

HOW NATHAN SAVED HIS COW.

BY THE REV. E. A. RAND.

Nathan Pinkham could not eat his supper.

"Billion!" asked his wife Sally in sharp head-tones.

Nathan shook his head.

"Fain anywhere?"

Another shake of the head.

Here Sally planted her hands on her hips. In Sally's case, this meant business, and she generally succeeded in what she undertook. Her business now was to find out what might be the matter with Nathan.

"Chirk up, Nathan. Have they got to shut down at the blind factory?"

"No"; a positive, deep, cheerless bass. It was the first word spoken, "No."

"No! Well, what is it? You don't eat, you only say 'No,' and you look like Bear Mountain in a storm. Have you been pizen?"

Nathan did smile at this.

"There, chirk up! It is good to see you smile. Now out with it and say what is on your mind."

"Well, Sally, I s'pose we've got to part with our cow and—"

"Sakes!" exclaimed the vigorous Sally fairly jumping toward the scullery. "Children, what do you think father says?"

Of course, they knew no more about it than the man in the moon. There were about a dozen Pinkhams of various ages and sizes whose imagination had filled the dusky, stone-floored scullery with bright-blooming shrubs and they were indulging in that charming, historic play, "Down in the garden." They now made a rush toward the supper-table in the kitchen.

"Father!" "Father!" "Oh my!" "Who says so?" "When?" "What for?" "How?" "When will she go?" "Poor moolie!" "Oh dear!" were a few of the exclamations flying toward Nathan like a cloud of Indian arrows.

"I will tell you, children," said Nathan. He was the very opposite of Sally. He was short and she was tall. He was thick and she was thin. He had deep, lugubrious eyes and a deep, lugubrious voice; her voice was high and her eyes were like electric lights. He was melancholic and she sanguine as a June morning.

"You see," said Nathan, "I bought that cow, six months ago, and promised Hiram Grover—who raises a lot of stock in Oakville, you know—to give him his pay by this month. But all this time I have only paid fifteen dollars. Well, you know I was sick and—"

"And we are such eaters!" interposed Katie Pinkham.

"I am glad you are," said Nathan looking proudly about on the Pinkhams, who, while not unusual for their head-measurement, took up a good deal of tape string when it came to the waist. "Well," continued Nathan, "the upshot of it all is that Grover met me on my way home to-day. He was a bit rough and says he's come Monday to drive the cow home. I asked him to wait a bit longer, but he said he was afraid that soon there wouldn't be any cow left, with such a family."

"The impudence!" exclaimed Sally.

"I wish he was here and I'd show him how to walk," squeaked the small Tommy holding up a fist of the size of a Banian hen's egg.

"What can be done? I am sure I haven't the money. You know it's a splendid cow, worth fifty dollars, and there's thirty-five due."

"Here's sassin towards it, papa. You may have that. Here's sassin!"

It was tiny May that spoke, her face old for a child and yet sweet as one of those old faces that the pansy hides out its velvety surface for the sun to kiss. As she spoke, May had a penny in her papa's lap.

All the Pinkhams felt an impulse to laugh, "Ha-ha! Ha-ha!" Then they felt it to be their duty and privilege to clap, and shout, "Bravo!"

"Bless you, child!" said the father, and this time not the sun but Nathan Pinkham kissed the pansy face. He smiled, but it was sad as a gleam of sunshine before a snow squall.

"Now chirk up," shouted the sanguine Sally. "All you want now is thirty-four dollars and ninety-nine cents. Chirk up!"

"Here's seven cents towards it, that I earned doing an errand," said Howard Pinkham advancing.

"Hurrah!" screamed Sally with an air as if waving the American flag. "The cow-fund is growing! All you want now is thirty-four dollars and ninety-two cents. Well, father, don't you worry. We will all take hold and help, and will make a way, you know. We will all help, won't we, children?"

The young Pinkham mouths opened in course as they shouted back, "Yes!"

"There, father keep your head up and keep lively," continued his stimulating spouse. "Everybody knows you are honest. I have that ambition for you, father, that I want to bury you a poor honest man."

"Not yet, mother," groaned Nathan.

"No, I can't spare you yet, but when the time comes I want all that pass to say, 'There lies an honest man.'"

"I'll do as much for you, mother," said Nathan winking.

"Oh dear," said Sally when alone the next morning in the kitchen, "I did all that I could to chirk up Nathan, last night, but I do feel that the prospect is bad. However, there's my rag-bag, and so, as May would say, 'Here's sassin.' Children," she called aloud.

The youngsters in the Pinkham brood not old enough nor well enough to go to school flocked about her.

