

**The Town of Nogood.**

My friend, have you heard of the town of Nogood,

On the banks of the river Slow,  
Where blooms the Waltawhille flower fair,  
Where the Sometimorother scents the air

And the soft Goeasys grow ?

It lies in the valley of Whatathouse.  
In the province of Leterslide,  
That Tired feeling is native there,  
It's the home of the reckless Idontcare,  
Where the Giveltups abide.

It stands at the bottom of Lazyhill,  
And is easy to reach, I declare,  
You've only to fold your hands and glide  
Down the slope of Weakwill's toboggan's  
slide,  
To be landed quickly there.

The town is as old as the human race;  
And it grows with the flight of years,  
It is wrapped in the fog of idlers' dreams,  
Its streets are paved with discarded  
schemes,  
And sprinkled with useless tears.

The Colledgebred fool and the Richman's  
he'r  
Are plentiful there, no doubt,  
The rest of us crowd are a motley crew,  
With every class except one in view—  
The Foolkiller is barred out.

The town of Nogood is all hedged about  
By the mountains of Despair,  
No sentinel stands on its gloomy walls,  
No trumpet to batt'e and triumph calls,  
For cowards alone are there.

My friend, from the dead-alive town  
Nogood,  
If you would keep far away,  
Just follow your duty through good and  
ill,  
Take this for your motto, "I can, I will,"  
And live up to it each day.

**A Methodist Soldier**

BY  
**ALLAN-A-DALE.**

**CHAPTER I.**

**MY GRANDFATHER'S STORY.**

I was born, said my grandfather, in the year 1790, in the days when George III. was king. My father was a farm-labourer, a man of old Puritan type, simple in his manners and limited in his purse and everything else, except his honesty and thorough-going belief in the Methodist faith as the best road to a better world.

How he became a Methodist I never learned. He was a silent man about his own religious experience, and professed to nothing he did not illustrate in a daily life of exceptional uprightness and self-denial. It is probable that he heard the Methodist doctrine first from some travelling preacher, for I do not think that he himself ever went twenty miles from the Hampshire village in which I was born. That he was the first Methodist in the village I think must also be taken for granted. It was he who took the bold step of inviting a Methodist preacher to visit the village as often as he could, and offered him the use of the living room in my mother's cottage as a preaching place. This offer was gladly accepted, and my earliest recollections are of the little company that used to gather every other Sunday in the cottage to meet the minister. Methodism met with little opposition in the village, for, truth to say, it was a most godless place, and its official spiritual head was an old vicar whose infirmities were such that he rarely appeared more than once in a week at the old Norman church; and sometimes winter weeks went by without any service at all.

To my mother belonged the cottage in which we lived and the bit of ground attached. She was the daughter of a small farmer, who like my own grandfather belonged to a class which almost disappeared in the closing years of the last century when the great landlords began to enclose the open spaces. Out of my father's small earnings and the produce of the bit of land they managed with rare economy to raise a large family and offer hospitality to the travelling preacher.

My early life was quiet and uneventful. Of schooling I had little, and that chiefly in the winter. Our schoolmaster was the old parish clerk, who, for a small consideration, usually paid in kind by the farmers and in services by the labourers, taught a few of the children of the village the rudiments of spelling and writing. Some even who had extra wit or time he instructed in Latin and figures.

It was at this school, when I was scarce ten years old, that I first met two persons who afterwards had considerable influence on my life. The one was Michael Erling, a boy of my own age, and the other Joe Harter.

This Joe Harter was a lusty ne'er-do-weel, who, vagabond that he was, caring nothing for body or soul, had fought well in the great wars in India, and had returned to his native village with less body but a great deal more rascality than he ever took out of it. He was of a type that I afterwards found only too common in the British army of that day—a veritable tiger in the fight and a still worse tiger out of it. Time and again, as he used to boast, he had been strung up to the triangle and lashed until the officer gave the order to stop lest the army should lose too useful a soldier. The scars of these infamous lashings he would show as proudly as the bullet furrow in his scalp or the wooden leg which he earned along with his pension and a solid amount of prize-money as one of the forlorn hope of Seringapatam. Each lashing was to him the memory of a drunken spree or outrageous action. In the recollection of which he gloried rather than shamed, as he drank his pension away on the bench outside the village ale-house.

Now, Joe, more's the pity, was the son of our poor old parish clerk and schoolmaster, and when I first went to the

became known as one of the most successful of the new farmers who in every part of England were at that time introducing new methods and ideas into English farming.

Erling had two children, Michael, about my own age, and his little sister Ellen, some years younger. The little girl was all sweetness and good looks, very dutiful and obedient to the maid Mary, who brought her up after her mother's death; her brother Michael, though sharing her good looks, was always of a mischievous and cruel disposition, lacking all honour, and even, as a small boy, eager to do anything which he knew to be forbidden or wrong.

In Michael Erling, Joe Harter found a pupil only too ready and willing to be instructed. He first met the boy when he visited the house-place of the big farm-house, where, in return for mugs of home-brew, he retailed wild stories of adventure under the flag in India.

At first the Squire used to tolerate these visits, but after a time, seeing the character of the man, forbade him the house. He did it, I think, at the request of the Mrs. Mary, who was a good girl and careful of her charge, and who, before she had been long in the village, under my mother's instruction, became a very consistent Methodist. But Mary, though she managed her own charge well, had no control over the boy, who, finding out why Joe Harter had been for-

being fond of the little one, could scarcely bear to let her out of her sight. My father was also very fond of the child, and used to declare that her childish voice, joining in the hymns we sang at the fortnightly preaching, was the sweetest music he ever heard.

