

THE LITTLE FOLK.

What Came of Not Acting a Lie.

Ever since Charley had seen the picture of a happy family of guinea pigs, and his father had told him what pretty pots these little creatures made, his heart had been set on having a pair; and so sure was he that his desire would sometime be fulfilled, that he made a little hut out of a tomato crate, and placed it beneath a great tree in the yard.

"I'll tell you what I will do," the minister said one day—Charley's father was the minister; "I'll give you some money now, instead of waiting for your birthday, and you can get a pair from farmer Gray; I know he has some, for I saw them the other day, when I was there."

Then, turning to his wife he said, with a little sigh:

"I wish I could get that man to come to church; though he's very polite to me, he won't listen to anything I say on the subject."

You may be sure that Charley accepted the offer, and the very next Saturday morning you might have seen him bounding along the road which lay between Farmer Gray's and the village, the happiest boy to be anywhere found.

Farmer Gray was at the house, but he directed Charley to the barn, telling him that he could go and make his choice, and he would come out in a few moments.

"But, no! on second thought you had better wait for me; there is a glass frame near the barn door that you might knock over, and I couldn't afford to have it broken."

"Oh! please let me go," cried Charley; "I will be very careful."

"Very well, then, of with you; but, Tray, you stay here; you almost knocked it over once, already this morning."

So Charley bounded off toward the barn, and as soon as the farmer's back was turned, naughty Tray dashed after him.

But, alas for Charley! In his eagerness he quite forgot the frame, and running through the barn door gave it a little push, and the next moment stood still, horrified by the sound of a fall and breaking glass; and the same instant his eyes fell upon the pretty little creatures for which he had come, in a stall near by.

Oh! why had he not been more careful; what would Farmer Gray say? Tray had reached the barn before him, and when the frame fell, ran quickly out again with his tail between his legs, frightened by the noise. But Charley had not noticed him, till he heard the farmer's voice the next moment.

"You bad dog," he cried; "so it was you knocked over my frame? Didn't I tell you to stay at the house!" And then poor Tray gave a sharp cry, as though he had been struck.

"Let him think that it was the dog!" The words seemed spoken in Charley's ear, and before he hardly realized what they meant, Farmer Gray came in and laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"Well, young man," he said, "I came pretty near blaming you for the crash that I heard as I crossed the yard, but I see that it was that disobedient dog of mine; if ever a creature looked his guilt he did. Well, which pair do you like best?"

Such a chance for escape! But Charley lifted up his head, and, looking the farmer straight in the eyes, said:

"It was not Tray, sir; I broke the frame; I am very sorry I was so careless; but please take this money: will it be enough to pay for it?"

"Just about," answered the farmer; but he looked down into the pale face, and not at the bill which the boy had laid in his hand.

"Tell me one thing," said the farmer; "why didn't you let me think it was the dog?"

"Father says that acting a lie is as bad as telling one; and that would be a shameful thing, you know. Good bye, sir! I am

very sorry;" and with that Charley fairly ran out of the barn and down the road. But not home; he turned off into the woods, and it was a full hour before he reached the village. What went on there under the shade of the trees? Well, never mind; the trees have never whispered the secret, nor will I.

Sadly and slowly Charley walked around the house, and finally paused before the little hutch which was to have held his pots. But what was it that made him start back, rub his eyes, and look again? Yes, there was no mistake; there in the hutch, were the prettiest pair from Farmer Gray's barn; and on a bit of paper thrust between the bars were these words: "For Charley, with Farmer Gray's respects." Nor was that all. The next day, to everybody's surprise, who should walk into church but Farmer Gray himself.

And when the minister came and welcomed him after the service, he said:

"I kinder thought I'd like to know what your preaching was like to turn out a boy like that one of yours; and I guess I like it well enough to come again."

"Wasn't it kind of Farmer Gray to give me the dear little things?" said Charley, as his father stood watching him feed his pots that evening.

"Very kind," replied the minister. And Charley wondered why his father suddenly stooped down and kissed him.

ANNIE L. HANNAH.

Many things in nature remind us of the power of little things. A little spring has satisfied the thirst of a village for centuries. A little bird by its morning song, has cheered the despondent soul of an invalid and led his desire and his hope up to things above the skies. A word of truth has lodged in the conscience, and been mighty to the pulling down of Strongholds. A despised Gospel has regenerated a nation, and opened the gates of a glorious morning to a world in darkness.

