

A Lesson of Mercy.

BY ALICE CARY.

A boy named Peter
Found once, in the road,
All harmless and helpless,
A poor little toad;

And ran to his playmate,
And all out of breath,
Cried, "John, come and help,
And we'll stone him to death!"

And picking up stones,
They went on the run,
Saying one to the other,
"Oh, won't we have fun!"

Thus primed and all ready,
They'd hardly got back,
When a donkey came
Dragging a cart on the track.

Now the cart was as much
As the donkey could draw,
And he came with his head
Hanging down, so he saw,

All harmless and helpless,
The poor little toad,
A-taking his morning nap,
Right in the road.

He shivered at first,
Then he drew back his leg,
And set up his ears,
Never moving a peg.

Then he gave the poor toad
With his warm nose, a dump,
And he woke and got off
With a hop and a jump.

And then with an eye
Turned on Peter and John,
And hanging his homely head
Down, he went on.

"We can't kill him now, John,"
Said Peter, "that's flat,
In the face of an eye
And an action like that!"

"For my part, I haven't
The heart to," says John;
"But the load is too heavy
That donkey has on."

"Let's help him," so both lads
Set off with a will,
And came up with the cart
At the foot of the hill.

And when each a shoulder
Had put to the wheel,
They helped the poor donkey
A wonderful deal.

When they got to the top
Back again they both run,
Agreeing they never
Had had better fun.

THE BOY AND THE DOG.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

BY ELSPETH MORAY.

The Dog first opened his brown eyes in an Indian's tent. Past the side of it rushed the noisy little Indian river all foamy with its race over the falls and eager to dive into the clear waters of the Georgian Bay. Far through the tent door gleamed the blue waves of Huron, and the grayish-yellow cliffs of the opposite shore fringed with emerald. Along with his brothers and sisters the Dog was carried out to the sward, and furnished great amusement to a number of young savages rolling around there. They pelted the puppies with grass, and shrieked with delight when the fat little things tossed tipsily about. Old Waukedec, chief of the camp, sat and watched them, but with a face like a stone. He puffed away at a pipe, and threw an occasional glance along the dusty road near by. Presently, from a big brick house above the reserve, a Boy emerged, and came whistling down the embankment. The old Indian, who had expected him, kept his eyes studiously away, and only turned when he felt the Boy's hand on his shoulder.

"Waukedec," said the Boy, "I want a pup."
He smiled as he spoke with all the frankness of ten years, and opening his hand displayed there a silver coin. The redskin took the money stolidly, turned it over in his palm, and without a word pointed to the pups. Never had a bargain been closed more promptly. A few minutes later he was sitting in his old attitude puffing at his pipe, but inwardly amazed at his good fortune. But the Boy hurried away, afraid that at the last moment he might be recalled, and

all the time he pressed his warm young cheek against the little creature, calling himself a lucky fellow as he did so.

At this period the Dog was a bundle of yellow and white floss, out of which blinked two dark and shining eyes. It was in his eyes that one knew him to be a friend or foe. Set in his white head, and made a thousand times darker by the contrast, they were an ornament any lady might have been proud to possess—so luminous, so pleading, so prayerful were they—so tenderly human! As he grew older he was taught tricks; submitting gravely to be decked out with a hat cocked over one eye, a coat tied around his neck, glasses upon his nose, and a pipe hanging piteously from his drooping mouth. How he hated that pipe! Sometimes before it was given him his eye glanced distrustfully at the shelf where it lay, and when the Boy thrust it between his teeth he had an expression which plainly read: "I could bear anything but this!"

He could shut the door with quite as loud a slam as the Boy's, scratching it dreadfully with his claws, but turning around afterward with such a brilliant air of triumph that one had the heart to scold him. He kept his coat so spotless that he was allowed to lie on the very best rug, but even the tidliest dog will get muddy sometimes. On a wet day, unless asked to go for a walk, he preferred to sit on the broad windowsill and watch vagabond dogs strolling past. From his expression we gathered that he felt sorry for them. But when the Boy donned a waterproof he resigned himself to fate, and trotted gingerly out into the rainy streets. When they returned, the Dog knew better than to enter the house. No matter if the door stood wide open, he would sit in the perch, dirty and abject, with the look of a thief. When one came near him to inquire the trouble, a very muddy paw was held out tremblingly as a sufficient answer. By-and-bye it became the custom to wipe his feet, and then he would enter radiantly into the best room.

