

THE BISHOP'S NAPKIN.

BY ELIZABETH ABBOTT RAND.

"I think I'll gather some roses for the bishop," and Amy tiptoed to reach the garden-scissors swinging on their peg.

She ran down the mossy walk. Tall spikes of hollyhocks towered high above her head; she nodded gaily at them. "You look just like a chime of bells ready to ring a welcome to the bishop. Little Miss Rosebud and Mr. Bachelor's Button, too, are all dressed up in their Sunday best, in honour of the day."

"Snip, snap," clacked the scissors, as dainty rosebuds fell into Amy's basket.

"Everybody in the house is getting ready for the bishop, he's such a good man you see," continued Amy, talking confidentially to a row of bachelor's buttons which bent stiffly to hear her words. "Papa's dusting all his cyclopaedias, and rolling his study chairs around, so's to hide the holes in the carpet, and Charlie's brushing down the cobwebs in the barn, just as if the bishop had a hundred eyes, like that Argusman, he told us about. And mamma—I'm sure I don't know what she's doing."

"Amy, Amy!" Her mother was calling.

"I'm coming."

"I'm coming."

"My head is bending low,"

sang Amy as she skipped along the path.

There was a faint "whirr whirr" in the air.

"Mamma's in the pantry whipping the cream," she thought. "The bishop is very fond of whipped cream, and we're very fond of him. That's the reason we have it when he comes. He told mamma he always had scalloped oysters and preserves everywhere else he went. Poor Bishop! Scalloped oysters are the very meanest kind of birds."

Amy opened the pantry-door, and whirled the knob round and round.

"Will my little daughter please press out some napkins for me?" her tired mother smiled over the creamy froth.

"Yes'm." Amy scowled a wee bit though, as she dragged over the kitchen floor. Ironing was such hot work, and not half so much fun as cutting roses in the cool garden.

"Remember, dear," called her mother, "not to press the iron over the

napkin, unless you're first tried it on the cloth."

"Oh, hum!" sighed Amy. "I don't believe the bishop'd ever notice about the napkins, he'd be so interested in in the cream."

She banged the iron on the board. What dainty napkins they were, all covered with a delicate starry frostwork. Four of them were neatly pressed and hanging in the sunshine to air. From the window she could see the cool green garden, and the bushes of sweet blush roses, and the garden-scissors sprawling on the ground where she had thrown them.

"What a bother ironing is!" Amy sighed again as she took a hot iron from the stove and mounted the wooden stool by the board.

"This iron's cool enough. I can tell by the looks of it 'thout trying it on the old cloth." On the napkin she pressed it.

Just then a ragged figure slouched up the pathway. Amy peered out the window. The iron still rested on the napkin.

"Ho! that's a tramp. I'd better be a-watching my scissors. He may be a stealer!" She ran to the door; no tramp to be seen, but the scissors still sprawled on the ground.

Back she came to the board, a dusky smoke rose from the napkin.

Amy snatched the iron. There underneath in the very midst of the frosty stars, was a deep, brown, three-cornered mark! She gazed sorrowfully at it. That horrible burned spot! Not all the laundrying in the world, not even Chin-Wah, the slanting-eyed Chinaman could ever wash it out. And the bishop was coming to tea!

"Guess I'll fold it as nicely as I can," she thought, "and hide it in the side-board drawer. To-morrow I'll tell mamma about it. She's too tired today."

At last the hot work was over, and Amy wandered among the rows of hollyhocks nibbling at a tart mamma had given her as a reward. Somehow, the tart didn't taste as delicious as usual. Amy couldn't forget the mark on the napkin. It almost seemed as if it were burned into her heart. The world would turn round and round and round, but the mark would never, never come out.

Horrible! Amy shivered in the warm sunshine. The tramp slouched round the corner of the house. Amy saw him. Quick as a flash she united the corner of her pink-bordered handkerchief, and taking a silver quarter from its hiding place she ran toward the tramp and dropped the money in his hand.

