

when Mrs. Brown had rushed into the bedroom to tell her husband that Sam had come home, then had hurried back to stoop over her son, and wrap the blanket closer round his shoulders.

"Why, yes; Rufus would be just tickled to come out to a spread like this," replied Mrs. Brown, lifting her hands in astonishment, for Cassie and Daisy were setting the table for tea. "We have not had anything but pork and beans for a week, and I'm fair sick of the sight of 'em, and the smell, too."

Dick and Alf hustled off into the next room to assist at Mr. Brown's toilet, while Ned helped Daisy to toast tea-cakes, and Cassie poured the melted snow-water from the saucepan into a kettle in readiness for making the tea.

The blanket in which Sam was wrapped was a brown one, very big and warm, brought by the surprise party. There was also a blue and red bedspread, which Cassie suggested putting round the rheumatic shoulders of Mr. Brown to keep away wandering draughts.

"You are burning the cakes!" cried Daisy to Ned, who was so busy staring at Rufus Brown in the red and blue wrapper that he forgot what he was doing.

"And you have burned your cake, too, just a little," said Cassie, as she took them both for buttering. "Now I'm going to make the tea, and while it is drawing, we will see if we've got everything just all right."

"Nothing missing," said Dick, proceeding to count the things. "A cold chicken, half a ham, two pork pies, twelve sausage rolls, two jellies, three big currant cakes, seed cake, rock cake, railway buns, mince pies. Daisy, where are the jam-turnovers? I know mother made some."

"Here they are in this empty saucepan," said Daisy. "There were no more dishes or plates or trays, so I put them in a saucepan; it is a nice clean one, and they are quite handy on this shelf."

"Don't trouble about seats for us," said Alf; "we would much rather skirmish round and help ourselves."

"I shall sit on this round box," said Ned, dragging a cheese-box from under the table, and sitting down upon it with a bounce.

It was that bounce which brought disaster. There was a cracking, splitting noise, and Ned, shutting up like an umbrella, disappeared inside the box, while only the soles of his stout little boots remained visible.

The others laughed so much that it was some minutes before they could pull him out and set him on his feet again. Then Cassie turned with an air of rueful apology to Mrs. Brown.

"I am so sorry the box has been broken. I will ask mother if she has one like it, that she can spare for you, then the boys shall bring it up to-morrow."

"Don't you go a-worrying about that box, my dear; it is worth having it broken to hear all of you laughing," said Mrs. Brown. "And then I'm not forgetting that you have brought me my Sam home again, and that is worth more than a hundred old cheese-boxes."

Cassie poured out the tea. There were only three cups, two mugs, and a basin; but they managed quite nicely. Reserving the cups for the Browns, Cassie gave Daisy the little blue mug, used the red one, which was cracked, herself, and gave the three boys their tea in the basin.

"It is a beautiful treat, that it is, sitting here like a lady and taking my tea, with nothing to do but enjoy it," murmured Mrs. Brown, as she nibbled her cake with great relish.

Just then there came a whine outside the door, followed by a scratching noise, and Cassie, who was sitting on a three-legged stool, jumped up in a great hurry, knocking the stool over with a bang. "May I let the dog in, please? I'm sure he wants to share the fun."

"Do as you like, Missie dear; he won't bite folks that are inside, though he is a bit rough on them that are outside," replied Mrs. Brown.

"I don't think he will hurt me," Cassie said with a laugh. "I gave him some cake just now, and he is sure to remember. Mother says animals always do; it is only people who forget."

The dog came in wagging his tail, and looking as if he enjoyed surprise parties more than anything else in the world. He had some tricks, too, and when Rufus Brown called out sharply, "Now, Towser!" the creature just dropped

on the floor, stretched his legs out, and gave such a dismal, sighing groan that Daisy cried out:

"Oh, the poor, dear dog is really dead!" But just then Towser came to life with great suddenness, for Dick dropped a piece of cake on his nose, and they all laughed at the eager way in which he snapped it up.

Then Rufus Brown told him to sing a song, and shutting one eye, whilst he flung his head up, Towser howled in such a truly dismal fashion that they all shouted to him to leave off. But he mistook the shouting for applause, and howled and howled, until they had to stuff a big piece of cake in his mouth to stop the noise.

After that, Sam said he would sing, but he was still weak from his adventure in the snow, and he had very little voice. He had also forgotten most of the words, and had to fill in the gaps with something that sounded like um-un-um.

But they cheered him tremendously, and rattled the crockery, so that he flushed with pleasure at the praise.

Leaf Ladies

By Nancy Byrd Turner

The three children filing across the meadow looked rather forlorn. It was the first time that they had ever spent a week on grandfather's farm, and the very day after their arrival their mother had been suddenly called away. When the buggy drove off with her, a cloud seemed to settle over everything; all three children, Jack, Virginia, and little Sue, felt unhappy and even a little cross.

"No one to take us round, no one to show us things!" grumbled Jack. "I wish we hadn't come!"

"There's Molly!" cried Virginia suddenly. "Listen! She's always singing. I don't think she was ever discontented in her life."

Molly was a girl who lived on the next farm. She was round-faced and jolly; if she ever was discontented, no one knew it. She came down the path swinging her basket and singing. At sight of the mournful line of children, she stopped short and crinkled her face in a smile.

"Mother's gone," explained Jack. "And we don't know what to play or what to do with ourselves."

"I see," said Molly. She stood quite still and her eyes took on a far-away look. "Oh, by the way," she asked briskly, a moment later, "did you ever know the Leaf Ladies?"

The children answered with one voice that they did not. Their bored look vanished and their faces brightened.

Molly took little Sue by the hand and began to walk on. "I'll introduce you, then, of course," she said. She led them through a brown cornfield and across a dry, spicy meadow, then, where the meadow touched the edge of a big wood, she made them all sit down. "You wait here, and I'll ask the ladies to come."

Jack and Virginia and Sue were all looking pleased and interested when she came back, a few minutes later. "Now," said Molly, taking her seat and putting a hand under the lid of her basket, "here they are—or as many as I could call together in such a short time. I will introduce them to you."



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No. 1 This is the first of the twelve Hun Beating Proverb Pictures. What proverb does it represent?

You may find the answer to the Proverb Picture No. 1 here:

The hypocrites' hopes shall perish. Hasty climbers have sudden falls. He that sows iniquity shall reap sorrow.

Who takes up the sword shall perish by the sword.

Peace begins where ambition ends. He who exalts himself shall be humbled.

Where villainy goes before, vengeance follows after.

Forces come at last to the furrier. Big heads have big aches.

Punishment follows close on the heels of crime.

To the wicked, misfortune comes triple.

Force can never destroy right.



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