Often the Boy would lay a juicy morsel on his friend's black nose, and having said, "Stay there!" would leave the room. Nothing could be more ludicrous than the Dog at such moments. His whole body trembled with anticipation to the tip of his tail. His nose twitched and shook the meat invitingly, while his eyes remained rivetted on the door, where the Boy's roguish eyes were peering through the key-hole.

The Boy never whipped him; a word of rebuke was quite enough for him. At the words, "Bad dog!" all the brown fire died out of his eyes, his tail drooped sadly, and his whole body assumed a deplorable air. Usually on such occasions he would walk up to his accuser, and hold out a supplicating silken paw, which was never refused. Having been thus pardoned, he, like other sinners, threw off his repentant air, and became self-assertive again.

Autumn was his favourite season, for then the Boy began burnishing his gun. The very sight of that gun intoxicated the Dog. He barked, whisked his tail, and raced round and round the room in the exuberance of his delight, while the Boy whistled in sympathy, and rubbed affectionately away at his rifle. It would be difficult to say which of them enjoyed the sport most. The Boy, on the look-out for partridges, trod cannily on the spongy ground; the Dog followed close behind, watching every movement of his master with the greatest alertness. At night, when the sun spilled all his purple-red wine into the placid bay, they trudged home, sometimes triumphantly, sometimes dejectedly, but always friends, beguiling the bush-path with a by no means one-sided conversation. After such excursions they lay down on the hearth-rug together, the Boy's arm around his chum, and the bonny brown head pressed against the white one.

One day the Dog was disobedient. The Boy and his friends were going for a sail, and, of course, the Dog must go too. But for the first time in his life he refused to obey. Entreaties and commands were alike useless, and finally the Boy lifted him in his arms and carried him on board. But as they sailed out of the harbour, the Dog watched his first opportunity, and leaping into the water, struck out for shore. Summer was on the earth in all the glory of her first and living freshness, but over all hung invisibly the shadow of death. There was a lad on board, the Boy's Jonathan, his opposite in many respects, yet knit all the closer for that to the warm heart of his chum. He stood at the prow of the little vessel watching the small blue waves dashing aside, till his eyes grew dizzy; suddenly, his hold loosened, he staggered, and with a low cry slipped overboard. In a moment, all was confusion. It seemed impossible

to save him, for a stiff breeze was blowing, and the yacht would require some smart handling before she could be brought about. Besides that the water was still deadly cold with the ice of the late winter, and no one could long exist in it. Could he hold out under such adverse circumstances? Ah! the Boy asked none of these questions. Love called to him from the jaws of death; he never dreamed of staying. Years were condensed into that moment, for in it the Boy's thoughtless past rolled up like a scroll and he became a man.

He tore off some of his outer clothing, plunged in, and with a few bold strokes reached his friend's side. And now began a life and death struggle. The Boy's vigorous and hopeful nature refused to think of danger. With one arm round his friend and the other beating back the encroaching water, he kept repeating:

"Cheer up! here they come!—just one minute longer."

But in vain! The cheering words struck no vitality into the other's sombre and drooping spirit, and pushing back the Boy's hand, he answered:

"No, it's no use, old man, I can't hold out."

Again and again as the yacht raced cruelly near, and a half-dozen eager and frantic hands were outstretched to catch them, the Boy's love and pity broke out in the intense cry: "Save him! never mind me! never mind me!"

When at last the yacht drew alongside, the struggle had ended. The Boy was pulled, half unconscious, into the pitiful arms of his comrades, but the dark young face of the other lay under the impenetrable waters.

At night, when the Boy drew his dog-friend into his tired arms in the darkness, he whispered through his tears:

"Why were you not there? You could have saved him."

But the Dog only looked up with his wise brown eyes, and licked the caressing hand in sympathy.

When the Boy grew to a youth's height, he must needs go and seek his fortune. Here was no place for the Dog. But the Boy's heart-strings were very tender ones, and scarcely a year slipped away before he was back filling the waiting space in the circle. When he had gone the rounds with his warm and welcome kisses, he looked around for the Dog. The beautiful creature was standing apart, half-expectant, but waving his tail slowly, as though in doubt. A year is a big slice out of a dog's life. His master whispered his name softly; the coils looked up and the four eyes met, one pair scarcely less human than the other. That moment of recognition was instantaneous. The Boy opened his arms, and with a shrill bark of delight the Dog leaped into them, wriggling, licking, whining, showing by every mark he could his intense joy at the reunion. When the Boy, some time later, sat down to recount his adventures, the Dog sat in his old place beside him, his soft brown eyes fixed on his master's face.

