

A MIDSUMMER SCENE.

HOW delightfully cool it looks under the shadow of those over-arching trees! How the soft winds wave the swaying branches and fan the fevered brow? What deep content fills the dark brown eyes of the cattle as they stand in the crystal stream, and how sweet the water lilies smell, and how gay the crimson cardinal flowers look in the margin of the rivulet. This peaceful summer scene makes us think of Mary Howitt's charming legend of the midsummer farms, which we give on another page, and of Mr. Arce's sweet midsummer song which runs as follows:

A MIDSUMMER SONG.

'Till, once I was a little girl,
A-dwelling far away;
My mother made the butter,
And my father made the hay.

And I—I wandered, out of school,
Amid the woodlands wild,
And scorned the teacher's measured rule—
A harum-scarum child.

Of thorny lane, and meadow fair,
My frock bore token still;
The wind would catch my yellow hair,
And braid it at its will.

The sun was busy with my face—
And still it shows it some;
And, on my neck, I know how high
My dresses used to come.

And I was smart, and all the springs
On all the hills could show;
And, if there were some grammar things
I didn't care to know,

I knew, beside the swollen rill,
What flowers to bloom would burst;
And where, upon the south-sloped hill,
The berries ripened first.

Each violet tuft, each cowslip green,
Each daisy on the lea,
I counted one by one—for they
Were kith and kin to me.

I knew the moles that dared to claim
The vanished beavers' huts;
And sat on mossy logs to watch
The squirrels crack their nuts:

And they winked slyly at me, to,
But never fled away,
For in their little hearts they knew
That I was wild as they.

My mother saw my garments soiled,
And thought it hardly right;
But, when I wished to go again,
My father said I might.

And now I am a woman grown,
And strive to keep my hair
Beneath the guidance of my comb,
And bind my dress with care.

I thread the world's unchanging maze,
Through all life's fettered span,
And seek to be in all my ways
As "proper" as I can.

I never liked the ways of men,
Or wished more old to grow,
For life was wondrous curious then,
And isn't curious now.

I know not how it seemed to me,
Or what my father thought,
But mother said I'd never be
A woman, as I ought.

I know 'tis hard such children wild
In polished rules to train;
And, if I were once more a child,
I'd—do just so again.

Don't let us be afraid of enthusiasm. There is more lack of heart than brain. The world is not starving for need of education half as much as for warm, earnest interest of soul for soul. We agree with the Indian who, when talked to about having to much zeal, said, "I think it is better for the pot to boil over than not to boil at all."

HIS MESSENGER.—A STORY OF THE OHIO FLOODS.

BY WILLIS BOYD ALLEN.



"It seems to me, wife, I never saw the river so high before. I've got the cattle out of the shed, and sent 'em up to Mr. Balderston's on the hill; and if it keeps on raising much more, we'll have to go ourselves, I'm thinking."

But, John, do you think it could possibly come up as high as this? You know last year it stopped a dozen rods away."

The honest farmer shook his head thoughtfully. "I don't know, Bess. People from up the river say there's no signs of lowering yet: and there's a heavy rain to-night, I'm afraid."

"Why, papa," broke in a little fellow of ten or a dozen years, sitting beside his father at table, "how can you be afraid? Don't you know, you said in meeting last Wednesday evening that the Lord's people needn't be 'fraid of anything? We're the Lord's people ain't we, papa?"

"Yes, dear, yes," said the man, hastily and heartily. "You're right, chicken. It's his river, and we're his children, and of course he'll take good care of us."

His wife listened with a pleased smile at this. Mr. Frane was a deacon in their church, and he had only needed to be reminded by the boy, to settle himself firmly in his faith once more.

The supper was finished merrily enough, afterward Mr. Frane took down an old leather-covered Bible from the shelf where it was always kept, and turned to the ninety-first psalm. They all gathered around the open fire while he read.

Little Roger, the boy, listened attentively, smoothing the fur of the gray kitten, and looking hard into the fire all the while.

When his father reached the eleventh verse the little fellow looked up with a perplexed air.

"Well, Roger, what is it?" asked Mr. Frane pleasantly.

What does it mean, papa? Are there real angels?"

"Angels' are 'messengers,' my son. Perhaps there may sometimes be real white-winged angels about us, like those at Bethlehem; and sometimes God just sends somebody or something—the first thing he can find—as a messenger to tell us that danger is near."

Roger sat pondering, but said no more during the remainder of the chapter, and soon afterwards was tucked away snugly in bed.

"I'm going to be looking out for messengers, mamma," he whispered, as she kissed him good-night. "I would be too bad if we didn't know them when they came, wouldn't it?"

All the night the mighty Ohio rose higher and higher, bearing on its bosom huge, heaving cakes of ice, uprooted trees, floating cattle, and fragments of houses. All that night the water crept up nearer and nearer the house, putting down its soft feet closer and closer, as a cat does when she watches a bird.

