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The Western Home Monthly

"You naughty, bad Miss Emmaline! You're killing my little mice!"

Amid shrieks from the sisters, who nimbly mounted convenient chairs Cricket turned the glove inside out, and five tiny lifeless bodies fell into her hand.

Her grief was so genuine that "the girls" thought she had been punished enough; for the child sat out in the garden crying over her dead pets and refusing to be comforted.

Anna hunted up a small box and went out to the child. Cricket's face was tear-stained and her eyes dim, while the baby mouth drooped and quivered pathetically. Anna knelt Leside her, heroically suppressing a shudder at the proximity of the dead mice.

"Look, dear! I have brought you a nice little box and some soft white cotton. Now, put the little dead babies in it, and you can have a fun-

eral and bury them in your garden." A little later the sisters slipped into the yard; and after Cricket patted down the mound, she turned a dirty but cheerful face to the girls, saying briskly, "Did you enjoy that funeral? I've had a per-fect-ly beau-ti-ful time. Now let's go fix a 'Peace Infernal,' like they have on the graves at church.'

After ten minutes of diplomacy and persuasion, Cricket consented to forego her idea, and substitute the words, 'Cricket's Mice," on the bit of pasteboard that was in evidence for a few days in the garden.

Sunday was a day Cricket dreaded. It meant walking sedately to Old Sweede's Church, where one could see the tall masts of foreign ships, but not go close enough to see anything one wanted to. You couldn't skip on Sunday, nor take long jerky steps to avoid walking on the dividing cracks of the flag-pavements. The rows of old graves, dating back to the first settlers of Philadelphia, and the story of the church being used as a place from which the Colonists fought the British vessels, fired the child's imagination, and she would dream of times when church was not so stupid for little girls. If only a British vessel woud fire on the church once in a while, she knew it would be lots

a wind, she knew it would be lots easier to keep awake. After services and the walk home there was usually cold meat, bread and butter and milk, and dinner at six instead of tea.

When lunch was over, Cricket stood gazing out of the front window, wondering why God made Sunday so uninteresting, and whether he did not get tired of hearng people pray and sing every single Sunday, forever and ever, amen!

stood with her small nose

to investigate, Adelaide, as usual, in the lead. On the narrow stairs they collided with five cats, four of which shot by them with wildly glaring eyes and abnormally large tails, but the fifth one seeing Miss Adelaide's

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head within reach, made a flying leap and clung to her with frantic grip until the brown wig and cat fell to the floor together, while the pup danced about in delight. Cricket hauled him out of the door, hoping against hope to make amends by removing the cause of the trouble.

Shutting the pup outside, the child returned and viewed the scene of disaster, where the sisters were pick-ing up the fragments of old china keepsakes. Adelaide, who had recovered her hair, smoothed it out with shaking fingers, and, going to the long pier-glass, adjusted the wig carefully, pinning it in place by means of a velvet ribbon. In so doing she

spied the culprit. "Go to your room at once!" she commanded, in a voice Cricket had never heard before. "You are a naughty, ungrateful child! I don't wonder Mrs. Jessup was glad to get rid of you. It was downright wicked to set the dog on those poor cats!" "Don't be too severe, sister,"

begged Anna, picking up a threelegged chair.

"Maybe she did not intend to do it," came from Emmaline, who was trying to fit pieces of a Chinese teapot together and thinking of the time when her father had brought it to her from one of his voyages.

A'delaide turned on them in wrath. "You are all to easy with her, and she takes advantage of it. Solomon was right when he said, 'Spare the rod and spoil the child.' I guess any man with nine hundred wives ought to know how to raise children, and I shall follow his advice. I am sick of this everlasting commotion, and if Elizabeth will not behave, I shall have to chastise her. We have a moral responsibility that I, for one, shall not shirk,' concluded Adelaide, her curls bobbing frantically in her excitement, as she gave vent to her pent-up anger under the pretext of advocating discipline.

Cricket looked from one to the other, but, seeing no encouragement, her inclination to say she was sorry and explain how it all happened turned to a dull sense of anger. "Let them think I brought the pup in to set it on the cats if they want to, the mean old "things!" and with her small mouth pouting she went slowly up to her room.

he hours dragged till dinner time, when a tray of substantial food was brought to the small prisoner by Adelaide who placed it on the table and left the room without speaking. Cricket maintained her position at the window until the door closed, then hurried to inspect the supper. No dessert, no cake; just roast potatoes, bread, milk and a stuffed tomato. Her solitary dinner was soon finished, and she stood staring disconsolately from the window of the sec-ond story front room. The church bells began to peal from every dir-ection. Trinity Church answered the chime of St. Peter's, the German Church around the corner echoed the faint call from Old Sweede's, and people passed on their way to evening service. Cricket raised the window, watching them enviously. Across the street children in their best clothes congregated on the steps and talked. Then one of them spied her and called, "Come on out." She shook her head, "I don't want to." A derisive laugh answered her, and the boy whom she had thrashed for trying to kiss her called, tauntingly, You dassent!" In a fury Cricket seized the stuffed tomato and hurled it at her tormentor. It landed on the top of the high silk hat of an elderly gentleman, and splattered in every direction like a small red geyser. The other children, batants into the house she saw the animated more by spite to Cricket than courtesy to her victim, picked up the hat and pointed to the now deserted window. Cricket, concealed behind a friendly green slat-blind,

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flattened against the glass, a half grown saucy pup appeared, and stopped in front of the house. After glancing carefuly around Cricket hurried to the door and called the dog. It wagged its tail delightedly and stumbled up the front steps.

Sneaking through the hall, they managed to reach the back yard undetected, where, screened by friendly shrubbery, she sat down, hugging the pup in ecstasy, while he reciprocated with slobbering mouth, muddy paws, and all his doggish heart.

Cricket might have successfully carried out her original plan of letting the dog out the alley gate had not the back parlor door been open, and a malicious fate led the five cats in a stately procession to the house.

There was a streak of fur, and the puppy was in full chase. In the parlor there was frenzied yowling and spitting, mingled with shrll yaps; a sound of breaking bric-a-brac, and the thud of overturned spindle-legged chairs. A huge glass-covered piece of artificial flowers made from shells stood on a small marble-topped table, which Cricket had been warned never to touch; the shells had been gathered by friends of. "the girls'" father, and made into this work of art by "the girls." As Cricket followed the comtable totter and crash to the floor.

The sisters were still in the kitchen tidying up the lunch things, when they heard the commotion, and started