

that night his head ached so fearfully that he was glad to throw aside his boyish dignity and consent to lie on the sofa and be "comforted by Helen."

Tom was the sturdiest of the four boys, the ringleader in all their mischievous pranks, the originator of their most daring tricks, always noisy and boisterous—never quiet, not even in sleep, Helen used to think despairingly sometimes—and to see him now, lying on the sofa with his little flushed face drawn with pain, pressing his hands to his burning brow, touched his sister to the heart. The boys were awestricken; Tom sick! Tom who had never had even a headache before. When the evening was over they helped Helen, in solemn silence, to put the invalid to bed, and watched, wonderingly, while she made him comfortable and bathed his forehead with *eau de Cologne*.

"I know what's the matter," said Donald the eldest, "he's been in swimming too much, its enough to make any fellow sick the way he has been going it. Come on to bed boys, Tom 'll be 'O K' in the morning."

But Tom was not "O K" in the morning. Through the long night he lay tossing in restless fever, while Helen sat beside him holding his little, hot hand and singing to him, over and over, all the soft, soothing songs she could remember. He could not sleep, his head troubled him, his back ached, and his throat was dry and sore.

"Bless my soul! The lad's caught a severe cold," the old Major said as he comes in to see him in the morning. "You should'n't let him go swimming so often Helen; but don't worry, he will be better to-morrow." Nevertheless he telegraphed for Dr. Dupont.

The Doctor lived twelve miles away, and the day was far advanced before he stood by Tom's bedside. A change had come over the boy's face. Helen refused to see it, she would not allow herself to think, she forced back the sickening dread which filled her heart, repeating to herself, with piteous iteration, that it was "only a cold."

The Doctor was a stout, little man, with a ruddy complexion, and hair bleached white as snow with the wind and rain of forty years, driving about in the country in all kinds of weather. He had a jaunty, gay, young manner, but his old heart was tender as a woman's, and the bright, black eyes softened with a keen sympathy as he turned from Tom and said in a whisper:

"Helen, my poor child, the little one has the smallpox."

"Oh, my God! not that, not that," sobbed the young girl, sinking on her knees and burying her face in her hands.

It was only for a moment; she had felt it was thus, and unconsciously had made all her plans. With the help of the kindly little doctor she had the boy removed to an empty cottage at the other end of the village. It was entirely isolated and stood on a small point jutting out into the river, surrounded on three sides by the river over which a cool breeze was playing this hot September day, ruffling it into tiny wavelets and dashing them playfully almost up to the walls of the impromptu hospital. Here Helen had everything brought that she could possibly require.

"But, bless my soul, Helen, you don't mean to shut yourself up in that place alone with Tom?" exclaimed the Major when he realized what his daughter was doing.

"Yes, father; there is no one else to nurse him. You must telegraph to Aunt Jessie to come at once and keep house for you and the boys. Don't let any of them come near the cottage. Good-bye, Dickey, darling, good bye. Don't forget sister. You must not worry, father. I'm not afraid. God will take care of me." Helen tried to smile brightly as she turned away.

The healthy colour had faded from the Major's face. He seemed to have grown suddenly old and haggard. His hands moved tremulously as he leant heavily on his gold-headed cane. He stood helplessly watching Helen disappear; he even noticed the glint of the sun on the braided coil of brown hair, as she turned the corner. In his trouble he forgot that he was bareheaded, and that the hot sun beat mercilessly on his white head. Poor old man! He had given in meekly,

had allowed Helen and the rest of the boys to be vaccinated, and had even consented to undergo the operation himself.

Through weary days and nights little Tom fought for life, while the horrible disease ran its course. In his wildest delirium Helen was always able to quiet him. She scarcely left his bedside, and in answer the piteous cry "Sing to me, Helen, sing to me," sang hour after hour until the sweet voice grew strained and hoarse.

No one came near them only the cheery little doctor when he could be spared from his other patients, bringing them all that was needful with news from the outside world, remaining as long as possible in order that the young nurse might have a little rest.

Slowly Tom returned—it seemed—to life and consciousness, a pitiful wreck of the strong, sturdy boy he had been previously. But as each day brought fresh strength to Tom, Helen grew weaker, her face lost all its delicate beauty and became thin and wasted. Vaccination had not been successful with her, and a morbid certainty, a dread presentiment, possessed her.

September was past and gone; the trees, still green when Tom was taken ill, had now turned to crimson of many shades. The leaves were falling softly, noiselessly, from the swaying branches. The yellow golden rod, the purple asters and all the brilliant autumn flowers were brown and withered.

An unconquerable feeling of drowsiness was overwhelming Helen. All day long she fought against it, rousing herself with an effort when she felt her eyes close and her head droop. It was a horrible sensation; it over-mastered everything, even the dreadful sickness which was stealing over her. She felt the pain only remotely; nothing was very present but the intense longing to sleep—to sleep anywhere and anyhow. As the early twilight gathered the longing became more and more imperative.

