

be serenaded home," he said, laughing. So our anxieties for him were over, and you see I have good cause to remember the first time I heard the hand-bell ringers.

The Loaf of Bread.

In a time of famine a rich man allowed twenty of the poorest children in the town to come to his house, and said to them: "In this basket there is a loaf of bread for each of you. Take it, and come again at the same hour every day, till God sends better times."

The children pounced upon the basket, struggled and fought over the bread, because each wished to have the largest and best loaf; then went away without a word of thanks to the kind friend.

But Francesca, a little girl, meanly though neatly dressed, stood at a distance and gratefully took the loaf that was left in the basket, which was the smallest; then she kissed the good man's hand and went quietly home.

The next day the children were just as naughty and ill-behaved; and this time there was left for poor Francesca a loaf that was hardly half as large as the others. But when she reached home and her mother cut the bread, there fell out a number of new pieces of silver. The mother was frightend and said: "Take back the money this moment; for it is certainly in the bread by mistake."

Francesca took it back.

But the kind man said: "It is no mistake, my good child; I had the money baked in the smallest loaf in order to reward you. Be always as contented and yielding as you now are. He who is contented with the smallest loaf rather than quarrel for the largest, will receive abundant blessings."

The Deserter.

The boys had been having a merry game. They had been playing at soldiers. They would have told you they were soldiers, and that it was no game at all, but sober reality. And indeed so Charley found it.

He had joined the corps, and had found the rules very strict. They were to meet every evening after lessons or work, and with wooden swords or guns have very strict drill and exercise presided over by Rogers, whose father was a soldier, and who had great ideas of military discipline.

Charlie thought it great fun at first, and never missed an evening's drill, but after a while he grew tired of always doing as Rogers told him, and one evening he stayed away.

"Why were you not with us last evening?" asked Rogers, as he met him next day.

"I am tired of it all," said Charley. "It spoils the corps to have one absent and you fairly joined us. If you are not with us this evening, I shall look after you as a deserter."

Charlie hid away under the brush-wood on the common, but Rogers found him, tied his hands tightly together, and led him back by his ear.

"Don't do that," said Charlie, struggling to get his hands free.

"It is the punishment for deserters," said Rogers, as he walked quickly along, sword in hand. "Soldiers have to obey, whether they like it or not; when they once join the army, they can never do as they like any more."

Charlie thought it very hard, especially as Rogers insisted on carrying

out the punishment—so many strokes on the back with the flat of a sword. And he was very glad when shortly after his father moved to another village, where he was quite out of Rogers' reach; for as he told his mother, "Rogers made an awful strict captain."

A Strong Protector.

Poor old Rough! He was not very handsome, but he had as kind a heart as any dog in the United Kingdom, and always used his great strength to protect the weak. Suspicious characters who sometimes called at the farm fared badly when Rough was there; he knew them in a minute, and would growl and bark and make such an ado that they soon turned away from the house.

But the young ducks saw the other side of his character. The large cat was not very friendly with the ducks; she had twice worried two of the youngest, and delighted to chase the others round the yard, so that they soon learned to take shelter with Rough, knowing that she would never attack them while under his protection. They ran about under his feet, or in his kennel, but he never hurt or frightened them, always behaving most politely.

So that, though he was not very beautiful, I think we may yet call him a handsome dog, remembering the old proverb,—

"Handsome is that handsome does."

—Those who will get to heaven must fight their way thither. There must be a conflict with corruption and temptation and the opposition of the powers of darkness.

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—And when it is all over, and our feet will run no more, and our hands are helpless, and we have scarcely strength to murmur a last prayer, then we shall see that instead of needing a larger field, we have left untitled many corners of our single acre, and that none of it is fit for our Master's eye, were it not for the softening shadow of the Cross.

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