

Choice Literature.

A LITTLE TRAMP.

"Were you looking for work?"

"No'm, I was wantin' somethin' to eat."

"Do you expect to get it without working for it?"

Aunt Judith stopped for a moment in her sweeping of the front walk, and looking sharply at the ragged boy who stood before the gate.

"Don't you know," she went on, as the boy made no answer, "that the bible says that folks that don't work sha'n't eat?"

The boy was passing on, but stopped at sound of a gentle voice. Mrs. Lee was weeding the pansy border a little further on inside the front fence.

"Go round by the side door," she said in a low voice, which might lead one to think she did not wish Aunt Judith to hear.

The boy went around, meeting in the back yard Johnny Lee, restlessly walking about.

"Where did you come from?" asked Johnny.

"Oh, from back in the country," said the boy.

"Where do you live?"

"Not much of anywhere, just now."

"Did you run away?" asked Johnny, eagerly, coming close to him.

"Yes."

"Where did you sleep last night?"

"Close up to a haystack."

"Wasn't it fun?"

"No."

"I'd like it. I'd like to run away this minute. I want to go to the fair and see the elephant and the balloon, and I know we'll be late. Papa's gone somewhere else, and he said he'd come back and take me, and he doesn't come."

"Come here." A door opened, and Mrs. Lee motioned to the boy who had slept under a haystack.

He sat down by the table on which she had laid something for him to eat, while she, busying herself about the room, took in his condition with a few sympathizing glances.

How small and forlorn he looked! Everything about him was small except the big, pathetic eyes, which told so eloquently a story of hardship and friendlessness. His small face was pinched, his bare feet and hands bony.

Then she noticed one other large thing about him—his appetite, and went for another bowl of milk, and added a piece of pie to the bread and cheese and ginger-bread. Everything in which he differed from her own boy seemed to carry its appeal straight to her mother's heart.

"Have you far to go?" she asked, when at length he seemed to have eaten enough.

"I'm going to the fair," he said.

"Do you live near here?"

"No'm." He got up as if not wishing to be questioned further.

"Well," she said, wrapping up some ginger-bread and putting it into his hand, "I guess you'd better get back to your folks as soon as you can, poor fellow. I'm glad you came in. You're a good boy, I'm sure; you'll do your best wherever you are, I know. You can go out by this way and round to the road."

Quickly guessing that the kindly lady desired to get him out of the way before Aunt Judith came about, he glided out of the back door; but Aunt Judith's eyes were as sharp as her voice, and nothing of what was going on had escaped her.

"After all I've said to you, Sarah, about the sin of encouraging idleness by harbouring such tramps! And a boy starting out so young, that ought to be whipped and set to work! I never could see, for my part, why the Lord made boys. Of course I don't mean to say He doesn't do everything right; but it does seem to me as though in His wisdom He might have contrived to do without 'em. Now, look at that one out there."

It is sad to be obliged to admit that Johnny was doing his very best in the way of fretful exclamation and impatient footsteps to justify his great-aunt's opinion of boys.

"Mamma," he jerkily called in from the porch, "when do you s'pose Papa'll come?"

"Oh, very soon, I think, dear."

"I want to go; and I want to go this very minute."

"Dear me!" Johnny's mamma looked very much distressed and perplexed. "Then I guess you'll have to go in the top buggy with Aunt Judith and me."

Johnny gave another kick, and scowled worse than before.

"I hate that! Poking along! I want to go in the open buggy with papa and Prancer. He goes lickety-cut."

"We'll wait a little longer and then, if Papa doesn't come, we'll have the buggy out."

"I know it'll be too late for the balloon," whimpered Johnny.

He went to the front gate and watched the people who were passing on the way to the fair grounds, his heart beating with restless irritation. The ground was two miles distant. He could see plainly its high board fence and the buildings rising above it; he could hear taps of a drum, and knew a band was playing.

"And what's that thing wobbling about? It's the balloon, I know 'tis! And its about ready to go up."

Johnny's impatience rose to fever heat.

"I'll just run ahead a little—just to where I can see better. I'll get in the buggy when mamma comes."

Without another thought Johnny ran at full speed, until all his breath was gone. As he stopped, hot and panting, he caught sight of a ragged little figure plodding along the road-side.

"Hello!" said Johnny. "I'm going to the fair. Ain't you going to see the elephant and the balloon?"

The boy looked keenly at him, taking note of his fresh face and clean clothes. Most of the people pressing on to the fair were already looking dusty and wilted.

