

## HOW BILLY WENT UP IN THE WORLD.

BY ANNETTE L. NOBLE.  
AT THE RED COASTAGE.—(Continued.)

Silas Bernard and Prissy Tarbox had undeniably reached years of discretion. Silas had been very devoted to Prissy for a long time. Prissy had been by turns, as Silas phrased it, "getatable," and then again not getatable. She declared she "never would be engaged until she got ready to be married, for what was the use?" Silas would not ask her to marry him until he was able to support her as well as she could support herself by dress-making, and so months and even years had gone by. Now Silas had a snug little sum in the bank, and he was quite ready and more than willing to marry Prissy. They were to remain in the little house, which had, however, undergone several decided changes. Two rooms had been added, and the whole painted and repaired. Granny was to remain there the same as before, for Silas was as fond of her as was Billy.

When Dr. Higbee returned, Billy requested leave of absence for the next night, and was told that he could attend the wedding, of which we will now go on to speak in detail.

It was a cold, starlit night in January when Billy arrived, a little late, at the cottage, and found assembled there a small but merry company. Prissy's new "parlor" was as pretty as her eye for bright colors, and her own good sense could make it, and Prissy herself was of course the centre of attraction. She looked as much like a rosy apple as ever, and was not half as scared as was Silas, who would lurk in out-of-the-way corners, conscious of an entree, so to speak, of good clothes, never experienced all at once before during his existence.

Mr. and Mrs. Ellery were there, making themselves agreeable to the friends and neighbors invited; for neither bride nor groom had any relatives present. Billy's first chat was with Prissy, whom he found giving a last look at the excellent supper, to be attended to later in the evening.

"How fine you look!" he exclaimed, admiringly.

"Well, I hope I ain't a perfect fright, Billy," she replied, straightening a platter of cold turkey on the table. "Si was for having me wear bride's white flumdiadilly, but I told him never! I could neither make butter nor go to prayer-meetin' in a white muslin, while a sensible dark blue cashmere I could wear, and turn and wash, and dye black when I got through with it for best. Where is Nan? I thought she was coming with you."

"No, her mother says Stan Ellery will bring her."

"Yes, I remember now, that Si said Stan thought it was such splendid sleighing, maybe Nan and he would ride over and bring some of their friends. There they are now, as likely as not."

There was a sound of sleigh-bells and merry voices, much stamping of feet and more laughter before the newcomers entered. Nan came first, then a fair, tall girl of about the same age, then Stan Ellery and Ned Fenton. Ned was introduced to Prissy, and Billy to the young lady, whose name was Sara Wells. While Stan went out again to put his horses in his uncle's barn, Ned said laughingly to Billy:

"I did not tell you I was invited, because I am not sure I was asked in any ordinary way; but Stan and Miss Ellery were kind enough to let me come."

Prissy assured him that all of Miss Nan's friends would be welcome, if the house would only hold them; so Ned proceeded to make himself at home. He did it in a pleasing, animating way, which Billy found as new as interesting. In less than half an hour he had talked with Mr. and Mrs. Ellery in a frank, intelligent fashion they greatly liked; he had sought out Silas, and made him almost forget that the minister was in the parlor, and that he had got to marry Prissy with a ring that he feared much he should drop. He had kindly seen to it that Sara Wells, who was left with people entirely unknown to her, and very decidedly he devoted himself later to Nan's entertainment.

Billy had never seen Nan Ellery look so bright and so altogether charming as to-night. Her eyes sparkled with mischief, and her cheeks were as brilliant as the rose-colored ribbons she wore with her dark and trim-fitting dress. She was overflowing with good spirits and ready to talk with

anybody. But Billy, for some unaccountable reason, could not walk boldly up to her and jest or tease her in the old familiar way. He envied Ned the ease, the half-deferential, half-confidential manner of address so natural to him. It must be pleasant, and it must make Ned liked by the people whom he thus approached.

There were half a dozen nice girls there, all old school-mates of Billy, but, much to their surprise, he was as dignified and ceremonious as if he had never begged them for their photographs or sent them remarkable valentines. They resented his gravity a little, but secretly they thought he had "improved;" therefore it was a pity that this last was just what he did not think about them. He watched them—and Nan, as the evening went by. He reflected that where Nan was sprightly, they were loud, in an innocent, rustic way, certainly, but their way made her way seem doubly pretty and refined.

"How do you get on, Billy, at the Academy?" she suddenly asked, standing at his side, and adding, in a minute, "reproach" to him, because you are so studious. That's a good boy!"

