

HOME CIRCLE.

NUBBINS.

It was just this time of year when he came to us, and the first circus had passed along the day before, and we had all turned out to see it, and this evening we were out in the front yard, father leaning over the gate in his shirt-sleeves smoking his pipe, mother about the length of his shadow from him. The rest of us were acting circus. Tom tying himself into knots in the grapevine arbour, while we girls took turns on the flying trapeze, otherwise the swing. At this moment Tom gave a yell:

"Hi, there, you small boy! No crawling in under the canvas; if you want to see this show, come in at the gate."

We looked, and saw a boy so small that he seemed a mere infant. He was lying on the short grass just outside the garden paling, his little hands clasped together under his head, and his eyes closed; his face was deadly pale and his matted yellow hair uncovered by hat or cap.

We went out and shook him up, but to all our inquiries he only gave brief and incoherent answers, and father said he was too ill to speak; so we took him into the house and mother soon had him in a snug little bed, and after feeding him with a bowl of bread and milk, which he greedily ate with closed eyes, she held a consultation as to what should be done with him.

"It's my belief that he has been starved to death; there isn't a spot on him that hasn't a bruise, and, girls, I think I know where he came from"—here mother became melodramatic and dropped her voice—"he's run away from the circus!"

We had been a haven for stray cats and lost dogs and penniless tramps all our lives, but now a refugee from a circus! We sat up half the night expecting the whole cavalcade would come marching after him, but no one came, and our hero slept till morning.

He did not get up then, he was far too weak, but he smiled feebly at us and kissed Tom's hands—great, awkward, good-natured Tom—who called him "Nubbins," because he was all bones, and sat on the side of the bed, while we crowded round and looked on. Father had questioned the little chap, but not a word would he say, only his big blue eyes filled with tears and his lips trembled. Tom began differently, he plunged right in.

"So you ran away and left the circus folks, did you?" he asked in a matter-of-fact voice. The boy looked at him for a moment, as if terror-stricken, then he gasped:

"Who told you?"

"Oh, a little bird," said Tom. "Say, now, did they beat you when you couldn't ride those horses right?"

"Yes," whimpered the child, "and pinched me black and blue."

"Poor little soul," we chimed in; "were you always with the circus?"

"Born there," he answered, in the most musical voice I ever heard.

"And your father and mother, are they living there, too?"

"Both dead," he said, pitifully, and the tears stood on his yellow lashes, and we cried a little, too, all but Tom, who sniffed and snorted suspiciously, and suggested that we "give the kid a rest."

No circus company put in an appearance, and for months we ceased to read the newspapers, for fear that our daring child equestrian would be advertised in their columns; for we had formed a prodigious attachment for the child phenomenon, and were highly entertained by him in return. He told us fearful and wonderful stories of his

life in the ring, the hardships he endured and the perils he braved, and we drew from him that his mother had been called the Queen of the Arena, and had been thrown from her horse and killed, and his father missed his footing in vaulting, and so came to his death, leaving this one poor child alone. Then he would fondle us one by one, and kiss Tom's big red hands, and make his best public bow.

Yes, he was pretty and winsome, too, was Nubbins.

One night in late summer we were all ranged along the front garden fence getting the salt marshy air as it came drifting in from the sea, when a waggon-load of people drove slowly past. They were a gaunt crowd, a woman with a long wisp of mourning veil fluttering at half mast, a melancholy-eyed man with a stove-pipe hat of a past generation and red necktie, and some little girls in the raw, undeveloped years of early childhood. Nubbins was at the moment balancing on the top line of the fence, his thin arms gyrating like a wind-mill, his face turned up to the sky. The people in the waggon stopped their horses and looked at us intently. Then they all screamed in chorus:

"It's our Sammy!"

Nubbins heard, and jumped off the fence.

"Hallo," he said coolly, "if I ain't found again!"

"Sammy," screamed the woman, "O Sammy, come here! You dear boy! I'd 'most given you up!"

The man came over and tapped Sammy on the head.

"Ain't you ashamed, old fellow, to treat us so? It's just made your ma most sick. Come on home now, and be a good boy."

"Nubbins," we shrieked, "who are these people?"

But Nubbins was climbing into the back of the waggon, and the little girls and the woman overwhelmed him with caresses.