Caleb—that was his name—had run away from the wretched place he called home, because his poor little heart had failed him by reason of hard work, unkind treatment and poor fare. He could not remember a time when anyone had cared whether he was clean and comfortable. As he looked at Johnny, everything in his neat clothing and his bright, clean

face seemed to remind him of the gentle woman whose voice had spoken sweet words to him that morning as she had given him food. He could still feel the touch of her hand as she had stroked his rough hair. And his heart gave a little bound in recalling words so unlike any he had ever heard before:—

"You're a good boy, I'm sure. You'll do your best wherever you go, I know."

It was Mrs. Lee's firm belief that thinking the best of persons will go far toward leading them to do their best. If everyone believed so and acted upon the belief, who can tell how much better it might be for boys?

Caleb began to feel concerned about Johnny. He was such a little fellow to be so far from home alone.

"Where's your folks?" he asked.

"They're coming," said Johnny, who kept on with head-long speed, at one time getting very nearly run over.

"You'd best wait," Caleb said, taking his hand and drawing him to the roadside. "Stay here till they come."

"No, I'm going to the fair." And Caleb followed him closely as he hurried on.

At the entrance the crowd was thick and noisy. Johnny paid his ten cents, and in the crush Caleb contrived to creep in without paying and still kept near the small runaway.

The air was full of music of the band and of the sound of many voices. Merry-go-rounds were on all sides, but Johnny soon joined the crowd of boys making its way to the far side of the grounds.

"The elephant is over there," he said to Caleb.

"Hain't you better wait till your folks come?" asked Caleb, anxiously, as he gave Johnny another pull out of danger's way.

"No, I'm going to see him. And I want to see the balloon. Oh! there's the balloon."

Johnny stood gazing with awe at the huge thing which swayed and bobbed in the wind.

"Where's its legs?" he asked of a boy who had come before him.

"Ho! it ain't got any."

"Where's its wings, then?"

"Why it ain't got any o' them neither," said the boy, with a laugh.

"How does it go, then?"

"Ho! ho!" The boy gave a shout which made a dozen other boys turn to look. "Here's a chap's asking how the balloon goes."

Johnny grew red with anger and confusion as they laughed at him.

"I'm going to see the elephant," he said. "This ain't the kind of a balloon I wanted to see."

"Come on," cried an excited boy. "He's as big as a house, and he's got legs like tree trunks and ears like an old coat."

There he was—the awkward monster. Johnny gave a jump and a scream at finding himself, before he knew it, close to one of the great legs. Then he felt a cold touch on his hand, and screamed again as he saw the brown snake-like trunk feeling about his pocket.

"Don't be scared," said the showman. "He's just hunting for nut, and things."

Johnny soon got over being frightened, and as he still gazed he grew wild with excitement. There was a little temple-shaped thing on the elephant's back, and in that thing boys were riding as the huge creature walked slowly one way and then the other—little boys like himself.

"I'm going too," exclaimed Johnny, after gazing up with eyes and mouth wide open.

"Keep back," said Caleb. "Don't you see that big critter might kick up or run away? What'd become o' you then?"

But Johnny was beside himself and would not hear. The elephant had just been making its round with a dozen or more boys on its back, and the man was holding a step-ladder against its great neck for them to get down by.

"Who goes next?" he called. There was a rush of small boys, and Johnny was one of the first who went up the step-ladder.

Caleb was not afraid for himself; and would have greatly enjoyed the odd ride.

"But I ain't that kind of boy," he said, shrinking back as he gave a glance at his rags and then at the other boys, every one of whom, it was plain to see, had a home and a mother.

The great legs moved and the ungainly body lumbered forward. Caleb caught sight of Johnny's laughing face so far above him with an uneasy wonder how his mother would like to see him there, wishing with all his heart that the small, well-cared-for boy was again on solid ground.

"Hurrah-h-h-h!"

A long shout arose and the balloon shot up in full sight of the elephant as he turned on his round. With a snort the huge animal threw up his trunk and backed and reared in fright at the unusual sight. With screams of terror people rushed out of the way, while the elephant's keeper tried to quiet him.

But it was of no use. Mad with fright, the great creature tossed himself about, trying to shake the burden from his back, flinging the boys right and left.

Caleb kept his scared eyes fixed on Johnny as, with a scream, he fell to the hard ground, close to the cruel heavy feet so well able to crush out a dozen glad young lives.

"Keep back!" was the cry of two or three men who sprang to the help of the boys. But like a flash a ragged figure rushed up as Johnny fell. So quickly did it all happen that when at length two insensible forms were lifted no one could have told which of them had felt the weight of the heavy foot.

From an upstairs window Aunt Judith had seen the small boy running toward the fair ground. She was not glad he was showing himself a bad boy, for she loved Johnny as if she had thought boys the only thing in the world worth having. She told Johnny's mamma, and the two, in the top buggy, followed the little runaway.

