spell of ship building and rigging followed the flag fit; for Thorny, feeling too old now for such toys, made over his whole fleet to "the children," condescending, however, to superintend a thorough repairing of the same before he disposed of all but the big man-of-war, which continued to ornament his own room, with all sail set and a little red officer perpetually waving his sword on the quarter-deck.

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These gifts led to out-of-door water-works, for the brook had to be dammed up, that a shallow ocean might be made, where Ben's piratical "Red Rover," with the black flag, might chase and capture Bab's smart frigate, "Queen," while the "Bounding Betsey," laden with lumber, safely sailed from Kennebunkport to Massachusetts Bay. Thorny, from his chair, was chief-engineer, and directed his gang of one how to dig the basin, throw up the embankment, and finally let in the water till the mimic ocean was full; then regulate the little water-gate, lest it should overflow and wreck the pretty squadron of ships, boats, canoes, and rafts, which soon rode at anchor there.

Digging and paddling in mud and water proved such a delightful pastime that the boys kept it up, till a series of water-wheels, little mills and cataracts made the once quiet brook look as if a manufacturing town was about to spring up where hitherto minnows had played in peace and the retiring frog had chanted his serenade unmolested.

Miss Celia liked all this, for anything which would keep Thorny happy out-of-doors in the sweet June weather found favor in her eyes, and when the novelty had worn off from home affairs, she planned a series of exploring expeditions which filled their boyish souls with delight. As none of them knew much about the place, it really was quite exciting to start off on a bright morning with a roll of wraps and cushions, lunch, books, and drawing materials packed into the phaeton, and drive at random about the shady roads and lanes, pausing when and where they liked. Wonderful discoveries were made, pretty places were named, plans were drawn, and all sorts of merry adventures befell the pilgrims.

Each day they camped in a new spot, and while Lita nibbled the fresh grass at her ease, Miss Celia sketched under the big umbrella, Thorny read or lounged or slept on his rubber blanket, and Ben made himself generally useful. Unloading, filling the artist's water-bottle, piling the invalid's cushions, setting out the lunch, running to and fro for a flower or a butterfly, climbing a tree to report the view, reading, chatting, or frolicking with Sancho,—any sort of duty was in Ben's line, and he did them all well, for an out-of-door life was natural to him and he liked it.

"Ben, I want an amanuensis," said Thorny, dropping book and pencil one day, after a brief interval of silence, broken only by the whisper of the young leaves overhead and the soft babble of the brook close by.

"A what?" asked Ben, pushing back his hat with such an air of amazement that Thorny rather loftily inquired:

"Don't you know what an amanuensis is?"

"Well, no; not unless it's some relation to an anaconda. Shouldn't think you'd want one of them, anyway."

Thorny rolled over with a hoot of derision, and his sister, who sat close by, sketching an old gate, looked up to see what was going on.

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"Well, you needn't laugh at a feller. *You* didn't know what a wombat was when I asked you, and *I* didn't roar," said Ben, giving his hat a slap, as nothing else was handy.

"The idea of wanting an anaconda tickled me so, I couldn't help it. I dare say you'd have got me one if I *had* asked for it, you are such an obliging chap."

"Of course I would if I could. Shouldn't be surprised if you did some day, you want such funny things," answered Ben, appeased by the compliment.

"I'll try the amanuensis first. It's only some one to write for me; I get so tired doing it without a table. You write well enough, and it will be good for you to know something about botany. I intend to teach you, Ben," said Thorny, as if conferring a great favor.

"It looks pretty hard," muttered Ben, with a doleful glance at the book laid open upon a strew of torn leaves and flowers.

"No, it isn't; it's regularly jolly, and you'd be no end of a help if you only knew a little. Now suppose I say, 'Bring me a "*ranunculus bulbosus*,"' how would you know what I wanted?" demanded Thorny, waving his microscope with a learned air.

"Shouldn't."

"There are quantities of them all round us, and I want to analyze one. See if you can't guess."

Ben stared vaguely from earth to sky, and was about to give it up, when a buttercup fell at his feet, and he caught sight of Miss Celia smiling at him from behind her brother, who did not see the flower.

"S'pose you mean this? *I* don't call 'em rhinocerus bulburses, so I wasn't sure." And taking the hint as quickly as it was given, Ben presented the buttercup as if he knew all about it.

"You guessed that remarkably well. Now bring me a '*leontodon taraxacum*,'" said Thorny, charmed with the quickness of his pupil and glad to display his learning.

Again Ben gazed, but the field was full of early flowers, and if a long pencil had not pointed to a dandelion close by he would have been lost.

"Here you are, sir," he answered with a chuckle, and Thorny took his turn at being astonished now.

"How the dickens did you know that?"

"Try it again, and may be you'll find out," laughed Ben.

Diving hap-hazard into his book, Thorny demanded a “trifolium pratense.”

The clever pencil pointed, and Ben brought a red clover, mightily enjoying the joke, and thinking that *this* kind of botany wasn’t bad fun.

“Look here, no fooling!” and Thorny sat up to investigate the matter, so quickly that his sister had not time to sober down. “Ah, I’ve caught you! Not fair to tell, Celia. Now, Ben, you’ve *got* to learn all about this buttercup, to pay for cheating.”

“Werry good, sir; bring on your rhinoceriouses,” answered Ben, who couldn’t help imitating his old friend the clown when he felt particularly jolly.

“Sit there and write what I tell you,” ordered Thorny, with all the severity of a strict schoolmaster.

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Perching himself on the mossy stump, Ben obediently floundered through the following analysis, with constant help in the spelling and much private wonder what would come of it:

“Phaenogamous. Exogenous. Angiosperm. Polypetalous. Stamens, more than ten. Stamens on the receptacle. Pistils, more than one and separate. Leaves without stipules. Crowfoot family. Genus ranunculus. Botanical name, *Ranunculus bulbosus*.”

“Jerusalem, what a flower! Pistols and crows’ feet, and Polly put the kettles on, and Angry sperms and all the rest of ’em! If that’s your botany I won’t take any more, thank you,” said Ben, as he paused as hot and red as if he had been running a race.

“Yes, you will; you’ll learn that all by heart, and then I shall give you a dandelion to do. You’ll like that, because it means *dent de lion* or lion’s teeth, and I’ll show them to you through my glass. You’ve no idea how interesting it is, and what heaps of pretty things you’ll see,” answered Thorny, who had already discovered how charming the study was, and had found great satisfaction in it since he had been forbidden more active pleasures.

“What’s the good of it, any way?” asked Ben, who would rather have been set to mowing the big field than to the task before him.

“It tells all about it in my book here—‘Gray’s Botany for Young People.’ But I can tell you what use it is to *us*,” continued Thorny, crossing his legs in the air and preparing to argue the matter, comfortably lying flat on his back. “We are a Scientific Exploration Society, and we must keep an account of all the plants, animals, minerals and so on, as we come across them. Then suppose we get lost and have to hunt for food, how are we to know what is safe and what isn’t? Come, now, do you know the difference between a toad-stool and a mushroom?”

“No, I don’t.”

“Then I’ll teach you some day. There is sweet flag and poisonous flag, and all sorts of berries and things, and you’d better look out when you are in the woods or you’ll touch ivy and dogwood, and have a horrid time if you don’t know your botany.”

“Thorny learned much of his by sad experience and you will be wise to take his advice,” said Miss Celia, recalling her brother’s various mishaps before the new fancy came on.

“Didn’t I have a time of it, though, when I had to go round for a week with plantain leaves and cream stuck all over my face! Just picked some pretty red dogwood, Ben, and then I was a regular guy, with a face like a lobster and my eyes swelled out of sight. Come along and learn right away, and never get into scrapes like most fellows.”

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Impressed by this warning, and attracted by Thorny's enthusiasm, Ben cast himself down upon the blanket, and for an hour the two heads bobbed to and fro from microscope to book, the teacher airing his small knowledge, the pupil more and more interested in the new and curious things he saw or heard,—though it must be confessed that Ben infinitely preferred to watch ants and bugs, queer little worms and gauzy-winged flies, rather than “putter” over plants with long names. He did not dare to say so, however, but when Thorny asked him if it wasn't capital fun, he dodged cleverly by proposing to hunt up the flowers for his master to study, offering to learn about the dangerous ones, but pleading want of time to investigate this pleasing science very deeply.

As Thorny had talked himself hoarse, he was very ready to dismiss his class of one to fish the milk-bottle out of the brook, and recess was prolonged till next day. But both boys found a new pleasure in the pretty pastime they made of it, for active Ben ranged the woods and fields with a tin box slung over his shoulder, and feeble Thorny had a little room fitted up for his own use where he pressed flowers in newspaper books, dried herbs on the walls, had bottles and cups, pans and platters for his treasures, and made as much litter as he liked.

Presently, Ben brought such lively accounts of the green nooks where jacks-in-the-pulpit preached their little sermons, brooks beside which grew blue violets and lovely ferns, rocks round which danced the columbines like rosy elves, or the trees where birds built, squirrels chattered and woodchucks burrowed, that Thorny was seized with a desire to go and see these beauties for himself. So Jack was saddled and went, plodding, scrambling and wandering into all manner of pleasant places, always bringing home a stronger, browner rider than he carried away.

This delighted Miss Celia, and she gladly saw them ramble off together, leaving her time to stitch happily at certain dainty bits of sewing, write voluminous letters, or dream over others quite as long, swinging in her hammock under the lilacs.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOMEBODY RUNS AWAY.

“School is done,
Now we'll have fun,”

sung Bab and Betty, slamming down their books as if they never meant to take them up again, when they came home on the last day of June.

Tired teacher had dismissed them for eight whole weeks and gone away to rest; the little school-house was shut up, lessons were over, spirits rising fast, and vacation had

begun. The quiet town seemed suddenly inundated with children all in such a rampant state that busy mothers wondered how they ever should be able to keep their frisky darlings out of mischief; thrifty fathers planned how they could bribe the idle hands to pick berries or rake hay; and the old folks, while wishing the young folks well, secretly blessed the man who invented schools.

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The girls immediately began to talk about picnics, and have them, too; for little hats sprung up in the fields like a new sort of mushroom,—every hill-side bloomed with gay gowns, looking as if the flowers had gone out for a walk, and the woods were full of featherless birds chirping away as blithely as the thrushes, robins, and wrens.

The boys took to base-ball like ducks to water, and the common was the scene of tremendous battles waged with much tumult but little bloodshed. To the uninitiated it appeared as if these young men had lost their wits; for no matter how warm it was, there they were, tearing about in the maddest manner, jackets off, sleeves rolled up, queer caps flung on anyway, all batting shabby leather balls and catching the same as if their lives depended on it. Every one talking in his gruffest tone, bawling at the top of his voice, squabbling over every point of the game, and seeming to enjoy himself immensely in spite of the heat, dust, uproar, and imminent danger of getting eyes or teeth knocked out.

Thorny was an excellent player, but not being strong enough to show his prowess, he made Ben his proxy, and, sitting on the fence, acted as umpire to his heart's content. Ben was a promising pupil and made rapid progress, for eye, foot, and hand had been so well trained that they did him good service now, and Brown was considered a first-rate "catcher."

Sancho distinguished himself by his skill in hunting up stray balls, and guarding jackets when not needed, with the air of one of the Old Guard on duty at the tomb of Napoleon. Bab also longed to join in the fun, which suited her better than "stupid picnics" or "fussing over dolls;" but her heroes would not have her at any price, and she was obliged to content herself with sitting by Thorny, and watching with breathless interest the varying fortunes of "our side."

A grand match was planned for the Fourth of July; but when the club met, things were found to be unpropitious. Thorny had gone out of town with his sister to pass the day, two of the best players did not appear, and the others were somewhat exhausted by the festivities, which began at sunrise for them. So they lay about on the grass in the shade of the big elm, languidly discussing their various wrongs and disappointments.

"It's the meanest Fourth I ever saw. Can't have no crackers, because somebody's horse got scared last year," growled Sam Kitteridge, bitterly resenting the stern edict which forbade free-born citizens to burn as much gunpowder as they liked on that glorious day.

"Last year Jimmy got his arm blown off when they fired the old cannon. Didn't we have a lively time going for the doctors and getting him home?" asked another boy, looking as if he felt defrauded of the most interesting part of the anniversary, because no accident had occurred.



“Ain’t going to be fire-works either, unless somebody’s barn burns up. Don’t I just wish there would,” gloomily responded another youth who had so rashly indulged in pyrotechnics on a former occasion that a neighbor’s cow had been roasted whole.

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"I wouldn't give two cents for such a slow old place as this. Why, last Fourth at this time, I was rumbling through Boston streets up top of our big car, all in my best toggery. Hot as pepper, but good fun looking in at the upper windows and hearing the women scream when the old thing waggled round and I made believe I was going to tumble off," said Ben, leaning on his bat with the air of a man who had seen the world and felt some natural regret at descending from so lofty a sphere.

"Catch me cutting away if I had such a chance as that!" answered Sam, trying to balance *his* bat on his chin and getting a smart rap across the nose as he failed to perform the feat.

"Much you know about it, old chap. It's hard work, I can tell you, and that wouldn't suit such a lazy bones. Then you are too big to begin, though you might do for a fat boy if Smithers wanted one," said Ben, surveying the stout youth with calm contempt.

"Let's go in swimming, not loaf round here, if we can't play," proposed a red and shiny boy, panting for a game of leap-frog in Sandy pond.

"May as well; don't see much else to do," sighed Sam, rising like a young elephant.

The others were about to follow, when a shrill "Hi, hi, boys, hold on!" made them turn about to behold Billy Barton tearing down the street like a runaway colt, waving a long strip of paper as he ran.

"Now, then, what's the matter?" demanded Ben, as the other came up grinning and puffing, but full of great news.

"Look here, read it! I'm going; come along, the whole of you," panted Billy, putting the paper into Sam's hand, and surveying the crowd with a face as beaming as a full moon.

"Look out for the big show," read Sam. "Van Amburgh & Co.'s New Great Golden Menagerie, Circus and Colosseum, will exhibit at Berryville, July 4th, at 1 and 7 precisely. Admission 50 cents, children half-price. Don't forget day and date. H. Frost, Manager."

While Sam read, the other boys had been gloating over the enticing pictures which covered the bill. There was the golden car, filled with noble beings in helmets, all playing on immense trumpets; the twenty-four prancing steeds with manes, tails, and feathered heads tossing in the breeze; the clowns, the tumblers, the strong men, and the riders flying about in the air as if the laws of gravitation no longer existed. But, best of all, was the grand conglomeration of animals where the giraffe appears to stand on the elephant's back, the zebra to be jumping over the seal, the hippopotamus to be lunging off a couple of crocodiles, and lions and tigers to be raining down in all

directions with their mouths wide open and their tails as stiff as that of the famous Northumberland House lion.

“Cricky! wouldn’t I like to see that,” said little Cyrus Fay, devoutly hoping that the cage, in which this pleasing spectacle took place, was a very strong one.

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"You never would, it's only a picture! That, now, is something like," and Ben, who had pricked up his ears at the word "circus," laid his finger on a smaller cut of a man hanging by the back of his neck with a child in each hand, two men suspended from his feet, and the third swinging forward to alight on his head.

"I'm going," said Sam, with calm decision, for this superb array of unknown pleasures fired his soul and made him forget his weight.

"How will you fix it?" asked Ben, fingering the bill with a nervous thrill all through his wiry limbs, just as he used to feel it when his father caught him up to dash into the ring.

"Foot it with Billy. It's only four miles, and we've got lots of time, so we can take it easy. Mother wont care, if I send word by Cy," answered Sam, producing half a dollar, as if such magnificent sums were no strangers to his pocket.

"Come on, Brown; you'll be a first-rate fellow to show us round, as you know all the dodges," said Billy, anxious to get his money's worth.

"Well, I don't know," began Ben, longing to go, but afraid Mrs. Moss would say "No!" if he asked leave.

"He's afraid," sneered the red-faced boy, who felt bitterly toward all mankind at that instant, because he knew there was no hope of *his* going.

"Say that again, and I'll knock your head off," and Ben faced round with a gesture which caused the other to skip out of reach precipitately.

"Hasn't got any money, more likely," observed a shabby youth, whose pockets never had anything in them but a pair of dirty hands.

Ben calmly produced a dollar bill and waved it defiantly before this doubter, observing with dignity:

"I've got money enough to treat the whole crowd, if I choose to, which I *don't*."

"Then come along and have a jolly time with Sam and me. We can buy some dinner and get a ride home, as like as not," said the amiable Billy, with a slap on the shoulder, and a cordial grin which made it impossible for Ben to resist.

"What are you stopping for?" demanded Sam, ready to be off, that they might "take it easy."

"Don't know what to do with Sancho. He'll get lost or stolen if I take him, and it's too far to carry him home if you are in a hurry," began Ben, persuading himself that this was the true reason for his delay.

“Let Cy take him back. He’ll do it for a cent; wont you, Cy?” proposed Billy, smoothing away all objections, for he liked Ben, and saw that he wanted to go.

“No, I wont; I *don’t* like him. He winks at me, and growls when I touch him,” muttered naughty Cy, remembering how much reason poor Sanch had to distrust his tormentor.

“There’s Bab; she’ll do it. Come here, sissy; Ben wants you,” called Sam, beckoning to a small figure just perching on the fence.

Down it jumped and came fluttering up, much elated at being summoned by the captain of the sacred nine.

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"I want you to take Sanch home, and tell your mother I'm going to walk, and may be wont be back till sundown. Miss Celia said I might do what I pleased, all day. You remember, now."

Ben spoke without looking up, and affected to be very busy buckling a strap into Sanch's collar, for the two were so seldom parted that the dog always rebelled. It was a mistake on Ben's part, for while his eyes were on his work, Bab's were devouring the bill, which Sam still held, and her suspicions were aroused by the boys' faces.

"Where are you going? Ma will want to know," she said, as curious as a magpie all at once.

"Never you mind; girls can't know everything. You just catch hold of this and run along home. Lock Sanch up for an hour, and tell your mother I'm all right," answered Ben, bound to assert his manly supremacy before his mates.

"He's going to the circus," whispered Fay, hoping to make mischief.

"Circus! Oh, Ben, *do* take me!" cried Bab, falling into a state of great excitement at the mere thought of such delight.

"You couldn't walk four miles," began Ben.