"Hunt all through the house for the rag-man is comin' down the road, and anything like a rag that you can see, be sure to scrape and rake, and then begin again, and take and scrape. Paper, too, any old newspapers you can find."

The result of this was that the rag-man handed her twenty-five cents.

"Children, we only want thirty-four dollars and sixty-seven cents."

"Mother," said Jimmy, "I saw some old books up garret."

"Do you buy old books, sir?" inquired the head scraper and raker addressing the rag-man.

"Jabbers, mem, it's books that I'm not fairly equal to. It's the literary that's not my line, but I knows a foine, loikely looking man as ye ever laid yer eyes on. He's quite an aquarium, mem, on buyin' up books, an' I'll send him to ye this very day."

The rag-man kept his word, and up came the antiquarian book-buyer. To Sally's surprise and delight, he gave her five dollars for an awful lot of books, lattered and banged, but worm-eaten, musty and old. That was enough for an antiquarian.

"Now, children," called out the head scraper and raker, "we will go all over the barn."

O, thee!" said lisping Tobias, "Thereth thum iron," pointing at a rough little pile in a corner.

"Yes, that's it. Hunt up all you can," replied Sally.

The Pinkham barn was very small, but to Sally's joy, besides this heap, the tire of an old wheel turned up, having ceased forever to turn round. Then some broken wedges were found. The iron when sold brought seventy-five cents.

Sally now went to her cooking. She was grating nutmeg into some plain gingerbread, and used the nutmeg because the ginger had given out, as things were likely to do in the Pinkham family pretty often.

"In thow work, mother," said Tobias.

"Yes, Tobias, to me it's the slowest of slow work, but it was mother's old grater and I like to use it, and if you will keep gratin', you'll get quite a heap."

"No, but if we keep on getting money, we thall have our cow."

"Why, yes. That gives me a tech of courage. Keep gratin'! We will make it our motto."

But what could be done now?

"If the nutmeg gives out," thought Sally, "what's the use to keep gratin'?"

Looking out of the kitchen window and glancing down the road, she saw the early dandelions. Bright, sunny, handsome fellows, they had put on their gold caps, and were marching down the road in gay procession.

"Children, let's dig some dandelions and we may sell them up at the tavern," suggested Sally. They did so, and it brought fifty cents more to the cow-fund.

When Nathan came home that night Sally handed him the twenty-five cents received for rags.

"Now, father, you only want thirty-four dollars and sixty-seven cents. Here's

seventy five cents we got for old iron. Five from seven leaves—leaves two—and seven from six—from—oh dear! What is it, Ann Emily! You did it on your slate!"

"Thirty-three dollars and ninety-two cents."

"After her cookin', I found a leetle more iron that I wanted to keep a secret from the children, though it was only ten cents, and that cuts it down to thirty-three dollars and eighty-two cents. We kept gratin', and some dandelions brought us fifty cents, which leaves thirty-three, thirty-two. And, father, look here! Last but not least!"

She held up the five dollar bill.

"This we got for old books, and it leaves twenty-eight dollars and thirty-two cents, only."

Nathan was delighted.

"I feel, Sally, less than ever like bein' berried—just now—a poor, honest man."

"St up, Nathan."

"Well, I can take that pile of debt down five dollars' worth, for I got a chance to work extra time, evenings, for ten days, and it will count up five dollars. Wanted, twenty-three dollars and thirty-two cents!"

All the Pinkhams began to cheer.

"Father, it does me good to see you so lively," said Sally. Down in her heart, which was like a deep well, full of the waters of comfort for others, and yet like a deep well it would be dark, Sally was saying, "Where shall we get the rest?" But her resolute spirit permitted no confession. Nothing was said about difficulties. Whatever tears she had were boxed up in the heart.

"The money will come somehow," declared the Pinkhams great and small.

"You just wait," said Howard Pinkham in the morning, "till Sherwood and I go to Oakville and see if we can't get some work. We are goin' to 'keep gratin', mother."

The Pinkham brothers started out brave as knights to take a castle, but alas there was no Oakville castle to be taken! Nobody wanted help.

"Shall we try any more?" asked Sherwood, whose face by this time was pretty long.

"Keep gratin'!" said Howard. "We will try once more, anyway."

They knocked hesitatingly at a door which was opened by a woman and she asked pleasantly, "What do you want?"

"Have you anything by way of work for us to do?" asked Howard.

She shook her head, and then asked, "Where do you live?"

"At the 'Four Corners.'"

"Did you walk?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You must be tired. Come in and rest."

As they sat down by the stove on whose broad top a tea kettle was singing a lively tune, a man in a long, blue driver's coat entered the room, and, passing to the sink, began to wash his hands.

"Then you want work," said the woman.

