

Our Young Folks.

—For Truth.
VALMAR THE TRUTH-TELLER.

BY MRS. C. JEWETT.

Once upon a time, long and long ago, there lived in a far land a great king. His palace was built of silver, and his treasury was full of gold. His queen was as good as she was beautiful, and as beautiful as she was good. His servants served him faithfully, and his people loved him loyally; in all the world there was naught to trouble him, save one thing only. The royal prince, his eldest son; a well-grown lad and fair to look upon, was grievously afflicted. There was no trace of disease on his ruddy cheeks, and all his limbs were strong and well proportioned. His mind also was as vigorous as his body. No lesson daunted him and no task appalled.

In spite of all this, however, he was a shame to his mother, a disgrace to his father, and a terror to all with whom he came in contact. Every one, from king to page, from queen to scullion, had suffered by reason of his infirmity.

Every one knew his weakness, and thoroughly understood that the little prince could never by any possibility speak the truth; yet daily tumult and discord and ill-feeling clung about him like an evil atmosphere.

The king lost his appetite, and the cooks trembled for their lives. The queen's fresh color faded, and all the dressmakers and milliners shook in their shoes.

To such a pass did things at length arrive, that it was thought necessary to take more vigorous measures than were commonly resorted to for the healing of royal maladies. It was determined, therefore, to seek the advice of the Wizard of the Wind-Mill; an ancient and oft-times inaccessible authority on all diseases of morals and manners. This remarkable personage dwelt in a wind-mill that crowned the highest peak of a lofty mountain, known as Gullible, and lying a day's journey to the east-west of the king's palace.

The court physician suggested the experiment, after all his own drugs and simples had failed lamentably. It was favorably commented on by the chaplain, and hailed with delight by the lath-like whipping boy. The king, glad to catch at any straw of comfort, ordered immediate preparations to be made for the journey; and one pleasant morning in the early spring, the cavalcade set forth.

They rode hard all day, scarcely stopping for necessary rest and refreshment. After a long and breathless climb up the rocky sides of an almost perpendicular mountain they halted in front of gigantic wind-mill, whose arms were whirling swiftly, driven by a stiff cold breeze.

Haunting to them, leaping from one to another, dancing about like a crazy blow-ball, they saw the Professor; but although they hailed him repeatedly, standing bare-headed in the blast, bowing and sneezing with the greatest humility, not the slightest notice did he deign them. If anything, he flew faster, and leaped harder among the flying beams.

At last the king, nearly frozen and quite discouraged, gave orders for the homeward journey. Then, and not till then, the Wizard spoke.

"Leave my fee," he cried shrilly, and his voice falling from so great a height, was like to the sound of bending trees, or the rushing of great waters. "Leave my fee, I will take it when you take your leave; and be assured that the young prince shall be well cured."

The king ordered his servants to place upon the threshold a bag of gold and silver coin; and then through the darkness and the cold the cavalcade rode slowly homeward. The little prince was so weary and so sleepy that he did not once open his mouth, save to yawn dully, and seeing him so silent the king was fain to believe the Wizard.

The next day, however, having eaten heartily and rested well, the boy was quite himself again; and cried out boastfully:

"A fig for the Wizard, and a fig for his wind-mill; I myself could jump as high as he swings, and come down knowing no more than when I went up."

Alas for the little prince! No sooner had the words left his lips than, like a rubber ball, he bounced from the earth. Up! up! up! he went, until his legs and arms and flying curls made but a tiny speck against the blue glory of the sky.

Spell-bound, the people watched him, growing smaller and smaller as he ascended higher and higher; until the queen cried out, in a terrible voice:

"Fools! dolt! will you see your prince dashed in pieces before your eyes and never lift a hand to help him? Fly quickly and bring beds and pillows before it is too late."

Then they all rushed hither and thither; and from the palace window, big beds, little beds, puffs and pillows, fell like rain; and when presently the little prince began to grow larger on his swift descent, a huge and downy heap awaited the shock of his coming. They picked him up very sick and dizzy, but otherwise none the worse for his unexpected journey. Indeed he was much better, for all the untruth was—for the time at least—shaken out of him.

The king, in his delight, engaged three new cooks; and the queen gave dinner parties every day. As for the whipping boy, he grew so round and fat for lack of exercise that his clothes broke in several places. Perhaps being quite sure as to his cure, made the little prince careless, for one day he quite forgot himself.