Billy was almost a six-footer; but it was not his size, as he stood looking down on Nan's soft hair and her mocking eyes—not that which made him feel that he was not a "boy" any longer. It was instead the clear realization that he should never think of Nan again as a little girl. His old care-free intercourse with her was at an end. He had begun to love her exactly as a young man like Ned Fenton, socially her equal, older, better read, more polished than he. Billy Knox was—as such an one might venture to love the young girl whom he hoped to win some day, and to marry. He glanced at the older Ellerys almost with fear. Nan, their only child, the pride of their hearts, the heir to their property—and Billy Knox whom they had taken from poverty and ignorance—what if they knew his thoughts? But his thoughts were honest, manly and tender ones, if they were perhaps presumptuous, and certainly not hopeful. Billy, at this crisis in his life, was almost morbidly humble. His past was too near him, his future too undefined, even in imagination. He could not believe wholly in Prissy Tarbox's prophecy that "Some day that Billy Knox will be as good as anybody, if he only keeps on behaving well."

Soon Nan gave Billy's elbow a jog, whispering, "Get out of the minister's way! How much room you take up! They are going to begin now!"

Somebody looked behind doors and secured Silas, who, once fairly captured, walked out bravely, while Prissy turned pale, but had presence of mind enough to stop exactly on the pink tulip in her carpet which she had previously selected to stand on during the ceremony. After the ceremony, which was, on Silas' account, mercifully made brief, supper was served.

Billy might have offered his services then to either Nan or Sara Wells, for Stan and Ned Fenton were blocked up in the opposite corner, and could not at once reach them; but he slipped quietly past to a spot where, a little out of the crowd, sat granny.

Her white hair was no softer than the delicate muslin cap that covered it, and her plain attire was dainty with careful touches. The happy excitement about her had made her as eager in enjoyment as a contented child. She caught Billy's arm with both her trembling hands and talked to him of her new "son-in-law," as she was pleased to call Silas. She laughed gleefully when Billy gallantly saluted her, declaring, if he could not get a chance to kiss the bride she would do quite as well; and after he brought her the kind and amount of supper she required she murmured lovingly:

"You have always been such a comfort to me, Ben; but you never stutter now-days, do you—and you have grown so strong."

After supper came another hour or two of simple enjoyment.

"Go and talk to Sara Wells," said Nan to Billy, in her imperative tone and coaxing smile. "She is one of the nicest girls you ever saw."

"I don't doubt it; but what shall I talk to her about? I don't know how to amuse young ladies, as Ned Fenton can."

"Amuse young ladies! A body would think she were a baby, and you had no rattle-box for her! Go and talk sense to her."

"Does Ned talk nothing but sense?"

"What Mr. Fenton talks has nothing to do with it. He adapts himself to everybody, and makes everything he says more or less entertaining."

"Yes, he does," returned Billy, with a humility so unusual that Nan gave him a sharp glance, which caused him to stammer out something about Miss Wells—"that she might not care to make his acquaintance."

"She cares to know all my friends, and I have often spoken to her of you."

"I wonder what you have said of me?"

"Why, what would I be likely to say?" asked Nan, half pettishly: "I've told her about home, and you were naturally mentioned as one of us."

Billy's eyes grew suddenly soft, and he exclaimed warmly: "It is very kind in you, Nan, to say 'one of us.'"

"What else should I say?"

"You might say truthfully: 'the poor boy my father took out of charity—the ignorant, graceless cub, whom nobody cared a cent to save.'"

Nan, though only yesterday a child, was now woman enough to feel by one keen intuition that some new emotion was stirring in Billy. Probably his ambition was awakened and his pride touched; but how she could not detect from his own words. She had behind her well understood propensity to tease, her mother's kind heart and her father's good sense. Now therefore she looked directly into Billy's face, saying: "I talk of you as you are, and not as you were years ago; you are not ignorant now, and you have plenty of friends. Don't be a goose, Billy, and get any poor spirited notions into your head."

The blood rushed into his face, his voice was low, but full of boyish eagerness, as he asked: "Tell me this truly, Nan.—If I make myself, by hard study and reading, to be really intelligent, if I am honest, industrious, and get on in the world, will good sensible people let my early life go for nothing against me?"

"My father was a poor boy, and he earned all his property, and worked hard for his education; does anybody remember that against him?"

"The young man's face was very bright, as he replied, 'No, indeed!'"

In a moment he continued, cheerfully, "I am glad to remember one thing; my mother came from a respectable Scotch family, and my father, when she married him, was a sober, decent man. I might have worse blood in my veins."

"Of course you ought to be glad of this; but what started you off on such a queer track at this late day? Go and talk now to Sara Wells, as I told you."

"I am very well contented."

"I am not. I want to go and plan for a skating match with the others. Your roommate has promised to teach me some marvelous performances on the ice."

