

A Lesson for Hugh.

(By Sydney Dayre, in 'Good Cheer.')

'I want you to go over to the Corners on an errand for me this morning, Hugh,' said his father, at the breakfast table. Hugh's face clouded.

'I did want to go fishing,' he said. 'Jack and I thought that as this was the first Saturday since the fishing's good that something hasn't prevented, we'd make a good day at it. We bought minnows last night on purpose.'

'I am very sorry to have to interfere with your sport,' said his father kindly, 'but the business is important, and I'm afraid the fishing will have to stand over.'

Hugh was well disposed towards a dutiful regard to his father's wishes, but the disappointment was severe, making it an ill-judged time for his younger brother to begin, eagerly,

'Oh, Hugh! Can't I have your minnows, as you can't use them? I'll pay you for them with the money I get, truly I will. Mother'll buy the fish I catch, won't you, mother?'

'If you catch any,' put in Hugh unpleasantly. 'No, you can't have the minnows. Perhaps I'll get home in time to have a little chance myself, late in the day.'

'Just a few of them,' pleaded Archie.

'No, not one! Remember now!' said his brother sharply.

He went to make ready for his unwilling ride to the Corners, leaving Archie to go about his Saturday morning chores in a discontented and rebellious frame of mind.

'He might let me have them just as well as not. He won't be able to use them himself, I know, I've the greatest mind—yes, I have—'

Archie's great mind spurred him to a rate of liveliness heretofore unknown through his small work, after which permission to go fishing was easily obtained.

A few minutes later he might have been seen, had any one taken the trouble to look, entering the tool-house. Under a shelf in a cool corner were the coveted minnows.

'Now—if only I can get out without anybody seeing me—'

It was easy to do it, for every one was busy at that time of day. Around behind the small building, keeping well out of sight behind the barn, he went, then along a hedge, holding his head well down.

'Now, Rover, Rover, come here, doggie.'

With a few calls Rover bounded up to him and joined his hasty steps towards the river.

'A tip-top day, Rover. Not too hot and the sky just cloudy enough. The fish'll bite well, I know. We'll go to the hole where I got so many good bites last summer. Haven't I got the better of Hugh, though.'

He laughed, and for a while amused himself with thoughts of the clever trick he had played on his brother.

'When he gets home he'll go to the tool-house and feel for that pail and it won't be there. Then, when I show him the fish I'm going to catch and promise to divide with him, of course he'll see how silly it would have been for me to let them stay there and die. If he doesn't see it, why, he'll have to stand it, that's all.'

But as the boy lay under the deep shadows of the great willows, in the quiet of the lonely woods, other thoughts came to him.

'I don't know, after all, but it was a little mean and sneaky. I do believe Rover thinks so,' turning to see Rover gazing intently into the pail of minnows. 'I most wish I hadn't done it.'

An hour or more passed. If the fishing

had been a success Archie might possibly have felt differently about it. As a few nibbles resulted in nothing, he became discouraged.

'I've the greatest mind to carry them back. I haven't used but one or two, and—what's all that noise?'

From far down the river came the sound of voices in wild terror and distress.

'Help! Help!'

A bend of the bank hid from view whatever might be going on, but still the cries echoed through the still woods.

'What can it be?' Springing to his feet unmindful that the end of his rod dropped into the water and that he had over-turned the pail of minnows, he bounded away in the direction from which the sounds came.

Half way to the Corners Hugh met a friend of his father's, who told him something which he at once knew made it unnecessary to continue his ride.

'Hurrah! I'm in luck. It's early yet.'

Hastening home he quickly made ready to join his friend at the river-side, his last act

An unusual number of men and boys were meeting and passing him. There was evidently some excitement abroad. He opened his anger-set lips to make an inquiry.

'There's a boy drowned.'

The startling intelligence turned his thoughts into a new channel. He was near the place where he had expected to see Archie, but a glance sufficed to ascertain that he was not there.

'Whereabouts did it happen?' he again questioned.

'Down below: a little boy fishing, so they say. They found him in a hole and got him out and carried him up to Baird's and tried to bring him to. But they could not.'

And like the falling of a crushing blow came a sudden thought to Hugh. Archie had been fishing. Half blinded by his awful fear, Hugh turned, joining the increasing number of those who pressed on with awed faces.

'Does anybody know who it is?' he forced himself to ask.

'I don't. It's a little fellow.'



being to go to the tool-house for the pail of minnows.

'Well! where is that pail?'

He felt for it more eagerly, very soon to realize that it was not there. With an excited face he hurried back to the house.

'Mother, where's Archie?'

'I told him he might go fishing.'

'I know it! The little rascal's taken my minnows. How dared he? Well, I guess I know where he's gone, and if I don't manage to be even with him!'

'Hugh, don't be hard on him. He's a little fellow—'

'He's old enough to know better,' said Hugh.

In great wrath he made his way to what he knew was Archie's favorite fishing spot. No voice answered his angry call as he drew near. Arrived at the bank, his indignation arose to white heat at what he saw there.

'There they are—minnows! Tipped over and all dead. Now—I'll find that boy—and—'

Fierce anger blazed in his eyes as he strode on. He turned his steps up the river, believing that Archie had gone to join a friend in the construction of a dam across the mouth of a little tributary creek. And with every step his wrath against his brother grew and increased.

'It was not enough to steal them. To be careless with them and let them die! I'll let him know. But what are all these people coming down for?'

The very words in which his mother had made her plea for Archie! As Hugh stumbled on a torrent of thought surged over him.

While he had been cherishing anger in his heart against him, his little brother might be lying dead. He had been fancying the words in which Archie would plead, beg, excuse himself. It might be that his lips were closed for ever. Hugh's last words to him that morning had been harsh and disobliging. Could it be that the Lord would punish him by laying on him the weight of such a bitter memory?

Oh, to see him in life and health—to hear his voice—to be granted the blessed opportunity of enduring something from the sometimes so provoking boy, of showing forbearance in slight annoyances! Would he ever, ever again indulge in angry words and thoughts?

With heart beating almost to suffocation, he drew near to the silent crowd gathered in farmer Baird's front yard. Surely somebody there could tell him the name he feared to hear, but how could he dare to ask?

'Why—Hugh!'

Hugh leaned against the fence in momentary weakness at the sudden revulsion. For it was Archie who had taken his hand and was looking up into his face with tears in his eyes.

'Poor little Ted Griffiths,' he faltered.

'Let's go home,' said Hugh. Still hold-