

THE SCARE-CROW COAT.

Young goslings were dipping themselves in mud-puddles and ponds to the great delight of the old quaking gander and the strutting goose; boys were flying their kites, or playing marbles. 'Twas the month of May, the loveliest month of Spring. The trees were putting forth their foliage, and the daffodils had effloresced, and were making the genial zephyrs redolent with their fragrance. The farmer had planted his corn a few weeks before, and the future crop was symbolized in the little ribbon-sprouts of corn that were bursting through the soft alluvial loam. The crows cawed as they winged themselves from the trees to the old rail-fences at a distance from the corn-field. Nature indeed was smiling upon the earth, and the poor, who had suffered through the cold winter, thanked God that they were privileged to witness the blossomed fields, and to listen to the melodious carols of the robin and blue bird.

Widow Shore, who lived in a little house down by the hill, looked smilingly upon Tommy, her son, who had cut from the asparagus bed several bunches of that succulent vegetable. Tommy put the well-washed branches into his basket, and went to the city a short distance from the little village, and in an hour and a half returned with a dollar and some cents, which he gave to his mother.

Susan Shore had been a widow for four years, yet she was scarcely thirty-five years of age. Tommy was the only child she had, and his mother worshipped him much; on Tommy her hopes seemed to centre, and she endeavored to inculcate in his mind sound principles and precepts. Tommy was thirteen years of age, and as his mother was poor, of course had to help her get a living. Attached to Widow Shore's house was about an acre of land, which the widow, with the help of Tommy, raised vegetables on for market. In the winter Widow Shore served for the rich people in the city, from whom she would occasionally get substantial presents, in the way of dresses for herself and clothing for her son.

"You look sad, my son; what ails you?" said the widow, as Tommy handed her the money that he had obtained by the sale of his asparagus.

"Nothing, only John Martin, the blacksmith, said that he would make me a kite if I would get some kite-line to fly it with; but I ain't got any money, and you want all you can get to buy things with," said Tommy.

"Poor boy," said the widow, as she brushed a tear from her eye.

"All the other boys have got kites—even Dan Carr, and he's as poor as I am," added Tommy.

"Never mind, Tommy; the day will come, I trust, when Providence will bless you with all that can be wished this side of your father's grave," said the widow,

who was now kneading some dough to make bread with.

Tommy, having done all the chores and other business which his widowed mother had at present to be done, went up to the school ground where all the boys were flying their kites and playing marbles. Dan Carr was there, and his kite was the highest to the clouds.

"Take hold of the string and see how it pulls," said Dan to Tom, as the latter was watching it dive and prance.

Tom did as requested, remarking at the same time, that he could have a kite too, if he had a line, and asked Dan how he procured his.

"Well, if you wont tell anybody about it I will tell you, and you can get one as good," said Dan.

Tom promised solemnly not to divulge a word.

"Well," said Dan, "you know down in the field Deacon Styles has put cord all around that ten acre field of his on poles, to keep the crows from pulling up the corn?"

"Yes," responded Tom.

"Well, I went down there last week and stole all this cord off the poles;—there's enough left to make you a tip-top line—go and get it."

"I will," said Tom; and he galloped off at a happy speed, and in a few minutes he was down to the ten acre lot of Deacon Styles—to steal.

"*Thou shalt not steal*," rang into his ear as if some invisible being had spoken to him; and Tom, with one leg over the rail-fence and the other on the ground, paused, very much frightened. It sounded like his dear father's voice, only a little more harsh than his father's voice used to be when he read to him that sentence from the Holy Scriptures.

"And I wont steal," said Tommy to himself, who now had come to his senses. The idea of getting a kite-line, as long as Dan Carr's, by pulling it from off the poles set in Deacon Styles's lot, had set Tom's mind a-blaze; but now that he had time to reflect, he saw how wicked it would be to transgress the Divine command—"Thou shalt not steal."

Tom marched away from the ten-acre lot towards home, not by the way he had come, but cross lots in another direction. He was crossing Abijah Ladd's corn field, and, as he looked at the old scare-crow, made to keep the filching crows away, an idea struck him.

"Perhaps if I feel in the pockets I might find a shilling piece that Mr. Ladd has forgotten to take out," said Tom. So Tom searched the pockets of the pants, vest and coat, but no shilling did he find. In the inside pocket of the coat there was a hole, so Tom ran his fingers down into the lining, and, striking a piece of soft paper, he pulled it out, when lo, it was a twenty dollar bill! Tom was delighted, and ran like mad towards Abijah Ladd's

house; but he stopped all of a sudden, and his countenance changed, saying to himself—"It may be a bad bill;" and then again he said, "It may be good," and on he went.

"What's the matter, Tommy?" said the widow, as they sat down to dinner to partake of a humble cheer; "you look disappointed."

"Nothing," said Tom, only I would like a kite-line."

In the evening, after supper, as Tommy and his mother were sitting on the stile, gazing at the stars and moon, a figure was seen coming down the lane towards the house, whom they could not as yet distinguish. Presently the figure of Abijah Styles halted in front of the door, which was open, and the widow, extending her hand, invited Mr. Styles in, and lighted a tallow candle, which threw but a faint light on the scant but neat furniture.

"I come to see whether you would not like to have Thomas go into my son's store as clerk," said Mr. Styles.

The widow, much surprised, said she would; but that his services were so indispensable to her, in the way of doing chores, &c., she was afraid that she could not let him go.

"But you needn't live here all by yourself; come and make your home with me and my wife; for now Sallie's married Jane is quite lonesome; besides, I'll give six hundred dollars for your house and lot, which is more, I guess, than any one else will give you; don't you think so yourself?"

The widow couldn't understand what Mr. Styles was about, why he had taken such an interest in Tommy all at once, and what were his reasons for acting altogether so liberal.

"Well, what do you say, Widow Shore? six hundred for your house, a place for Tommy in the city with my son Robert, and a home for life for yourself with my wife and me?"

"I can only say (if you are not jesting,) that I accept your kind offer, and may God reward you hereafter."

"All right, said Mr. Styles; I'll be here to-morrow and settle everything;" and Mr. Styles started to go. "Oh! here, my lad, is that twenty dollar bill you found; take it and buy some good clothes, &c.; and *always* be honest."

"Tommy didn't find that bill—my Tommy—did he?" asked the widow.

Mr. Styles seeing Tommy's face, divined that the widow was ignorant of the circumstance; so he took a seat again, and explained the whole affair, much to the surprise of the widow, who burst into tears of joy at hearing of the honest act of her son.

In a week Widow Shore had her six hundred dollars in the bank, and was living happily with rich Farmer Styles.

Tommy was in New Haven in Mr. Styles' son's store. Ten years afterwards