Pressing through the crowd as fast as possible, they came within sight of the elephant just after it had been brought to order.

"Don't be frightened, ma'am," said a man who knew her. "It's all right with Johnny, except that he's dizzy with his tumble."

"Came within an inch of the brute's big foot as he fell," whispered another to Miss Judith. "The little beggar chap dashed forward and gave Johnny a jerk out of the way. Bad for the little tramp, but would have been worse for Johnny if he'd lain there a half-second longer."

The two boys were carried to Mrs. Lee, Johnny rubbing his eyes and looking about him with a bewildered stare, the ragged boy lying limp and pale, with closed eyes.

"It is—yes, it is the boy who came to us this morning. Bring him here."

"Where's Johnny?" asked Caleb. His eyes opened upon the kind woman who had smiled upon him and spoken sweet words to him, whose face had been before him when he imperiled his life to save her boy from harm. The next moment he turned paler than usual with the pain of his crushed foot, and Johnny's mother also grew white as they wrapped it up and laid him upon the seat of the buggy.

Caleb did not leave the home in which he was nursed up to health and strength and happiness. Johnny's mamma feels as though she could never be easy about Johnny unless he is in Caleb's care. Aunt Judith thinks exactly as she did before of all boys in the world—except two. And Caleb declares that he gets along with one foot far better than he ever did with two.—*Sydney Dayre, in the Independent.*

AUTUMN AND THE AFTER-GLOW.

When the far woods a misty veil assume
(The sun being gone), and stand in solemn hush,
To the pale heavens comes a heightened bloom;
Slowly it gathers—an ethereal flush,
Blending the summer rose—the oriole's breast—
Wine—fruit—and leafage touched to various flame
The candle-light of home far seen and blest,
And flower-like, gem-like splendours without name.
This is the reminiscent After-glow,
Day's riches told upon the bourn of Night
So I, Life's pilgrim, ere from hence I go,
Resigning the sweet heritage of light,
Would view in the soul's west the pageant train
Of what hath been, but shall not be again.

As dies the Day, so dies the blessed Year,
Through dreamful languishment and mystic trance,
With murmur voiced adieu, and wistful glance
Still deepening as the shadow draws more near.
What is it wanders with the thistle's sphere,
Or darts before the gossamer's shimmering lance,
Or mingles with the lost leaves' elfin dance,
Or, birdlike, flutes along the upland sear?
The host of those departing! Yet, a while
They linger, and with sweet remembering
Catch back the tender prattle of the Spring,
The full heart-throb of Summer and her smile.
Good-by fond Day, good-by, regretful Year!
Ye go—the Night and Winter tarry here!

—*Edith M. Thomas, in the October Scribner.*

BURMESE ART.

The workmen of Burma, although they have little idea of composition, are wonderfully fertile designers of details. They can all draw with freedom and grace; their legends are full of stirring incidents, and deal with a varied range of characters, from the puny human infant to the grotesque man-eating monster. Their standards of masculine and feminine beauty differ from ours, but are, nevertheless, quite possible. Without the insight and delicate refinement of the Japanese, they are free from the extravagance of the Chinese, and there is nothing in their art so debased as the representations of Hindu gods. There are, as yet, no artists in Burma, and, to see how the people draw, we must examine the designs of the decorator, the gilt lacquer-maker, the silver-smith, and the wood-carver. It is true that pictures may be seen in some of the houses of the well-to-do; many of these are panels taken from the base of the funeral-pyre of a monk, and the others are similar productions made to order by decorators. These pictures are remarkable chiefly for the glaring colours used, for the absence of any composition, and for the distorted perspective common to Oriental representations. The drawing is, however, good, the attitudes are life-like, and the story is generally well told. To European eyes, the attitudes appear as distorted as the perspective, but it needs a very slight knowledge of the country to recognize that the Burmese habitually placed themselves in the most ungainly positions. After more intimate acquaintance with their mode of life, we find out that these very attitudes are esteemed graceful and are only acquired after years of practice. For example, a village belle comes to take her seat at the theatre. The place is crowded with people sitting on mats spread on the ground. She is perfectly self-possessed, though conscious of general criticism. A dainty wreath of Jessamine is placed tiara-wise just below the neat coils of shining black hair. She wears a spotless white jacket, with tight-fitting sleeves, and over one shoulder a maize-coloured scarf is thrown. With every swaying movement of her lithe limbs, the gay colours of her narrow silk petticoat glance and play in the light of the flaring torches. When she reaches the mat, that serves as the family box, she sits smilingly down and leans on one arm, and gradually turns the hand round inward until the elbow is bowed outward in front. The general impression is one of supple grace; but, if we watch this girl walking through the village by ordinary daylight, we shall see that she swings