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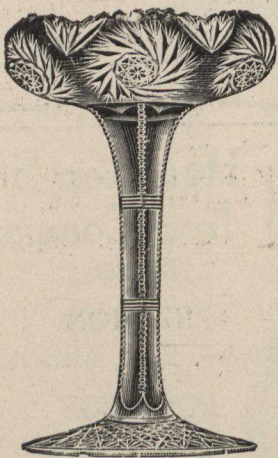
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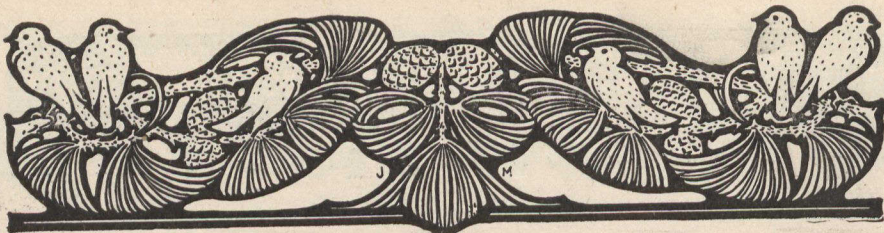


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FOR THE CHILDREN

THE "BANANA BOY."

By ELIZABETH HILL.

LONELY little Ned Goodwin stood at the gate, watching for the "banana boy." Twice a week, at noontime, the banana boy turned aside from his route along the main road and pushed his cart up to the Goodwin gate.

Pretty soon the hand-cart appeared round the corner, and then Ned saw with surprise that the banana boy had a little one trotting beside him—a dark, curly-headed youngster, about as large as Ned himself. The little boy was chattering blithely, but as they drew near, he gazed at Ned with shy yet friendly eyes.

"My leetle brudder," said the banana boy, as he wheeled his cart up. "He play with you."

He took a box of food from the cart, and seated himself on the grass. "Come," he said to the child, and the little brother snuggled at the big brother's side and reached up for a piece of bread—never once taking his glance from Ned's face.

Ned felt excited and bashful. To have a boy to play with! What fun! But he was not very polite about it—he turned and ran as fast as he could to his mother.

"Mother! Mother!" he shouted. "A boy! The banana boy's little brother."

Mrs. Goodwin went down to the gate to see the little boy who had come to play with Ned. When the banana boy saw her he stood up, pulled off his cap and smiled.

"My leetle brudder," he explained. "He all lona. Got no mudder—jusa me. I taka heem away from streeta boys. You leetle boy, he all lona, too. Dey playa some."

"What is his name?" asked Mrs. Goodwin.

"Tony," answered the banana boy. "An-to-nio."

"And yours?" she asked.

"My name Carlo. We 'Merican boys now. I talka 'Merican to heem all time." The big brother smilingly stroked the little one's curly head with a loving caress.

When the lunch was over, Ned and the little brother played together, and while they were running and shouting Mrs. Goodwin came down to the gate again.

"I hope you will bring him often," she said to the banana boy. "You might wheel your cart in at the carriage gate, and then they can play on the lawn."

So twice a week the two boys came to eat their dinner under the Goodwin elms, and Ned ate with them. Mrs. Goodwin saw that they had plenty of milk to drink, and the food that she supplied made it a feast to the visitors. After dinner there was always a half-hour of fun for the little ones; and for the next three days Ned could talk of nothing else.

At last, one day the banana boy came alone. His face looked troubled and he was absent-minded and sad.

"What is the matter, Carlo?" asked Mrs. Goodwin. "And where is Tony?"

"He ees seeck. ma'am. I hafa leave heem all lona."

"Isn't there any one to look after him?"

"No, ma'am. Da woman nex' door, she go away to worka. I musta go queeck now."

"Go right home and fetch him to

me," said Mrs. Goodwin. "I will take care of him until he gets well again."

So the banana boy brought his little brother to Mrs. Goodwin, and she nursed him. Carlo sat beside him for hours, singing softly sweet Italian songs, the folk-songs of his own home land, in a voice that was pure and sweet. Then, when the little brother began to mend, and the big one had to leave him by day to go on the banana route, always at evening-time the singing was resumed. "Sing, Carlo, sing!" the voice coaxed; and the sweet notes would swell and soar—gaily now, because the little brother was better and Carlo was happy. He was such a good brother; he could not do enough in every way for the little sick one.

"How he loves that child!" said Mrs. Goodwin to the doctor. "It is like a father's, and how he sings to him!"

And the doctor agreed and said that such a wonderful voice ought to be cultivated.

"I think so myself," replied Mrs. Goodwin. "I do not think that anything beautiful should be wasted, and if Carlo has a voice, some way should be found to teach him. I will write a note to our organist, and ask him to call this evening while Carlo is singing."

So Mrs. Goodwin wrote the note, and the organist came; and before long Carlo was taking a singing lesson twice a week. And now he does not peddle bananas, but works for the doctor, and goes to evening-school. The little brother goes to school, too—with Ned, while both of the boys live at Ned's home.

* * *



The Zoo, (A D. 2600)

"Yes, children, that is a horse—one of those animals I told you about in the fairy stories."—Pall Mall Magazine.

* * *

EXTINGUISHED.

"The boy stood on the burning deck whence all but him had fled"—When Tommy Gibbs stood up to speak he had it in his head,

But when he saw the schoolroom full of visitors, he knew, From his weak knees and parching tongue, the words had all fled, too.

"The boy stood on the burning deck"—he felt the flames and smoke. His tongue was thick, his mouth was dry, he felt that he would choke.

And from the far back seats he heard a whisper run about: "Come back, Tom, and take your seat. They've put the fire out!"

—Youth's Companion.

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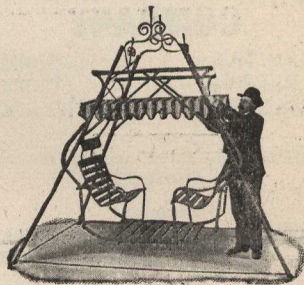
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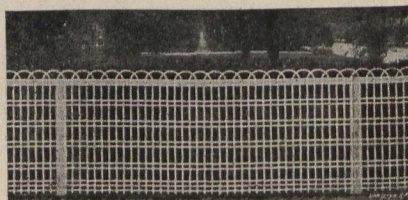
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