

PETE THE PEDLAR, OR,

A BOY'S START IN THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

One day in the month of November, thirty years ago, a man was chopping wood in the forest about a mile from the village of Rawsonville, State of Wisconsin. His name was John Wilkins, and he was known as a hard-working and honest man. After being idle a good part of the summer and fall from want of work, he had begun to cut wood for the railroad at so much per cord. Back in the village he had a wife and son, the latter being named Peter, and being then a lad of seven.

Soon after noon on this first day of his chopping the woodcutter began on his second tree. It was a large maple, and when he had cut half way through the man paused to rest.

Two squirrels began chasing each other over the ground, and as he watched them he forgot for a moment that there was danger above. High up in the top there was a dead limb. The strokes of his axe had loosened it, and as the woodcutter watched the squirrels frisking about the limb came plunging down and crashed him to earth.

When Mr. Wilkins did not return home that evening the alarm was given and men went in search of him. He was soon found, but he had been dead for hours. A dead limb in the dark woods on a dreary November day had made a woman a widow and a boy fatherless.

Thence on Mrs. Wilkins earned the support of the little family by sewing. The boy was in school, and was kept there. It was three years before he was able to earn anything by doing odd jobs before or after school hours. In a small village there is very little that a boy can do to earn money.

Five years had passed, when there was another accident, or tragedy. One Saturday Pete, as everybody called him, was promised a quarter if he would look up a lost cow belonging to one of the villagers. It was a warm, still day in summer.

While he was in the woods looking after the cow his mother took a fall and started across the fields to pick raspberries, of which there was a plentiful supply that season. She had to cross a creek, and in springing from one bank to the other she fell into the water. It was not more than two feet deep, and it seemed as if a child could have gotten out safely, but the woman was drowned. It was not until the next day that she was found.

The house and lot had been only partly paid for, and though the expenses had to be paid by the neighbors, Pete was left alone in the world without so much as a shilling to his name. What little furniture there was no one would buy.

A good many were asking what was greatly concerned. One family

gave him a home for a week, and then another took him in, and a third, and so on, until he had come to know what was to become of him. He was a well-grown boy, and able and willing to work, but there was little or nothing for him to do. Living in the outskirts of the village was an old man called Mims the Miser. His name was Mims, and it was known for sure that he had money and was very stingy with it. We went about in rags, and the poorest food and never had been known to give anybody as much as a penny. He had such a reputation for being miserly and hard-hearted that he was the last person any one would have applied to for help. Pete knew Mr. Mims by sight, as all others did, but never had spoken to him.

One day the boy was sent on an errand that led him past the hut of the miser. The old man was gathering wood not far away, and as he caught sight of Pete he beckoned to him to come through the gate, and then to follow him into the house. The lad obeyed, with some fear and a great deal of amazement. There was only one room, and all the furniture in it could have been carried on a man's back.

"Well, boy," began the miser as they entered the hut, "they tell me that your mother is dead."

"Yes, sir," replied Pete. "Your father was a fool for losing his life five years ago, and now your mother must go and get drowned in the brook. Some folks don't know how to keep alive. Who 'as taken you in?"

"I am stopping with Mr. Clark for a few days."

"And when he don't want you any longer where are you going?"

"I-I can't say, sir."

"Of course you can't," snarled the old man. "Nobody wants a fatherless boy around. No matter how hard he works, they are afraid he'll eat too much. People pretend to be very sorry for us when we are in trouble, but they put most of it on. I suppose you've been told a hundred times over that I'm a mean and stingy old man?"

"Something like that, sir," replied Pete.

"Are you one of the boys that have run after me and called me names?"

"No, sir."

"No, I don't think you are. I think your mother brought you up better than that. Well, I am stingy. I have to be, or people would beg everything I have. Because I won't lend money to anybody without security and give them a chance to beat me. They call me a miser. I don't go anywhere, and I wear old clothes, and so I'm called mean. Boy, did you ever hear of my cheating any one in this village?"

"No, sir."

"When I lend my money shouldn't I have good interest?"

"Other folks want interest."

"Of course they do, and they are not called misers for it. I don't care what they call me, however. I know what I am. You are a boy without father or mother. You have got to make your own way in the world. Let us have a talk of what you are going to do."

(To be continued.)

HOW THE WATER SYSTEM STARTED

BY SARAH NOBLE-IVES.

When the earth first began to take form and shape and to assume its spherical proportions, its water supply was in bad shape. There was water enough, to be sure, but no system. The earth in her first infancy was so hot that the water was all turned to steam and hovered in great clouds all around the seething surface.

But still there was no system, for as the earth was perfectly round, there was no place for the water to settle, and it just went rolling round and round, wave upon wave, and there was not a dry spot for the Head Apprentice to put his foot on.

He was in a dreadful perplexity. Finally in the garret of the universe he found a section of an old ring that had once been made for Saturn and found too small. He took this, and sharpening it on its inside edge, he jabbed it down into the earth as hard as he could and made a sort of well. The water went on rolling round the earth, but when it reached the bit of ring it had to stop, and simply piled up in a great watery bank. But on the other side of the

ring the water rolled away, moving always in the direction of the earth's rotation. This left a great dry place, and the Head Apprentice was so pleased that he laughed aloud and pouncing down with a big spade, he went to work like mad until he had dug an enormous hole, and for there was an ocean, while the earth thrown by the spade made the first dry land.

Now that he had something to start with, the Head Apprentice sat down on top of one of his piles of dirt (known today as the Andes Mountains), and there he thought out the greatest system ever known on earth. There lay all the dry land he had spaded up, and there was all the water bunched into two great oceans. The question was how to arrange a perpetual water-motion which would power the land and irrigate it so he could plant his garden and set things started for the final use of the children of men.