The next morning the family were surprised to see how near their front

yard the water was running. Immediately after breakfast Mr. Frane started off to help his less fortunate neighbours. He still thought himself absolutely safe. The broken fragments of houses in the river increased. Once or twice people were seen helplessly waving their hands as half a roof or an outbuilding was swept bodily down stream, with the poor creatures clinging to them and screaming for help. Still the river put its feet down softly, advancing inch by inch.

At Deacon Frane's supper table that night but little was said except by Roger, who chattered as cheerfully as usual.

"Of course we're not afraid," he remarked to his father. "We'll just leave the door unlocked, and then the angels or the messengers could come in and tell us, couldn't they?" And again he stroked the kitty, who seemed rather more nervous than any of the rest of the family. She refused to touch her saucer of milk, and walked to and fro between the door and the warm hearth where she was accustomed to be in the long winter evenings. Now and then she would start and bristle up as if she heard an enemy near. Perhaps, being a cat herself, she understood the soft approach of the river better than the others.

"By tomorrow afternoon, Bess," said Deacon Frane, "I shall begin to move our furniture, unless the river reaches high-water mark. At the rate it's rising it will strike our front door before sunset to-morrow."

Little Rogers listened, and stroked the cat comfortably, not in the least concerned—unless, perhaps, by a lingering anxiety lest the angels should wet the tips of their drooping wings before the door.

At ten o'clock the house was dark and still. The Deacon and his wife, worn out with the labor and worry of the day, were fast asleep. And of course Roger was as usual, dreaming the happiest of dreams.

Midnight, one, two, three o'clock. Night dark and river still creeping up softly. No, not so softly now; as if it were sure of its prey, it was a little noisier in its approach.

Strangely enough, Roger awoke with a start, "Hark!" he said to himself; "what a rumbling the river makes!"

Just then he heard a sound of soft footsteps on the bare floor of his room.

"A messenger!" he thought; and his heart leaped to his throat.

Then he listened again.

"Mei-a-ow!" said the messenger, piteously.

"Why, kitty, is that you?" whispered Roger, rather disappointed. "You ought to be asleep downstairs. Jump up here, if you want to."

Kitty needed no second invitation, but jumped at once.

Her feet struck wet on the boy's hands. Trying to stroke her, he found her back bristling, her eyes gleaming, and her pretty fur dripping from ears to tail.

Meanwhile Mrs. Frane had heard the slight noise, and came running to see if her boy was sick.

"Mamma," said Roger, "please drive kitty downstairs. She's all wet."

"Why Roger—you don't mean—why—" all the doors were shut tight and locked!

She ran down to the foot of the

stairs, and gave a little shriek. Just before her half a dozen sticks of wood she had left piled up by the fireplace were floating quietly about over the carpet.

In five minutes more the family were escaping by the back door, and shortly after were safe in the home of their kind friends, far up on the hill out of the water's reach.

Deacon Frane did not stop to find out how he had made such a mistake in his calculations, until morning he and his neighbours worked hard, carrying furniture and valuables from the house. Long before sunset on the next day people on the river-banks miles below watched the remnant of his house float past, tossed to and fro in the white and cruel paws of the river.

"Mamma," said Roger, quietly, "I guess I believe that angel verse now, don't you?"

"Why, my dear, there wasn't any—"

"Oh, yes, mamma—the kitty, you know!"—*Children's Friend.*

CAN CROWS COUNT?

A FARMER had planted a field of corn; and when the corn had come up and begun to grow nicely, the crows came in great numbers and pulled up a great deal of it. The farmer made an immense scare-crow in the shape of a man and hung it up in the field. But this did not alarm them very much. Indeed, after they got used to it they would light upon the head and arms of the scare-crow and there sit and "caw" triumphantly, to show their utter disregard and contempt for it.

One day the farmer shot one of the crows and hung it up in the field as a warning to the rest. No doubt the crows were sorry for their unfortunate companion. But they soon became reconciled to their loss, and went on stealing corn as bad as ever. But they were very cautious after this, and never let the farmer get near them again. While some of them would fly down to pull the corn, others would be on guard; and when the farmer approached these would give the alarm, and away all would go.

At last the man became very angry. There was a shed in the field, and he hid himself in this, determined to kill his black enemies when they came near. But when he was in the shed not a crow appeared. Yet the farmer thought he could outwit them. He took his two sons with him into the shed, and presently sent one out, expecting that the crows would be deceived. But not so; they all kept at a distance. After awhile the other son went out, but still they kept away. But so soon as the farmer went out, they flew down into the corn-field. So it seems that crows can count three, anyhow.

The farmer was obliged to watch his corn-field all the time, until the corn grew so large that the troublesome crows could not injure it.

A LITTLE negro waiter was sent to call a gentleman to dinner, and found him using a tooth-brush. "Well," said the landlady, when the boy returned, "is he coming?" "Yes, mistress, d'rectly; he's jes sharpenin' his teeth."