"Yes, I could, as easy as not."

"You haven't got any money."

"You have; I saw you showing your dollar, and you could pay for me, and Ma would pay it back."

"Can't wait for you to get ready."

"I'll go as I am. I don't care if it is my old hat," and Bab jerked it on to her head.

"Your mother wouldn't like it."

"She wont like your going, either."

"She isn't my missis now. Miss Celia wouldn't care, and I'm going, anyway."

"Do, do take me, Ben! I'll be just as good as ever was, and I'll take care of Sanch all the way," pleaded Bab, clasping her hands and looking round for some sign of relenting in the faces of the boys.

“Don’t you bother; we don’t want any girls tagging after us,” said Sam, walking off to escape the annoyance.

“I’ll bring you a roll of chickerberry lozengers, if you wont tease,” whispered kind-hearted Billy, with a consoling pat on the crown of the shabby straw hat.

“When the circus comes here you shall go, certain sure, and Betty too,” said Ben, feeling mean while he proposed what he knew was a hollow mockery.

“They never do come to such little towns; you said so, and I think you are very cross, and I wont take care of Sanch, so, now!” cried Bab getting into a passion, yet ready to cry, she was so disappointed.

“I suppose it wouldn’t do—” hinted Billy, with a look from Ben to the little girl, who stood winking hard to keep the tears back.

“Of course it wouldn’t. I’d like to see *her* walking eight miles. I don’t mind paying for her; it’s getting her there and back. Girls are such a bother when you want to knock round. No, Bab, you *can’t* go. Travel right home and don’t make a fuss. Come along, boys; it’s most eleven, and we don’t want to walk fast.”

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Ben spoke very decidedly, and, taking Billy's arm, away they went, leaving poor Bab and Sanch to watch them out of sight, one sobbing, the other whining dismally.

Somehow those two figures seemed to go before Ben all along the pleasant road, and half spoilt his fun, for though he laughed and talked, cut canes, and seemed as merry as a grig, he could not help feeling that he ought to have asked leave to go, and been kinder to Bab.

"Perhaps Mrs. Moss would have planned somehow so we could *all* go, if I'd told her. I'd like to show her round, and she's been real good to me. No use now. I'll take the girls a lot of candy and make it all right."

He tried to settle it in that way and trudged gayly on, hoping Sancho wouldn't feel hurt at being left, wondering if any of "Smither's lot" would be round, and planning to do the honors handsomely to the boys.

It was very warm, and just outside of the town they passed by a wayside watering-trough to wash their dusty faces and cool off before plunging into the excitements of the afternoon. As they stood refreshing themselves, a baker's cart came jingling by, and Sam proposed a hasty lunch while they rested. A supply of gingerbread was soon bought, and, climbing the green bank above, they lay on the grass under a wild cherry-tree, munching luxuriously while they feasted their eyes at the same time on the splendors awaiting them, for the great tent, with all its flags flying, was visible from the hill.

[Illustration: "THERE STOOD BAB WAITING FOR SANCHE TO LAP HIS FILL OUT OF THE OVERFLOWING TROUGH."]

"We'll cut across those fields,—it's shorter than going by the road,—and then we can look round outside till it's time to go in. I want to have a good go at everything, especially the lions," said Sam, beginning on his last cookie.

"I heard 'em roar just now;" and Billy stood up to gaze with big eyes at the flapping canvas which hid the king of beasts from his longing sight.

"That was a cow mooing. Don't you be a donkey, Bill. When you hear a real roar, you'll shake in your boots," said Ben, holding up his handkerchief to dry after it had done double duty as towel and napkin.

"I wish you'd hurry up, Sam. Folks are going in now. I see 'em;" and Billy pranced with impatience for this was his first circus, and he firmly believed that he was going to behold all that the pictures promised.

"Hold on a minute while I get one more drink. Buns are dry fodder," said Sam, rolling over to the edge of the bank and preparing to descend with as little trouble as possible.

He nearly went down head first, however, for, as he looked before he leaped, he beheld a sight which caused him to stare with all his might for an instant, then turn and beckon, saying in an eager whisper: "Look here, boys—quick!"

Ben and Billy peered over, and both suppressed an astonished "Hullo!" for there stood Bab waiting for Sancho to lap his fill out of the overflowing trough.

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Such a shabby, tired-looking couple as they were! Bab with a face as red as a lobster and streaked with tears, shoes white with dust, play-frock torn at the gathers, something bundled up in her apron, and one shoe down at the heel as if it hurt her. Sancho lapped eagerly, with his eyes shut; all his ruffles were gray with dust, and his tail hung wearily down, the tassel at half-mast, as if in mourning for the master whom he had come to find. Bab still held the strap, intent on keeping her charge safe though she lost herself; but her courage seemed to be giving out, as she looked anxiously up and down the road, seeing no sign of the three familiar figures she had been following as steadily as a little Indian on the war-trail.

“Oh, Sanch, what *shall* I do if they don’t come along? We must have gone by them somewhere, for I don’t see any one that way, and there isn’t any other road to the circus, seems to me.”

Bab spoke as if the dog could understand and answer, and Sancho looked as if he did both, for he stopped drinking, pricked up his ears, and, fixing his sharp eyes on the grass above him, gave a suspicious bark.

“It’s only squirrels; don’t mind, but come along and be good, for I’m so tired I don’t know what to do!” sighed Bab, trying to pull him after her as she trudged on, bound to see the outside of that wonderful tent, even if she never got in.

But Sancho had heard a soft chirrup, and with a sudden bound twitched the strap away, sprang up the bank, and landed directly on Ben’s back as he lay peeping over. A peal of laughter greeted him, and having got the better of his master in more ways than one, he made the most of the advantage by playfully worrying him as he kept him down, licking his face in spite of his struggles, burrowing in his neck with a ticklish nose, snapping at his buttons, and yelping joyfully, as if it was the best joke in the world to play hide-and-seek for four long miles.

Before Ben could quiet him, Bab came climbing up the bank with such a funny mixture of fear, fatigue, determination, and relief in her dirty little face that the boys could not look awful if they tried.

“How dared you come after us, miss?” demanded Sam, as she looked calmly about her and took a seat before she was asked.

“Sanch *would* come after Ben; I couldn’t make him go home, so I had to hold on till he was safe here, else he’d be lost, and then Ben would feel bad.”

The cleverness of that excuse tickled the boys immensely, and Sam tried again, while Ben was getting the dog down and sitting on him.

“Now you expect to go to the circus, I suppose.”



“Course I do. Ben said he didn’t mind paying if I could get there without bothering him, and I have, and I’ll go home alone. I aint afraid. Sanch will take care of me, if you wont,” answered Bab, stoutly.

“What do you suppose your mother will say to you?” asked Ben, feeling much reproached by her last words.

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"I guess she'll say you led me into mischief," and the sharp child nodded as if she defied him to deny the truth of that.

"You'll catch it when you get home, Ben, so you'd better have a good time while you can," advised Sam, thinking Bab great fun, since none of the blame of her pranks would fall on him.

"What would you have done if you *hadn't* found us?" asked Billy, forgetting his impatience in his admiration for this plucky young lady.

"I'd have gone on and seen the circus, and then I'd have gone home again and told Betty all about it," was the prompt answer.

"But you haven't any money."

"Oh, I'd ask somebody to pay for me. I'm so little, it wouldn't be much."

"Nobody would do it, so you'd have to stay outside, you see."

"No, I wouldn't. I thought of that and planned how I'd fix it if I didn't find Ben. I'd make Sanch do his tricks and get a quarter that way, so now," answered Bab, undaunted by any obstacle.

"I do believe she would! You are a smart child, Bab, and if I had enough I'd take you in myself," said Billy, heartily; for, having sisters of his own, he kept a soft place in his heart for girls, especially enterprising ones.

"I'll take care of her. It was very naughty to come, Bab, but so long as you did, you needn't worry about anything. I'll see to you, and you shall have a real good time," said Ben, accepting his responsibilities without a murmur, and bound to do the handsome thing by his persistent friend.

"I thought you would," and Bab folded her arms as if she had nothing further to do but enjoy herself.

"Are you hungry?" asked Billy, fishing out several fragments of gingerbread.

"Starving!" and Bab ate them with such a relish that Sam added a small contribution, and Ben caught some water for her in his hand where the little spring bubbled up beside a stone.

"Now, you go and wash your face and spat down your hair, and put your hat on straight, and then we'll go," commanded Ben, giving Sanch a roll on the grass to clean him.

Bab scrubbed her face till it shone, and pulling down her apron to wipe it, scattered a load of treasures collected in her walk. Some of the dead flowers, bits of moss and green twigs fell near Ben, and one attracted his attention,—a spray of broad, smooth leaves, with a bunch of whitish berries on it.

“Where did you get that?” he asked, poking it with his foot.

“In a swampy place, coming along. Sanch saw something down there, and I went with him 'cause I thought may be it was a musk-rat and you'd like one if we could get him.”

“Was it?” asked the boys all at once and with intense interest.

“No, only a snake, and I don't care for snakes. I picked some of that, it was so green and pretty. Thorny likes queer leaves and berries, you know,” answered Bab, “spatting” down her rough locks.



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"Well, he won't like that, nor you either; it's poisonous, and I shouldn't wonder if you'd got poisoned, Bab. Don't touch it; swamp-sumach is horrid stuff, Miss Celia said so," and Ben looked anxiously at Bab, who felt her chubby face all over and examined her dingy hands with a solemn air, asking eagerly:

"Will it break out on me 'fore I get to the circus?"

"Not for a day or so, I guess; but it's bad when it does come."

"I don't care, if I see the animals first. Come quick and never mind the old weeds and things," said Bab, much relieved, for present bliss was all she had room for now in her happy little heart.

(To be continued.)

[Illustration: THE LITTLE ITALIAN FLOWER-MERCHANT.]

FATHER CHIRP.

BY S.C. STONE.

Three little chirping crickets
Came, one night, to our door;
 Tried all their keys,
 Then tried their knees.
Till they could try no more.

The biggest of the crickets
Scratched hard his shiny head;
 And what to do,
 And what to do,
He didn't know, he said.

[Illustration: "THEN TRIED THEIR KNEES."]

The door, it would not open
To comers so belated;
 Nobody heard,
 Nobody stirred,
As still the crickets waited.

And then, as on a sudden,
By some new impulse bent,
 Their voices three



'Rose shrill and free,
To give their feelings vent!

[Illustration: "HIGH UPON THEIR TINY LEGS."]

Then high upon their tiny legs
They stretched, to peep and peer;
While right behind
The window-blind
I crouched, to see and hear.

Louder the crickets chirped and chirped,
And, as I heard it then,
The tale they sung
In crickets' tongue
I render with my pen.

The tallest one was Father Chirp;
Here was his early home;
Here lived his mother
And dearest brother,
And hither had he come;

And with him brought his two brave sons,
Both skipping at his side,
To show to her,
Their grandmother,
With true paternal pride.

"There used to be," sang Father Chirp,
"A little child about;
And that door there
Was free as air
For going in or out.

"But days have passed since I lived here,—
It's like the folks are dead!
My children, oh!
My children, oh!
I'm going to weep," he said.

And then into his handkerchief
His little head went bobbing,
And his two heirs
They pulled out theirs,
And all three fell to sobbing.

[Illustration: "ALL THREE FELL TO SOBBING."]



I lost no time in opening wide
The door that had been fast;
And I could see
Those crickets three
Like dusky ghosts flit past.

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And when I, listening, heard a chirp,
Another, and another,
I knew as well
As words could tell
They'd found the old grandmother!

WHERE MONEY IS MADE.

BY M.W.

"Ho!" I hear some New York boys say; "no need to tell us that. Everybody knows that New York is the place to make money. Look at the men in Wall street."

Indeed! And what will you say if I tell you that there is not a dollar of money made in New York; nor in Chicago, neither; though I know my young friends who live there are eager to speak up and claim the honor. There are but three cities in all the Union where money is actually made; that is, where metals are coined. The principal mint of the United States is in Philadelphia. Here are made all the copper and nickel coins—one, two and five cent pieces—and a large part of the gold and silver coins used in the country. There are also branch mints at San Francisco and Carson City. And at these places gold and silver coins of every value are coined in great quantities.

Those of you who have been in Philadelphia will remember, on the north side of Chestnut street, near Broad, a Grecian building of white marble, somewhat gray from age, with a tall chimney rising from the center, and the United States flag flying from the roof. This is the mint. Let us climb the long flight of steps and enter the building. On the door is a placard: "Visitors admitted from 9 to 12." The door opens into a circular entrance hall, with seats around the wall. In a moment a polite usher, who has grown gray in the service of the institution, comes to show us all that visitors are allowed to see. He leads us through a hall into an open court-yard in the middle of the building. On the left is the weighing-room; and if you owned a gold mine, like the boy I read of in a late number of ST. NICHOLAS, it is to this room you would bring your gold to be weighed, so that you might know how much money the mint must pay you for it. All the gold and silver received in the mint is weighed in this room. Sometimes the gold is brought in the form of fine dust; sometimes in the shape of grains from the size of a pin's head to that of a pea; sometimes in plates and bars, and sometimes it is old jewelry and table service. Visitors are not allowed to enter the weighing-room; but, by looking through the window you can see the scales, large and small, which are balanced with wonderful delicacy, and the vault on the other side, where the treasure is kept.

[Illustration: THE MINT AT PHILADELPHIA.]

“When the gold has been weighed,” says our guide, “it is locked up in iron boxes, and carried to the melting-room, where it is melted and poured into molds.”

A small piece is then cut off, and its fineness ascertained by a long and delicate process called assaying. This decides the value of the lot. The depositor is then paid, and the metal is handed over to the melter and refiner, to be entirely freed from its impurities and made fit for coinage.

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And a hard time it has of it, to be sure. Nothing but pure gold and silver could ever stand such treatment. It is melted again, dissolved in nitric acid, squeezed under immense pressure, baked in a hot cellar, and finally carried to this dingy-looking room, at the left of the court-yard, where we have stood all this time. The metal is perfectly pure now, but before the final melting one-tenth of its weight in copper is added to it, to make it hard enough to bear the rough usage which it will meet with in traveling about the world.

The room would be dark but for the fiery glow of the furnaces which line one end of the place. On these are a number of small pots, filled with red-hot liquid metal; and while we look, a workman lifts one after another, with a pair of long tongs, and pours the glowing gold in streams into narrow iron molds.

"This piece of gold," says the usher, taking up one of the yellow bars from a cold mold, "is called an ingot, and is worth about 1,200 dollars."

One of the party asks why one end of the ingot is shaped like a wedge.

"That it may enter easily between the rollers," is the reply. "You will see the rollers when we go upstairs."

The guide calls our attention to the curious false floor, made of iron in a honey-comb pattern, and divided into small sections so that it can be readily taken up to save the dust. He tells us that the sweepings of these rooms have sometimes proved to be worth fifty thousand dollars in a single year. The particles which adhere to the workmen's clothing are also carefully saved, and there is an arrangement in the chimney for arresting any light-minded atoms that may try to pass off in the smoke.

We would gladly remain longer, peering in at the glowing fires and the swarthy figures of the workmen, but our guide is already half-way across the court, and we reluctantly follow, stepping aside to make room for a workman with his burden of silver bars, which he is carrying to the next process.

This takes place in the rolling-room, where the short, thick ingots are pressed between two steel rollers, again and again, till they are rolled down into long thin ribbons of metal about the thickness of a coin.

[Illustration: THE ROLLERS.]

The next step in the work is to draw the metal ribbons through a "draw-plate," to bring them down to an exactly uniform thickness. This pulling through a narrow slit in a steel plate hardens the metal, and again and again it has to be put in the fire and brought to a light red to make it soft and pliable. This drawing and annealing brings each band of metal to just the right thickness and condition, and we may go on and see the cutting-

presses that stamp out the round pieces of metal called “planchets.” A workman takes a ribbon of gold and inserts the end in the immense jaws of the press, and they bite, bite and bite, and the round bits of gold drop in a shower into a box below.

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[Illustration: POURING THE MELTED GOLD INTO THE MOLDS.]

"This press," says the usher, "is cutting double-eagles; and in the single moment, by the watch, that we have been looking at it, it has cut forty-five hundred dollars' worth. The same number of cuts would make only two dollars and twenty cents if made in copper."

The machine goes on hastily biting out the round planchets to the end of the ribbon, and then the guide holds up the long strip full of holes, much as you have seen the dough after the cook has cut out her ginger-snaps. These perforated bars go back to the furnace to be melted over.

"The planchets," says the guide, "after being annealed in those furnaces which you see at the rear of the room, are taken upstairs and most carefully weighed."

None but women are employed in the weighing-room, and so delicate are the scales that they will move with the weight of a hair. If a planchet is found too light, it is thrown aside to be remelted; if only slightly over the proper weight, a tiny particle is filed off from the edge; but if the weight is much in excess, it is to go back to the furnace. Nothing but perfection passes here, you see.

Now, one final washing in acid, then in water, and these much-enduring bits of metal are admitted to the coining-room, there to receive the stamp which testifies to their worth.

In the coining-room the planchets are first given to the milling-machine. They are laid down flat between two steel rings, and as the rings move one draws nearer to the other, and the planchets are squeezed and crowded on every side, and finding no escape they turn up about the edges and come out at the end of the sorry little journey with a rim raised around the edges. Beyond the milling-machines stand the ten coining-presses. These presses are attended by women. Watch this one near us. At her right hand is a box containing silver planchets, which are to be coined into fifty-cent pieces. On that round "die," which you see in the center of the machine, are engraved the letters and figures which are to appear on the back of the half-dollar. Directly above the die, on the end of a rod, which works up and down with the most exquisite accuracy, is the sunken impression of the face.

[Illustration: THE CUTTING PRESS.]

The woman gathers up a handful of the planchets and drops them one at a time into a brass tube, which they just fit. They slip down in the tube, and as the lowest planchet slides from under the tube, two small steel arms spring out and grasp it and lay it on the die. At the same instant, the upper die descends with a quick thump, and the silver counter, stamped in a twinkling on both sides, falls into a box below. In an instant, another takes its place, and thus they go on dropping under the swiftly moving rod, and turning into coins in a flash.

[Illustration: “THE LONG STRIP FULL OF HOLES.”]