It is related that the old vicar, aroused by the visit of a fellow cleric of more ardent temperament, once ventured to warn the Squire of the danger of allowing his little girl to consort with villagers and dissenters. And Erling in turn spoke sharply to the maid about it.

Happening, however, to pass our cottage the very next Sabbath evening, and hearing the sound of singing, Erling stepped to the open door and looked in. Whereupon his little daughter, who was then but a tiny mite, standing on a chair close to the door, laid hold of his arm and drew him to her side.

Smiling, he counted to stay, and actually waited until the hymn was finished; but then as the little one hid her face in her hands, while the rest knelt in prayer, he stole shamefacedly away.

Although he came not, Erling never again rebuked the maid for taking the child to the cottage. On the contrary, he took early occasion to commend her for the good care she bestowed upon her charge.

(To be continued.)



JOE HARTER AND HIS PUPIL.

school, he frequently found his way thither, having but recently returned from the wars. When sober I think perhaps he had a bit of kindly feeling for his old father, and tried to show it by doing odd jobs for him, for he was a handy man in his way, and being deprived of the use of one leg used his fingers the more.

One of Joe Harter's most evil instincts was a desire to train others in his own peculiar wickedness. He was, I take it, one of the most blasphemous men I ever met. If he could get hold of one of the village boys and teach him some of the strange oaths used by our army in India he was merry for a day afterwards, and many was the time he tried to persuade "the Methody kid," as he called me, to repeat after him some of his favourite expressions. I was only a child then, but my father, hearing from my mother of it, sought for the one-legged scoundrel and promised him a terrible beating with his own wooden leg if he caught him at such tricks again.

But there were others who were not so fortunate as I, and chief amongst them was Michael Erling.

The boy's father—the Squire as he used to be called, though he was only a farmer renting his land like others in the neighbourhood—came to the village about the year 1800, not long after Joe Harter's appearance in it. He arrived with the avowed intention of sheep-farming on a large scale, and he carried out all he promised. He took the big farm-house near the schoolhouse with all the land that went with it, and more; and soon

bidden the house, followed him the more. Erling himself was, unhappily, too much concerned with the affairs of his large farm, and the experiments he continued to carry on for the improvement of his sheep, to care what became of the children, though he could not fail to notice, as time went by, the habits of idleness and the mean evasions by which Michael sought to escape the consequences of the trouble into which he frequently fell. He tried vigorous whipping, as the custom was in those days, but the fear of the whipping only drove Michael to deeper evasions and more deliberate lying.

I have said that my schooling was chiefly in the winter. The reason was that, as soon as I was old enough to follow my father into the field, my services became worth a few pence a day, and my time as fully occupied as that of a full-grown man. It was not labour that was either very heavy or very distasteful to me, and whether I was frightening birds from the standing corn, or gleaming after the harvest, or later, when I came to be employed as a shepherd by Erling, I was always of a merry heart and cheerful disposition. Obeying my mother's wishes and my father's stern injunction, I kept as clear of Joe Harter as I conveniently could, and as Michael Erling was often in his company, saw but little of a boy who might have been something of a close companion to me otherwise.

His little sister Ellen, on the other hand, often came to my mother's cottage, brought there by the girl Mary, who,

**"O THAT I HAD THE WINGS OF A DOVE."**

In one of our local churches, last Sunday, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove," was sung by the soprano, and "Oh, that I had wings," sang the contralto, and even the tenor and bass joined in the "ongling for "wings like a dove." The music was finely rendered, but while listening to it, and afterwards to the words of the pastor, as he prayed that he might be "borne on the pinions of faith,"—the writer could not help thinking, irreverently perhaps, but relevantly nevertheless, of the countless variety of birds' wings and feathers worn by members of that congregation that morning in church. And not only are wings and feathers used, but even birds themselves.

Poor birds! They look as if they would like to "fly away and be at rest!" Celia Thaxter, with her intense love for birds, wrote, "God gave us these exquisite creatures for delight and solace and we suffer them to be slain by thousands for our adornment. A bit of ribbon, or a bunch of flowers, or any of the endless variety of materials used by the milliner, would answer every purpose of decoration, without involving the sacrifice of bright and beautiful lives."—Westfield Times and News Letter.

**When Mother Sits Down by the Fire.**

BY MARTHA BURR BANKS.

Oh, the five-o'clock chime brings the cozlest time  
That is found in the whole of the day  
When Larry and Gus, and the others of us,  
Come in from our study or play.

When we push the big chair to the hearth over there,  
And pile the wood higher and higher,  
And we make her a space in the very best place—  
And mother sits down by the fire.

There's a great deal to say at the close of the day,  
And so much to talk over with mother,  
There's a comical sight, or a horrible plight,  
Or a ball game, or something or other.

And she'll laugh with Larry and sigh with Harry,  
And smile to our heart's desire,  
At a triumph won or a task well done—  
When sitting down there by the fire.

Then little she'll care for the clothes that we tear,  
Or the havoc we make on her larder;  
For the toil and the strife of our everyday life  
She will love us a little bit harder

Then our lady is she, and her knights we would be,  
And her trust doughty deeds will inspire;  
For we long then anew to be generous and true—  
When mother sits down by the fire.

The prayer-meeting killer is often the one who goes away bragging to himself that he saved the meeting.

The devil's sandals are so constructed that those who wear them can only walk down hill.