

and when the hoarse whistle gave the signal for starting, he clapped his hands with delight.

Since the railway had been made to Northville, two years before, it had been the great ambition of John's life 'to have a ride in the cars.'

When the train fairly started, he sat for a long time, gazing about him in silence. At last he murmured, 'Isn't it perfectly lovely, Winnie? Ain't these little seats cute? — just for two.'

'Yes,' said Winnie, in her staid o'd-fashioned tones. 'They are very comfortable.'

'I should say so. Why, Winnie, these cushions are velvet, I do believe. I wish you could have a dress of the same piece. I don't like that black one.'

'Hush, John, it's for papa and mamma,' she whispered, but the old lady in the next seat heard, and began to feel for her handkerchief.

'Mamma wouldn't have liked it,' said John stoutly, 'but, oh, ain't we flying? Look at the trees, and the telegraph poles! Oh, my, if there isn't a sleigh stuck in a drift! Look, quick, Winnie. Oh, you're too slow, for the cars were past it already. Oh, what's that?'

The old lady behind laughed this time, for John jumped back from the window with a little shriek as they rattled past another train on a siding.

'Ain't we flying?' cried John again. 'Oh, I can do that too, old train,' he exclaimed, as the engine whistled on approaching a level crossing; and to Winnie's dismay he uttered a long shrill imitation of the sound, which he thought so delightful.

'Hush, hush! you mustn't do that, John,' said Winnie, adding hastily as an apology for him, 'he's never been in a train before.'

'I daresay he's getting hungry,' said a woman on the other side of the long aisle. 'Do you like doughnuts, sonny?'

'I guess so. Do you like sandwiches, ma'am? We've got a whole heap in our basket. Where is it, Winnie?'

Winnie pulled it out from under the seat, and John murmured, 'I'd better hand 'em round, hadn't I, sis? I hope Mis' Sinclair made enough for everyone.'

'I don't know. Perhaps they won't like it,' said Winnie, looking doubtfully at their fellow-passengers.

'Oh, they'll like it,' said John, confidently.

'There, didn't I tell you?' he said. 'There are only two left, for the man at the end took four; but look! the basket is half-full of cake and apples and candy. It's like a regular Sunday-school picnic.'

John thoroughly enjoyed his dinner, and there was very little left in the basket when he had finished.

They had just put it away when the conductor came round to look at the tickets.

'Please, sir, how long will it take us to get to Merton?' asked Winnie timidly.

'We are due there at four o'clock,' said the conductor. 'I only hope the line isn't drifted. I suppose there will be some one to meet you there.'

'I don't know,' said Winnie. 'We are going to live with our uncle, and Mrs. Sinclair wrote to say that we were coming by this train.'

'Oh, then it's sure to be all right. But Merton is only a flag-station, you know.'

'What's a flag-station?' demanded John, always eager for information.

'You'll soon see,' said the conductor. 'I'll have your trunk put off there, missy, shall I?'

Before they reached Merton even, John had begun to feel that he had had enough of 'the cars' for one day. His efforts to wile away the time were constantly becoming more trying to his neighbors and more hu-

milating to his poor little sister. Neither were they altogether satisfactory to himself. In an attempt to escape on to the platform of the car, he trapped his fingers in the door, and when he stood on his head in the aisle, the train gave a sudden lurch sideways, and he fell in a heap against the iron supports of a seat. If it had not been for the black band round his arm, I fear he would have received more than one good scolding.

However, when everybody's patience was getting a little worn out, the engine gave a sudden shriek, and the conductor came to Winnie, saying, 'We're close to Merton, Miss. There is no one else to get out, so you'll have to be quick. I hope you'll see your uncle waiting for you.'

'I'm sure I hope they will,' said the old lady at the back. 'Poor children!'

a white handkerchief from one of the windows, and John shouted 'Good-bye' till he was hoarse.

At length the last car disappeared behind a curve, and John said, with a shiver, 'I wonder if there's a fire in this waiting-room.'

'Let us go and see,' said Winnie. 'I don't suppose we shall have to wait long.'

'This isn't a nice waiting-room,' remarked John, looking around the bare little wooden shed with an air of disgust. 'I wonder it it's a station at all. Perhaps the conductor has made a mistake.'

Older people might have come to the same conclusion for there was no porter, no station-master, and no ticket-office. Indeed, there was nothing to mark it but the tiny platform and a board with Merton painted on it in black letters.



A FRIEND IN NEED.

'Good-bye, ma'am,' said John cheerily. 'We have had a splendid time. Good-bye, everybody!'

'Good-bye,' said their fellow-passengers. Then they stood up to look who had come to meet the children, but there was no one on the platform.

'It don't seem right to put them off in this lonely place by themselves,' said an old farmer.

'The roads hereabout are frightfully drifted,' said another.

'What's to be done?' said the conductor, gruffly. 'Their tickets are for Merton, all right enough.' But when he had lifted the children down into the middle of the siding and had put their trunk on the little platform, and had given the signal to start again, he went to the back of the train to look once more whether anyone was coming. And as the train dashed in its way, he shouted with all his might, 'Go into the waiting-room a bit. You'll get your deaths of cold out there. Some one will be around for you before long.'

But Winnie and John stood hand in hand, watching the train quite out of sight, before they obeyed him. Someone was fluttering

'It's a flag-station,' said Winnie. 'See, there's the flag in the corner of the seat.'

'What's that for?' asked John, examining with interest the little square of red cotton nailed to a short stick.

'It's to wave at the trains when you want to stop them,' explained Winnie.

'Is it? I wonder why Uncle John doesn't come. I should think it's tea-time.'

'Well, we'll have tea while we're waiting. We'll eat the cake the old lady gave us; but first, I wish you'd stay here and take care of our things while I go and see if there is any house near where we could ask about Uncle John.'

'I'll come with you,' said John but they did not go far, for there was not a single house in sight, and the road that led away down the hill was so drifted with snow that the first step took John up to his knees.

'I guess Uncle John'll need a good horse to get to us to-night,' he said, shaking his head sagely. 'I hope he'll come soon, for its getting dark very fast.'

'Come back into the waiting-room, and let us have our supper while we can see,' said Winnie.

John was very quiet over his cake. At