

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

THE FIRST SNOWFALL.

The apples were being brought from the orchard—baskets full of great red and green and striped ones—and upon the high seat of the cart, beside John rode little Persis.

"O mamma!" she called, "come see the apples—they are all in!"

Mamma came and looked. "Why I don't see a single Maiden's Blush," she said. "Didn't our jelly-tree bear?"

"I knew you'd miss the Maiden's Blushes right away, Mamma," said little Persis. "But we did get one!" And in the hand which she had held behind her, she showed a great rosy apple.

"Well, that is a large one, Pussy," mamma said.

"It was the onliest one, mamma, and on the very tip-toppest branch! I don't believe the old tree wanted us to have it! What shall we do with it, mamma?"

"How would you like to make it into jelly?" Little Persis' mother always proposed such pleasant things to do!

"Make it myself and seal it up, and pack it away?" said little Persis.

"Yes," said her mother.

"And unpack it, and eat it myself in the winter?"

"Yes," laughed her mother.

"I'd just love to," said little Persis. And she put the big rosy apple away in the store-room—and forgot all about it.

When Persis woke Saturday morning, she heard the rain pattering against the window panes.

"Rain on Saturday!" Poor Persis buried her face in the pillow and squeezed out a few tears.

And then her mother's voice was heard at the foot of the stairs: "Come, Persis, hurry! Today is jelly day!"

Jelly! Persis was up in an instant, and made such haste with bathing and dressing that she slipped into her chair just as the others were sitting down, blissfully beaming upon them all; for she was thinking of her big rosy apple.

By and by her mother and she had the clean pleasant kitchen all to themselves, and Persis had a little stool and a bright little pan and a little sharp knife. She brought the big apple and washed it. How it shone, all green and rosy! Then she pared the skin off in great even strips, and cut the apple in pieces.

She took out the seeds and core. Then she put the clean white pieces and the bright skin into a little saucepan, and poured a cup of water on the fruit and set it over the fire to boil. When it was soft, she strained it through a little jelly-bag, and found she had a cupful of juice.

Little Persis put a cupful of white sugar with the rosy juice and set it on the fire again. It boiled and boiled; and pretty soon she took some in a saucer to see if it would grow thick and jelly-like. "I've seen you try yours in the sun, mamma," she said, "and came, right away. I wish the sun would just please to shine on mine."

It boiled some more, and then little Persis tried it again; and at the very moment she held the spoon up a sunbeam shone out from between the rain-clouds, and the rosy spoonful grew thick as it dropped!

There was just enough to fill a little jar Persis had; and it was the most fragrant, rosy, gleaming jelly that ever was seen!

When it cooled, Persis melted some paraffine, and poured it into the top of the jar, and it hardened and was beautifully white and tight, and would keep the jelly clean and sweet until she wanted to eat it. Then she cut a nice white piece of paper, and wrote on it, "PERSIS WELLS MAIDEN BLUSH JELLY," and pasted it on the little jar.

"How long must I keep it before I eat it, mamma?" she asked.

Her mother smiled. "Well," she said, "I wish you to eat it the very day the first snow falls."

"Months and months from now?" asked little Persis.

"Only weeks and weeks," answered her mother.

Little Persis wanted to put her jar of jelly in a safe place. So she found a silken scarf that belonged to her doll, and wrapped the little jar in it and stored it away at the bottom of the doll's trunk, and forgot that it was there.

Early in November Persis went to visit her grandmother and the three aunts who lived in the city, and she had a delightful time for three weeks: Then, one day, she felt lonesome and wanted to see her mother.

So she went and stood behind the parlor windows and looked out into the street. She saw many happy smiling people walking there, and Persis pitied herself so hard that two tears rolled down her cheeks just as Uncle-Doctor Alec glanced up at the window.

He came right into the house and into the parlor and right behind the curtains.

"Hello!" said he. "What's the matter with Persis Pussy?"

"I want to go somewhere—I want to go home!" sobbed little Persis. And then she sobbed right out loud.

"Go straight and put on your things, and I'll take you somewhere!" said he.

"Where are you going with that child, Alec?" asked grandma, seeing Persis in her hat and coat, as she too came through the hall.

"Hospital—visiting day—sick little girl—perfectly safe—can't stop!" called Uncle Alec. And the next moment he and Persis were out in the street.

