

Happy Days

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THE SHEEP-WASHING.

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WHEN I was about ten years old I spent several months with some friends in Connecticut who kept a flock of sheep, and I became very much interested in them.

I had been told that every spring, as the warm weather came on, the thick, soft covering of wool which had kept the sheep warm during the winter, was taken off and sold to be made into clothing for boys and girls; but that the wool was so dirty after being worn all winter by the sheep, that it must be washed before it could be used; and it was so much easier to wash it before it was taken off the sheep than after, that the farmers generally took them to a stream or pond, and washed them before shearing.

So when I heard that they were going to "wash the sheep," I asked eagerly if I couldn't help.

"Oh, yes, I guess so," said Uncle Francis.

So I put on some old clothes and went out to the barnyard, where the sheep were crowded together and bleating loudly. They

were to be washed in a pond near; so we drove them down the road till we came to the bars opening into the pasture which bordered on the pond. I ran ahead and let down the bars, and the sheep jumped over them into the pasture. Then we went



through the pasture and into the woods on the other side, until we came to the sheep-pen on the banks of the pond.

This pen was large enough to hold the entire flock, but not large enough to give them much room to run around in; and the

set open gates for greater thieves to come in at, even so, if we accustom ourselves to commit little sins, and let them reign in us, they will make us the fitter for greater offences to get the advantage of us, and to take hold on us.

fence which surrounded it ran down into the water, lest the sheep should try to escape; for, like some boys, they did not much like to be washed.

There was one sheep that had always been a pet; and when, after several others had been washed, they came to "Billy," as he was called, I begged leave to help.

So Uncle Francis took hold of Billy's fleece on one side and I took hold on the other, and we went down into the water with Billy between us. He struggled a little, but we held him firmly, rubbed his fleece and squeezed out the dirty water; and when we let him go he was the cleanest sheep in the flock.

A little while afterward the sheep were sheared. It was a warm summer day, and I thought the sheep must be glad to get rid of such a load of wool. While the wool was being cut off they remained very quiet, not making any noise until they were sheared, when they ran, bleating, about the yard.

As little thieves, being let in at a window, will