

* * The Story Page. * *

The Fairy in Uncle Dan's Den.

Uncle Dan, who was a professor in the college, had a large room in the upper part of the house, in which he studied and conducted his private experiments. Every one in the house called it "Uncle Dan's den," and nobody had any special desire to venture into it: first, because Uncle Dan was a little cross, sometimes, at being intruded upon; and, secondly, because the place was full of awfully unpleasant smells, and was not very tidy to look upon. There were bottles of liquids and powders, and queer looking machines, and jars of alcohol containing toads and snakes, and hundreds of bugs pinned in glass cases, and all sorts of queer, creeping repulsive things.

One day the children saw Uncle Dan going up the walk with a bucket of some thick, black-looking substance in his hand.

"What's that, Uncle Dan?" asked Jimmie, one of the twins.

"Coal tar," laconically replied Uncle Dan.

"What in the world are you going to do with coal tar, Uncle Dan?" asked Tom, the other twin.

"Now, don't you boys go to sticking fish-hooks into me," said Uncle Dan, with a laugh. "I'd rather stand a civil service examination than have you two get after me. But I'll tell you what I'm going to do with it," he added, in a mysterious air; "I'm going to feed the fairy up in my den."

"The fairy!" exclaimed both the boys in surprise. "What sort of a fairy have you in your den, Uncle Dan?"

"Oh! a very wonderful one," he replied. "Cinderella's is nowhere. If I were to tell you only a few of the transformations she can make of this black coal tar, you would say it was gammon."

"What can she make, Uncle Dan?"

"Well, go to your mother and ask her for the sample card of diamond dye colors, her perfumery case, and that drug list that I loaned her."

The boys soon came back displaying a card of brilliant colors.

"There," said Uncle Dan, taking it from Jimmie's hand, and holding it before their eyes. "that is a specimen of what my fairy can do with such dirty, common-looking stuff as this coal tar."

"You don't mean to say that these beautiful dyes are made of coal tar?" exclaimed the boys.

"Yes, indeed," replied Uncle Dan, "and more than a thousand other shades that are not on that card. Now, pull the stopper out of each one of those perfumery bottles, and take a whiff. Can you tell them apart?"

"Yes, there's heliotrope. That's clove. This one's queen of the meadow. Here's cinnamon. Pshaw! camphor. Wintergreen's better. Thymol is what Bess likes."

"Well, now, don't let your eyes burst open when I tell you that my fairy makes all those, too, out of this nasty coal tar; and the next time you get a whiff of delicate perfume from a lady's lace handkerchief, you may say quietly to yourself, that, if she only knew it, she ought to thank the tar-bucket."

"O, Uncle Dan!" exclaimed the entranced boys, "tell us what else your fairy makes out of coal tar."

"Well, take the list of drugs next. I'll call them off; your tongues might trip. There are quinine, anti-pyrene, atropine, morphine, and a dozen of others that I might mention, that are now made of coal tar. But you are not so much interested in medicines as you are in something good to eat—are you?"

"You are right there," agreed both the boys, smacking their lips. "The things that Susan makes down in the kitchen are the things we are most interested in. Smell that pudding for dessert—will you?"

"I should say so. Well, tell me what is your favorite flavor for pudding sauce or ice-cream."

"Vanilla," promptly replied Jimmie.

"Mine is raspberry," averred Tom.

"Well," said Uncle Dan, "it wouldn't do to tell Susan, of course, and it may not be a pleasant thing to think of, but a great many of flavoring extracts, including the cheaper grades of vanilla, raspberry, etc., come out of this bucket of black coal tar—not the genuine flavors, mind you, but substitutes for them which are pretty nearly as good as the real."

"Oh, fie! Uncle Dan. Surely, you have come to the end of your string now. If your wonderful fairy can get all those things out of the tar-bucket, I don't see that anything more could be expected of her."