Billy retreated immediately, and let her seek the "others." He would not have obeyed her orders, however, had not Sara Wells made a little effort to come near and talk to him. She was indeed a thoroughly "nice" girl, and Billy forgot he could not "amuse" her. They were before long as animated as possible over a subject which Stan Ellery somewhat later discovered to be geometry, and great was his laughter. He never talked mathematics at any girl, not he!

Stan always appeared to good advantage in a little company like this. Never troubled with bashfulness, he was free to talk with anybody or with everybody, individually and collectively. He was as dutiful as a son in his politeness to his aunt, while avoiding—when he could do so easily—his uncle. Stan was now his own master; but he chose to treat Mr. Ellery with the same old deference and outward respect. He never intended to forfeit any of his good opinion if he could retain it by such easy methods as smiles, bows and fair words. He was temperate, he gambled, he had low associations; but he knew how to be a pleasant hypocrite, for he had learned the art early.

As he stood talking with Billy, his uncle was silently watching him. Young as he was, his face seemed to the older man to wear already the marks of drunkenness and sensuality. From studying Stan, he turned at last to Billy; and thinking of his sturdy struggles toward an honorable manhood, the farmer said to himself: "It passes my comprehension. Stan came of a pure ancestry. His earliest associations were refined and

elevating. He has wealth, education and good manners; yet his instincts all seem depraved. Billy, on the contrary, comes out of villainess, and is perpetually working up towards the best things he learns of in life and principle."

Mr. Ellery's reflections were here cut short by the breaking up of the festivities. The sleigh-load of young people departed noisily. Prissy and Silas shook hands with each guest, and received their departing congratulations. Billy lingered with the last, to give the bride a modest little present he had brought her, and had not wished displayed. He also slipped into granny's hand a small gift, which she smilingly accepted. It was an amiable whim of Billy to provide her with a purse and to keep little sums of money in it. He liked to have her feel so "able to do anything," as she seemed to think herself when handling it. There was nothing about Billy that Stan Ellery found so "soft," as this: Billy's love for a "silly old grandmother, and not his own at that." Perhaps a third person might have discovered the nature of the difference between the young men, by reflecting on this softness in the rougher mannered one, and the inability to understand it in the one whose bearing was so gracious.

## SNARED AND STRUGGLING.

Doctor Higbee approved of Billy. He did not have to hear from the lady of the house that he flirted with the cook, or made himself in any way obnoxious. He "minded his business, and was not a fool," therefore the old man, having arrived at this conclusion, frequently gave him good advice, and interested himself in his aims and pursuits.

One day, as Billy was about leaving the office, he detained him by remarking: "You know Stan Ellery well, I suppose?"

"Not so much of him as you may think. I lived with his uncle while Stan was at the farm, lately I see him occasionally."

"He is going to the old boy," said the doctor calmly, uncorking a vial and touching his tongue to its contents. The process being a satisfactory test, judging from the grimace he made, he calmly continued:

"He's going straight to the old boy—but he is going slowly. He started early, and he will be long enough on the way to rope in and rain a dozen better fellows. He'll drink, and stand it for years; he'll gamble and win as a rule. He loves himself better than anybody else and isn't going to do anything desperate, openly disgraceful. He's fairly off for brains, and as for trickery and assurance—well, if he escapes Congress it will be almost a miracle! You wonder how an old chap like me knows so much about a young one, don't you? Perhaps I should admire him if I did not happen to be a doctor. He has dropped in here a few times, once with a sprained wrist, once with a sore throat; has chatted a little, asked no amount of advice, given me no confidence, but I've read him through and through. I don't have to look at a body's stomach to tell that it is disordered—or his conscience, either."

If Billy could have proved the untruthfulness of any one statement made by the old doctor he would not have been silent; as it was, he held his peace for a while before he remarked: "I haven't any influence over him. He is older and better educated than I am. He has always treated me well, but I have no doubt he looks down on me as being greatly his inferior. It is perfectly natural that he should do so."

"Maybe, Oh, I had no idea of setting you on Stan Ellery's track. If there's any influence going he'll be the one to exert it, and that brings me to the point. Ned Fenton is your room mate, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir," returned Billy, a little anxiously, for as an outgrowth of their life together he was becoming much attached to Ned.

"I've known Ned Fenton ever since he used to sit in his father's study and play at sermon writing. He is a fine, strong fellow, with a quick brain, not powerful; he is sensitive, seems a little lazy now; but he will be terribly excitable or morbidly melancholy, if his mind or body ever get over-wrought. I wish Stan Ellery would let him alone."

"I don't believe he has a very great deal to do with Ned."

"Would you know if he did have? You are busy, and are seldom in your room until ten or eleven at night. I've seen them together constantly lately, and in fact more or less in one another's company for a year." "Ned seldom talks of him."

"Stan might not care to have him talk of