

MARY ANN'S PIECE.

Afternoon of a winter's day, many years ago. An old-time, low-ceiled room, not a bit artistic in its furnishings, but suggestive of comfort and industry, and family affection, was brightly lit by a gas lamp, and when that light fell on the other side of the window, a pleasant-faced woman was seated in a low rocking chair, that gave out a soft, cheerful little squeak as she moved to and fro. She was sitting busily on a long leaved gingham "sweater" and listening at the same time to the singing of a high pitched, childish voice.

"It was the voice of Mary Ann, her only child, practicing the 'piece' she was going to 'speak' in school the next day.

Mary Ann was sitting on a low tricycle, with a yellow kite fast on her lap. She was a solemn looking little thing, with apple cheeks, clear gray eyes and straight, brown hair, parted exactly in the middle, and cut very straight around the neck. She wore over her plaid wool frock a gingham tie, like the one her mother was at work upon.

In the days when Mary Ann was a little girl all the children had to 'speak pieces' in school, and the piece Mary Ann was reciting was a very popular one. It began as follows:

"Why, Phoebe, have you come so soon? Where are your berries, child? You surely have not sold them all; you had a basket piled."

"No, mother, as I climbed the fence. The nearest way to town. My apron caught upon a stake and so I tumbled down."

"I scratched my arm and tore my hair. But still did not complain. And had my blackberries been saved, should not have cared a grain."

"But when I saw life on the ground, all scattered by my side, I picked my empty basket up. And down I sat and cried."

"Just then a pretty little miss Chanced to be passing by. She stopped, and looking pitiful, She begged me not to cry."

On and went Mary Ann's voice through the pathetic story to its happy ending, low Phoebe had longed to go to Sabbath school, and how her father, a poor laboring man, had promised that if she could earn the money for bonnet and shoes, he would "buy her the gown," and how there lay the berries she had picked on the ground, salt mixed with sand and dirt, whereas the "pretty little miss" had given Phoebe the bonnet from her own head, saying:

"I have another one at home. And one's enough for me."

And Phoebe's tears were dried and she had gone home as happy as possible.

Mary Ann knew the lines perfectly, and her mother, after telling her to speak up loudly and not to be afraid, said that it would go very well indeed.

Mary Ann drew her tricycle nearer to the big air tight stove, dropped her round chin into her plaid hands, and all into one of her "singing spells."

"For some time nothing was heard in the room but the ticking of the tall clock in the corner, the snapping of the fire, the putting of the yellow kites, and the squeak, squeak of Mrs. Clement's rickety "Sabbath-day" chair, and a long breath, as she always did when coming out of one of her "spells," for a plunge and conversation.

"I was real good of that pretty little miss to give Phoebe her bonnet, wasn't it, mother?" said Mary Ann.

"Very good, answered Mrs. Clement, looking toward the window; she was so anxious to finish the last button hole by daylight."

There was another pause, then, after a deep breath, and another question.

"Do you see the little miss' mother holding her when she got home?"

Mary Ann's eyes were very serious, and she asked the question; but her mother, content on that last button hole, did not look around at her.

"Saw her," she repeated, in a far-away tone, "that last?"

"Why, she gave her bonnet away, you know, without asking her mother if she might," said Mary Ann, with that earnest, puzzled look still on her face.

"Oh, well," answered Mrs. Clement, breaking off by a throaty gasp, "I am satisfied, of course it would have been better to have asked; but I suppose she was a long way from home, and it was an act of kindness, and I guess her mother didn't mind her."

Mary Ann looked relieved. After a little more thinking she woke up the kitchen-tin on an apple to a string, and went in for a nice rolic until supper time.

When Martha Ann started for school the next morning, it was bitter cold; but she was wrapped up so warmly that only her nose was exposed to the air, and there was so little of that, that it really did not matter.

She had a pleasant day at school, and spoke her piece in such a loud, clear voice, and with so much expression that the children listened spellbound, quite as if they had not heard it twenty times before. "Very well, Mary Ann," and she came down from the platform covered with glory and confusion. After school the big girl she liked best put on her wraps for her, and she started home, a very proud and happy little girl.

Mary Ann's home was some distance from the village; and just in the coldest,

A SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

Across the drowned lands which the old Dutch settlers called the "Vlaie" road follows a narrow tongue of land, crosses the sunken meadow and the deep channel of the creek by a causeway and bridge, and remains the higher and not far beyond. When the flood comes down the river it flows over into this great natural reservoir, backing up the streams which empty into it and turning the whole region into vast shallow lake. Then the road is under water and he who crosses does so at his peril.

John Wilson's farm was just upon the borders of this wide level of sunken meadow, and the short way to the market town lay over it. He came in one stormy evening, dripping from his long drive in the rain. It seemed good to be at home again after his long exposure to the elements. His eye caught the cheerful flicker of fire through the crack in the stove, and the snapping of the wood joined with the steady singing of the steam in the kettle. It was a comfortable place to be, far better than splash through the road across the Vlaie with the water about his ankles and the trickle of the rain from his hat brim down his back.