"But wait! She does a great deal more than that," said Uncle Dan. "The paraffine that is put into the starch to make the gloss on my shirt bosoms and collars; the creosote that the dentist uses to ease toothache; the pitch that covers the roof of yonder stable, those artificial paving-stones over which you like to ride your bicycle, the lampblack which gives the deep black to the glossy

paint on the carriage, the ammonia which your mother uses in the bath-room and about the house for cleansing, the oil that lubricates her sewing machine, the varnish with which the woodwork of this room is finished, the resin that makes your violin bow musical, and a hundred other things that I could mention, are all extracted, nowadays, from the tar which is taken from the coal in manufacturing artificial gas, and which used to be considered worthless and thrown away."

"How wonderful!" exclaimed the twins.

"But, Uncle Dan," suddenly exclaimed Jimmie, "the fairy, the fairy! You haven't told us who the fairy is that performs all these wonderful feats."

"Oh! my fairy," replied Uncle Dan, "is named Science. And these are only a few of the wonderful things she performs. Try to get acquainted with her at school, and you will find nothing more fascinating than to watch her marvellous performances."—Rev. John F. Cowan, in Sunday-school Times.

A Queen of Society.

In the life of Madame Mohl, a woman who, without rank, fortune or beauty, held a controlling position in French society for the greater part of a century, there are useful hints for American women who wish to gain influence in the world.

Her dinners were famous. The most learned, wise and witty men of every country were her guests, and she gave much anxious thought to assorting them, to placing them, and to the suggestion of subjects which would draw from each the best he could give. The food was plentiful, but plain and simply cooked, and only a white-capped maid served it. There was no display of any kind.

Queen Sophia of Holland, when visiting Napoleon III., expressed a wish to dine with Madame Mohl, who asked a brilliant company to meet her.

"And what will be your menu?" asked an anxious friend.

"Oh, Marie must cook us a lobster," said the old lady; "she cooks lobster very nicely."

The usual simple dinner was served, with its sauce of rare wit and wisdom, and the queen was enchanted.

The next day, with her suite, she came to call upon her hostess. Madame Mohl, her gray hair in curl-papers, attired in a short jacket and skirt, was busy dusting the chairs, while the linen from the laundry was spread upon the table. When the royal party suddenly entered, the old lady laid down her brush and after welcoming the queen, chatted away as gaily as usual.

"Were you not mortified at being caught in such a dress?" a friend asked the next day.

"Not a bit, my dear. I didn't mind it. Neither did her Majesty. I suppose it was important to her maids and the flunky who waited behind her, and they were mortified."

Once, as one of her favorites left the room, a fashionable woman asked, superciliously: "Who was Madame X—before her marriage?"

Madame Mohl turned. "She is my friend. What do I care for her was-es?"

She once said, "It is des ames bien-nees (well-born souls), not bodies, that we need in our friends," a maxim as profoundly true in America as in France.—Youth's Companion.

His Brother's Keeper.

Here is a "dog story" about Major, a "shaggy, lumbering, elephantine Newfoundland," and Kirkie, a "sleek, wiry little black-and-tan."

A few hundred yards from the house of the woman who owned the dogs was a railroad crossing. Kirkie had the bad habit of rushing down the street to this crossing whenever he heard the whistle of an approaching train. He would then dash along beside the cars and bark furiously. Many a time he had been punished for it, but the roar of a train was always too much for his good resolutions.

One day—the pitcher that goes too often to the well, you know—some portion of the flying train struck him. He fell into the ditch beside the track, and there he lay till old Major's barking attracted the attention of a passing friend.

The little dog was taken home, his wounds dressed, and his battered frame nursed back to health. During his convalescence Major was always with him, and doubtless often said: "I told you so," and "I hope this will teach you a lesson."

But, alas, for Major's hopes. Kirkie was no sooner out of doors again than he resumed his dangerous habit. Major, however, had apparently made up his mind that moral suasion was useless, and physical force must be employed.

