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were gone (which was the real reason why the boys were planning such a fine, long holiday), and they had not thought it necessary to explain to Mandy all their arrangements for spending it. It was vacation, and in a way they were free to do what they chose; still, as Billy had hinted, it was just as well to avoid "fusses."

Downstairs in the house Mandy went blithely about her work. She swept and dusted and turned the house inside out, as was her habit when the owners went out of it. She did not stop to get a noon meal, but picked a bite as she went in and out of the pantry, and when the afternoon began to wear on toward three o'clock started her preparations for supper.

"I'd give a cookie to know where our old yellow cat has gone to!" she told a neighbour who came over to borrow a cupful of something. "She's been gone ever since early morning, and I'm afraid some of those boys have made way with her. I heard

em sputtering about her stealing their fish bait this morning. A dozen times I've thought I heard her yowling, but I can't find her anywheres."

"She come back all right," said the neighbour, easily. "I wouldna't worry. Maybe they have shut her up somewhere. Boys will be boys."

"Sometimes they're little—images," said Mandy, trying to think of a name that would express her feelings. "Turn about is fair play. I'd like to see some of them going around with tin pails dangling and their feet fitted into walnut shells—if there was any grew big enough—and taken up by their ears and 'scatted' within an inch of their lives every blessed time they showed themselves. They're cruel—that's what young folks are—cruel and thoughtless. And they call it having fun. I know one thing I believe, and that is they'll get their come-uppance some time or other. Folks do. I've often noticed it."

Little did Mandy know what a prophet she was, or how, even at that very moment, two sorrowful folks were getting it!

"I wish the folks would come home!" she went on, nervously. "I've cleaned up all the lower part of the house, but I've got that scary about being upstairs, 'specially out the back part, towards the barn way, that I won't go out there any more than I can help. Such a thumping and banging. Up in the boys' room its worst—right under the loft we use

for a store-chamber to dry herbs and things and lay away old truck. Thump, thump, thump, it goes—I'd think it was ghosts if 'twas only night, and ghosts wore wooden legs and went round stumping."

"Pooh!" said the neighbour, who wasn't superstitious. "Let me see your ghosts. I'm not afraid of any haunted chamber."

Mandy hesitated, but finally led the way upstairs, and the two women stood with faces uplifted toward the ceiling listening to the uncanny sounds that came from that eerie upper chamber.

"It is mighty curious-sounding!" admitted the visitor. "I'm sure I don't know what that sort of thumping means, and I'd as lief have a good stick in my hand when I go in."

"You ain't a-going in!" said Mandy. "Of course I am, but I'll take a good club along with me. There—look! look!" as Mandy opened the door, and they stood blinking in the darkness trying to make out the outlines of things stored there.

What they both saw quite plainly was what seemed to be a barrel moving and jumping about; an inverted flour barrel which rattled and banged and thumped around in a strange fashion for a good, old, respectable family flour barrel. It rose suddenly and jerkily, sidewise, as if it had been minded to turn a somersault, wavered an instant, then dropped back with a sullen thud, as if it had become discouraged and changed its mind again. Muffled cries and snarls came from somewhere—the garret seemed full of them.

Mandy was thoroughly frightened, and even the neighbour looked doubtful, but neither of them noticed who had "tagged" them from the floor below, and now stood looking on interestedly at the barrel's antics. Father had come back, and open doors had given him and mother the clue to Mandy's whereabouts, so they followed till they found her.

As the barrel rose again, father gave it one tremendous kick that sent it flying into the corner. As it rolled and spun over the floor, a big "tiger" cat sprang from under it and vanished, tail in air, through the open doorway.

"My poor, poor kitty!" cried mother, in indignant amazement, looking after it. "The boy that did that ought to suffer for it!"

"He will! he will!" said Mandy, tearfully and excitedly. "Think of that poor, little starved kitten being shut up there this livelong blessed day without a thing to eat or drink or breathe, hardly!"

"He has!" cried father, suddenly, from the foot of the stairway, where he had unhasped the door to go into the harness-room. "Boys, you'd better go upstairs and make your peace with your mother."

"We only did it just for the fun of it!" pleaded Billy.

"That's everything!" said Jerry.

"I guess I'd forgive 'em, mother," called father. "They know just how much fun it is."—Anna B. Bryant, in Congregationalist.

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