After supper there came a knock at the door, and Edwin Bissell, the minister, entered, and sat down on a high-backed woman, he explained, and had been attracted by the light in the window as he passed. "I talk ran from the news of the neighborhood to the mystery of affliction and on to the providential care of God."

"I suppose one must believe in special providences," the farmer said, "at least for Bible folks. Moses and David and Paul. I wouldn't deny that God helped them, but I don't see much sign of special providence nowadays."

"I suppose," the minister answered, "we do not see the dangers, and so think little of the help."

"That's so, but for once I should like to see God's hand stretched out."

"Don't you believe that God kept you in your drive tonight?"

"Oh, yes, but then, I'm used to that. I've driven that road to Amsterdam by night ever since I was a boy, and I know every foot of it as well as I know the multiplication table."

"But there may have been dangers in the storm that you did not know about."

"Yes, may have been. I'll tell you. Don't you see, I was always asking you, show my gratitude to God by standing up and telling folks to love Him. Some how He doesn't seem near enough for that. If I could see for once that He'd help me, I could help myself. I believe I'd do it."

"You want a sign then just as the Jews did."

"No, not just that, but I'm tired of humdrum living. I was never in what I call real danger in my life. If I had been I should perhaps believe that God cared enough for me to help."

Just then Mrs. Wilson entered the room with her neighbor, who stopped and stared when she saw her husband.

"Why, when did you get home?"

"I got home just as you went to Amsterdam this afternoon."

"So I did, and got home half an hour ago. What makes you stare so, Dick Weaver? Am I a ghost?"

"How did you come? Not by the Vlaie?"

"Of course I came by the Vlaie road. I wouldn't go ten miles found on such a night as this. What else you man?"

"The bridge is gone. I saw it go at sunset."

"You must have been dreaming, Dick. The horse did not stop a moment on the other side of the bridge, I remember. I put my hand down and the water was up to my chest, but he came across all right."

"I'm not dreaming. I saw the bridge go off, and the planks are lodged in the water at Robt's mill. If you came over, your horse must have had wings."

"It is some mystery here," said Mr. Wilson, "I remember now that some one told me that the bridge was gone, but when I found you here I thought it must have been a mistake. The rain has stopped and I must go home. It's all about it for my own satisfaction."

John Wilson rose, "It's all nonsense," said he, "but I will go with you. I have a message for my sister on the way."

The moon was clear and then lost again as the clouds drove across the sky, the world was dripping wet and the rising wind shook quick showers from the trees. Mr. Wilson's sister came to meet him, and he had been so long and so tired that he had not stirred back with the same look of astonishment that Dick Weaver had shown.

"How did you get here?" she asked.

"I do not understand this," said Mr. Wilson, "I was there this afternoon. I came back this evening and Mary Ann told me that she would be here for Sunday."

"But how did you get here?" she persisted, without paying the least attention to the message. "The bridge is gone."

"I don't know anything about it. I know that I drove across it about seven o'clock."

"You couldn't. It was gone at six."

"I do not understand this," said Mr. Bissell, "but it looks to me as if your special providence had come and gone and you had failed to recognize it."

"If I drive up in the morning and see for myself," answered the farmer.

John Wilson's conscience was awake that night as he lay in bed for many years. It was not merely the mystery of the bridge, though it was evident that he had been in danger and never dreamed of it. But it came over him that he had never let one touch of gratitude in his long life of safety, or made one real sacrifice for God who had taken care of him. "I have always lived," he said to himself, "as if the world belonged to me, John Wilson, and it struck him all at once that this was something to be ashamed of and sorry for.

The wind had blown itself out by morning. The flood subsided slowly as the choked river could receive the water from the submerged lands. Soon after breakfast John Wilson drove up to the Vlaie bridge and found a little crowd already there. As he stepped from the wagon, Mrs. Bethune, whose gray hair and long record of neighborly kindness

BILL MASON'S RIDE.

Half an hour till train time, sir, An' a fearful dark time, too; Take a look at the switch lights, Tom, Fetch in a stick when you're through. On time I well say, I guess so— Left the last station all right— She'll come round the curve a flyin'! Bill Mason comes up tonight.

You know Bill? No! He's engineer, Been on the road all his life— 'Til never forget the morning! He married his chuk of a wife, 'Twas the summer the mill hands struck— Just off work, every one; They kicked up a row in the village And killed old Donovan's son.

But hadn't been married more'n an hour, Up comes a message from Kress, Orderin' Bill to go up there, And bring down the night express. He left his gal in a hurry, And went up on number one, Thinkin' of nothin' but Mary, And the train he had to run.

And Mary sat down by the window To wait for the night express; And, sir, if she hadn't 'a done so, She'd have been a widow, I guess. For it must 'a been 'aigh midnight When the mill-hands left the Ridge— They came down—the drunken devil! Tore up a rail from the bridge. But Mary heard 'em a workin' And guessed there was somethin' wrong. And in less than fifteen minutes, Bill's train it would be along!