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Take up one of the coins and study it carefully. Every mark, letter, number and bit of decoration is deeply cut in the metal. Even the “reeding,” or roughened edge, is stamped sharply, and we can tell just what the coin is by feeling of it with the finger, even in the dark. This last step finishes the work. The money is made, coined and ready for exchange in the shop and market. Sometimes you may have noticed that coins, like the nickel five-cent and the silver twenty-cent piece, have smooth edges. In these coins the reeding is omitted. The dies in the presses have only the letters and figures of the face and back of the coin, and when the planchet is caught between them the metal is squeezed up against the smooth sides of the die, and none of the little reeding marks on the edge are formed.

“And now,” says our kind conductor, “you have seen all the process of making money. This next room is the cabinet, and here you can remain as long as you please.”

But I have not time to tell you half the curious and instructive things you may see in this apartment. There are coins of all nations and ages. Egyptian, Greek, and Roman, bearing effigies of forgotten kings and emperors; curious oblong coins, of very fine workmanship, from China and Japan, and others of a square shape with a hole in the middle, that they may be strung on a string, instead of putting them into a purse. Smallest of all, so small that you might overlook it, if your attention was not especially drawn to it, is the “widow’s mite.” Perhaps—who knows?—this may be the very coin which, dropped into the trumpet-shaped mouth of the treasury, called forth the commendation of the Savior upon the poor giver.

In other cases are the coins of England, France, Germany and other modern nations; some more beautiful than our own, others far inferior to them in design and workmanship. The cases around the wall are filled with beautiful minerals, and, in particular, many fine specimens of gold in its native state.

For so long a time have we been using paper money in this country that it seemed almost useless to have mints to make coins, when ordinary people never saw any of them, excepting those made of copper or nickel.

But our merchants, and others dealing with foreign countries, needed gold, for our paper money could not be sent to Europe, or anywhere out of the United States, to pay for goods; and so gold eagles and double-eagles and half-eagles and quarter-eagles and gold dollars were coined to be sent away, or to be used here to pay duties on imports. Silver coins also were made, to be used in foreign countries, and among these was the trade-dollar, which many of you may have seen.

[Illustration: THE COINING-PRESS.]

When silver small-change lately came into use again, there were many boys and girls who had never seen a quarter or a half dollar. When they spoke of fifty or twenty-five

cents, they meant a piece of paper currency, printed like a bank-note, of no value in itself, but only a promise to pay.

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But, since Congress has decided that we are to have not only silver small-change, but also silver dollars, and now that these have become again a part of the legal currency of the country; all three of our mints have gone to work and are coining dollars as fast as they can, for millions of them will be required, if we are all to use them.

I hope that you and I, dear reader, may be able to get as many of these new dollars as we actually shall need, though perhaps none of us may ever have as many of them, or of any other kind of money, as we think we should like to have.

A SONG OF SPRING.

BY CAROLINE A. MASON.

O the sweet spring days when the grasses grow.
And the violets blow,
And the lads and the lassies a-maying go!

When the mosses cling in their velvet sheen,
Like a fringe of green,
To the rocks that o'er the deep pools lean;

When the brooks wake up with a merry leap
From their winter sleep,
And the frogs in the meadows begin to peep;

When the robin sings, thro' the long bright hours,
Of his southern bowers,
With a dream in his heart of the coming flowers;

When the earth is full of delicious smells
From the ferny dells,
And the scent of the breeze quite plainly tells

He has been with the apple-blooms! They fly
From his kisses sly
Like feathery snow-flakes scurrying by!

O the saucy pranks of the madcap breeze
In the blossoming trees!
O the sounds that thrill, and the sights that please,

And the nameless joys that the May days bring
On their glad, glad wing!
O the dear delights of the sweet, sweet spring!

SAM'S BIRTHDAY.

BY IRWIN RUSSELL.

On the nineteenth day of last month, Sam could and would have testified, from information and belief, that he was “eight yeahs ol’, gwine on nine;” but on the morning of the twentieth, that interesting infant of color was informed by his mother, as soon as he awoke, that he was “nine yeahs ol’, gwine on ten.” When Aunt Phillis imparted this surprising intelligence to her son, he was greatly amazed and confounded; and he immediately began to speculate as to what extraordinary combination of circumstances could have so suddenly wrought this remarkable change.

“Hoo-ee!” he cried, “whut a pow’ful while I mus’ ha’ slep’! Or else I grows wuss an’ dat ar Jonus’s gourd you tol’ me ’bout, whut wuz only a *teenchy* leetle simblin at night, and got big as de hen-house afore mornin’—early sun-up. Hm! hey! look heah, mammy, is I skipped any Christmusses?”

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"No, chile," replied his mother; "you aint skipped nuffin. Dis is yo' buff-day: de 'fects ob which is, dat it's des so many yeahs sence you wuz fust borned. I don't know how 't 'll be, Sam,—folks is sim'lar to de cocoa-grass, whut grows up mighty peart, tell 'long come somebody wid a hoe to slosh it down,—but ef you libs long enough, an' nuffin happens, you'll keep on habbin a buff-day ebry yeah wunst a yeah till you dies. An' ebry time you has one, son, you'll be one yeah older."

"Fine way to git gray-headed," said Sam.

At this moment a mighty crash resounded from the kitchen, down-stairs, and Aunt Phillis descended the steps with great precipitation. Then Sam heard her shouting, angrily:

"You, Bose! Oh, you *bettah* git, you mean ole no-'count rascal! I do 'spise a houn'-dog!"

Sam went on with his toilet, musing, the while, upon the probability of his ever getting to be as old as Uncle "Afrikin Tommy," who was the patriarch of the plantation, and popularly supposed to be "cluss onto" two hundred years of age; and who was wont to aver that when *he* arrived in that part of the country, when he was a boy, the squirrels all had two tails apiece, and the Mississippi River was such a small stream that people bridged it, on occasion, with a fence-rail. Thus meditating upon the glorious possibilities of his future, Sam got ready for breakfast, and went down. It was not until he had absorbed an enormous quantity of fried pickled-pork and hot corn-cakes, and finally with reluctance ceased to eat, that his mother told him what had caused the noise a little while before,—how old Bose, the fox-hound, had with felonious intent come into the kitchen, and surreptitiously "supped up" the chicken-soup that had been prepared for Sam's birthday breakfast; and further, how the said delinquent had added insult to injury, by contemptuously smashing the bowl that he had emptied.

"I alluz did 'low," exclaimed Sam, in justifiable wrath, "as dat 'ar ole houn' Bose wuz de triflin'est meanest dog in de whole State ob Claiborne County!"

Sam, however, was too true a philosopher to cry long over spilt milk—or soup. He reflected that the breakfast he had just taken would prevent his eating any soup, even if he had it. "I isn't injy-rubber," said he to himself, with which beautiful and happy thought his frown was superseded by a smile, the smile developed into his normal grin, and he began to chant an appropriate stanza from one of his favorite lyrics:

"O-o-o-old Uncle John!
A-a-a-aunt Sally Goodin!
When you got enough corn-bread
It's des as good as puddin'."

The excellent Aunt Phillis was much affected by this saint-like conduct on the part of her son. She sighed; fearing that the boy was too good to live.

“Nemmind, Sam,” said she; “you needn’t tote no wood to-day, or fetch no water, or do nuffin. Go down to de quarters, an’ git Pumble to play wid you.”

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Pumble was a boy who in age and tastes corresponded closely with Sam, as he did in complexion. His real name, at full length, was Pumblechook,—he having been so christened at the instance of Mahs'r George, in honor of the immortal corn-and-seedsman. Off went Sam in search of this boy; and he found him at the back of the maternal mansion splitting up pine-knots for kindlings. Sam approached him with a very slow, dignified step, and a look of commiseration.

"Hey, nigger!" said Sam, "dat's all you fit for, is to work. Why don't you be a gemman like me, whut aint a-gwine to do a lick o' work dis whole day?"

"Done runned away, is you?" answered Pumble. "Well, I'll come 'round dis ebenin, when de ole ooman gibs you a dose ob hickory-tea."

"Dat'll do, boy;" said Sam. "Let you know dis is my buff-day, an' I wont work for *nobody*, on *my* buff-day. Go ax yo' mammy kin you come up an' play wid me; tell her *my* mammy sont word for you to come."

Pumble dropped the hatchet, stared ecstatically, and ran in to obtain the desired permission. It was granted. Then this dialogue occurred:

"Be a good chile!"

"Yes'm."

"Don't forgit yo' manners!"

"Nome."

"Member you's *my* son!"

"Yes'm."

"Don't you git into no mischuf!"

"Nome."

"Ef you dose, I'll w'ar you out, sah! Now, go 'long!"

The boys trotted merrily away together. But they had not gone fifty rods before they heard Pumble's mother calling him. They stopped to listen.

"*Take—keer—ob yo'—clo'es!*" she shouted, and then went back into her house.

Under a great pecan-tree, on the lawn before the “big house,” Sam and Pumble sat down to consider and consult, or, as they expressed it, “to study up whut us gwine to do.”

“Shill I tell a story?” asked Pumble.

“Does you know a good one?” inquired Sam.

“Dis story’s gwine to be a new one,” said Pumble “beakase I’ll make it up as I go ’long.”

“Tell ahead,” said Sam.

“Wunst apon a time—” began Pumble.

“What time?” interrupted Sam.

“Shut up! Wunst upon a time. Dey wuz a man. An’ dis heah man lighted up he pipe, an’ started out on de big road. An’ he went walkin’ along. Right stret along. An’ walkin’ along, an’ walkin’ along, *an’* walkin’ along. An’ *walkin’* along. An’ walkin’ along, an’ walkin’ along—”

“Dat man wuz gwine all de way, wuzn’t he?” interjected the listener.

[Illustration: “THE BOYS TROTTED MERRILY AWAY TOGETHER.”]

“He hadn’t got *no* way, hardly, yit,” said Pumble, “but he kep’ a-walkin’ along. An’ walkin’ along, an’ walkin’ along, an’ walkin’ along, an’ walkin’ along, an’ walkin’ along, an’ walkin’ along, an’ walkin’ along—.”

“Stop dat walkin’ now,” said Sam, “and tell whut he done when he *got froo* walkin’.”

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"He come to de place he wuz a-gwine to," said Pumble.

"Did he, sho' enough?" exclaimed Sam. "I wuz kinder skeered he wudn't nebber git dar at all. Whut did he don nex'?"

"De nex' t'ing he done," said Pumble, impressively, "wuz to turn right 'round an' go back whar he come from. An' dat's all!"

As was his invariable custom when deeply impressed Sam began to sing, Pumble joining in:

"Jay-bird a-settin
On a swingin' limb,
He wink at Stephen,
Stephen wink at him;
Stephen pint de gun,
Pull on de trigger,
Off go de load—
An' down come de nigger!"

Greatly refreshed and invigorated by the chanting of this touching ballad, Sam and Pumble returned to the consideration of their day's programme. A great many amusements were proposed, discussed, and rejected in their respective turns. Almost any one of them would have been held entirely satisfactory on any ordinary occasion, but Sam thought none of them good enough for his birthday. He required something extraordinary.

"Kaint you think up nuffin else?" he asked his friend, after a long pause.

"I done thinked plumb to de back o' my head a'ready," replied Pumble.

"Den I tell you what," said Sam; "I heared my pappy say dis: when a pusson want to think *rale strong*, he mus' lay down on de flat ob his back and shet his eyes; an' den, putty soon, he kin think anything he wants to. Let's try it."

This plan was immediately experimented on. Pumble instantly succeeded in thinking; but he only thought that he wished he could have a "buff-day" of his own. Very soon afterward, he ceased to think at all. As for Sam, *his* thoughts were for some time very ordinary—of too commonplace a nature to be here recorded; but they gradually assumed such an odd and remarkable shape that they may fairly be described as a vision. It seemed to Sam that the whole country around, as far as one could see, was transformed into one great field, in a perfect state of cultivation. But the growing "crop" was not one of cotton, or corn, or cow-peas, or sorghum, or anything else that he had ever before seen in such a place. Coming up out of the ground were long rows of very

singular bushes, whereof the stalks were sticks of candy, and the leaves were blackberry pies, and over the whole field was falling a drenching rain of molasses. Sam, however, was most astonished at the curious fruit that the bushes bore. The twigs of some of them supported jew's-harps and tin trumpets; others bent beneath a wealth of fire-crackers and Roman candles; others, again, were weighted with his favorite sardines; and so on in endless variety. It is not at all surprising that the idea occurred to him that this crop ought to be "picked." He found himself becoming highly indignant at the negligence of the planter—whoever he might be—in leaving all these good things to spoil on the bushes;

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and he burned with a desire to have them properly gathered, and to assist in that work himself. Accordingly, he was just about to reach for a pie and a jew's-harp, by way of beginning, when he found that this was made impossible, by the fact of himself having been suddenly and incomprehensibly changed to a huge water-melon. Over him grew one of the largest bushes, from whose branches depended seven roasted 'possums. It was some consolation to look at them, and imagine how good they would taste if he only *could* taste them. Presently a little gingerbread bird flew down and began to peck at him, and say, "Git up, Sam! You Sam! Sam!"

He woke up, and found that the wonderful field had vanished, and that he was lying under the old pecan-tree instead of the 'possum-bush; and there was his mother shouting in his ear:

"Sam! don't you heah me, you lazy—*S-a-m!* *Git* up dis minnit an' go to de well for a bucket ob water, sah, foah I *whoop* you!"

Pumble sat up and stared.

"Why, mammy," said Sam, "you tol' me I needn't do no work, kase it's my buff-day."

"I's ben countin' it up ag'in," said Aunt Phillis, "an' foun' out where I made a mis-figger, de fust time, and tallied wrong altogedder. 'Cordin' to de *c'rect* calkilation, yo' buff-day was one day *las' month*. WALK arter dat water!"

WAIT

BY DORA READ GOODALE.

When the icy snow is deep,
Covering the frozen land,
Do the little flowerets peep
To be crushed by Winter's hand?

No, they wait for brighter days,
Wait for bees and butterflies;
Then their dainty heads they raise
To the sunny, sunny skies.

When the cruel north winds sigh,
When 'tis cold with wind and rain,
Do the birdies homeward fly
Only to go back again?



No, they wait for spring to come,
Wait for gladsome sun and showers;
Then they seek their northern home,
Seek its leafy, fragrant bowers.

Trustful as the birds and flowers,
Tho' our spring of joy be late,
Tho' we long for brighter hours,
We must ever learn to wait.

THE STORY OF MAY-DAY.

BY OLIVE THORNE.

Alas, children! the world is growing old. Not that dear old Mother Earth begins to show her six thousand (more or less) years, by stiff joints and clumsy movements, by clinging to her winter's rest and her warm coverlet of snow, forgetting to push up the blue-eyed violets in the spring, or neglecting to unpack the fresh green robes of the trees. No, indeed! The blessed mother spins around the sun as gayly as she did in her first year. She rises from her winter sleep fresh and young as ever. Every new violet is as exquisitely tinted, as sweetly scented, as its predecessors of a thousand years ago. Each new maple-leaf opens as delicate and lovely as the first one that ever came out of its tightly packed bud in the spring. Mother Nature never grows old.

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But the human race changes in the same way that each one of us does. The race had its childhood when men and women played the games that are now left to you youngsters. We can even see the change in our own day. Some of us—who are not grandmothers, either—can remember when youth of fourteen and fifteen played many games which, nowadays, an unfortunate damsel of six years—ruffled, embroidered, and white gowned, with delicate shoes, and hips in the vice-like grasp of a modern sash—feels are altogether too young for her. I dare say I shall live to see the once-beloved dolls abandoned to babies; and I fear the next generation will find a Latin grammar in the cradle instead of a rattle-box, and baby cutting his teeth scientifically, with a surgical instrument, instead of on a rubber ring.

Well, well! What *do* you suppose our great-grandchildren will do?

We must not let these old-fashioned customs be forgotten, and I want to tell you the story of May-day. A curious tale is told of the beginning of the May-day celebration, which is of more venerable age than perhaps you know. You shall hear it, and then you can believe as much as you choose, as all the rest of the world takes the liberty of doing; for although the grave old Roman writers put it in their books for truth, it is very much doubted by our modern wiseheads, because it is so unreasonable, and so inelegant (as our dainty critic says). As though the world was always reasonable, forsooth! or undoubted historical facts did not sometimes lack the important quality of elegance!

However it may be, here is the story: Many hundred years ago,—about two hundred before Christ, in fact,—there lived in Rome a beautiful woman named Flora. Had she lived in these luxurious days, she would have enjoyed another name or two; but in those simple times she was plain Flora.

Being human, this lady had a great dread of being forgotten when she had left the world. So she devised a plan to keep her memory green. She made a will giving her large fortune to the city of Rome, on condition that a festival in her memory should be celebrated every year.

When the will came before the grave and reverend Roman senators, it caused serious talk. To decline so rich a gift was not to be thought of; yet to accept the condition they did not like, for it was a bold request in Madam Flora, who had, to say the least, done nothing worthy of celebrating. At last, according to the old story-tellers, a way out of the difficulty was found, as there generally is; and the city fathers decided to accept the terms, and make Flora worthy of the honor by placing her among their minor deities, of which there were no less than thirty thousand. She took her place as Goddess of Flowers, with a celebration about the first of May, to be called Floralia, after her.

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This little story may be a fable; but now I shall tell you some facts. When the Romans came to Britain to live, many hundred years ago, they brought, of course, their own customs and festivals, among which was this one in memory of Flora. The heathen—our ancestors, you know—adopted them with delight, being in the childhood of their race. They became very popular; and when, some years later, a good priest, Gregory, came (from Rome also) to convert the natives, he wisely took advantage of their fondness for festivals, and not trying to suppress them, he simply altered them from heathen feasts to Christian games, by substituting the names of saints and martyrs for heathen gods and goddesses. Thus the Floralia became May-day celebration, and lost none of its popularity by the change. On the contrary, it was carried on all over England for ages, till its origin would have been lost but for a few pains-taking old writers, who “made notes” of everything.

The Floralia we care nothing for, but the May-day games have lasted nearly to our day, and some relics of it still survive in our young country. When you crown a May queen, or go with a May party, you are simply following a custom that the Romans began, and that our remote ancestors in England carried to such lengths, that not only ordinary people, but lords and ladies, and even king and queen, laid aside their state and went “a-Maying” early in the morning, to wash their faces in May dew, and bring home fresh boughs and flowers to deck the May-pole, which reared its flowery crown in every village.