The queen had just returned from a ride, and was praising warmly the grace and beauty of a favorite white palfrey, when the child broke in—quite in the old way:

"Why, the horse is a good beast enough, but nothing uncommon, I myself could out-run him and never stop to rest."

Alas! alas! for even as he spoke the white horse sped through the court-yard gate, his flying hair, his silver shoes, flashing in the sunlight; and close beside him dashed the little prince.

Neck and neck, and away together, the strangest race that ever was run. The white horse's flanks were dripping, and the boy's breath came in quick, hot gasps, but neither for a moment slackened speed.

Far behind them, hither-skitter, rode the king and queen, the lords and ladies, the doctors, lawyers, dukes and pages.

All the long summer evening the race continued. The poor queen threw away her crown and tied her apron over her head, while the king tore along in his white shirt sleeves.

But ever further, and further away fled the silver-shod steed and the golden-haired boy.

At last, when every one was drooping and fainting with fatigue, the white horse was seen to shudder, stumble and pitch forward. A moment after the little prince fell beside him.

They picked him up tenderly from beside the poor dead animal and carried him home, laying him, white and speechless, on his own white bed.

Then they all stood about, anxious and fearful, while the court physicians brought their minds to bear upon a case at once so extraordinary and unprecedented. They found the prince quite uninjured, only bruised and shaken, and lame, and tired, whereupon everybody else found themselves bruised and shaken, lame, tired, and cross as well. Under the circumstances it was not to be wondered at, and the king couldn't blame them; no more could the queen. A lesson so sharp could not fail to make an impression on the young prince, and for weeks he hardly dared open his lips.

So well did he guard them that he came to be looked upon quite as a model of discretion; and so no one dreamed of the disastrous results to follow, when they began to notice and remark upon the erratic and extraordinary growth of a strange and gourd-like vine, which appeared in the corner of the court-yard.

"I never in my life beheld anything so wonderful," cried Professor Naught, as the vine crept gallily upward; and the little prince, for one evil moment forgetting his boasting sin, cried out:

"Wonderful indeed; I myself could grow as fast as that, if I but minded me so to do."

The words died upon his lips, as he felt with horror his head rise slowly but surely to an unnatural height.

In a little while every one in and about the palace knew that the unfortunate prince was growing against the wonderful gourd. The king, quite overcome, sat down on a saw-horse and cried aloud.

The queen stood on tip-toe and tried to hold her darling down; but presently she swung off her feet, and finding that her position lacked dignity, while it did her child no good, she reluctantly desisted.

Then followed a terrible time. By night the prince was much too tall to be got into the house, and had to be fed from the second story window.

In the morning it was still worse, for the queen—who would let no one else wait upon him—was obliged to climb a ladder and sit upon the ridge-pole while she fed him mouthful by mouthful, for his little hands were yards away from his ever-rising head. By noon worse came to worst, for the queen had to sit on the chimney top; and seeing her boy still a good way above her, she cried so hard and fast that everyone seeing the tears come plashing into the court-yard, said that it rained.

Presently the little prince began to cry also, and he boo-hoo'd with so hearty a will that all agreed it must be a thunder storm.

Just at this time the whipping boy who had been detained in the house for some time sewing on buttons, came into the yard.

"Why don't somebody," said he, in great surprise, "why don't somebody cut down that vine?"

"Why not, indeed?" shouted the king, "I was just thinking of that myself," and seizing an axe the vine soon lay in the dust.

The day was hot and the plant but a feeble growth, that immediately began to wilt and wither in the sunshine. As it withered, all could see with joy that the little prince shrank perceptibly. By night it was a dead dry string, and the prince was himself again. That is in size, but never again did any one find him either a liar or a braggart.

Indeed, he became so honest and so truthful that when in time he sat on his father's throne and ruled in his stead, he was known not as Valmar the Second, or as Valmar the Great, but as "Valmar the Truth-Teller."

EAST DENNARD, Maine.

Ont in the Tent.

"Please, mamma dear! please let us!"

"Now, mamma, please to do!"

Two eager voices begged and coaxed and argued and plead and teased, but still mamma would not consent, and at last Harry and Fred had to go up to bed in their own little room, instead of sleeping out in the tent, as they wanted to do. It was such a pretty tent, and such a new tent, and such a nice, cool place to sleep in on this hot night!

"I don't see why mamma won't let us" growled Harry.

"Less we might get the whooping-cough," suggested little Fred.

"Oh, nonsense! It's just because she's nervous. I heard grandpa tell her so once, and now I know what he meant."

"She says we might get scared."