The next time Kirkie started for the crossing, Major

followed. The little dog was light and quick-motioned, and got into his stride, as the horsemen say, in the first few yards. Major, on the other hand, was heavy and slow at the start, and before he was under full headway Kirkie was fifty yards ahead.

But there was a conscious rectitude and stern resolve, and the force of a moral principle in Major's gait. He doubled himself up and let himself out in a way that was good to see, and he overtook Kirkie within ten yards of the crossing.

With one blow of his paw he batted his small friend over, placed his great foot on the little dog's chest, and held him down while the train rushed by.

Kirkie lay perfectly still. When the last car had passed old Major removed his paw with a bark and a growl, which said plainly as speech: "There, you little fool! Can't you learn anything? Do you want to get hit by the cars again?" And Kirkie got up and followed Major home with his tail between his legs.

Many a time all this was repeated to the delight of those who saw it. Kirkie never failed to get the best start, but Major always caught him before the crossing was reached, always knocked him over, and held him down till the whole train was safely past. Kirkie never learned wisdom, but Major never gave him up as "past reformation."—Ex.

The Queer Thing that Happened.

It wouldn't have happened if Sweetheart hadn't been, of all little women, the very most inquisitive. So mamma said, and mamma knew.

Sweetheart was continually introducing her small, blunt nose into everything—into mamma's cologne bottles and Ann Mary's cranberry pies, and even into Crested Ned's cage to investigate his seed cup. There were so many, many things in Sweetheart's world to examine and to look into and to, smell of. It kept her very busy, and got her into all sorts of scrapes; but the very funniest and really the most serious, too, happened one day down at the beach. They were all "clamming." Quite a pile of the big, ugly fellows lay near Sweetheart when she sat down to rest.

"I wish I knew what the rest of him was like," she thought, as a long black neck issued inquiringly from one of the shells; "I'm going to peek in and see. I shouldn't be 's'prised if he was homely all over."

She leaned over and peered down at the slippery shell. Of course, the clam drew in his head quickly, but he left his front door wide open. In went Sweetheart's nose, with her two bright, inquisitive eyes just behind, when—snapp—the front door shut on the poor little nose. It was dreadful; but afterward, when the front door had opened again, and the poor little nose had been anointed with vaseline and cuddled comfortably, how Sweetheart laughed at the funny photograph papa drew of her with a big clam on her nose!

"I guess I won't be 'quis'tive any more, though," she said.—Constance Hamilton, in Youth's Companion.

"I'll Pay You for That."

A hen trod on a duck's foot. She did not mean to do it, and it did not hurt her much. But the duck said, "I'll pay you for that!"

So the duck flew at the hen; but as she did so her wing struck an old goose who stood close by.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried the goose, and she flew at the duck; but as she did so, her foot tore the ear of a cat who was just then in the yard.

"I'll pay you for that!" said the cat, and she started after the goose; but as she did so, her claw caught in the wool of a sheep.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried the sheep, and she ran at the cat; but as she did so, her foot hit the foot of a dog who lay in the sun.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried he, and jumped at the sheep; but as he did so, his leg struck an old cow who stood by the gate.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried she, and she ran at the dog; but as she did so, her horn grazed the skin of a horse who stood by a tree.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried he, and he rushed at the cow.

"What a noise there was! The horse flew at the cow, and the cow at the dog, and the dog at the sheep, and the sheep at the cat, and the cat at the goose, and the goose at the duck, and the duck at the hen. What a fuss there was! and all because the hen accidentally stepped on the duck's toes."

"Hi, hi! What's all this?" cried the man who had the care of them. "I cannot have all this. You may stay here," he said to the hen. But he drove the duck to the pond, the sheep to her fold, the dog to his house, the cow to her yard, and the horse to his stall.

And so all their good times were over, because the duck would not overlook a little hurt, which was not intended.—Ex.

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