Great were the doings around the May-pole, for which the tallest and straightest of trees was selected. It was drawn to its place by as many as thirty or forty yoke of oxen, their horns decorated with flowers, followed by all the lads and lassies of the village. The pole was wound or painted with gay colors, and trimmed with garlands, bright handkerchiefs, and ribbon streamers, from top to bottom.

With great ceremonies, and shouts of joy, it was lifted to its place by ropes and pulleys, and set up firmly in the ground; and then the people joined hands and danced around it. The whole day was given up to merriment, every one dressed in holiday clothes, doors and windows were adorned with green boughs and flowers, the bells rang, processions of people in grotesque dresses were arranged, and the famous Morris dancers performed.

In this dance the people assumed certain characters. There was always Robin Hood, the great hero of the rustics; Maid Marian, the queen, with gilt crown on her head; Friar Tuck; a fool, with his fool's-cap and bells; and, above all, the hobby-horse. This animal was made of pasteboard, painted a sort of pink color, and propelled by a man inside, who made him perform various tricks not common to horses, such as threading a needle and holding a ladle in his mouth for pennies.

The various characters labored to support their parts. The friar gave solemn advice, the queen imitated lady-like manners, the fool joked and made fun, and the horse pranced in true horsey style.

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This Morris dance is supposed to have been brought in early times from Spain, where the Moors danced it, and where it still survives as the “fandango.”

All this May-day merriment came to an end when our grim Puritan fathers had power in England. Dancing around the May-pole looked to them like heathen adoration of an idol. Parliament made a law against it, and all the May-poles in the island were laid in the dust. The common people had their turn, when, a few years later, under a new king, the prohibitory law was repealed and a new May-pole, the highest ever in England (one hundred and thirty-four feet), was set up in the Strand, London, with great pomp. But the English people were fast outgrowing the sport, and the customs have been dying out ever since. Now, a very few May-poles in obscure villages are all that can be found.

Though May-pole and Morris dancing were the most common, there were other curious customs in different parts of the kingdom. In one place, the Mayers went out very early to the woods, and gathering green boughs, decorated every door with one. A house containing a sweetheart had a branch of birch, the door of a scold was disgraced with alder, and a slatternly person had the mortification to find a branch of a nut-tree at hers, while the young people who overslept found their doors closed by a nail over the latch.

In other places, wreaths were made on hoops, with a gayly dressed doll in the middle of each, and carried about by girls, the little owners singing a ballad which had been sung since the time of Queen Bess,—and expecting a shower of pennies, of course.

In Dublin, the youths decorated a bush, four or five feet high, with candles, which they lighted and danced around till burnt out. They then lighted a huge bonfire, threw the bush on it, and continued their dance around that. In other parts of Ireland, the boys had a mischievous habit of running through the streets with bundles of nettles, with which they struck the face and hands of every one they met. The sting of nettle, perhaps you know, is a very uncomfortable pain. The same people are very superstitious, and they believed that the power of the Evil Eye was greater on the first of May than at any other time; and they insured a good supply of milk for the year by putting a green bough against the house, which is certainly an easy way. In old times, the Druids drove all the cattle through the fire, to keep them from diseases, and this custom still survives in parts of Ireland, where many a peasant who owns a cow and a bit of straw is careful to do the same.

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In the Scottish Highlands, in the eighteenth century, the boys had a curious custom. They would go to the moors outside of the town, make a round table in the sod, by cutting a trench around it, deep enough for them to sit down to their grassy table. On this table they would kindle a fire and cook a custard of eggs and milk, and knead a cake of oat-meal, which was toasted by the fire. After eating the custard, the cake was cut into as many parts as there were boys; one piece was made black with coal, and then all put into a cap. Each boy was in turn blindfolded, and made to take a piece, and the one who selected the black one was to be sacrificed to Baal, whose favor they wished to ask for their harvest. The victim in that day had only to leap through the fire; but there is little doubt that the whole thing was a survival from the days when human beings were really sacrificed.

In the island of Lewis, in the west of Scotland, there prevails a custom of sending a man very early on May-day to cross a certain river, believing that if a woman crossed it first the salmon would not come into the stream for a year.

May-day festivals were not confined to the British islands. They were found, with variations suited to the different races, all over Europe. In France, the day was consecrated to the Virgin, and young girls celebrated it by dressing the prettiest one in white, crowning, and decorating her with flowers, and throning her under a canopy of flowers and greens, built beside the road. There she sat in state, while her attendants begged of passers-by, for the "Lady of the May," money, which was used in a feast later in the day.

In Toulouse, there was an ancient custom of giving a prize of a golden violet for the best poem. This custom held its place for more than four centuries. May-poles also flourished in France, and had gilt pendants.

The Dutch May-pole was still different, being surrounded by trees stuck into flower-pots, and ornamented with gay-colored flags, and hoops with garlands and gilt balls hanging. Another sort had wooden dolls made to represent the figures of peasants, nailed against the pole by their hands and knees, as though climbing it. There were also figures of birds and people. In some parts of Germany it was the firm belief of the common people that certain ill-disposed beings met on a high mountain on May-day to dance and feast, with no good intentions to their human neighbors. Accordingly on the day before, every family was careful to have a thorn of a certain kind, which was stuck into the door as a protection.

[Illustration: AN OLD-TIME MAY-DAY IN "MERRIE ENGLAND."]

The Scandinavians, whose first of May is not very balmy, had of old a curious fight between Summer and Winter. Winter—or the man representing him—was dressed in skins, armed with fire-forks, and threw snow-balls and pieces of ice. Summer was dressed in green leaves and summer dress. They had a mock fight which was called

“Driving away Winter and welcoming Summer,” and in the Isle of Man, where Norwegians had rule for many years, this custom lingered until very lately.

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But, as the years went on, these merry games died out, and a few years ago May-day was in London simply the festival of chimney-sweeps and milk-maids, certainly a falling off from the times of King Henry VIII. The only traces of the old custom of going a-Maying were the garlands of the milk-maids and the Jack-in-the-green of the sweeps. The garland (so called) was made of silver plate, borrowed for the day, and fastened upon a sort of pyramid. Accompanying this droll garland were the maids themselves in gay dress, with ribbons and flowers, and attended by musicians who played for them to dance in the street. Sometimes a cow was dressed in festive array, with bouquets and ribbons on her horns, neck and tail, and over her back a net, stuck full of flowers. Thus highly ornamented, the meek creature was led through the streets.

The sweeps brought out the Jack-in-the-green, which was a tall cone made of green boughs, decorated with flowers, gay streamers and a flag, and carried by a man inside. Each of these structures was followed by a band of sweeps who assumed certain characters, the fashion of which had been handed down from the palmy times of May-day.

There were always a lord and lady who wore ridiculous imitations of fashionable dress, and made ludicrous attempts to imitate elegant manners. Mad Moll and her husband were another pair who flourished in tawdry, gay-colored rags, and tatters, he brandishing a sweep's broom and she a ladle. Jim Crow and a fancifully bedizened ballet-dancer in white muslin, often swelled the ranks, and the rest of the party rigged out in a profusion of gilt paper, flowers, tinsel and gewgaws, their faces and legs colored with brick-dust, made up a comical crowd. But even these mild remains of the great festival are almost entirely banished to the rural districts, and are almost extinct there.

Poor Flora! (if there ever was such a person) she has her wish (if that wish ever existed save in the imagination of the Romans); she is not forgotten; her story survives in musty books, though her personality be questioned; various marble statues bear her pretty name, and, after running this declining scale through the ages, she and her May-day are softened by time to a fragrant memory.

WILD GEESE.

BY CELIA THAXTER.

The wind blows, the sun shines, the birds sing loud,
The blue, blue sky is flecked with fleecy dappled cloud,
Over earth's rejoicing fields the children dance and sing,
And the frogs pipe in chorus, "It is spring! it is spring!"

The grass comes, the flower laughs where lately lay the snow,
O'er the breezy hill-top hoarsely calls the crow,



By the flowing river the alder catkins swing,
And the sweet song-sparrow cries, "Spring! it is spring!"

Hark, what a clamor goes winging through the sky!
Look, children! Listen to the sound so wild and high!
Like a peal of broken bells,—kling, klang, kling,—
Far and high the wild geese cry, "Spring! it is spring!"



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Bear the winter off with you, O wild geese dear!
Carry all the cold away, far away from here;
Chase the snow into the north, O strong of heart and wing,
While we share the robin's rapture, crying, "Spring! it is spring!"

THE CHARCOAL-BURNERS' FIRE; OR, EASTER EVE AMONG THE COSSACKS.

(A Russian Legend.)

BY DAVID KER.

"If you want me to tell you any wonderful stories, Barin, such as *you've* been telling us," says Ostap Mordenko, shaking his bushy yellow beard, as he finished his cup of tea, "you're just looking for corn upon a rock, as the saying is; for *I* never had an adventure since the day I was born, except that time when I slipped through a hole in the ice, last winter. But, perhaps, it will do as well if I tell you an old tale that I've heard many a time from my grandfather, that's dead (may the kingdom of heaven be his!), and which will show you how there may be hope for a man, even when everything seems to be at the very worst.

"Many, many years ago, there lived in a village on the Don River, a poor man. When I say he was poor, I don't mean that he had a few holes in his coat at times, or that he had to go without a dinner every now and then, for that's what we've all had to do in our time; but it fairly seemed as if poverty were his brother, and had come to stay with him for good and all. Many a cold day his stove was unlighted, because he couldn't afford to buy wood; and he lived on black bread and cold water from the New Year to the Nativity—it was no good talking to *him* about cabbage soup, or salted cucumber, or tea with lemon in it.[A]

"Now, if he had only had himself to be troubled about, it wouldn't have mattered a kopeck,[B] for a *man* can always make shift for himself. But, you see, this man had been married once upon a time, and, although his wife was gone, his three children were left, and he had *them* to care for as well as himself. And, what was worse, instead of being boys, who might have gone out and earned something for themselves, they were all girls, who could do nothing but stay at home and cry for food, and many a time it went to his heart so that he stopped his ears, and ran out of the house that he mightn't hear them.

"However, as the saying is, 'Bear up, Cossack, and thou'll be Maman (chief) some day;' so he struggled on somehow or other, till at last it came to Easter Eve. And then all the village was up like a fair, some lighting candles before the pictures of the saints; some baking cakes and pies, and all sorts of good things; others running about in their best



clothes, greeting their friends and relations; and, as soon as it came to midnight, such a kissing and embracing, such a shaking of hands and exchanging of good wishes, as I daresay you've seen many a time in our villages; and nothing to be heard all over the place but 'Christ is risen!' 'He is risen indeed!'[C]

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“But, as you may think, our poor Stepka (Stephen) had neither new clothes nor rejoicings in *his* hut—nor lighted candles either, for that matter. The good old priest had left him a few tapers as he passed, for *he* was always a kind man to the poor; but he had quote forgotten that the poor fellow would have nothing to kindle them with, and so, though the candles were in their places, all ready for lighting, there was not a glimmer of light to be seen! And that troubled poor Stepka more than all his other griefs, for he was a true Russian, and thought it a sore thing that he could not even do honor to the day on which our Lord had arisen from the dead. Besides, he had hoped that the sight of the pretty light would amuse his children, and make them forget their hunger a little; and at the thought of their disappointment his heart was very sore.

“However, as the proverb says, ‘Sitting still won’t make one’s corn grow.’ So he got up and went out to beg a light from some of his neighbors. But the people of the village (it’s a pity to have to say it), were a hard-hearted, cross-grained set, who had not a morsel of compassion for a man in trouble; for they forgot that the tears of the poor are God’s thunder-bolts, and that every one of them will burn into a man’s soul at last, as good father Arkadi used to tell us. So, when poor Stepka came up to one door after another, saying humbly, ‘Give me a light for my Easter candles, good neighbors, for the love of Heaven,’ some mocked at him, and others bade him begone, and others asked why he didn’t take better care of his own concerns, instead of coming bothering *them*; and one or two laughed, and told him there was a fine bright moon overhead, and all he had to do was to reach up a good long stick and get as much light as he wanted. So, you see, the poor fellow didn’t get much by *that* move; and what with the disappointment, and what with grief at finding himself so shabbily treated by his own neighbors, just because he happened to be poor, he was ready to go out of his wits outright.

“Just then he happened to look down into the plain (for the village stood on the slope of a hill), and behold! there were ever so many lights twinkling all over it, as if a regiment were encamped there; and Stepka thought that this must be a gang of charcoal-burners halting for the night, as they often did in passing to and fro. So, then the thought struck him, “Why shouldn’t I go and beg a light from *them*; they can’t well be harder upon me than my own neighbors have been. I’ll try, at any rate!”

“And off he set, down the hill, right toward the encampment.

“The nearer he came to it, the brighter the fires seemed to burn; and the sight of the cheery light, and all the people coming and going around it, all so busy and happy, made him feel comforted without knowing why. He went right up to the nearest fire, and took off his cap.

““Christ is risen!” said he.

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“‘He is risen indeed!’ answered one of the black men, in such a clear, sweet voice, that it sounded to Stepka just like his mother singing him to sleep when he was a child.

“‘Give me a light for my Easter candles, good people, I pray you.’

“‘You are heartily welcome,’ said the other, pointing to the glowing fire; ‘but how are you going to carry it home?’

[Illustration: STEPKA CARRIES THE FIRE IN HIS CLOAK.]

“‘Oh, dear me!’ cried poor Stepka, striking his forehead, ‘I never thought about that!’

“‘Well, that shows that you were very much in earnest, my friend,’ said the other, laughing; ‘but never mind; I think we can manage it for you. Lay down your coat.’

Stepka pulled off his old patched coat and laid it on the ground, wondering what was to come next; but what was his amazement when the man coolly threw two great shovelfuls of blazing wood into the coat, as coolly as if it were a charcoal bucket!

“‘Hallo! hallo!’ cried Stepka, seizing his arm, ‘what on earth are you about, burning my coat that way?’

“‘Your coat will be none the worse, brother,’ said the charcoal-burner, with a curious smile. ‘Look and see!’

“And, sure enough, the fire lay quietly in the hollow of the coat, and never singed a thread of it! Stepka was so startled, that for a moment he thought he had to do, not with charcoal-burners, but with something worse; but, remembering how they had greeted him in the Holy Name, he became easy again.

“‘Good luck to you, my lad,’ said the strange man, as the Cossack took up his load. ‘You’ll get it home all right, never fear.’

“Away went Stepka like one in a dream, and never stopped till he got to his own house. He lighted all his candles, and then awoke his children (who had cried themselves to sleep) that they might enjoy the bonny light; and, when they saw it they clapped their hands and shouted for joy.

“Just then Stepka happened to look toward his coat, which he had laid down on the table, with the burning wood still in it, and started as if he had been stung. It was choke-full of *gold*—good, solid ducats[D] as ever were coined, more than he could have counted in a whole hour. Then he knew that his strange companions were no charcoal-burners, but God’s own angels sent to help him in his need; and he kneeled down and gave thanks to God for his mercy.



“Now, just at that moment one of the neighbors happened to be passing, and, hearing the children hurraing and clapping their hands, he peeped through the window, wondering what *they* could find to be merry about. But, when he saw the heap of gold on the table, everything else went clean out of his head, and he opened the door and burst in, like a wolf flying from the dogs.

“‘I say,’ cried he, without even stopping to give Stepka the greeting of the day, ‘where did you get this fine legacy from? It makes one’s eyes blink to look at it!’

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“Now, Stepka was a good-hearted fellow, as I’ve said, and he never thought of remembering how badly this very man had treated him an hour or two before, but just told him the whole story right out, exactly as I tell it you now. The other hardly waited to hear the end of it, but set off full speed to find these wonderful charcoal-burners and try if *he* couldn’t get some gold out of them, too. And, as there had been more than a few listeners at the door while the tale was being told, it ended with the whole village running like mad in the same direction.

“When they got to the burners’ camp, the charcoal men looked at them rather queerly, as well they might, to see such a procession come to ask for a light all at once. However, they said nothing, but signed to them to lay their coats on the ground, and served out two shovelfuls of burning wood to each; and away went the roguish villagers, chuckling at the thought of getting rich so easily, and thinking what they would do with their money.

“But they had hardly gone a quarter of the way home, when the foremost suddenly gave a terrible howl and let fall his load; and in another moment all the rest joined in, till there was a chorus that you might have heard a mile off. And they had good reason; for, although the fire had lain in Stepka’s coat, it wouldn’t lie in theirs—it had burned right through, and their holiday clothes were spoiled, and their hands famously blistered, and all that was left of their riches was a smoke and smell like the burning of fifty tar-barrels. And when they turned to abuse the charcoal-burners, the charcoal-burners were gone; fires, camp and men had all vanished like a dream!

“But as for Stepka, *his* gold stuck by him, and he used it well. And always, on the day of his visit to the charcoal-burners, he gave a good dinner to as many poor folk as he could get together, saying that he must be good to others, even as God had been good to *him*. And that’s the end of my story.”

[Footnote A: The three great dainties of the Russian peasant.]

[Footnote B: One third of a penny; one hundred kopecks equal one rouble.]

[Footnote C: The Easter greeting, and reply.]

[Footnote D: The Russian word is “tchervontzi”—gold pieces worth five dollars each.]

PARLOR BALLOONING.

BY L. HOPKINS.

[Illustration]

There goes the toy balloon man!

Here, take this ten-cent piece; run after him as hard as ever you can, and bring me one of those over-grown ripe-cherry-looking things, and I will show you a few queer tricks the toy balloon can do, which, I'll venture to say, the inventor of toy balloons himself never thought of.

Ah! I see you have picked out a fine plump one. Now for a bit of paper—any kind will do. This, torn from an old newspaper at random, will serve the purpose admirably.

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Now, I crumple it up at one corner, and tie it to Mr. Balloon's half yard or so of tail, and turn him loose in the room. He rises slowly for a little, and then as slowly settles down to the floor. That won't do. I want to see him exactly balanced between floor and ceiling; so, of course, the paper must be of exactly the same weight as the balloon itself. We soon can accomplish that. See! I tear off a bit more. Top heavy yet? He rises higher this time, and settles down more slowly to the floor. Tear again. Whew! I took off too much that time. He rises to the ceiling, bumping his head against it a few times, and finally remains there in a sullen manner as if determined he will have no more of our nonsense.