"Been here long?" asked the man, as he drew out a red handkerchief and mopped his face.

We told him Nubbins's own story. He laughed a little and said the boy was "cute," and allowed that the circus story was a good one; he had been used to run away ever since he was "knee high to a grasshopper," his parents said, for this was really Nubbins's father. Sometimes he told one thing and sometimes another, and he usually got back home in a week or two.

"This time," said the tender parent, "I really thought Sammy was gone. He's all the boy we've got, and he has a roving disposition, and he's powerful good company—pays for all he gets in entertaining folks. I'm sure I don't know what we'd do without him," continued the affectionate father.

The last we saw of that thankless Nubbins he was standing up on the waggon seat blowing kisses off the tips of his small, lean fingers, and the mist had got into our eyes so that the little rascal's figure was blurred and indistinct. We tried to forget him as the worst little waif, and the most untruthful that had ever lived; but when we thought it all over we had no doubt but all that stuff about the circus into his foolish head, and as for his forgetting us—well, older people forget, but oh, what a cute child he was! and how entertaining, and how we all did give our hearts to Nubbins!—Mrs. M. L. Rayne, in *Detroit Free Press*.

FOR TIRED HOUSEWIVES.

The human brain needs rest and change. The human mind needs relaxation. The human heart needs pleasant companionship. Deprive them of these requisites, and the result, in nine cases out

of ten, will be insanity. Perhaps you imagine that I mean to frighten you. Why, to tell you the truth, if I could not arouse you to a sense of your condition unless I terrified you a little, I would rather do so than see you an inmate of an insane asylum. You see this to be quite in accordance with the rest of nature's laws. The body cannot subsist on one kind of diet, it must have more or less variety; and behold how plentifully our Creator has provided for this great need in the abundant fruitfulness of earth, air and sea! How soon the palate tires of one article of diet! how soon the body starves when fed upon one thing! Dear friend, I beseech you give this subject your most careful consideration, for I perceive you are killing yourself with the constant strain brought to bear upon body and mind, and unless you consent to relax that strain you will suffer very seriously in consequence.

Your "nervous headaches" are sent perhaps as warnings, which, if heeded, may prove your salvation from more serious trouble. I have found it exceedingly injurious to work during the evening. You have been busy all day with one duty or another; the night has come, you can find no warrant in Scripture for continuing your labours, but you can for resting from them. So let the work-basket remain undisturbed, let the needle rest. You will be all the more skilful with it on the morrow. Spend the evening in reading, conversation, playing interesting games with your children, or in visiting your friends; or, better still, if you feel able, in attending an interesting lecture or concert; then when you retire, you will sleep sweetly and awake refreshed and equal to the performance of the day's duties.

Never eat heartily when "tired to death." Drink a cup of tea and eat a cracker or two, or beat up an egg in half-a-pint of milk, sweeten and flavour to taste and drink it. This will strengthen you and will not make any demands upon your weary stomach or digestive organs. And another thing: Do not rise early in the morning and trot all over the house doing this and seeing to that for hours before you eat anything. Put on the coffee, if you use that beverage, or the tea, if you use that, as soon as possible, and pour yourself out a cup just as soon as it is in condition for drinking, and add whatever light, easy-digested article of food you may like best. This done—and you must eat slowly and at your ease—you will find that you can return to your work and fairly "make things fly."

You will catch yourself singing, perhaps, and when your husband and children come down fresh from their pleasant slumber, they will meet a smiling face and sit down to breakfast, presided over by a cheerful hostess. Force yourself to try this plan once or twice and I know you will be pleased with it. I have the greatest faith in it because I proved it in my own case, and this is true of all the suggestions I have given in this letter.

TO GET RID OF COCKROACHES.

A correspondent writes as follows: "I beg to forward you an easy, clean and certain method of eradicating those loathsome insects from dwelling-houses. A few years ago my house was infested with cockroaches (or 'clocks' as they are called here), and I was recommended to try cucumber peelings as a remedy. I accordingly, immediately before bedtime, strewed those parts of the house most infested with the vermin with the green peel, cut not very thin from the cucumber, and sat up half-an-hour later than usual to watch the effect. Before the expiration of that time the floor where the peel lay was completely covered with cockroaches, so much so that the vegetable could not be seen, so voraciously were they eating it."