"But we won't. I tell you, Fred," said Harry, his eyes sparkling with mischief, "if we just slept out there once, she'd let us all the time, 'cause then she'd know it wouldn't make us sick."

"But she told us not to."

"Oh, well, you know, she wouldn't really care if she found we didn't get cold, or rheumatism, or ammonia, and weren't a speck frightened."

"But she said we mustn't."

"Oh, you're afraid!"

"I ain't!"

"Yes, you are. I don't want you to go with me, anyway. I'd have more fun by myself. Good-bye, 'fraid-cat!"

"I ain't a 'fraid-cat, and I'm going to sleep in the tent if you do!" cried Freddie, sturdily. "Only—I guess you'd better take your pop-gun, Harry."

So Harry armed himself with his pop-gun, and the two boys stole down stairs. Freddie did hope his mother would hear them, and come out to see where they were going; but she didn't.

How dark it was outside! The moon had gone behind a cloud, and somehow the stars looked dim and sleepy.

Harry kept saying the tent was so pleasant and cool and comfortable, and he

just wished somebody would dare to disturb them, so he could shoot him down dead with his pop-gun. But dear me, how dark it was inside!

Freddie was nearly frightened out of his wits, but he had been playing hard all day, so he just curled himself up and said, "You kill—anything—down dead—that!"—and was off to the land of Nod before he could finish.

"What did he mean?" thought Harry. "There isn't anything that could hurt us really and truly. There ain't any ghosts, and I guess lions don't live anywhere near here."

Then he tried to spy into those dreadful little nooks and crannies all full of darkness, where snakes might hide, or bears, or tigers, or even lions, if they did find their way to the tent.

My, how hard the ground was! Not a bit like a bed with plenty of pillows, but all bumps and sticks and stones and ants and bugs.

He wasn't afraid, oh, no, indeed! but somehow he couldn't get to sleep, and kept sitting up and listening to the queer noises, and wondering whether mamma had gone to bed, and handling his pop-gun.

What was that? Surely he heard something creeping, creeping, creeping softly over the grass!

They had fastened the tent back on both sides to let the cool air come in, and at one of these openings appeared a big black head.

It was a lion!

Harry was so terrified that he could not even scream. His heart went pit-a-pat, and his hands grew cold as ice, and he never once thought of his pop-gun.

Then the lion uttered a low growl!

"Freddie! Freddie!" cried Harry.

"What? what?" gasped Freddie, waking from his sound sleep in a great fright.

"Run! Run! There's a lion after us!"

And in a moment the two boys were rushing across the garden screaming at the top of their voices, with the horrible creature close behind them.

Mamma heard the cries, and came running out to meet the two naughty youngsters. "Why, what is the matter?" she asked, breathlessly. "Where have you been? What has frightened you? Why, surely you can't be afraid of Carlo!"

Then these two brave, brave boys looked at the lion again, and saw that it was Carlo, dear, kind, gentle old Carlo, the big Newfoundland!

Harry burst into tears, and throw his arms around his mother.

"Oh, please forgive us," he sobbed, and mamma just kissed them both, and did not ask any questions, or say another word about the lion. She understood what Harry meant, just the way mamma always do.

A Talk to Boys.

I saw a sad boy this morning. I don't like sad boys. They generally die young. This boy had red eyes. He looked like a little old fellow. He seemed to think it was smart to have red eyes, for he was continually trying to make them redder. He was smoking a cigarette; this was what made him look so old, and this was the way he was trying to make himself have red eyes and look like an old man. He went down the street and into a saloon. He stepped up to the bar like an old toper and simply said, "One beer." He drank it all at one breath, just like an old drunkard, and said, "I'm braced up."

Thinks I to myself: "Yes, you are braced up for becoming an excellent drunkard one of these days. You'll spend the money you ought to save. You'll be blotched in the face and not more than half-grown, and when you die people will mourn principally because you hadn't hurried up and died sooner." It don't pay to try to be a toper. Perhaps some men can smoke, and drink beer and whiskey, and stand it, but boys can't. It kills them every time. Do you say, "I don't believe it!"

How do you know? The men who drink didn't commence when they were boys. Drinking and smoking kill men sooner or later, but they kill boys very quick.

Do you want to try and see? Would you like to try and see what would be the effect of the bite of a mad dog or a rattlesnake?

Boys, if you want to grow up strong, active, large, successful men, don't smoke, and by all means don't drink. No happy, have just as much fun as you can, but do nothing wrong.