[Illustration]

I recapture him, and this time I add to the weight of his tail, by dividing in two the last bit which I tore off, and twisting it around the string.

Now, then, sir, you may go! See! he rises slowly, slowly, until about midway between floor and ceiling, where he stops and turns slowly about, as if making up his mind what to do next.

[Illustration]

Presto! a current of air strikes him, and he begins dodging about in a frantic manner, as if to escape from some invisible enemy. Presently he becomes calmer, and proceeds to explore every nook and corner of the room; now going up close to the clock on the mantel, as if to ascertain the time of day; now taking a look at himself in the mirror; then, turning suddenly away (as if in confusion to find you have caught him at it), he moves toward the window, and pretends to be interested in what is going on outside; but, a draught of air coming briskly in, he hastens away as fast as ever he can, as if in fear of taking cold. Skimming along close to the floor, he reaches the opposite side of the room, and, slowly rising again, peers into the canary's cage. The occupant resents the liberty with erect feathers, and our balloon quickly descends, and takes refuge under the piano. Recovering his presence of mind, presently he peeps cautiously out, and begins to ascend again. Here he comes toward us—slowly, majestically! Strike at him with a fan, and lo! he retreats in great disorder to a remote corner of the room, dodging about in most eccentric fashion, when, recovering his self-possession after a time, he goes about examining the pictures on the wall with the air of a critic. You lie down on your back, on the comfortable sofa in the corner, watching the balloon as it sails slowly about, and wondering what it will do next, until—until you fall asleep!

[Illustration]

You are awakened by something tickling your nose; and, looking up, you suddenly discover the toy balloon hovering over you, with its tail in your face, and apparently enjoying your surprise.

[Illustration]

All this, and much more indeed, will a toy balloon do, if treated in the manner I have described.

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Begin with a piece of paper rather heavier than the balloon, and tear off bit by bit until the two exactly balance.

DRIFTED INTO PORT.

BY EDWIN HODDER.

CHAPTER IX.

AMONG THE FISHER FOLKS.

We cannot follow the holiday party through all their pleasant wanderings, nor tell of the impressions made upon them by the scenes, celebrated in history and romance, through which they traveled.

Their drives in the midday heat, their strolls in the cool evening, their resting hours as they talked over the events of the day, all were harmonious and gladsome.

If there was one part of the trip which gave them greater pleasure than the rest, it was their visit to the Shetland Isles.

There was an indescribable pleasure to our young folks in wandering under cliffs gaunt and bare, and hearing the stories of Vikings, who fought and fell,—or fought and conquered in these isles.

Sometimes in their wanderings they would come upon a “fairy-ring,” and as they listened to the strange stories told by the islanders, they seemed to be really in some bewitched and spell-bound place. Or, perhaps a “kern,” standing solitary upon some hill-top, would call forth a whole series of Danish and Norwegian legends, which would give them food for reflection for days.

Many a pleasant adventure they had as they rode together on their sure-footed little “shelties,” or climbed the crags and rocks to look down upon the isles, “like so many stars reflected from the sky.” And many a pleasant talk they had with the hospitable inhabitants, who rehearsed to them some of the dangers which assail the dwellers in those solitary little islands. The narrow belts of sea, which divide their ocean-girded homes, have constantly to be ferried across, and many a boat which has gone out manned with a gallant crew has never returned or sent a waif to tell its story.

It was partly to acquire a knowledge of the Shetland character, and to see some phases of its home-life, that our friends, when they came at last to one little village by the sea, where they had only intended to make a flying visit, determined to halt there for a few days. It was a charming spot; on the one side of the village there were to be seen some

of the finest specimens of the savage grandeur of cliff and crag, and on the other the smiling, genial face of cultivation and quiet beauty.

On the morning our friends arrived at the village they found three fishermen at work beside their cottage door, on the margin of the sea. They were brothers—Ole, Maurice, and Eric Hughson; all young men, handsome, strong and intelligent. Howard and Martin made friends with them at once, and as the morning was calm and bright, entered into arrangements with them for their best boat to be launched, so that our friends might have a long sail, to visit some of the caverns abounding on the coast, and to see the homes of the wild sea-birds, and the haunts of the fowlers.

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When the hamper of provisions was safely on board, and the party for the picnic had followed it, of course the sea air and the fine scenery set every tongue loose, so that the solitary places rang again with the merry laughter and the voice of song. And then, when the first irrepressible pleasure had spent itself a little, the young folks gathered round the three brothers, and listened with attentive interest to the yarns they were spinning to Mr. Morton about some of the places they were passing; for every spot in the Shetlands has its own story.

Madeleine noticed that beneath the mirth and apparent gayety of the men, there seemed to be an under-current of deep feeling, probably born of sorrow, and she determined, if possible, to find her way to the hearts of the fine manly fellows, in whom she began to be interested.

It was not long before an opportunity occurred. The boat was steered round a huge bluff, and before our friends were aware where they were going, they found themselves in a vast cavern. There was something awful in the half-darkness into which they passed, and the dreary stillness, only broken by the splashing of the water against the sides of the cave, enhanced the feeling. As the boat rested in the midst of the cavern, they looked up, and saw as it were, stars shining through the massive roof; they looked around, and the huge rocks seemed like burnished metal. It was a curious sight, and the sounds were equally curious for every word they spoke came back again to the speaker, with a ghostly hollowness.

Madeleine, with Howard and Martin, sang a song together, which sounded splendidly within this vaulted cave, with all its wild re-echoings. When it ended, the boat glided slowly out of the cavern, and although they had enjoyed the somber magnificence they had left, they were all glad to be in the fresh air and cheerful sunshine again.

Madeleine watched her opportunity, and when she saw Eric alone in the fore part of the boat, she quietly disengaged herself from the rest of the party, and, sitting down beside him, said: "Eric, I believe you have seen some great sorrow, though you are so young."

"I was only twenty-two last birthday, Miss, but I have had sorrow enough."

"Would it pain you to tell me your story?" she said.

"No, Miss, it may do me good to tell it. It is a short and sad one. Two years ago my two brothers, Robbie and Gideon, both younger than I am, went away from here on a whaling expedition. There was a fine crew of fifty, half of them Shetlanders and the rest English. There were one or two gentlemen's sons amongst the crew, and as nice a set of fellows altogether as a seaman could wish. They set sail in good spirits, and it was from the headland yonder that we heard their cheers, as they sailed out on their whaling expedition. From that day to this no word has come of them, and we fear that all are lost. It has been a heavy blow to us. When they went away it seemed as if the light had

gone out of the old home, for they were young and merry and clever. The long waiting to hear from them has been as bad as the fear that they have perished.”

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“God comfort you, Eric,” said Madeleine, tenderly, as she wiped away her tears. “God comfort you. No words of mine can help to heal this wound.”

“Thank you, Miss,” said Eric. “I see you feel for us, and that helps—better than words, sometimes.”

CHAPTER X.

IN THE STORM.

The next morning, as Howard and Martin were coming up from the beach, where they had been taking a swim, they saw Maurice and Eric standing on the edge of a cliff looking out seaward, and they had not walked far before Eric came hastily toward them.

“You’ve never seen a Shetland storm, young gentlemen,” he said, “but you may see one to-day and to-morrow, too, for I doubt if you will get away from here as soon as you expected. I see the ladies coming out; it might be well to go and tell them.”

“Come along, Madeleine! Hurry, Ethel!” cried Martin; “you will soon see the sight we have longed for—a storm at sea. Eric says there is one brewing.”

The ladies looked incredulous, and Mr. Morton put on his double eye-glasses, and looked around with the air of one who more than half suspects he is being taken in.

It was a still, lovely summer morning. The sea was as calm as a village brook; the waves lazily played upon the shore, and the breeze scarcely stirred the little flag which Eric had mounted on his boat in honor of the visitors.

Presently, however, the dark clouds came up in rapid procession; the surf began to sigh and moan; the sea-fowls caught the sound, and cried as they only cry when the ocean is angry. The boats lying out hoisted sail and scudded away for the nearest haven of shelter. Then a white line of light rose up sharply against the black bank of clouds, and the still sea became covered with white-crested waves. The quiet shore rang again with the booming of waters, as they leapt against the rocks and broke in foaming spray.

It was a grand sight. The whole aspect of sea and sky and land had changed.

Ole, Maurice and Eric had withdrawn from the party of visitors and were standing on an eminence, talking earnestly, and looking out to sea with such evident anxiety, that Howard and Martin clambered up to them to hear what was the matter.

“Well, sir, you see that ship out there, we can’t make her out,” said Maurice. “We’ve watched her for an hour, and she hasn’t shifted an inch of sail.”

"I don't see her at all," said Howard. "Do you, Martin?"

No, Martin could not, because he had not that wonderfully acute sight which the discipline of constant experience gives to seamen.

However, with the aid of a glass he saw her clearly, and was seaman enough to know that she was playing a dangerous game in carrying so much canvas in such a gale.

"And what's the strangest part of all is, that she's making straight for rocks, if she keeps the same course," said Ole.

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"Can't you make out who or what she is?" asked Howard.

"I should say by her build she was a whaler," answered Maurice, taking up the glass again and having a long look. Then he hastily passed it to Ole and Ole to Eric.

"There's no time to be lost," said Ole, "the storm will be too heavy in another hour for us to put off. She's in danger, there's no mistake, and we must get to her. It seems to me there can't be any crew on board, or if there is, they must be mad. It's the strangest thing I ever saw."

In a few moments all was excitement; the news spread through the village like wild-fire; every cottage was astir; old and young came out to see and hear and speculate; while half a dozen stalwart fellows, including the three brothers, made ready for the start. Howard and Martin were among the first to volunteer to accompany them, but the fishermen would not hear of it. There was no time to discuss the matter; all was hurry and bustle.

See! the crew is ready; all hands are wanted for the launch. It is no easy matter; the waves are beating in on the shore, and threaten to swamp the boat almost before she starts on her perilous errand. Hurrah! she rides! Ole is at the helm; a manly cheer comes to the now silent watchers on the shore, and the little craft plunges through the waters, now rising on a crested wave, now sinking into the valley of waters, but speeding her devious way toward the mysterious ship.

Madeleine clings to the arm of Howard, pale with the excitement. Ethel has hardly dared to speak, and Martin has not found it in his heart to break the intense silence of those anxious moments as they watch the departure.

But see! a group has gathered on the spot where Ole, Maurice and Eric had stood. It is the favorite lookout. The glass is there, and an old man has taken it in his steady hand, and is reporting the news by little jerks of speech to the anxious throng around him. It is Ole Hughson, the father of the three brothers.

"Can make out one man on board. He sees them. They've tacked again. It aint so bad as it looked. Sea's quieter there. Hulloo! there goes a sail to ribbons. They are tacking again. She has slackened sail. Good! good!"

But other eyes can now make out the scene, for the ship draws nearer, and the eyes that have gazed so long seem to have gained strength to see further.

The Shetland boat nears the ship; it is near enough for the crew to catch the cry that comes from the solitary man upon the deck.

See! the little boat tacks again, and is now close in the wake of the ship. Good heavens! in that sea, with those waves running, will they dare to attempt to board her?

Yes, a rope has been thrown to them. Thank God, it is caught! But the little boat has sunk! No, she has but gone down in the great valley of waters, and is riding safe and sound. Look! some one from the Shetland boat has caught hold of the rudder-chains. He climbs the dangerous way. He is on board. It is Eric—the brave, dauntless Eric. Another and another follow, and all reach the ship in safety.

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No sooner had the brave Shetlanders mounted the deck than they were at work with a desperate will. A glance sufficed to show them that the management of the vessel depended upon them; and in a moment they were masters of the situation. Ole established himself at the wheel, and thundered forth his orders.

As if by magic, the course of the vessel was altered; dangling spars were cut away and thrown adrift, sail was taken in, and our friends on the shore could see that they were endeavoring to bring the ship to haven in the bay.

No time was to be lost with those who would witness the arrival and disembarkation; for, although it would have been a comparatively short distance if there had been a sea-coast and a calm sea, the haven was cut off from the village by rugged rocks and headlands, which necessitated a journey of some miles.

Howard and Martin, as soon as they saw that the ship was in the hands of the fishermen, rushed off at the top of their speed to get ready the first shelties they could lay their hands on, knowing, that in such a time of excitement, everybody in the place being related, directly or indirectly, to the six men who were on board, it was vain to put much trust in the help of others.

That morning marked an epoch in the life of Mrs. Morton. She had always been too languid to encounter any excitement of any sort, but she had watched the events of this day with an interest which was as new to herself as it was to all who knew her. And when the young folks declared that they must see the end of the matter, come what might, nothing could dissuade her, despite the fatigue, from making one of the party.

There was a tedious delay in getting the ponies together and saddling them for the journey. Those who had gone off on foot, and were accustomed to fatigues, had gained a long march on the visitors, and Howard had agreed with Martin that it would save time in the end if they only took four ponies, for the ladies and Mr. Morton, and went themselves on foot.

At last all was ready, and the start was made with the best speed possible in the circumstances. But they labored under one or two great disadvantages; the first was that they did not know the quickest route, and the next was that they could not see the vessel, having to make an inland journey to reach the haven.

When at last they came to the edge of a cliff, which they rightly judged must overlook their destination, a scene broke upon their view which staggered them.

The ship was at anchor; many people were upon the shore, and in little knots they were kneeling round the bodies of men stretched upon the strand, while boats were passing to and fro, freighted, as it would seem, with the dying and the dead.

“This is no scene for you, my dears,” said Mr. Morton, as he saw the pallor on the faces of those around him, “we must return at once.”

“Return?” cried Madeleine, “when perhaps the dead can be ministered to, and the dying cheered. Oh! no, no!”

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It was useless to resist such an appeal, nor was it necessary, for, as she spoke, a woman, running, drew near to them.

“Tell me, what does it mean?” cried Howard to her.

“Near twenty men on board, dead and dying. The ship is half full of water, and is sinking.”

They urged their way along, passing groups in attendance on the prostrate ones upon the shore. Howard and Martin led; the others followed. The whole party gathered about a boat that had just come in, and from which Eric was trying to lift the apparently lifeless body of a young man.

All at once, Mrs. Morton threw up her arms, uttered a piercing cry, and fell forward to the ground. Then, in quick succession, horror, surprise and joy filled the hearts of the little group, as they, too, recognized in Eric’s burden the form and features of Digby Morton!

[IN THE ICE. [SEE PAGE 499.]]

CHAPTER XL.

A STRANGE STORY.

The wind is hushed now. The sea beats no longer with rude shocks against the echoing cliffs. The sea-birds have gone to their nests, and the moon, bright and beautiful, is flooding ocean and land with its calm, clear light.

Howard and Martin walk together along the grassy way between their cottage and the sea.

They look anxiously, from time to time, along the road, for they are expecting the arrival of the doctor, and they make a start together as they see a form in the distance. But it is not the doctor; it is Eric.

“Well, Eric, what news? How are your patients to-night?”

“Going on well, thank God!” he answered. “Gideon is sitting up in bed, and has been talking a bit, but not much, for the doctor says it would be the worst thing he could do. And Robbie is picking up strength, but it’s slowly—slowly, poor Robbie!”

“We must hope and pray, and use the best means we can. God helps those who help themselves,” said Howard.

“But He helps those most who cannot help themselves, it seems to me,” said Martin, “when I think of all that has happened during the past few days.”

“It really does seem so, sir,” said Eric; “and to think that Mr. Digby, that you all thought was dead and gone years ago, should have sailed in that same ship along with my two brothers whom we had given up as lost, and that all should come back again together, and their ship drift into the very port they started from! I feel as if I couldn’t believe it; I’m sure I shouldn’t if I read it in a book.”

“It is strange, very strange; yet there are stranger things happening around us every day, Eric, than any man could invent. But, tell me, has Gideon yet spoken of Mr. Digby in his talk?”

“Bless you, sir, he’s talked of nothing else! From what I can make out, Mr. Digby has been the life and soul of the party, and that everybody loved him you may guess from the fact that almost the first question of every one that has come to, has been about him. But I beg pardon for not asking before, sir; how is Mr. Digby, to-night?”

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"Better, we hope. Certainly better than he was yesterday. He has not as yet shown any gleam of consciousness, but he has been able to take plenty of nourishment, and it is upon this that we ground a good hope. But see, yonder comes the doctor, and I hope he will report favorably of all." Never could a medical man have shown a greater interest in a patient than Dr. Henderson did in Digby. He had heard portions of his strange story from others of his patients who had been saved from the ill-fated ship, and the loving solicitude of all had drawn from him an answering tenderness.

"I shall stay with him to-night," said he, "if you will allow me, for I anticipate a change in him soon, and I am extremely anxious that at first he should receive enough information to satisfy him, and at the same time that he should have no clue as to where he is or by whom he is surrounded. After his intense excitement and the almost superhuman fatigue he has undergone,—for it was he who was the last to give up, and then not until the Hughsons were safe aboard the ship,—the least shock might prove fatal. So, you go away and leave me with him. But stay," added the doctor to Mr. Morton, who had now joined them; "just now one of the men gave me this book—a Bible—which he found on the ship; and as it bears the name of Howard Pemberton in the fly-leaf, I brought it with me, and with especial interest, for, inclosed in the cover, is a packet addressed to you, Mr. Morton."

Mr. Morton took the book with trembling hands, and when he had reached his own room he sat alone and read with deep emotion the strange story of his son's life. It ran as follows:

Baffin's Bay.

I know not into whose hands this paper will fall, but it is my earnest, perhaps dying entreaty that it may be placed in the hands of my parents, my sister, Dr. Brier, or Howard Pemberton, all of whose addresses will be found elsewhere.

I write this letter to the man whose name I bear and whom I have most deeply wronged.