Little Tom dropped asleep as Helen tried to sing him the song he begged for. She sat at the uncurtained window, watching the darkness fall. There was a fitful wind blowing; it came in low wailing sounds across the water. The river murmured continuously, but it seemed to Helen far, far away in the distance. The moon rose slowly—the great full moon, pale yellow in the cold autumn air. She watched it dreamily, as it came into sight, and threw a broad band of silver across the dark water. Again the overpowering desire to sleep. If she could but conquer it! She tried not to give way. She felt with a sudden chill, which startled her into momentary wakefulness, that it was the worst that could befall her. She remembered vaguely what she had read of the comatose phase which small-pox in its most dangerous form sometimes takes, when death almost certainly ensues. No! no! She must not give way to it! She forced herself to walk up and down the floor with trembling feet, until, exhausted, she fell beside the bed and instantly sleep stole over her.

She started up. Surely help would come! The doctor had not been there that day. She must keep awake until then. Seizing a penknife which lay on the table near her she made a deep cut in her hand. The sharp pain roused her; she staggered across the room. Was not that some one at the door? She moved uncertainly towards it; her trembling hand raised the latch; only the wind rustled among the falling leaves; even the cold night air had no power to touch her drowsy senses.

She could fight it no longer; exhausted she sank against the bed and dreamily began undressing. She knelt down, but the only words that came to her dulled mind were the words of the child's prayer she had been used to say at her mother's knee, "Now I lay me down to sleep," she repeated aloud drowsily as if she were again a child.

"If I should die before I wake," the words fell slowly, her head dropped on the bed, with a superhuman effort she wakened herself.

"I pray the Lord my soul to take." With the words still on her lips she crept into bed beside

Tom, and instantly fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

The boy awakened and sat up; a streak of light lay across the floor. He felt that Helen was ill; that he must stay awake and watch over her. He drew close to her and put his thin, wasted arm over her. He would take care of her as she had taken care of him—his good, sweet Helen.

The moonlight crept slowly across the floor; it reached the foot of the bed. Outside, the wind was still blowing fitfully; it sounded to the boy like voices sobbing; and then—he couldn't help it—he meant to watch, but he was tired, tired, and he, too, fell asleep.

The moonlight came softly, slowly over the bed and neither of the sleepers stirred. The world without was silent and at rest; only the wind and the water kept up their murmuring.

The silver streak crept on until it rested on Tom's face—the pretty boyish face, all red and disfigured with none of its old beauty left, but the brown eyes now veiled in slumber; and then it fell on Helen and on the thin little protecting arm, but the loving sister, whom the boy had meant to watch over, no longer needed his protection. God had taken care of her. That peace which passeth all understanding had fallen on her.

LINDA BELL COLSON.



A Southern hotel advertises among its attractions a "parlor for ladies thirty-five feet wide." We trust this paragraph will catch the eye of the woman who occupies three seats in a crowded car.

The latest device of the Church Sociable committee is to raise the temperature of the room to the roasting point in order to augment the sale of ice cream. It has been tried on the Colby university boys and works first rate.

"I don't know how it is," said the expressman, "but ever since our town went no licence, more'n half my packages are marked, 'Glass, handle with care.' I'm getting sick of it. I can't load or unload in twice the time I used to."

"Hm! Indians eat dogs," said a white youth in a slight quarrel with his Indian playmate. "Sshaw! White man eat oysters, ugh! No good! And crabs, too," remonstrated the little redman, drawing up his mouth to suit the occasion.

Absent-Minded Man (in a bobtail car): Conductor, I think I dropped a five-dollar gold piece in the box instead of a nickel. Street Car Driver: Well, sit down in the corner and ride it out. I'm very busy just now, and can't be bothered.

Aspiring Author: Of course you are fond of poetry, are you not, Miss Whipperly? Miss Whipperly: My maid is, I believe; but let us talk of something serious; tell me all about the entries for the Rensselaer kennel club dog show next month.

"How's beef to-day, Sparrib?" enquired Mr. Upson Downes, airily. "High, eh?" "If you want it on credit, Mr. Downes," replied the butcher, sternly, "It's on a hook about eleven feet up the wall. But it'll come down for cash, if I whistle."

Old Mr. Bentley: "I see that the two perforated-seat chair manufacturers in this town have consolidated and will hereafter do their work conjointly." Old Mrs. Bentley: "Yes, I s'pose one of 'em will make the seats and the other on 'em will make the holes."

They tell a good story of Ouida, the vitriolio author, at a swell English party. Mme. Patti was singing, and in the midst of her first bars Mme. Ouida spoke to her hostess. "Hush," said the lady of the house, "Patti is singing." "And I am speaking," said Ouida.

"I've got a complaint to make," said an office-boy to his employer. "What is it?" "The bookkeeper kicked me, sir. I don't want no bookkeeper to kick me." "Of course he kicked you! You don't expect me to attend to everything, do you? I can't look after all the little details of the business myself."

Street Car Driver: "Me and that off harse has been workin' for the company for twelve years now." Passenger: "That so. The company must think a great deal of you both." "Wall, I dunno; last wake the two of us was taken sick, and they got a docther for the harse, and docked me. Gid-ap, thare, now, Betsy."

Guest (attempting to carve): "What kind of a chicken is this, anyhow?" Waiter: "Dat's a genuine Plymouth Rocker, sah?" Guest (throwing up both hands): "That explains it, by George! I knew she was an old-timer, but had no idea she dated back there. Take'er away. I draw the line on the henhouse of the Mayflower."