

For Boys and Girls.

CONDUCTED BY T. W.

TEDDY SMITH.

When Teddy Smith first put on pants, He felt so very grand He wouldn't mind his mother, Or he wouldn't hold her hand.

But on the street he walked ahead, And tried to whistle some. He thought perhaps he'd go to war, And fire an awful gun.

He wouldn't ride his hobby-horse, He called Jack Spratt "a fib!" He sat at meals in father's chair, And scorned his gringham bib.

His mother mustn't spread his bread, Nor cut things on his plate; She mustn't say, "No more, my dear!"

No matter what he ate, He mustn't kiss him when he fell And bumped him on the stones, And she must say, "Dear sir," just as She did to Mr. Jones!

So hard to please this gentleman His loving mother tried, It quite enlarged his dignity, And swelled his lofty pride.

And all was brave, and all was well, Until that mother said, At eight o'clock, "Of course, dear sir, You'll go alone to bed!"

Ah, would you have me say, what then Befell the great big man? For if you undertake to guess— I hardly think you can!

He turned the corners of his mouth Most fearfully awry; He rubbed his grown-up fist awhile Across his grown-up eye.

Then burying in his mother's lap Both pride and manly joy, He said in just the littlest voice, "I guess I'm just a boy!"

—Youth's Companion.

The Passing of Hannibal.

I was walking down Terrell street, just beyond the Town Hall, one afternoon in November, leisurely eating a handful of persimmons,—as any other boy in my place would have done, provided he knew, as I did, where to find the best persimmon tree in the county,—when, just before me, from somewhere or other, appeared on the sidewalk the forlornest and most demoralized kitten I had ever beheld. It was thin, dirty, and bedraggled, with a matted little tail that looked for the world like a rusty tennipenny nail.

Half falling from hunger and weakness, this kitten came slowly toward me, seeming to have decided that one boy, at least could be trusted. I stopped, leaned down, and from that dirty little black face looked up at me two trustful eyes, the small mouth opened for a couple of soundless mew, and probably for the first time in its brief career that small cat's purring apparatus was set to work, and in honor of a new friend. And we were friends from that moment. I gathered the dirty little scrap of a kitten up in my handkerchief and carried him home; which, in brief, is the early history of Persimmon.

The next two years, during which he emerged from a kitten into young cathood, probably formed the happiest and most tranquil portion of his existence. At the end of that time we moved down on Stafford Street,—as you go toward the river,—and Persimmon, who was now an important member of the family, was duly transferred also. The houses are close together in that part of the town, and the rear yard of our new home was separated from that of the adjoining house by a high, white fence.

To Persimmon and me, moving-time had been a rather pleasant experience—enjoyment of which, I have since learned, is confined entirely to dogs, cats and small boys.

While we were exploring our new back yard, the day after our arrival, I was surprised to see the fingers of two hands appear on the back fence, slowly followed by a woman's face. Iron gray hair was brushed smoothly back from a wrinkled forehead. The face itself was thin and severe. Over the high cheek-bones appeared a pair of large, gold-bowed spectacles. It was the face of an old woman, but it was not a pleasant face. My youthful instinct told me that this was not the kind of an old woman that boys like.

Through the gold-bowed spectacles, from the vantage-ground of the barrel or box on which she stood, she peered severely at the new boy and his cat in the next yard. For a moment we looked at each other in silence, then she said, "Have you come to live here, boy?"

"Yes, ma'am?" "Is that your cat?" "Yes, ma'am; It's Persimmon."

"Is he much of a fighter?" I hesitated for a moment at this surprising question. Of course a boy ought to back up his own cat, but

the fact was, Persimmon was the most peaceable feline I had ever seen.

"He's the finest cat in town." I answered, diplomatically. "He's my own cat. I found him and brought him up from a kitten."

"Well, I've got a cat," rejoined the old woman, without relaxing the severity of tone or feature, "and that's why I'm talking to you. I want to tell you, boy, that you must keep your cat at home."