Much sorrow, and anxiety, my dear father, must have resulted from my cruel conduct, and I would confess, without a wish to conceal one single fact, the sins which wrought such mischief and have brought such strange punishments. I can only do so by telling the story of how one sin led to another, until all culminated in that fearful fraud, the pretense of death. For the first year that I was at Blackrock school I strove with all my strength to do and be what Dr. Brier and his kind, good wife would wish. Their influence over me was kind and gentle and good. I can never repay the debt of gratitude I owe them. But by degrees I grew to hate the restraints of school, and I was drifting, drifting, I knew not whither. My best friends at school were Howard Pemberton and Martin Venables. I loved them at the first with all the enthusiasm a boy feels

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when he thinks he has found his ideal friends. They supplied to me the lack of brothers; they were true, manly, high-minded friends. But as soon as I began to drift away from the good I had ceased to strive after, I loosened my hold on them. It was about a year before I left Blackrock school when my aversion to study and to all restraint became almost uncontrollable. During my holidays I once fell in with a young man, James Williams, who led a wild, reckless life. He had run away from home, had crossed the seas, and had raised money in various ways, which enabled him to indulge freely his wild fancies. His yarns about the sea, and the adventures he had met and dangers encountered, fired me with a mania to follow a similar career. The constant reading by stealth of pernicious books, of which smugglers and pirates were the heroes, stimulated the desire, and undermined the principle in which I had been educated; until, at length, when you informed me that I was to study under Mr. Vickers for the law, I determined to run away from school and seek my living by adventure. James Williams fostered the resolve, and often urged me to it; but my great difficulty was how to obtain money. By an accidental circumstance, Howard Pemberton became aware of my passion for the sea, and he upbraided me about it, kindly and honestly, but I could not brook it; my old friendship with him ceased, and I grew to hate him. About this time, the reception was given at Dr. Brier's of which you have heard. But you have not heard, and never can know, what that evening was to me. Satan seemed to have entered into me as he did into Judas.

I took the miniature and snuff-box from the cabinet in which they were placed by Mrs. Brier, and resolved to cast the suspicion of the theft upon Howard.

That night I placed the miniature in the hands of Williams, who gave me twenty pounds for it, and the snuff-box I placed in the ticking of Howard's bed.

Need I tell you all the catalogue of wrong? You can almost guess the rest. Williams procured for me a suit of clothes which would disguise me, and these were placed ready for me by arrangement with him. The early morning was very cold, and as I intended to travel far I thought I would take my great coat. In the hurry and excitement of the moment, I mistook Howard's for mine.

I left my clothes upon the river bank, and that afternoon I set sail for America.

In America I spent a few months, the remembrance of which I would gladly blot from my memory. Money came to me fast from gambling, and as quickly went. All the time I was restless, fearful, ill at ease and sick at heart. I had never heard one single word of how my disappearance might have afflicted those I left behind. I knew not whether you really thought me dead, or whether my secret had oozed out. At length I determined,

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with tears of penitence, to return, to confess all, to purchase back the miniature from Williams with money I had won. And, with this resolve, I started back to England. On arriving, I took up a newspaper, and you may judge the terror I felt as I read the account of Williams's awful death with the miniature upon him. It staggered me, but it did not melt my heart. I interpreted it that my plans were frustrated, as I found that Dr. Brier had obtained possession of the miniature. I dared not remain in the country, for fear of discovery and of identification with the crime of Williams; but I could not tear myself away until I had once more visited the neighborhood of the dear old school-house. I cannot think without emotion of that moonlight night when I lay down beside the marble pillar which tender hearts had caused to be placed there, "In loving memory of D.M." Oh, my father, how true it is that "the way of transgressors is hard!" I thought my heart would break as I lay there on the cold earth and wept the bitterest tears I ever shed. If I could but have caught sight of Dr. Brier, or felt the motherly touch of Mrs. Brier's hand upon my shoulder,—if I could but have heard the ring of Howard's or Martin's voice in the play-ground, I felt as if the evil within me would have taken flight and I should have risen up a regenerated man.

But I was alone. Dead! dead! And I went away with my heart cold and sad, and my future all dark and purposeless.

A twelvemonth ago I fell in with some Shetlanders who were about to start on a whaling cruise, and, as the expedition promised plenty of adventure and excitement, I joined them.

Three months after we left Shetland, we were fast in the ice. For nine months and more we have been almost starving, and have had to endure bodily suffering in other respects of a most severe kind.

I have written the foregoing part of my story at intervals, and I would now bring it to a conclusion, for the ice is breaking up, and we have before us our last chance.

Literature has been very scarce on board, and I had only brought one book with me. It was Howard Pemberton's Bible. I found it in the coat I had taken accidentally on the morning I left Blackrock school, and I never parted with it, hoping I might be able to restore it some day, for I found it was a sacred relic given to him by his father, and bearing in its cover his portrait and a copy of the dying words he spoke to Howard. That book became my friend, and it led me to recognize a friend in its Divine author. I had striven in vain to save myself from myself. This book pointed me the way. I should never have read it, however if it had not been for the kind sympathy of our captain. A nobler man, or a truer Christian, I never met. But our captain died, and my strength

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gradually failed from privation. I cannot tell you here all that happened, but I must refer you to a diary which I have daily kept posted, and that will explain more fully what I am unable to write now. We are free from the ice at last, and are drifting we know not whither! My strength is well-nigh gone. Not a man on board can move a hand to touch a sail. Perhaps these will be the last words I shall ever write. I crave from you, my dear father, and from all whom I have wronged, forgiveness for the sorrow, distress, and injury I have wrought. Return the Bible, please, if it ever comes into your possession, to Howard, and tell him how I thank God for its blessed teachings.

Land is in sight; we fancy it must be the Orkneys. A storm is gathering. Nine men lie dead upon the deck. There appears to be certain death for us all.

As Mr. Morton finished reading the letter, he paced the room to and fro, while the hot tears fell freely down his face; and his heart was full of thanksgiving and praise as he cried, "This, my son, was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

CHAPTER XII.

A FAREWELL.

It was a fortnight before Digby was well enough to leave his room, and then he had to be carried in the strong arms of Howard and Martin. So weak—so utterly weak was he—that the strong man had become as a little babe, and Dr. Henderson sometimes feared that he would never know health again.

But he was bright and cheerful and happy. The joy he experienced in finding so many dear ones around him, the relief in having unburdened his mind, and being assured of a full and complete forgiveness; the feeling of gratitude for the glad changes which had come to his father and mother, and for his own happy deliverance from death, made him think and talk so cheerily, that Ethel's heart rejoiced as she found in the long-lost one more than her old ideal Digby.

Howard and Martin had exceeded the time of their leave from business duties, but, in the circumstances of the case, they had been allowed longer furlough, and were now waiting for the time when Digby would be well enough to travel, so that they might superintend his journey home.

And the last day of the Shetland visit came. It was with a feeling of sadness that our friends went round on the afternoon of that day to call upon the cottagers and leave their little presents and say farewell.

Not the least memorable event of the visit, was the gathering of the villagers in the large room of the cottage, where our friends had taken up their abode. It was the last night in Shetland, and it had been Digby's earnest wish that, if he could bear it, the Hughsons and their friends, and as many as were saved from the death-stricken ship, should meet together to say farewell. Early in the evening, the villagers, in their best Sunday clothes, began to assemble, and, before very long, the room and the passage-way and the stair-way were crowded.

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Dr. Henderson was there, too, and he reminded the folks present that time was flying, and that the strength of his patients must not be taxed too far. Then Mr. Morton rose. His face was very pale, and at first his voice was tremulous.

“Good people all,” he said, “a kind Providence brought me and mine to this friendly island, and here we have seen and heard strange and happy things. Curious circumstances have brought us all together; and, in greater or less degree, we have been dependent upon one another; we have shared suspense, joy and anxiety together; and we have received mercies from the Great Father of us all more than we can trust our lips to tell. You, my good sir,” pointing to old Mr. Hughson, “have received from the jaws of death two of your sons. Heaven bless them! You,” pointing to a woman, “once more rest in the love of a husband; you, my little ones, are rejoicing in a father’s return; and I—I have received safe and sound, my only son, whom I had long mourned as dead. Let us thank God, all of us.”

A fervent amen was uttered as if by one voice.

After this, with chat and with song, time stole away, and the happy meeting would have been continued for an indefinite time, if Dr. Henderson had not announced it as his opinion that it would be neither wise nor kind to prolong it. And so with benedictions upon one another the company separated, and the next morning our friends left the island.

And now my story is done. I need only tell you that, after a long time, Digby regained his strength; that he never studied law with Mr. Vickers; but, having been started in business by his father, became a successful merchant, with ships of his own, on which several of the Hughson brothers found happy and profitable positions. Howard and Martin grew to be prosperous men, and Madeleine and Ethel not only rejoiced, but shared in their prosperity; for, of course, these two young men could find no better wives than these two young women. But I could not even begin to tell you of the happiness and thankfulness that filled the heart of every person in this story, when thought arose of that vessel which was so mercifully drifted into port.

THE END.

[Illustration]

JOHNNY’S LOST BALL.

BY LLOYD WYMAN.

Johnny had a silver dollar.

Johnny also had a good friend in the schoolmaster who, in various ways, had so interested the boy in natural philosophy that he desired of all things to possess a book on the subject, that he might study for himself.

Therefore, on the very first spare afternoon Johnny had, he rolled up his silver dollar in many folds of paper, tucked it snugly away in a lonesome corner of an old castaway pocket-book, and started for the village book-store; but, when he found the many nicely bound volumes too dear for his pocket, he choked, and nearly cried for disappointment.

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"Hold on!" said the book-seller, as he slipped his lead-pencil behind his ear, and stepped briskly to a little shelf of rusty-looking books.

"Here are some second-hand copies of Comstock, Parker and Steele, any of which you can have for seventy-five cents,—have your pick for six shillings. Comstock and Parker are in the best repair, and are finer print; but for *me*, give me Steele! In buying second-hand books, always choose the banged-up fellows. Comstock and Parker tell everything that everybody knows or guesses. Steele bites his'n down. But do just as you've a mind to: it wont make a bit o' difference to me one way or the other."

Johnny took Steele, handed over his dollar, and received twenty-five cents in change.

Before the money was fairly stowed away in his wallet his eye fell upon a beautiful rubber ball, painted in various brilliant colors, which lay in the show case. The book-seller tossed it upon the clean-swept floor, and up it bounded to the ceiling.

"The last of the lot," said he; "filled with air; that's why it bounces so; been selling at thirty cents; will close this out at twenty-five; every boy ought to have one; children cry for 'em; just the thing for 'hand-ball,'—what d' y' say?"

"I'll take it," said Johnny; and he took his book and ball and hurried home, "dead broke" financially, but happy, nevertheless.

Being open-hearted, he told his folks about his purchase, and they were inclined to find fault with him, though I do not know why. He seemed never to tire of his book and ball, but would change from one to the other, and for some days was as happy as a king is supposed to be.

Then came his bad luck.

He was tossing his ball upon the roof of the house, and catching it as it came down; but by and by it did not come down—it bounded into the tin eave-trough and rolled slowly along till it came to the big pipe that led to the cistern, and into this it dropped, and went whirring down, and stopped somewhere with a faint splash.

For once in his life, Johnny felt as if the world had slipped from under him.

For a few minutes he was bewildered; then came the joyful assurance that his Steele would help him out of his trouble, and if Steele couldn't, there was the schoolmaster.

The first thing he did was to lift the cover off the cistern, though he knew well enough the ball was in the pipe, as he well remembered that it ran nearly to the bottom of the cistern and then made a sharp bend upward, "so that the water mightn't wear the cement," the mason told him.

He found the water quite low, but not low enough to show the mouth of the pipe. Of course, there was no ball in sight. He closed the cistern with a groan, and got out his new book on natural philosophy. First he glanced at optics; but that did not help him to see his way; then at hydrostatics and hydraulics.

It was of no use; nothing seemed to hit the case. Then he gave it up, put his book away, and went to consult the school-master. Johnny found him among his books, and told him all about it.

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"Have you tried to fish it out with a hook and line?"

Johnny's face brightened. "No, sir, I never thought of that."

"All right; you couldn't do it. Besides, if you could, it wouldn't be scientific," said the school-master. "Now, go home, take a ten-foot pole, and measure the distance from the eaves to the water in the cistern, then find the diameter of the pipe, and on my way to school to-morrow morning I will tell you the three things necessary for recovering your ball."

Johnny fairly flew home, got a pole, measured the distance from eaves to water and found it to be twelve feet; measured the pipe and found it to be two inches and one-half. Then he put away the pole, did his chores, ate a hearty supper, and went to bed.

He was up bright and early next morning, and got quickly through his chores, so that when the school-master stopped, on his way to school, he was ready to see about the ball.

"Good morning, Johnny! Glad to see you on hand. How long's the pipe?"

"Twelve feet, sir."

"Diameter?"

"Two inches and a half, sir."

"Ah! $2\frac{1}{2}$ square multiplied by .0034, and that product by twelve feet, which is—"

"144 inches," Johnny quickly suggested.

"Will give the contents of the pipe in gallons," added the schoolmaster. "You're quick at figures, tell me the answer."

Johnny groped among the odds and ends of his jacket pocket for a minute, and then fished out a stubby lead-pencil, much chewed at one end, and picking up a piece of smooth board, ciphered away swiftly and carefully a few moments.

"3.06 is what I make it, sir."

"Very well; we'll call that right; that would be a little over a pailful—say a pailful and a half. Now get a ladder to go up to the roof with."

Johnny brought one in a jiffy.

"All right. Now, the three things necessary to get back your ball are, a pailful and a half of water, a plug, and pluck."

Johnny looked as if he didn't quite understand.

"What sort of a plug, sir?" he asked.

"Oh, this will do," answered the school-master, picking up a pine stick and beginning to whittle away vigorously. The plug was soon made. The school-master lifted the plank cover from the cistern put the ladder down, and said to Johnny: "Have you any pluck?"

"Lots of it," Johnny told him.

"Well, then, take this plug and stick it into the mouth of the pipe, *snug*."

Johnny took the plug, went down the ladder into the cistern till he reached the water, and then began feeling around for the pipe. By and by he found it, and, inserting the plug in the opening, pushed it down and screwed it firmly in place.

"All right!" he called out, and presently he came up the ladder.

"Now let's have the water—in two pails," the schoolmaster said, and he saw by Johnny's face that he at last understood how the ball was to be got out. Johnny ran to the barn, and soon came back with two pails of water and a funnel.

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"But what's the funnel for?" asked the schoolmaster as he drew the ladder from the cistern and leaned it against the eaves.

"To pour the water into the pipe," answered Johnny, in a tone that showed that he thought he had, for once, caught the school-master napping.

"Ah, indeed! so you always put the funnel in when it rains?"

Johnny blushed, and did not attempt any answer.

"Now mount the ladder, and I'll hand you the water," said the school-master.

Johnny ran up the ladder, and, when the school-master handed him the pails, he said nothing about the funnel, but boldly dashed the water upon the roof. When the flood began pouring into the cave-trough and gurgling down the pipe, Johnny fixed his eyes upon the hole through which his ball had taken its unlucky leap, and stared with anxious expectation. The gurgle in the pipe crept steadily upward, the tone all the while growing higher and clearer, till whish! came a dash of water over the trough, nearly drenching the schoolmaster while the ball bounded airily upon the eaves for an instant, before Johnny caught it and cried out:

"Here she is!"

"Put things in shape, Johnny; I must hurry to the school-house," said the school-master, going.

[Illustration: THE KING AND THE HARD BREAD.]

THE KING AND THE HARD BREAD.

BY J.L.

"When you want a thing done well, do it yourself," is an old saying, and a very good one; but it is not always possible or desirable to carry out this advice. Therefore it is sometimes better to adopt an amendment to this proverb, and make it read thus: "When you want a thing done well, do it yourself, or see it done."

So thought Louis IX. of France, sometimes called St. Louis, because he was considered to be rather better than most people.

Among his good qualities was kindness to the poor. He would go about, very plainly dressed, and attended by two or three courtiers, and visit poor people in their houses. He took an interest in their personal affairs, and when they were very needy, he would order bread and other food to be supplied to them. Of course, this made him a great

favorite with the poorer classes of his subjects, and they were glad not only to receive his bounty, but also to talk with him and tell him about their many troubles.

One day, when he was making one of his customary rounds, an old woman, leaning on a cane, and holding a loaf of bread in her hand, came out of a door in a wall which led into a collection of wretched dwellings.

As this old woman stood awaiting his approach, the king could not help feeling a little surprised. He did not often feel surprised at anything he saw among these poor people. He had just been talking to a group of strong, hearty fellows, who preferred sitting lazily about wherever they could find a shelter from the rain and sun, and trusting in chance charity for food and lodging, to working for an honest living; but he was not surprised at them. Such men have always existed, and probably always will exist.

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He had seen all sorts of strange things among his poor people. He had seen some who seemed to prefer to be poor; he had seen others who had been rich, but who appeared to be happier now than when they had plenty of money,—and perhaps plenty of anxiety with it; he had seen others who were poor and did not know it; but this was the first time that he had ever seen any one of them offer him bread or anything else to eat. No wonder he was surprised when this old woman held out to him the loaf of bread!

She did not wait for him to ask her what she meant, but immediately commenced to explain. She told him that she and her sick old husband were among those to whom he had ordered food to be furnished, but that for some time all that his agents had given them was bread such as the loaf in her hand; bread so hard that it was almost impossible for old people to eat it, and yet they must eat it or starve.

The king listened with attention to her story, and then he took the loaf in his hands, and broke off a small piece of it.

“It is rather hard bread,” he said, thoughtfully, while his attendants bent over to look at it, as if it were a matter of the greatest interest to them, although it is probable that they did not care a snap of their fingers whether or not the old woman ever had any bread.

“Yes,” said the king, “it *is* hard bread.” And then he stood thinking about it. The old woman thought he was thinking of the trouble she and her husband had in eating it, but she was very much mistaken.

He was thinking that he had ordered that these people be well fed; that he had supplied the money to buy them good and nourishing food. Now, if his poor pensioners received nothing but dry bread, and very stale, hard bread at that, while he paid for good food for them, somebody must be making money out of him, to whom he had no idea of being charitable in this way.

Therefore he thought that if he wanted a thing well done, he must do it himself, or see it done. In this case he determined to see it done.

He went into the old woman’s house, and he talked to her sick husband and herself, and examined into their condition. The old people thought he was very good to say so much about their hard fare, and so he was; but if they could have heard what he said afterward to his dishonest agents, when he went home to his palace, they might have been surprised to know what an important thing a piece of hard bread may sometimes become.