"Here, take this," she cried. "It's a pennance for my sin. The old kings used to be forgiven for their wrongdoings, if they parted with their money. Our bishop said so, and he ought to know."

She skipped away, among the hollyhocks, leaving the tramp standing astonished, with his mouth wide open, and grasping the silver in his rough hands.

"Feel better now," cried Amy, chasing a pair of tiny cabbage butterflies.

She didn't feel entirely happy. The quarter only blotted out a wee corner of the brown, burned iron mark.

"Everything is all ready," she murmured, glancing at the foaming cream and the cool salad. "Why no," she continued, "the bishop hasn't a napkin." She quickly opened the side-

board drawer. "Here's one. How well Amy has folded it," and she laid it at the bishop's plate.

Amy sat on the gate-post, watching for the chaise that would bring the bishop from the station. There it was now, rumbling and creaking along the road. She could even see the initials on the bishop's grey bag.

He had come at last. "Another of your delicious teas?" said the bishop.

Amy's mamma smiled over the amber coffee.

Amy was watching the bishop. What a very kind face he had, and what a curiously carved ring he wore. How daintily he lifted his little finger, as he shook the snowy folds of his napkin, and tucked it under his raised chin.

Amy was still watching him, but it seemed as if she were frozen to an ice-maiden.

There in the midst of the damask star was the burned iron-print!

How did he ever get that napkin?

There was some mistake. If she only had told her mother. And the good bishop was smiling. He didn't know of the burn, but the rest had noticed it. Amy had felt the blush on her mother's cheek. She didn't see it. Her eyes were drawn toward the horrible mark. It seemed to draw them with hot, hot brown bands.

"Boo-hoo-hoo!" Amy covered her face with her hands, and sobbed, and sobbed, and sobbed.

In the bishop's arms, her face against the napkin, Amy cried out the story of the day, about her unwillingness to iron, and the burned napkin, and the tramp and the quarter.

The bishop didn't even smile, as Amy expected he would when she looked up at him through her tears. He spoke very gently.

"My dear, before those kings of old did penance, they confessed their sins. You will not forget that, will you Amy?" And Amy never did.—The Churchman.

TAKE THE DARK AWAY.

"Papa, please take the dark away!" My infant darling said, As from his couch at midnight hour He raised his little head.

'Twas half in fear, and yet in trust, He stretched his tiny arm To nestle by his father's side, And there feel safe from harm.

Yet sadly on his mother's heart Those pleading accents fell, And burning thoughts rushed through the brain Which words but feebly tell.

"Save thee from dark," my precious child, Oh! 'tis a world of shade, And often when 'tis bright without Sooner or later must fade.

"Save thee from dark?" my cherub child, The world is full of sin, And often when 'tis bright without The heart is dark within.

"Save thee from dark," that valley's gloom, Which thou and I must pass? Death from a form as fair as thine I cannot ward, alas!

Oh, Light of Heaven! beam gently down, And by Thy holy ray My darling's footsteps ever guide To full and perfect day.

—Harriet O. Bean.

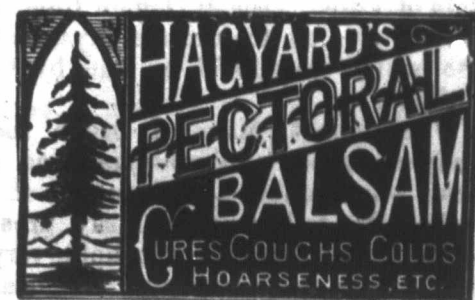
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FOR BOYS.

A publication called "Science" tells us that in an experimental observation of thirty-eight boys of all classes of society, and of average health, who had been using tobacco for a period ranging from two months to two years, twenty-seven showed severe injury to the constitution and insufficient growth; thirty-two showed the existence of irregularities of the heart's action, disordered stomach, cough, and a craving for alcohol; thirteen had intermittency of the pulse; and one had consumption. After they abandoned the use of tobacco, within six months one-half were free from all their former symptoms, and the remainder had recovered by the end of the year. Well, why not put that cigarette aside and let it stay aside?

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