She paused a moment, to let the significance of this sink in. Even Persimmon was all attention. The nodding head just appearing above the fence seemed to interest him so much that he sat down beside me and watched it with that expressionless, blinkless look that cats have when they see a yellowbird which is too far away to catch, but near enough to think about.

"What's your cat's name?" I asked, to break the silence.

"His name's Hannibal. In his day he was the finest cat in this county. How old are you, boy?"

"Going on twelve," I answered promptly.

"Twelve, hey? Well, my cat Hannibal will be fourteen years old come next June. I've raised him from a kitten. For fourteen years I've tended him when he was hurt, and hunted him up when he was lost. What's more, I've killed two dogs that worried him, and now that he's old, and so weak and so unsteady that he can't stand alone, I'm watching him every minute. So I've riz up here, boy, to tell you that if your cat comes prowlin' over in this yard, and tries to pick a fight with my poor, half-dead Hannibal, I'll lay a broom on him so he'll think about nothin' else for a week."

Our new neighbor paused, perhaps to recover breath. She did not seem to impress Persimmon in the least. Possibly she noticed his calm, unblinking stare, and concluded that it would be better at the outset to conciliate than to threaten.

"Would you like to see my old cat?" she asked, a little more pleasantly. "I bring him in the yard every sunny day," she added, "for he isn't able to walk more than a step or two by himself."

Securing a chair, I climbed up on my side of the fence and looked over. Beside the soap-box on which my new acquaintance was standing, in an angle of the fence that was sheltered from the wind but open to the sunlight, was the oldest and most decrepit cat that I have ever seen.

A piece of oilcloth had been placed on the ground, then a thickness or two of heavy carpet, over which a soft and really handsome red shawl had been several times doubled. Stretched out on this lay Hannibal.

Originally he must have been buff; but unlike paper, which grows yellow with age, this poor animal had been losing his color and, perhaps I should add, his fur also, for his ears and tail were almost hairless. A slight raising of the head as his mistress spoke to him was the only sign

of life that the old cat gave. He looked as though any moment might be his last.

"He must be a great care," I ventured.

"That he is; but he's been my best friend for years. I'm all alone, and he aint a-goin' to die if I can help it. I feed him five times a day. It's chicken and milk in the morning, and beef tea every three hours."

My position on the fence was so uncomfortable that I climbed back into the yard, and the owner of Hannibal who softened a trifle as she exhibited her aged treasure, resumed her former severity.

"I'm giving you fair warning boy," she said. "You must keep that black cat at home. I'll keep an eye on the fence all day, and if that cat of yours gets over into my yard—you can have the pieces when I get through." With quick sentiment the gold-bowed spectacles disappeared, and our new neighbor climbed down from the soap-box.

I was a good deal troubled at the outlook. Persimmon was quite unconcerned at threats, and it was perfectly plain that the high, white fence would soon be his favorite promenade. I concluded, however, that our neighbor had exaggerated a good deal. Certainly, nobody could be cruel to a cat like Persimmon, and least of all an old woman with a cat of her own.

As to possible trouble between the cats—Hannibal, however warlike he might have been in the past, would never again do battle, for his death was only a matter of a day or so, and Persimmon surely wasn't the kind of cat to take advantage of an expiring neighbor.

The next three days were tranquil. The household was busy getting settled, and Persimmon's energies were curbed by a plentiful supply of butter on his paws, to prevent his return to our old home.

There was one window in a rear room on the second floor of our house that commanded a view of our neighbor's yard, including the aged Hannibal on his cushions.

I was seated near it on the afternoon of the fourth day after our arrival, deep in textbooks, which, absence from school for a week made rather knotty companions, when a queer sound from the back yard attracted my attention.