And they might have thought, too, that it was a good thing for them, as well as for other poor people, that their bread had been so *very* hard that they were forced to complain of it to the king.

DISCONTENTED POLLY.

Polly ought to have been a very happy little girl, but she was not, because she hadn't a doll. She had everything else: a beautiful kitchen, a stove with everything to use on it, some pretty china dishes, a table to put them on, and a neat little wicker chair to match the table.

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Only a little while ago she had three lovely dolls; but there was another D to Polly's name—Destructive Polly; and now there was not a bit of a dolly left, and mamma had determined to let her wait till she wanted one so very much that when it did come she would be sure to take care of it. But Aunt Alice said, one day, "That child shall have a doll to-morrow." And sure enough! the next morning, in the little wicker chair, Polly found the most beautiful doll she had ever seen.

It had fluffy, golden hair, and bright blue eyes, and a dress just like Polly's best one with puffed sleeves. It could say "papa" and "mamma" quite plainly, and could move its eyes.

Of course, the first thing to be done was to find a name for the new treasure, and that made Polly discontented again. She wanted to call it after herself, but she said, "Polly is such an every-day name, it would never do; my doll must have a 'company' name." So she called her doll "Rosalinda."

The next day, mamma said there might be a party in honor of the new doll; so Polly carried Rosalinda into the play-room, put her in the little chair, and began to get ready for the party. Rosalinda looked as though she would like to help; so Polly filled one of her prettiest cups with milk, and put it in the dolly's lap, while she went out for three lumps of sugar.

Just then a dreadful thing happened. Puss, who had been hidden under a chair, came out, jumped to Rosalinda's lap, and began to drink the milk as fast as he could. Before it was half gone he heard Polly coming, so he jumped down again in a hurry, and out of the window. But one hind paw caught the cup by the handle, spilled the milk on dolly's dress, dashed the cup to the floor, and broke it all to bits!

When Polly came in and saw this, what do you think she did? She just looked at Rosalinda a moment, then she took her out of the chair and shook her—shook her so hard, and sat her down again with such a bounce that the pretty blue eyes shut up tight, and wouldn't come open.

Polly didn't mind that at first. She said, "Yes! you'd better shut your eyes, you naughty thing! Don't tell me it was 'a accidente.' You did it yourself, I know, and I don't love you one bit. You don't look fit to be seen, and the party will be here before I'm ready. Oh, dear! just open your eyes, and see what you've done."

But poor Rosalinda's eyes wouldn't open, and the more Polly shook her, the tighter shut they stayed, till she ran, crying, to mamma, to ask for help. Mamma had seen it all; so now she took Polly and Rosalinda both on her lap, and gave what Polly called "a little preach."

[Illustration: "JUST OPEN YOUR EYES, AND SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE."]

It did her good, real good, and at last she said: "Dear mamma, if Rosalinda will only open her eyes once more and look at me, I believe I will never be so naughty again."

So mamma found a way to open the pretty blue eyes, and Polly kissed them both, and then kissed mamma for helping her.

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By the time the party came, everything was ready. Polly was very good, and let the girls play with her beautiful Rosalinda the whole time. I do not know how long the good will last. I hope till every one forgets to call her Discontented Polly, and learns to call her Darling Polly instead.

[Illustration]

JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT.

Well, my dears, spring is here at last, and it is very pleasant to see the buds and flowers again. I begin to hear the voices of the children more often, too; and now and then I catch a glimpse of bright faces and new dresses.

By the way, talking of dresses puts me in mind of a paragram that came the other day, about

TRIMMINGS FOR COWS.

Something quite new to you, I dare say, for which of you ever heard of trimming cows with their own horns and ears? How should you like to see a cow with her ears—poor thing!—cut to the shape of a leaf with notched edges, and horns trained in some queer shape, twisted into curls, or divided into four, with two meeting overhead, and two turned down toward the ground? It would be a dreadful sight to me, I am sure; but the Africans admire such things. They consider this trimming of cows a sort of fine art. You don't see how they manage the horns? Well, they begin when the horns are young; divide each into two, or more, and gradually train them, while growing, in any way they choose. Of course it must hurt the poor cows, and take a great deal of time; but the people who train cows' horns have not very tender feelings, and they are richer in spare time than in anything else. Besides, they do not have to trim their own clothes much—they're savages.

FEET AND WINGS.

I have been told that flies have suckers on their feet, and climb up window-panes by using them, much as boys lift smooth stones with a piece of soaked leather and a string. Is this so, little folks?

By the way, while you are thinking of flies, I once heard some schoolma'ams (I'm sure our *little* one was not among them) disputing about the number of wings that a house-fly ought to have. And they said, though it's hard to believe, that over the door of the Masonic Temple at Boston there are bees, cut in the stone, each with only wings enough for a fly!



Perhaps the sculptor had been reading Virgil before carving those bees, for, as I've heard, that ancient poet in one of his writings made a mistake as to the number of a bee's wings.

CETUS, NOT CYGNUS.

One of my sharp eyed chicks, S.E.S., of Canandaigua, sends word that the star Mira, of which I told you last month, is in the star-group Cetus (the Whale), not in Cygnus (the Swan). S.E.S. is right, I find, and I'm much obliged to her.

PRSVRYPRFCTMN VRKPTHSPRCPTSTN.

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Deacon Green says that these letters were found on a wall in a church in Wales, painted, like a text, above an inscription of the ten commandments.

Some of you may have seen it before, he thinks; but, if not, it will be good fun for you to find out what it means. He adds that there is but one letter of the alphabet wanting, to make sense; this is used over and over, and, if you put it into the right places, the text will turn into a rhymed couplet.

A REMEDY FOR HARD TIMES.

I have a message from a bird on the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina.

"Here," says my friend, "I lately found a remedy for hard times. Looking for food one day, I came close to the home of a silk-spider who was about to make a new web. Now, what do you think I saw him doing? Why, he was eating up the old web, so as to turn it into thread again, and use it a second time! Another curious thing that I found out about this economical old fellow is that, although he has a great many eyes, he can see only just well enough to tell light from darkness."

Now, what in the world can be the use of that spider's eyes, I'd like to know, if he can't see the things around him?

A QUEER CHURN.

New Haven, Conn.

Dear Jack: Last year in April you gave us a picture of a very small doll-churn that a little girl had made, and I thought it was very 'cute. But I read the other day of another churn quite as odd. It is simply the skin of a goat, hung by a rope from the roof. It is used in Persia, and, when they want to churn, they fill the goat-skin with milk, and swing it forward and backward until the butter comes. The children do the swinging, and I think it must be better fun than turning a crank or working a plunger.—Yours affectionately, O.T.

CATS IN SPAIN.

Cats have a nice time in Spain, I hear. No dismal moonlight prowlings over fences and back sheds for them! They have the roofs of the whole country for their walks, and need never touch the ground unless they choose. I'll tell you why. Grain is stored in the attics of Spain, because they are too hot for anything else. But rats and mice delight in attics, as well as in grain. So each owner cuts a small door from the roof, big enough for puss, and any homeless cat is welcome to her warm home, in return for which she

keeps away rats. In a sudden rain it must be funny to see dozens of cats scampering over the roofs to their homes among the grain-bags.

“SINCERE” STATUES.

Cambridge, Mass.

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DEAR LITTLE SCHOOLMA'AM: In ST. NICHOLAS for December, 1877, Jack-in-the-Pulpit says that "sincere" is made of the words *sine-cera*, meaning "honey without wax." I have been told that it refers also to the Greeks, who, when they found a crack in a statue, would sometimes fill the flaw with wax; and that hence a "sincere" statue, one "without wax," would have no flaw, but be a true and honest statue.

I have not been able to find any authority for this, otherwise I should have written sooner.—Yours sincerely, F.B.J.

[Illustration: FOOLS'-CAPS FOR CROWS.]

FOOLS'-CAPS FOR CROWS.

My acquaintances the crows are very fond of corn, and have a way of picking it out of the ground with their bills just after it has been planted. So the farmers try all sorts of plans to keep them away. One of these plans is shown in the picture.

Paper cones are set point downward in the ground, and baited with a few corn kernels; then some bird-lime is smeared around the insides. When a crow reaches down for the corn, the paper cone sticks to him, looking rather like a fool's-cap, and he does not get rid of it in a hurry. I'm told that it takes only a few of these cones to keep off a whole flock of crows. They are afraid of making themselves ridiculous, I suppose.

ANCIENTS AND MODERNS.

Now then, my dears, here's a capital chance to show your knowledge of history. Who can answer this question?

Boston, Mass.

DEAR JACK: Will you please ask some of your chicks to tell me when the ancients left off, and the moderns began?—and you will greatly oblige. F.

LUMBER AND TIMBER, AGAIN.

The Little Schoolma'am says that "timber" generally means "felled trees," but is used sometimes to describe trees that are yet standing and growing; "lumber" means timber that has been made ready for use, by sawing, splitting, and so forth.

E.M. Ferguson, J. Harry Townsend, Lillie Stone, J. Dutton Steele, Jr., and N.Y.Z. all sent correct answers; but Virginia Waldo, G.V.D.F., and "Max" were only almost right in their replies.



THE LETTER-BOX.

The answers to Mr. Cranch's poetical charades, published on page 406 of the April number, are as follows: I., Carpet, car-pet. II., Bargain, bar-gain. III., Pic-nic, pick-Nick. IV., Nightmare, night-mare.

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A large number of correspondents kindly point out that the poem entitled "The Nightingale's Mistake," printed in the March "Letter-Box," is also called "The Singing-Lesson," and was written by Jean Ingelow.

* * * * *

Clayton, Iowa.

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DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I thought I would write to you to tell you about our little town of Clayton. It is a beautiful little place, of about three hundred and eighty inhabitants, situated on the Mississippi River. There are two large flouring-mills, two saw-mills, and a large hoop factory here, where all kinds of straps and hoops are manufactured by machinery. First, the poles are sawed into certain lengths; then they are taken to the splitters, to be split. They are then taken to the planers. After going through this process, they are bunched into bunches of fifty each. Then they are ready for shipment. They are made of hickory, white oak, and birch. It is very pleasant to take a boat-ride on a summer eve, with the banks on either side of you covered with long green grass, and flowers of nearly all descriptions bending down into the water, while in the woods all kinds of birds are clattering and chattering, and the ducks are quacking around you, all of which makes it very pleasant.—Your constant reader,

H.R.

* * * * *

Baltimore, Md.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I would like to know why it is that the wife of General George Washington is called Lady Washington? I do not think that we have ever had any lords or ladies in our country; so if you know the reason why, I would like to know.

E.M.

Can any of our boys and girls answer this question?

* * * * *

Somerville, N.J.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: As I wish to contribute a little to the "Letter-Box," I will send you a little poem written by my sister Allie when she was nine years old.

OUR BABY.

Little Bertha is my sister,
And she is two years old,—
A cunning little darling,
Whom I love to hold.

You ask her whom she loves best,
And she'll say "Papa Lou."



You ask her whom she loves next,
And p'r'aps she will say "You."

You ask her what her name is,
And she'll say "Bertie Lou."
But then, she's sometimes naughty,
And sometimes so are you.

Little Bertha is my sister,
And she's as cunning as she can be;
With a dimple in each cheek,
And a dimple in each knee.

And I guess most people love her,
For she's as cunning as she can be;
But then, sometimes she is naughty,
And that's the way with you and me.

My darling little sister
Always sleeps at night with me;
And, as I said before,
She's as cunning as she can be.

A.C.H.

* * * * *

Roseville, N.J.

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DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: We thought perhaps you would like to hear about our pet sparrow "Bob." We have had him since last July, and he is just as cunning as he can be. He was so young at first, he could not fly, and slept in a little box, with a piece of flannel over him; but now he roosts on a nail in the sitting-room bay-window. We do not keep him in a cage, but he goes all over the house, and does just as he pleases. He has had plenty of chances to fly out, but seems to be happy and contented, and makes himself perfectly at home. When we are eating, he helps himself to anything he wants, and is not a bit bashful. He loves honey, and will eat all he wants, and then wipe his bill on any one's dress or on the table-cloth. He will jump on papa's whiskers, and pull mamma's hair-pins out of her hair, steal her needle, and do many other mischievous things. He has chosen one of the gas-globes for a nesting-place, and carries bits of cloth, strings, or any such thing that he can find, and puts them there. He tries to sing, and has learned several of the canary's notes. We catch him sometimes, and put him under a hat, to tease him. He then gets angry, pecks the hat, and scolds at the top of his voice. We have a rabbit and a guinea-pig, too; but if they come into the room where Bob is, he will fly at them and peck them till they run out. Every one who sees him thinks he is a wonderful bird, and we should feel very sorry if anything should happen to him.—Yours truly,

ELLA AND EDWIN H.

* * * * *

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I have a little sister named Pet, because we love her so. A few days ago our papa had a narrow escape from being burned, and Pet asked me if I thanked God for taking care of him. I said, "Yes." "And did God say, 'You're welcome'?" asked Pet.

Now, don't you think that was a funny idea?—Your affectionate reader,

R.L.P.

* * * * *

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS AND THE MOONS OF MARS.—A correspondent writes that in Gulliver's "Voyage to Laputa," an imaginary flying island, Dean Swift, the author, describes some over-wise philosophers, and, among other things, says:

"They have likewise discovered two lesser stars, or satellites, which revolve about Mars; whereof the innermost is distant from the center of the primary planet exactly three of his diameters, and the outer-most, five; the former revolves in the space of ten hours, and the latter in twenty-one and a half; so that the squares of their periodical times are very nearly in proportion with the cubes of their distance from the center of Mars."

Now, these two satellites were not discovered really until August 16th, 1877, but Dean Swift's book appeared it 1726, more than one hundred and fifty years before! But, although the Dean's guesswork is not exactly correct, he comes very near the truth when he states the time taken by each moon in going around the primary. This you will see by comparing his words with the following letter, which we have received from Professor Asaph Hall, the actual discoverer of the moons:

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Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C.,
March 4th, 1878.

EDITOR ST. NICHOLAS: The periods (of revolution) of the satellites
of Mars are as follows,—Deimus being the outer satellite, and
Phobus the inner one:

Period of Deimus, 30 hours, 18 minutes, 0 seconds.
" " Phobus, 7 " 39 " 16 "

These values are very nearly correct, and will be changed in the
final calculation only a few seconds, if at all.—Yours truly,

A. HALL.

* * * * *

The following are extracts from the letters of a young girl now traveling in Europe:

Berlin, 1877.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: We were in the Auer Cathedral, Munich, looking down the long nave, when troops of little children, boys and girls, each with a little knapsack strapped between the shoulders, leaving the hands and arms free for play, came hastening in by twos and threes, till the whole church seemed full. They all knelt down, whispered a few words of prayer, and remained for a brief space, silent and motionless, bowed down in devotion; then they quietly arose and went out. I shall not soon forget Auer Cathedral with its little worshipers. We have been settled at Berlin for a month. Being the residence of the Emperor and Court, it is very gay with balls, theaters, *etc.*, and the streets are bright and lively with fine uniforms, prancing horses, and carriages full of richly dressed ladies, their escorts riding on horseback at the side. It presents a lively contrast with Munich in these respects, but, as to sunlight, it is a gloomy place. Thus far we have had only four pleasant days, and on those the sun set between three and four in the afternoon. Some days we thought it did not rise at all! We realize now, for the first time, how far north Germany is. We improved one of our pleasant days by a trip to Potsdam, where is the summer palace of the kings of Prussia. Here are the rooms of Frederick the Great, just as he arranged them. His library is chiefly of French books, and fills the shelves, which are everywhere, from floor to ceiling—upon the doors, even, so that, when they are shut, one feels imprisoned in books! At the opposite end of the palace are the rooms once occupied by Voltaire. The walls are covered with painted wood carvings of cats, dogs, parrots, and peacocks, which Frederick caused to be placed there after his quarrel with Voltaire, to express his opinion of the Frenchman's traits of character.

Directly under the walls of the palace stands an idle windmill, now owned by the Emperor. The noise of this windmill used to annoy the queen, so Frederick sent for the miller and said to him:

“We two cannot live so near each other. One of us must buy the property of the other. Now, will you buy my palace?”

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"But my leige, I have not the money," replied the miller.

"Then I must buy your mill," said the king.

"You also have not money enough; I will not sell," was the miller's reply.

When the king hinted his power to take possession by force, the sturdy miller said he could and would sue the king.

"Well," said the monarch, "since you have so high an opinion of the justice to be found in my courts of law, I will not molest you."

So the windmill continued to creak and whirr in the ears of the royal family for a long time.

ADA.

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HERBERT J.—In answer to your request, we give a copy of the poem entitled "The Little Boy who Went Out to Swim," published first in ST. NICHOLAS for September, 1874. Several of our readers have asked to see the poem printed, without its pictures, in the "Letter-Box," as the interweaving of the illustrations with the text, as they first appeared, hindered the meaning and beauty of the verses from being fully understood.

THE LITTLE BOY WHO WENT OUT TO SWIM.

BY HENRY HOWLAND.

A little boy went out to swim,
One pleasant day in June,
And the fish all came to talk to him,
That summer afternoon.

"Come down, dear little boy," they said,
"And let us show to you
The homes of fish, merman and maid.
Under the waters blue.

"We'll show you where the naiads sleep,
And where the tritons dwell;
The treasures of the unknown deep,
The coral and the shell.



“The siren’s song shall charm your ears,
And lull you into rest;
No monster shall arouse your fears,
Or agitate your breast.”

The little boy was glad to go;
And all the company
Of fish escorted him below,—
A pageant brave to see!

The pilot-fish swam on ahead,
The shark was at his heels;
The dolphin a procession led
Of porpoise, whale, and eels.

The trout, all brave in red and gold,
Many a caper cut;
And after them came crowds untold
Of cod and halibut.

The blue-fish with the black-fish swam;
Who knows the joy each felt?
The perch was escort to the clam,
The oyster to the smelt.

The muscalonge, from northern lake,
That leaps the harbor bar,
Swam closely in the sturgeon’s wake,
Famous for caviar!

The haddock floated side by side
With carp from foreign shore,
And with them, through the seething tide,
Went scollops by the score.

The sword-fish, like a soldier brave,
His saber flashing bare,
Went o’er the swelling ocean wave,
With bold and martial air.