"Yes, ma'am," answered Howard readily.

He was very social and communicative, always willing, his mother said, to tell all he knew and more too. "We have got to lose our cow if we don't look out, and we want to earn something and save her."

"Yes," added Sherwood who desired to pull an oar in the conversation that had been launched, "we all want to do something, or 'sassin' as May said, and she started it by bringing father a cent. Then mother has been selling her rags and her books and her iron and father said she looked with a longin' eye at his clothes as those would fetch some money. The next thing will be to sell ourselves, he says."

"All this time, the man in blue kept washing his hands."

"But how is it boys, you have got to lose your cow?" asked the woman.

"Father hasn't paid for her yet," replied Howard. "He—he—"

Here Sherwood who was aching for a chance to help along the conversation, broke in, "Yes—he is goin' to pay for her though and—he'll pay—pay the man who, I believe, lives down at Oakville, Hiram Grover—though I don't know him."

"Why, Hiram!" exclaimed the woman. The man in blue revolved at once. He was now wiping his face with a towel, and every other word, the towel went into his mouth, as the mouth was a big one and the towel a small one.

"I'm the—one, Susan—but—I've been—"

waiting—for—for—my pay—and didn't see—see—any chance—to get it."

"Make it easy though, Hiram."

The man ceased his wiping and this relieved his mouth.

"I don't mean to crowd, but I think I ought to have my pay. Look here, boys, you tell your father to bring me what money he can, the time I set. Then I will give you two boys suttin to do, and that I dare say will fetch the balance."

"O, thank you," said the Pinkham brothers in unison.

"And I thank you, Hiram," said his wife. The boys went off as if sailing in a balloon, Mrs. Grover having first stuffed their pockets with gingerbread, and whispering, "I would give the cow to you for your splendid efforts if I could."

"O, we'd rather pay, thank you," said Howard proudly.

That night, there was a jubilee in the Pinkham kitchen. Plenty of music though wholly vocal. Only one shadow darkened this bright occasion as Sally said, "I've lost my mother's grater."

A cloud swept over the company, but somehow it added no shadow to the usually sober face of Nathan. Indeed, sunshine took the place of shadow.

He put his hand into his pocket, pulled out an object and held it up. It was the missing grater.

"I have been keeping this a surprise and here it is, showing that if I am poor, I am honest and deserve a burial."

"Stop, Nathan! Now where did you get it?"

"When I went by the junk-store, to-day, the clerk there, Sam Weevil, said, 'I found this in your wife's old iron, her second lot—thin, you know, and we don't want it, and perhaps your wife does.'"

"I suppose I tucked her in and didn't know it," said Sally. "I was a scrapin' and ra' in' round. It is a wonder I didn't put myself in. I am so glad to get this, for it has helped us."

"There, I want to hang her on the wall!"—declared Nathan also applying the feminine gender to the beloved object—"and I want to put something under her that the children may see it."

"Soon, the grater was suspended from a nail and underneath was the motto "Keep Gratit'"—*Morning Star.*

STEADFAST IN FAITH.

I was called, in Philadelphia, to visit a sick girl in a very worldly and irreligious household, with whom I had but little acquaintance, and went anticipating only a painful visit of warning to a careless soul.

To my astonishment, I found a gentle child of grace, perhaps eighteen years of age, sinking in consumption, but perfectly clear in mind, and happy in hope. "How," I asked, "have you learned all this in your condition here?" Her answer was most precious. "I had a faithful Sunday-school teacher; and though I left her some years ago, and never gave her much satisfaction, yet when I was taken sick I took my Bible and went over the lessons she used to teach me, and God has taught me here alone."

She then showed me her little Bible, turned down and marked with many Sunday-school lessons, her constant and loved companion.

Dear child, she had no other religious companion. But she departed in sweet peace and hope, and my visits to her while she lived were full of satisfaction and delight, similar incidents of actual conversion under Sunday-school instruction have occurred in such numbers, that I might fill many sheets of paper with them.—*Rev. Dr. Tyng.*

SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN ST. PETERSBURG.—The *Southern Scholastic* has a very interesting account of the founding of the first Sunday-school in St. Petersburg. A lady who had been a teacher in a Sunday school at Stuttgart, and who went to live at St. Petersburg, told the German pastor there of "the beautiful work," and begged him to begin the same in St. Petersburg. The work was strange to the Pastor, and he already preached three times on the Sunday. But still the lady persisted and brought him all sorts of papers, showing the benefits of Sunday-schools. On Jan. 15, 1878, the first Sunday-school in St. Petersburg was begun with forty-three children. Now there are Sunday-schools connected with all the large churches, wherein about 1,500 children receive Christian teaching.

C. W. ST.

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