

HAPPY DAYS

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THE OLD MANOR-HOUSE.

Beatrice is a little English girl who lives in a dear old-fashioned manor-house in one of the quaint old towns of England. The house was built by the great-great-grandfather nearly two hundred years ago. It is, therefore, ancient-looking and in places is falling into decay. But as it is built so firmly of rough grey granite it is likely to withstand the ravages of time for a great while yet.

It is surrounded by a magnificent park in which are many grand old oaks and stately poplars. From the old library window with its quaint diamond-shaped panes, one obtains a very fine view of a bit of rural England. The window faces the west, and in the distance are the beautiful Berkshire hills. Often little Beatrice comes with her doll and enjoys the lovely sunsets. Not far off is the parish church, and we see through one window part of the church-yard, "where heaves the turf in many a mouldering mound."

WHAT A SPIDER DID.

A prisoner in Holland was lying on the wretched heap of straw in the corner of his cell, which was the nearest approach to a bed that could be seen there. The man, who was a Frenchman, and had been imprisoned for talking of liberty and equal rights to the subjects of the stadtholder of Holland, and for months he had pined in this dismal prison.

He was not asleep now, but sat propped up on his elbow, intently watching a black spider busy with his web. When the prisoner, whose name was Dis Jonval, first saw the spider at work in that dark corner, he felt glad of even so insignificant and silent a companion. He was quite interesting, too, on longer acquaintance, and by studying his habits the prisoner gained a great deal of information. The spider never appeared during

bad weather, and Dis Jonval was able to predict frost at least a week before it came simply by watching the spider's movements and noting his own feelings. When the spider kept securely housed, that Frenchman was almost sure to have a bad headache.

Meanwhile the French general, Pichegru, with a large force, advanced sudden-

The word was given, and the dikes were cut. A flat country, the greater part of it below the level of the sea, Pichegru found in the Holland seas a far greater foe than the Holland armies. The Dutch land was all a swamp. The Frenchmen could not advance, could hardly retreat. The fate of Anjou and his gallant army seemed in store for him. He had waited until the winter set in before he had given the command for the forward movement, for the wily general had anticipated the tactics of the stadtholder.

But the weather had suddenly shifted, until it was almost as mild as summer. The next day no spider appeared, and the Frenchman felt very lonely. Three days passed without seeing him. Dis Jonval thought his head had never ached so before. He talked to the gaoler who had brought in his meals, and found him more friendly than he had expected. From him he heard of the advance of Pichegru's army, and the trap laid for its destruction.

"You see, mynheer," added the man, "your countrymen depended upon hard water. If a frost had come he certainly would have taken the city; but as it is, he will soon have to retreat to Belgium."

A sudden light fell upon Dis Jonval, and, thanks to the spider and his headache, he began to see his way out of prison. "If a frost had come!" It was coming now! The army would be saved, Utrecht would be taken, and he—

He pleaded hard with the gaoler, as a man pleads for life and freedom, to bring him pen, ink, and paper, and smuggle a note for him through the line to the French general, who would probably exchange a Dutch prisoner for him with the stadtholder; and finally the man agreed to do the errand.

All that the note contained was a simple explanation about the spider who had not appeared for three days, and the



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ly into Holland. But this did not trouble the stadtholder, who could rely upon his "waterworks" on all such emergencies. He simply retired, and when the French army was well in the centre of the country he adopted against the invaders the old-time tactics that years before had baffled Spanish Alva, and had cost a French king's brother a splendid army.