

HAPPY DAYS

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THE BROKEN PITCHER.

Being the only child, Benny Grey had to do various kinds of work on the farm and around the house. He helped his mother wash dishes, he could handle the mop and clean the kitchen floor just as deftly as she could, and often he helped her prepare the meals. He was clumsy, and often broke things, but she knew he did not mean to be careless, and she overlooked his mistakes, as a loving mother does. When she was laid aside by a severe headache, which was often the case, then Benny proved her willing nurse and helper. She said she did not think she could keep house without him.

He had to assist his father also in out-of-door work. He drove home the cows, assisted by Rover, his faithful friend; hoed the potatoes and

corn, spread and raked hay, and did many other things that a farmer's boy has to. He really did not have much time for himself, especially when he went to school.

One day his mother was sick in bed with a very severe headache, and Benny had to get the meals ready for his father. It was in the haying season, and the boy



TWO FRIENDS.

was busy in the hay-field until nearly noon, when he hurried to the house and placed upon the table a platter of cold meat, bread and butter, an apple pie, and other food he found on the pantry shelves. He ate his dinner hastily, because he was in a hurry to get back to the hay-field as a storm was approaching and his father

told him to "be quick." He had just started for the field, with pitchfork in hand, when his father called him back.

"Hey, Benny; you've forgotten my cider. Go down in the cellar and get a pitcherful for me!"

Benny came back, took a brown pitcher from the closet, and started for the cellar. He did hate to draw cider; he never drank any of it, and wished his father would not make it nor drink it. The pitcher was of a queer shape, old-fashioned, and had been in the family for years, and was always called "the cider pitcher." As he was going up the cellar steps the boy stumbled, lost his footing, and fell to the ground. He was somewhat bruised, but the pitcher was more badly hurt than he, for it had a hole knocked in the bottom through which the cider trickled out.

Benny felt badly over his mishap, for he knew his father would scold, and sure enough he did when the boy entered the room with the broken pitcher in hand. He told the boy that he was careless, and did more harm than good in whatever he undertook. That was not really true, but the man was so provoked over the loss