To my horror, Persimmon stood midway on the fence in an attitude of feline defiance. His back was humped, his eyes gleamed, and his tail stood out so straight that it looked like a miniature pine-tree. Dreading the appearance of our neighbor, my first impulse was to hurry to the yard and secure possession of my aggressive pet; but it was already too late. As I looked, he crept along the fence and sprang down on the level roof of our neighbor's woodshed, and waited in battle array.

Hannibal at first had not perceived the invasion. He lay motionless in the sun, as usual, apparently far beyond interest in matters human or feline; but when I looked again an extraordinary change had come over him. The old cat raised himself to his feet. Two gleaming eyes blazed defiance at the enemy above. Slowly, and with some difficulty, he crept down the path toward the woodshed, but as he moved the years seemed to roll off him and vanish, and instead of the

decrepit and half-dead Hannibal, outstretched on a shawl, there moved an animal so large, stealthy and tiger-like as almost to suggest a wildcat.

With a leap the old cat reached the low roof of the woodshed, and paused. A moment the two animals surveyed each other, but it was for a moment only. Hannibal sprang upon his enemy. There was a rolling mass of fur, a confusion of sounds and cries of feline conflict, and then Persimmon shot out from the woodshed roof and over the fence into our yard, in a series of somersaults only terminated by a flower-bed.

He was up in a second, and seemingly half crazed with fear, tore across the yard in search of shelter and protection.

The battle was over, and Persimmon, young but terrified and utterly vanquished, was hiding under the hen house, after an invasion, challenge and defeat, which altogether had not consumed five minutes. I hurried to the yard, and at length succeeded in coaxing the bewildered wild-eyed Persimmon from his hiding-place.

He was a badly damaged cat. One ear was torn, two sections of fur were missing from his back, and he had left the end of his tail in the enemy's territory.

Persimmon may have believed with that great general who also had met defeat, that honor still remained; but it seemed pretty clear to me, as I worked over my injured pet, with warm water and court-plaster, that the fortunate absence of Hannibal's aggressive mistress was about the only bright spot in the whole affair.

Not a sound had we heard from the next yard since Persimmon rolled over the fence. I set my patient tenderly down on an old blanket, and securing a chair, peered cautiously over the fence.

Not far away from me, on a low projection of the woodshed roof, some ten feet from the scene of his victory, the old cat lay motionless, as if he had fallen exhausted.

"Hannibal," I called softly.

At the sound of my voice he half raised his head. It fell back upon the roof. A convulsive tremor passed over his long, gaunt frame, and Hannibal, faithful friend and invincible warrior, was no more. Quick steps sounded in our neighbor's kitchen, and as I hastily descended from my post of observation, I heard her step out into the yard.

Persimmon was sitting on the blanket beside me, eyeing disconsolately the glove-finger which decorated what was henceforth to be the end of his tail.

I caught him up and hurried into the house. Old Hannibal could tell no tales now, and with his passing there was some things about that afternoon's events which I was perfectly willing to bury with him, for the sake of my friend Persimmon.—Exchange.

Not the Place For My Boy.

Joe Allen always was a good boy to work, especially when he could earn a little money as a result of his efforts. He often saw ways of getting a few pennies that other boys did not see or think of; so he became noted on this account among his brothers and sisters, and it was often said by them that he always had money.

This characteristic was not discouraged, for there were many wants in the little family that could not be

supplied from the small income, as the father was dead and his older brother was in college and must be kept there some way, his mother said making economy a necessity.

Joe went to school, and one day he learned, among other things, that a wholesale grocer at the farther end of the city, hired boys to wait upon customers on Saturday, that being his most hurried day of all the week. He was filled with a great desire to be one of those boys, and his mother reluctantly gave her consent.

It was winter, and you can imagine a short, chubby fellow with dark hair, getting up before light, for the boys were expected early, eating a scanty breakfast and going off cheerfully to work all day in the cold store, for such stores are not warmed, you know. For his lunch he could eat anything he wished, as the other boys did, which he thought was an important consideration: to choose from a whole grocery store anything he wanted. But as it was cold and there was little time allowed them in which to eat, it did not prove very satisfactory, in reality.