The Boy came of age, and called himself a man, but in the midst of the rejoicings he drooped and sickened. How the Dog marvelled at his silence—no laughter, no racing, but a quiet figure on a bed. Sometimes the lion's brown, boyish hand came out to meet the caresses of the pink tongue; by-and-bye it became too tired even for that. There came days of sickness and distress when the passionate and healthy spirit of the Boy revolted against pain and death; when life cried out for life, and the mists of the cold valley wrapped him in their folds. But the morning dawned at last, fair and serene; out of the shadows the Boy's soul came; humbled and purified, and left, ere it fled, a smile on the young mouth as a sign of its triumphant peace. Thus the Boy came of age, and entered into his inheritance—not of earth, thank God, not of earth, but "one incorruptible and undefiled, which fadeth not away."

And the Dog—what of him?

Lying on his favourite rug before the fire, his dark eyes blinking at the glow it made—who can tell what thoughts were his? Very quiet he was; but often he would raise his head in a sharply listening attitude, his ears pricked backward, waiting, waiting for a footstep that never came. And then rising, from an impulse impossible to be guessed at, he would walk slowly from the room, and, mounting the staircase, enter the empty chamber above. There at the opened door he would stand, perfectly motionless, as though in expectation, then slowly return to his old place by the fire.

He, too, has gone—the bright and beautiful creature. When the glowing fire lends its enchantment to the dreamer, I seem to see him still, with the hand of his Boy-master at his collar, in the far, sweet land of truest friends.

MAKING HOME SWEET.

How many of us really do our best to make home happy? This question was suggested by an incident which took place at the close of the singing of that beautiful song, "Home, Sweet Home." An old woman and a young girl had been attentive listeners, and the former was moved to tears.

"Isn't it a beautiful song?" exclaimed the girl. This was the older woman's answer:

"Yes; and the sentiment to which it moves all these people is beautiful. How much happier the world would be if every one had as much principle as sentiment on the subject, and followed out a plain, everyday rule of making home sweet!"

The girl turned thoughtfully away. She hardly heard the next song. She was acknowledging to herself that, in spite of her love for her home, she made it unhappy every day of her life by her willfulness and quick temper.

EASILY DRAWN BY KINDNESS.

A kind word is better than a whip, asserts a writer in *The Child's Gem*, and then goes on to recount the following story, which proves the assertion to be an altogether correct one:

"In one of the London timber yards there is a carter who is noted for his kindness to the horse which is under his care. He is deeply attached to it, and the handsome creature appears to be equally fond of him. Such is the command that this man has acquired over his horse that a whip is unnecessary. He has only to walk a little in advance, when, after a word or two and the simple pointing of the finger the noble animal will draw his burden much more readily than those which are cruelly lashed with the whip. Oh! that more kind words were used in the management of horses and fewer lashes of the whip. Horses, like human beings, are more easily drawn by kindness than driven by cruelty."

The Little Prayer.

A little maiden knelt one night—
A little maiden all in white—
She knelt and said her simple prayer,
Asking the dear Lord's tender care,
That while her eyes were sealed in sleep
He would her soul and body keep.

A stranger sat within the home,
A man whose wont it was to roam,
Who had no God, no church, no heaven,
In his hard creed, no sins forgiven;
No faith, no hope, no bed-time prayer,
No trust in God's protecting care.

He watched at first half mockingly
The child beside her mother's knee,
With eyes down-drooped and folded
hands,

While o'er her shoulders golden strands
Of hair fell down, and snow-white feet
Peeped from her gown all fair and neat.

"And now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take."
So prayed the child, whose faith and love
Wanted her simple words above.

The proud man listened, and the years,
So full of sin, doubt, griefs, and fears,
Seemed blotted out, and he, once more
A child, was kneeling on the floor
Beside his mother, while he prayed
The same prayer as this little maid.

Dear childhood's prayer, so sweet, so strong!

With power to hold the heart so long,
And melt the frost of years away,
Until the scorner longed to pray;
And humbly, ere he went to sleep,
Besought the Lord his soul to keep.

—The Congregationalist.

HAVELOCK AS A BOY.

It is told of General Havelock that one day, when a boy, his father, having some business to do, left him on London Bridge, and bade him wait there till he came back.

The father was detained and forgot his son, not returning to the bridge all the day. In the evening he reached home, and, after he had rested a little while, his wife inquired:

"Where is Harry?"
"The father thought a moment.
"Dear me!" said he, "I quite forgot Harry. He is on London Bridge, and has been there for eight hours waiting for me."

He hastened away to relieve the boy, and found him just where he had left him in the morning, pacing to and fro like a sentinel on his beat.

The strict fidelity to duty which the boy gloriously displayed showed itself in after years in the march to Lucknow.