The jelly-fish went trembling down;
The star-fish mildly beamed;
And through the waves, like diamonds thrown,
The sun-fish glanced and gleamed.



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The sea-bass, black-bass, pike and dace
Went dashing on like mad;
The sheep's-head, with his lamb-like face,
Swam by the graceful shad.

The pickerel leaped and danced along;
The frog-fish puffed and blew;
The herring in a countless throng
Swam by, a merry crew.

The turtles sailed a Dutch-built fleet,
On port and starboard tack,
While through their ranks, with caution meet,
Darted the stickleback.

The shrimp and lobster clawed along
With others of their kin,
And in their company a throng
Of lively terrapin.

The bull-pouts, dressed in black and drab,
With horns and visage grim,
Preceded the meandering crab;
The mackerel followed him.

Sea-spiders, in their coats of mail;
Shiners, with silver vest;
White-fish and weak-fish at their tail,
Swam on with all the rest.

The royal turbot, true and tried,
Subject of England's queen,
Sailed on in regal pump and pride,
With whitebait and sardine.

The knightly salmon, king of fish,
Without reproach or fear,
The noblest fish a man could wish,
Came bringing up the rear.

And thus they reached the mermaid's cave.
Who, with a heart-felt joy,
To her bright home beneath the wave,
Welcomed the little boy!

* * * * *

Here is a letter which we print just as it was written by the little one who sent it to us:

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS I send you a little story to put in the letter
Box.

Once there was a little Boy His Name was Harry He lived with His Mother in a humble little Cottage) His Mothers Name was Mrs Jones she was a Widow) she and Harry lived all alone) one day Harry came Home from school and faced the Doctor at the Door young man said the Dr to the Boy your Mother is very sick) she was doing what you ought to of done for her) what is that sir said Harry chopping Wood Bringing in Coal and all such work as that) she straned her self and is very ill) poor Harry hung down His head for His Mother had asked Him to chop the wood this Morning when He was mending his Ball) He said I will be there in a moment Mother) and like all Boy He forgot) oh how poor Harry felt When He thought of this) but Harry took good care of His Mother ever after) a Friend of Harries got Him a good Situation and Made a man of Him and He allways did what His Mother asked Him) ever after Harry said to the Dr one day) Dr I can take care of Mother now and I allways will

So we hope Harry will take care of His Widow Mother, all the) rest
of His days)

M.J.W.

* * * * *

Here is a nice letter that a little girl wrote to her mother nearly thirty-three years ago. The little girl was away from her town home on a visit to the country for the sake of her health; and all that she wrote in the letter was true.

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Mr. McDonald's, October 1st, 1845.

MY DEAR MOTHER: I wish my arms were long enough to reach two miles, I want to give you a good hug, I am so glad you let me come out here. I was a little bit afraid last night, the horse was so high, and it was so dark. I never rode on a horse in the dark before, you know. It was so dark in the woods I could not see anything, but my eyes would stay so wide open they hurt me. I held as tight to Mr. George as I could; I felt as though some big thing was just going to snatch me off the horse, all the time; my fingers felt like they were full of pins when I let go. Everything does taste so good out here, and the air is so clean. I stretched out my arms to it this morning, it felt so good. We have a play-house on the rocks; it has two fire-places. They are made out of flat stones, and inside of the big stones we set up two smaller stones, and lay a flat one across, and there we do our cooking. We are going to have a party to-night, and have been busy all day getting ready. All the good things are cooked, waiting till night, when Mac will be home. We have three splendid baked apples, and three eggs roasted in the ashes, but we have only two pies. We could only find two blacking-box lids, and as these are our pie-pans, we have only two pies. We washed and scoured the black all off, and they looked as nice as Sophia's tins, which she will never let us touch at home. Our biscuits are not as nice quite as hers, it was so hard to make them round, and our range don't bake on both sides, so we had to turn them over to get both sides cooked. Our things all look very good, and I am real hungry for them, but you know it would not do to eat the party before Mac comes. We have made wreaths of maple-leaves, to wear on our heads to-night, one for Mac, too. We thought it would do for a boy to wear a wreath as long as there are so few of us, and the leaves are so pretty; and as it is my birthday, I have some leaves basted all around my blue dress, and it looks lovely.

I must stop now. Give my love to all. Take good care of Fideli, and kiss all around for your loving daughter,

JULIA.

* * * * *

Clifton, Iroquois County, Ill.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: We want to tell the little boys and girls that read ST. NICHOLAS, how a greedy rooster got caught in a trap. We set the trap to catch rabbits, but didn't get any; so the corn was left, and the chickens were all walking around, and saw it, and tried to get in to eat it; but the selfish old rooster drove them all away, and crowded in himself, and began to eat the corn, when down came the trap, and he was fast, but all the others were free.—Yours truly,

ARTHUR AND BROWNIE S.

* * * * *

South Boston, Mass.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: I read the "Letter-Box" every month with much interest, and have often seen puzzles and "such things" in it, so I send you one, and hope that somebody will find it out:

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There was somebody born in England, on the 16th of July, 1723. He was the son of a clergyman, and his father was rather strict with him. He made a drawing of his father's school with so much accuracy of outline, and in such correct perspective, that the grave clergyman could no longer maintain his severity. He saw that his son would be a painter, and resolved to aid him. An anecdote related of the artist runs thus: One day, a man called to see some of his pictures, and asked him what he mixed his colors with. The painter answered, "With brains, sir—with brains!"—Yours,

FRANK R.M.

* * * * *

Columbia, S.C.

DEAR ST. NICHOLAS: Our schoolma'am told us the other day that it is generally best to use short words instead of long words in writing or speaking, and she gave us a verse to copy as a specimen. She said that it was written by a man who was perfect master of seven languages, knew six others very well, was at home with another eight, and read with a lexicon four more,—in all twenty-five different languages; and although he could use tremendously long words when he chose, yet he made a point of using short ones, even though they were old and odd and not in common use. I send you a copy of the verse, and I think he might have done much better if he had used longer and more forcible words.—Yours truly,

STELLA G.

"Think not that strength lies in the big round word,
Or that the brief and plain must needs be weak.
To whom can this be true that once has heard
The cry for help, the tongue that all men speak
When want or woe or fear is in the throat,
So that each word gasped forth is like a shriek
Pressed from the sore heart, or a strange wild note
Sung by some foe or fiend. There is a strength
Which dies if stretched too far or spun too fine,
Which has more height than depth, more breadth than length.
Let but this force of thought and speech be mine,
And he that will may take the sleek fat phrase,
Which glows and burns not, though it gleam and shine—
Light but not heat—a flash, but not a blaze!"

Long words are not always the most "forcible," Stella,—nor, on the other hand, are they always to be avoided. Sometimes the best word for expressing our meaning may be long to spell, but easy to understand; and, again, a word may be short and yet fail to tell

exactly what we wish to say. The verse you copy is not a convincing example of the power of short words, although it shows that much may be done with them. Frequently a word is chosen for its rhythmic quality—the pleasantness and ease with which its sound fits in with the context—rather than because it is long or short. Mr. Longfellow’s poem, “The Three Kings” published in the last Christmas number of ST. NICHOLAS, is an example of a fine poem in simple and rhythmical language, the study of which will improve your style of writing more than any number of rules that we might give you.



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THE RIDDLE-BOX.

HOURLASS PUZZLE.

The central letters, read downward, name a fashionable and beautiful pet.

1. A large reptile. 2. Idolizing. 3. A foe. 4. To stain. 5. A consonant. 6. A dandy. 7. To baffle. 8. Good news. 9. Capable of being made better.

G.H.W.

BLANK APOCOPES.

In each of the following sentences, the second blank is to be filled with the first syllable of the word used in the first blank.

1. From some — we made a portion of our —. 2. The — was extinguished when we made a — for the door. 3. On the second shelf of the — you will find some —. 4. It was of a bright — color, the — that he had.

C.D.

EASY BEHEADINGS.

1. Behead to strike, and leave what all must do. 2. Behead what children like, and leave a man's nickname. 3. Behead two pronouns, and leave two other pronouns. 4. Behead an article of furniture, and leave capable. 5. Behead a color, and leave a writing material. 6. Behead something belonging to flowers, and leave a coin. 7. Behead a part of the head, and leave what comes from the clouds. 8. Behead another color, and leave a kind of stove. 9. Behead a sport, and leave a girl's name. 10. Behead a part of a ship, and leave a tree. 11. Behead a kind of bird, and leave disturbance. 12. Behead an article of food, and leave a kind of tree. 13. Behead a table utensil, and leave a bird. 14. Behead to frighten, and leave anxiety. 15. Behead a toilet article, and leave to crowd.

A.D.L. AND S.W.

EASY TRIPLE ACROSTIC.

The primals, read downward, name a bird; the centrals, an animal; the finals, an insect.

1. Disentangling. 2. Echo. 3. A city in a Western State. 4. Can't be worse.

ESOR.

FRAME PUZZLE.

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Make the frame of four words of eight letters each, so that the letter A shall come at each of the four corners where the words intersect. The words mean: Sweet-smelling, to make a scale, a fillet, an ecclesiastic.

BESSIE AND HER COUSIN.

HIDDEN FRENCH SENTENCE.

Find in the following sentence the French words with which the Emperor Alexander of Russia once described St. Petersburg:

Give him a good anvil, let him deal sound blows on the irons for the pier, repeated and strong, and the work will last.

B.

PICTORIAL ANAGRAM PROVERB PUZZLE.



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[Illustration]

The answer is a proverb of eight words. Each numeral beneath the pictures represents a letter in that word of the proverb which is indicated by that numeral—5 showing that the letter it designates belongs to the fifth word of the proverb, 3 to the third word, and so on.

Find a word that describes each picture and contains as many letters as there are numerals beneath the picture itself. This is the first process. Then put down, some distance apart, the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, to correspond with the words of the proverb. Group beneath figure 6 all the letters designated by the numeral 6 in the numbering beneath the pictures. You will thus have in a group all the letters contained by the sixth word of the proverb, and you will then have only to transpose those letters in order to form the word itself. Follow the same process of grouping and transposition in forming each of the remaining words of the proverb. Of course, the transposition need not be begun until all the letters have been set apart in their proper groups.

S.R.

THREE EASY SQUARE-WORDS.

- I.—1. A bard of fame.
2. From mines I came.
3. A fish's name.

- II.—1. The mountain's fringe.
2. I make slaves cringe.
3. A ruddy tinge.

- III.—1. What bad men hate.
2. I blanch the pate.
3. To join or mate.

N. AND VIOLET.

EASY ENIGMA.

My first is in dark, but not in light;
My second in girl, but not in boy;
My third is in peace, but not in fight;
My fourth in mourning, not in joy;
My fifth is in flowers, but not in weeds;
My sixth in kind, but not in cruel;

My seventh is in drives, and also in leads;
And my whole is a beautiful jewel.

N.K.K.

REVERSIBLE DOUBLE DIAMOND AND CONCEALED WORD-SQUARE.

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— E —
— E — E —
— E —
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Fill the vacant places with letters to form a reversible double diamond which shall inclose a reversible word-square.—Centrals: Perpendicular, to make merry; horizontal, a mechanical power. Word-square: 1, a number; 2, part of the day; 3, to knit.

H.H.D.

EASY SYNCOPATIONS.

1. Syncopate a composite metal, and leave a fish. 2. Syncopate an article of food, and leave an ornament. 3. Syncopate a map, and leave a vehicle. 4. Syncopate a pungent spice, and leave a small bay. 5. Syncopate a wading bird, and leave a reed. 6. Syncopate a short, ludicrous play, and leave a part of the body. 7. Syncopate another part of the body, and leave a wild animal. 8. Syncopate a domestic animal, and leave articles of clothing. 9. Syncopate a small animal, and leave to ponder. 10. Syncopate a flower, and leave a domestic animal.

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ISOLA.

PICTORIAL TRANSPOSITION PUZZLES.

To solve these five puzzles: Find for each picture a word, or words, that will correctly describe it, and then transpose the letters of the descriptive word or words so as to form another word, which will answer to the definition given below the picture.

B.

[Illustration: 1. Gives right 10.]

[Illustration: 2. A prince of Hindustan.]

[Illustration: 3. A token of victory.]

[Illustration: 4. A sylvan deity.]

[Illustration: 5. A creator.]

EASY SQUARE-WORD.

1. Soothing ointment. 2. A bitter-tasting plant. 3. Knowledge gained from reading or study. 4. Mild of temper.

K.

EASY DIAMOND.

1. A consonant. 2. A lively animal. 3. To moisten or irrigate. 4. A jewel. 5. A consonant.

ISOLA.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN APRIL NUMBER.

NUMERICAL ENIGMA.—Victor Emanuel. 1. Rome; 2. Turin; 3. Venice; 4. Milan.

EASY DIAMOND PUZZLE.—G, bEt, GeNoa, tOe, A.

WORD SYNCOPATIONS.—1. Parsonage—arson, page. 2. Noticeable—ice, notable. 3. Bewilder—wild, beer. 4. Devotee—vote, Dee. 5. Decanter—cant, deer.

ANAGRAMS.—1. Annoyance. 2. Combinations. 3. Conversion. 4. Dangerous. 5. Ceremonial. 6. Madrigal. 7. Unalterable. 8. Disengage.

DROP-LETTER PUZZLE.—“He doth much who doth well what he hath to do.”

EASY RHOMBOID PUZZLE.—C A R E

N E A T
D R O P
L E A P

PICTORIAL ANAGRAM PUZZLE.—Frigates. Feast, stag, gate, seat, rats, air, fist, tars, safe, stage.

SEXTUPLE WORD-CROSS.—Full perpendicular: Bobolink. Full horizontal: Bayonet. Top limb: Bob. Bottom limb: Link. Left arm: Bay. Right arm: Net.

PRESIDENTIAL DISCOVERIES.—1. Ant. 2. Washing. 3. Martin, tailor (Taylor). 4. Ruth. 5. Birch (*Barchard*). 6. Abraham, Zachary. 7. John, James, Andrew, Thomas. 8. Tin. 9. Lard, ham. 10. Mil. 11. Ton. 12. Frank. 13. Andre. 14. Rank. 15. Pier. 16. Aft. 17. Ford, dams. 18. Roe. 19. Ayes. 20. Franklin. 21. Ulysses. 22. Ash. 23. William Henry. 24. Grant. 25. Mi, la, re. 26. I Am. 27. Jam. 28. Hen. 29. Ada. 30. More. 31. Son.

EASY DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—America, England. 1. Agreeable. 2. Main. 3. EgG. 4. RaiL. 5. IdeA. 6. ClaN. 7. Amused.

NUMERICAL PUZZLE—Madagascar. Dam, sag, car.

S C
D A M
R G

A PROVERB AMONG PROVERBS.—“Love can neither be bought nor sold; its only price is love.”

A MEDLEY.—Scrape, crape, rape, ape. Capers, cape, cap. Pacers, pace, ace. Casper, asp.

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HALF WORD-SQUARE.—S E N A T O R

E X O G E N

N O V E L

A G E S

T E L

O R

R

Answers to puzzles in the March number were received, before March 18, from R.T. McKeever, Eddie Vultee, Charles M. Jones, George J. Fiske, Esther L. Fiske, "Guesser," Milly and Maude Adams, Jay B. Benton, Chas. G. Todd, M.A. Newlands, "Mione and White Fawn," Leonie Giraud; Unsigned, Philadelphia; Fred M. Pease, Katie Burnett, Mary C. Warren, Jennie Dillingham and Frances V. Lord, M.W. Collet, Catherine Cowl, Allie Bertram, Julia F. Allen, T.J. De la Hunt, G.L., Carrie Speiden and Mary F. Speiden, "Bessie and her Cousin," Nettie I.G., Xerxes J. Booren, "Nettie 722," "Queen Bess," E.C. Moss, Nellie Baker, A.L.S. and L.R.P., Otto Dreier, "Prebo," "Prebo's Ma," Mary Belle Giddings, Nellie Kellogg, Lillie Stone, Grace C. Raymond, J. Harty Townsend, C. Lothrop, Robin Nelson, Ben Merrill, Bessie Cary, Edith Claypole Ewing, Nellie Wooster, Rufus Clark, Nellie C. Graham, Harriet H. Doyle, Bertie E. Bailey, May Odell, "Thorndale," Louie G. Hinsdale and Arnold Guyot Cameron, Robert P. Christian, Belle W. Brown, Dellie Wilmarth, Emily Morison, Frank Bowman, Fred Worthington, Walter Stockdale, Carroll B. Carr, Eddie F. Worcester, Charley W. Sprague, Nellie Emerson; "Winnie," Brookline; Josie Morris Brown, Mary W. Ovington, Allie Armstrong, Sidney S. Conger, Nellie J. Hutchings, S.N. Knapp, F. Armington, Austin D. Mabie, Carrie and Sharlie King, Willie B. Deas, Bessie B. Whiting, Nettie A. Ives, Richard Emmins, A. Gunther, H.B. Ayers, Frances Hunter, Alice B. Moore, Percy Crenshaw, "Robin Redbreast," John V.L. Pierson, Mattie S.J. Swallow, Gertrude V. Sharp, Harriet Etting, Mary H. Stickney, Maggie J. Gemmill, Georgie B., B. McVay Allison, Jennie Beach; Nellie T. Dozier and Julia T. Gardiner; Everett B. Clark, R.H. Marr, Jr., Jennie O. Smith, Lillie Singich, Georgine C. Schnitzspahn, F.D., Anna E. Mathewson, Edward C. Niles, R.W. Abert, Mollie W. Morris, Sam V. Gilbert, Mary H. Bradley, William H. Atkinson, Alice N. Dunn, Philip Cary, Fred Whittlesey, Bessie L. Barnes, "Nightingale," Grant Squires, E.C., L.C.L.; Unsigned, Seymour, Conn.; Lafla Whitaker, Edna C. Lewis, Jennie R. McClure, "Eagle;" Sadie Duffield and Constance Grand-Pierre; Barton Longacre, Eva Doeblin, Belle M. Grier, "Minnehaha," Emmie O. Johnson, "Sister Lizzie," Harry Haskell, Addison F. Hunis; Kittie Hamilton Chapman and Carrie R. Heller; and Elmer Dwiggin. Gladys H. Wilkinson and John P. Brewin, both of England, also sent answers.

Correct answers to all puzzles were received From "King Wompster."