Forgetting the unpleasant circumstances he thoroughly enjoyed the day. He liked the hurry and bustle of the work and the rush of business generally. But the getting home at night was the best of all; it was in his mind all day. Cold, tired and hungry, he knew his mother would be watching for him. The fire would be bright and cheerful and there would be a nice hot supper waiting for him. And then the money he had earned seemed so much to him, though I may as well tell you it was only a dollar; but he had worked for it, it was peculiarly his own. If you have never tried it, you do not know how much more anything is prized than that you have worked for, whether it is money or some other thing.

Joe's courage did not fail and several weeks passed. He was one of the most trusty, reliable boys. Sometimes he was sent to the bank to carry the funds which had accumulated during the day and Mr. Brown gave him more than at first when he paid him at night, so he had a little more money to take home.

But his mother, who was ever watchful over her boy, found out something one night that startled her. It was a tiny little bottle that he brought home in his pocket. Mr. Brown had given it to him, and had said 'it was good to keep in the house,' and it was labelled 'Fine Whiskey.' She looked at him reproachfully, too much astonished to speak. After supper she had a quiet sensible talk with him. She found out that in the store liquor was kept for sale; there was a pile of boxes and barrels and behind them a little counter and a small dipper for customers to try the quality of each kind as they desired. 'Joe,' she said, putting her arm around him lovingly, 'that's not the place for my boy.' And Joe drew a long breath and said: 'I knew you would say so, mother.' —Union Signal.

The Best References.

The following little anecdote which is told in the "Sacred Heart Review," bears its own moral and needs no comment:—

John was fifteen, and very anxious to get a desirable place in the office of a well-known lawyer who had ad-

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vertised for a boy, but doubted his success, because, being a stranger in the city, he had no references to present.

"I'm afraid I'll stand a poor chance," he thought, despondently; "however, I'll try to appear as well as I can, for that may help me a little."

So he was careful to have his dress and person neat, and when he took his turn to be interviewed, went in with his hat in his hand and a smile on his face.

The keen-eyed lawyer glanced him over from head to foot. "Good face," he thought, "and pleasant ways."

Then he noted the neat suit—but other boys had appeared in new clothes—saw the well-brushed hair and clean looking skin. Very well, but there had been others there quite as cleanly; another glance, however, showed the finger nails free from soil.

"Ah! that looks like thoroughness," thought the lawyer.

Then he asked a few direct rapid questions, which John answered as directly.

"Prompt," was his mental comment; "can speak up when necessary. Let's see your writing," he added aloud.

John took a pen and wrote his name.

"Very well, easy to read, and no flourishes. Now what references have you?"

The dreaded question, at last! John's face fell. He had begun to feel some hope of success, but this dashed it again.

"I haven't any references," he said, "I'm almost a stranger in the city." "Can't take a boy without references," was the brusque rejoinder, and as he spoke a sudden thought sent a flush to John's cheek.

"I haven't any references," he said, with hesitation, "but here's a letter from mother I just received. I wish you would read it."

The lawyer took it. It was a short letter:—

Dear John,—I want to remind you that whenever you find work you must consider that work your own. Don't go into it, as some boys do, with the feeling that you will do as little as you can, and get something better soon, but make up your mind that you will do as much as possible, and make yourself so necessary to your employer that he will never let you go.

You have been a good son to me, and I can truly say I have never known you to shirk. Be as good in business, and I am sure God will bless your efforts.

"H'm!" said the lawyer, reading it over the second time. "That's pretty good advice, John—excellent advice. I rather think I'll try you, even without references."

John has been with him six years, and last spring was admitted to the bar.

"Do you intend taking that young man into partnership?" asked a friend lately.

"Yes, I do. I couldn't get along without John; he is my right hand man!" exclaimed the employer heartily.

And John always says the best references he ever had was a mother's good advice and honest praise.

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