She couldn't come here to tell us, A mile-it wouldn't a done so— So she just grabbed up a lantern, And made for the bridge alone. Then down came the night express, sir, And Bill was makin' her climb! But Mary held the lantern, A-singin' it all the time.

Well, by Jove! Bill saw the signal, And he stopped the night express, And he found his Mary cryin' 'On the track, in her wedding dress; Cryin' an' laughin' for joy, sir, An' holdin' on to the light— Hello! here's the train—good-bye, sir, Bill Mason's on time to-night.

—Exchange.

THE THIMBLE.

The thimble was originally a thumb-nail, because it was worn on the thumb, as sailors still wear their thimbles. It is a Dutch invention, and in 1883, in Amsterdam the bi-centennial of the thimble was celebrated with a great deal of formality. This valuable addition to my lady's work-bag was first made by a goldsmith named Nicholas Van Benschoten, the ancestor of the American family of Van Benschotens. And it may further interest colonial dames to know that the first thimble made was presented in 1684 to Anna Van Wedy, the second wife of Killian Van Rensselaer, the purchaser of Rensselaerwyck, and the first Patrons' Ready Relief will afford immediate ease, and its continued use, for a permanent cure.

No other remedy for Pulmonary troubles combines so many good qualities, nor proves so generally efficacious as Patrons' Ready Relief. For sale by all medicine dealers, only 50 cents for a large bottle.

Don't worry. Don't run in debt. Don't trifle with your health. Don't try experiments with medicines. Don't waste time and money on worthless compounds. Don't be persuaded to take a substitute for Ayer's Sarsaparilla. It is the best of blood-purifiers.

STREET CAR ACCIDENT.—Mr. Thomas Saragosa, a 65-year-old man, had his foot badly injured by being run over by a car on the Street Railway. We at once commenced bathing the foot with Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil, when the dislocation and swelling was removed, and an instant cure effected.

"Do you ever catch any whales, Captain?" asked a first passenger on the ocean liner. "Often, ma'am," answered the dignified captain. "How very wonderful! I have never seen any whales, but I do catch a few of the 'old salts' on their tails, ma'am."

Faded Out.—None but those who have become fagged out, know what a depressed, miserable feeling it is. All strength is gone, and despondency has taken hold of the sufferers. They feel as though there is nothing to live for. There, however, is a cure—none other than Parlee's Vegetable Pills will do wonders in restoring health and strength. Many a man has been cured of his troubles. It is compounded from several articles entering into the composition of Parlee's Pills.

Last Christmas Eve Mr. J. went up stairs to see if the children had hung up their stockings for Santa Claus, and found that Fred had slipped his up in a prominent place with a slip of paper attached, containing the suggestive sentence: "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

So rapidly does lung irritation spread and deepen, the often in a few weeks a simple cough culminates in tubercular consumption. Give heed to a cough, there is always danger in delay, get a bottle of Bickel's Anti-Consumptive Syrup, and cure yourself. It is a medicine unsurpassed for all coughs and lung troubles. It is compounded from several herbs, each one of which stands at the head of the list as exerting a wonderful influence in curing consumption and all lung diseases.

BI-CENTENNIAL.

Dr. Edward Everett Hale, who has sounded so often the praises of sleep, is reported to have remarked that he had been giving throughout the west a lecture on sleep, with illustrations by the audience.

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Scrofula in the Neck—Bunches All Gone Now.

Blanche Atwood, Sangerville, Maine.

"C. I. Hood & Co., Lowell, Mass.: 'Gentlemen—I feel that I cannot say enough in favor of Hood's Sarsaparilla. For five years I have been troubled with scrofula in my neck and throat. Several kinds of medicines which I tried did not do me any good, and when I commenced to take Hood's Sarsaparilla there were large bunches on my neck so sore that I could not bear the slightest touch. When I had taken one bottle of this medicine, the soreness had gone, and before I had finished the second the bunches had entirely disappeared.' BLANCHE ATWOOD, Sangerville, Maine.

Hood's Pills cure constipation by restoring the peristaltic action of the alimentary canal.

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Intercolonial Railway.

ON AND AFTER MONDAY, the 29th (1st) of October, 1893, the trains will run only (Sunday excepted) as follows:

TRAINS WILL LEAVE ST. JOHN.

Express for Campbellton, Pugwash, Pictou and Halifax	7.30
Express for Halifax	7.50
Express for Quebec and Montreal	10.30
Express for Boston	10.40
Passengers from St. John for Quebec and Montreal take through sleeping car at Moncton at 10.30 o'clock.	

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN.

Express from Boston	8.30
Express from Montreal and Quebec (Monday excepted)	10.30
Express from Moncton (daily)	10.30
Express from Halifax	10.50
Express from Halifax, Pictou and Campbellton	11.30
Accommodation from Moncton	21.00

The trains of the Intercolonial Railway are lighted by electricity.

All trains are run by Eastern Standard Time.

D. POTTINGER, General Manager. Halifax Office, Moncton, N.B., 7th October, 1893.

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Catarrh Cured for 50c.

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