As Uncle Alec reached for Persis' hand, he found it full. She was holding in it a little white jar. "What's this?" he asked.

"Oh, that's my Maiden Blush jelly. I packed it away in my doll's trunk and forgot it, and today I found it. I can't eat it until it snows, but I can show it to the sick little girl and tell her what's in it."

Pretty soon they came to the hospital. When they were inside, Persis thought it a very pleasant place; for the corridors were full of visitors, and most of them had smiling faces and carried flowers in their hands.

And such a lovely room as they came to at last! It was full of sunshine, and the windows looked out upon a garden bright with autumn colors. Six little girls sat in the six white beds, five of them seeming so happy; for each one had a visitor. They were the almost-well little girls. The sixth little girl looked sad, for no visitor sat by her bedside; but her pale little face brightened when she saw Dr. Alec, and she held out her hands to him. He took one, but put the other in Persis' hands.

"Pussy, this is Pussy," he said to the little girl in bed. And then he said to Persis the very same words, "Pussy, this is Pussy."

How the two little girls laughed! And, as they were laughing, Uncle Alec slipped away, whispering a word to the smiling nurse. She took off Persis' coat and hat, and put a screen near the bed, so that the two children seemed to be in a tiny house by themselves. Then she drew a queer one-legged table to the bed, and swung the top about so that it made a nice stand, and then gave Persis a package Uncle Alec had left.

"Is your name Pussy?" asked Persis.

"No, Doctor Alec just calls me so. My name is Persis."

"Oh!" cried the visiting Persis, "mine is Persis, too!"

Then she showed the little sick Persis the jar of jelly, and told of the great rosy apple, and how the jelly was made, and when it was to be eaten. And then they opened the package Uncle Alec had left, and found it was beautiful paper dolls dressed in bright dresses, with gay paper for making more dresses! what fun it was!

By and by the nurse came and said, "Aren't these two Pussies getting hungry?"

"Oh, see! It's snowing! It's snowing!" cried a gleeful voice from the next bed outside the screen.

Little Persis ran out and looked from the windows and at every one she saw the air was full of white feathery flakes!

"Oh, oh, now we can eat it!" said she and ran back and squeezed the sick little Persis for very joy.

Presently the nurse came again with a tray, and on it were two bowls of delicious broth, and crisp dainty crackers, and plenty of nice bread and butter, and a plate of white grapes. Persis had the jar open and made the nurse smell it, and gave her a spoonful, and told her she made it herself and all about their Maiden Blush jelly-tree. And then she asked if the little sick Persis might eat some, and the nurse said yes and brought a tiny plate, and Persis turned the jelly into the plate. It glowed and shone, now amber now rose, and made the whole room fragrant.

The two children sent a generous spoonful to each of the five almost-well little girls, and then the two Persises ate theirs.

Soon Dr. Alec came, and the two Persises bade each other good-bye—and how they met again is quite another story. It was not that winter; for, when Persis got back to grandma's, she told her aunts she must go right home, because she must let her mother know that she ate her jelly the very hour the first snow fell. "For," said Persis, "I know my mother is worrying dreadfully about it this minute, because she always keeps her promises, and she doesn't know that I brought it with me, and she'll think I didn't have my Maiden Blush jelly when she said I might!"

Scott occupies more space in the British Museum catalogue than any other writer with the exception of Shakespeare. More than a thousand entries, contained in eighty pages, appear under the novelist's name. Forty-one pages contain the 752 entries relating to Dickens, while Thackeray occupies twenty-one pages, with 223 entries.

The Scottish Patriot has ceased to exist. In his farewell to readers the editor, Rev. David Macrae, warns Scottish patriots against—1, Ritualism in the Scottish Church; 2, the evil of Drunkenness in Scotland; 3, growing Love of Money; 4, Love of Pleasure; 5, Militarism; 6, Trashy Literature.

The retirement of the Rev. Evan Jones from the Calvinistic Methodist ministry of Moriah Chapel, Carnarvon, after a period of over thirty years, is just announced. Originally a printer, Mr. Jones later entered the Church he has served so well, and has long been known as one of the stalwarts of Welsh Methodism.

In a speech in London on the 22nd ult. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain admitted that the majority against him was much larger than he expected, and he recognized that a political revolution had been in progress, "but," he said, "I want once more, now, at the end of the election, to put on record my determination to pursue to the end the policy which I believe to be demanded in the interest of the population.