First of all he made canals to connect the two oceans and form the continents. Then he dug holes upon the hills, and ditches for their outflow. He then condensed some more clouds and dropped the water into these holes, and they became lakes, while the ditches were rivers. This clearing away of the clouds gave the sun a chance to help. Good old Sol hitched millions of little buckets on to his rays and let them down into the ocean and went to drawing water. As fast as the sun drew the water he emptied it into the lakes, and it trickled back down the hills in every direction. In this way the earth was beautifully wet up, and the sun has kept up the practice ever since.

For the last completing touch the Head Apprentice drilled tiny tunnels everywhere underneath the hills, and beside their openings he planted the seeds of the first trees, which afterward furnished the world with coal. These trees began pumping, pumping, with their mighty roots until the water was sucked up through the underground channels and came bubbling out of the ground in cool springs. Then the old earth sang for joy, for out of the springs came the water of life.

As for the Head Apprentice, he had no time to stop and sing, for he had other work on hand. There were the climates to be adjusted before he could expect to have much luck with live things. So he kept on planning, and did his singing down in his heart.

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DICKEY'S PALM-LEAF HAT

COSTELLA G. WASHBURN.

Auntie Parsons climbed leisurely out of the old-fashioned chaise, reached under the low seat and drew out a newspaper bundle.

"Here, Richard," she said, "is the new hat I promised you. I braided it out of some palm leaf I found in the attic. Some I had left years ago. The blue band is made of the two premium ribbons that old Black Jerry won at the County Fair when he was a colt. Take good care of

long upon the hat full of berries. "There, now, see what you made me do!" he cried, crossly. "The hat will be all stained. What shall I do about it?"

"Well," replied Viola, "you'll have to throw the berries away. Then you go over to the spring and wash the stains off while I run on to Mrs. Squier's with the message."

The girl was quickly back, calling, "Here are the cookies, after all, two for each of us. I told Mrs. Squier how you tumbled over the wall and spoiled the berries we had for her."

"Now we will sit here and eat the cookies and rest a while. We'll make some cups out of these big basswood leaves and drink some of this spring water; it is as cold as ice water."

"What's that giggling about in the mud?" asked Dickey, as he bent to fill his cup.

"Why, it's a little mud turtle," answered Viola. "Let's catch him and put him into your hat, so we can see him better."

Into the hat went the muddy turtle, but as he refused to move about there the children soon tired of him, and put him back beside the water.

Just then Mookey, the old red cow, came near, quietly eating grass.

"It's the fashion for horses to wear hats, and Mookey ought to have one, too," exclaimed Viola, mischievously. "Lend her yours, Dickey," she snatched it from his hand, and she placed it upon one of the cow's horns.

Mookey, startled by the girl's sudden motion and frightened at the strange object waving before her eyes, ran awkwardly down the hill and up the lane to the barnyard, where she stopped at the horse trough, tossing the hat into the mud and putting her foot in it just as the children came running after her.

"There now, the hat is all mud!" cried Dickey.

"Oh, well," answered the girl, coolly, "the trough is a good place to wash it off. Don't wait for it dry, but come over to the well curb and look for the big trout. Uncle John put in there yesterday."

That day for I cannot make another.

"Let's great, Auntie," said Dickey, as he jammed the hat upon his head and hurried to John Wilkins, who was waiting for him at the gate, on her way to the house of old lady Squier, where she had been sent with a message.

Viola was Dickey's cousin, and she was helping to make his first summer in the country as interesting for him as she had made her seven previous summers to herself and family.

"Let's stop and watch the shiners a few minutes," she suggested, as they neared the willow-bordered pond. "Oh, see that big one, Dickey!"

As Dickey leaned over, down fell his hat into the well.

"Oh, dear! Now it is lost, and what will Auntie Parsons say?" he cried, despairingly.

"Get your hook and line and fish it out. Why don't you ever think of that yourself?"

After some minutes the hat was safely landed, again soaking wet.

"How am I ever going to dry it, now that the sun has set?" asked Dickey.

"I'll go to the house and get a match and we will build a little fire of grass and twigs," replied Viola.

The fire was built and the hat held over it, so that it was very near. Once it got scorched a little on one side.

"There, it's dry enough now," observed Viola, shortly. "It is getting smoked, too; and there's Grandma calling us to supper. Say, but I'm hungry!"

As they went up the path Aunt Lorraine Coles, who was just stopping on the porch after bidding Grandma good-night, remarked, "Seems to me that palm-leaf hats nowadays don't look so well as the ones I used to braid."

"SHE PLACED IT ON THE COW'S HORNS."

You couldn't catch him in your hat, could you?"

Off came the hat, and in a second Dickey was kneeling by a little pool and reaching out for the fish.

"I've got him!" he cried, triumphantly, reaching up the dripping hat. "It's a beauty," said Viola. "but your hat's pretty wet, Dickey."

"Yes," said Dickey, soberly, "so it is."

"How shall I dry it?"

"Oh, leave it on that rock in the sun for a while, and it will be all right," replied Viola.

The hat sun soon dried the hat, though Dickey said it felt a little limp as he put it on.

When they reached the top of the hill they found quantities of ripe blueberries.

"My, but they are good," said Dickey. "Let's pick some for Mrs. Squier; she's very fond of them, and maybe she will give us some of her caraway cookies."

"Your hat would be just the thing to pick the berries in," said Viola.

"Yes," assented the boy, "and we'll fill it in no time."

When the hat was nearly full Viola said, "We must hurry now. Let's see who can get over the wall first."

Viola, accustomed to climbing walls and fences, was quickly over, but Dickey, in his haste to be first, caught his foot in the wall and fell head-

BOBBY'S BASHFULNESS

Bobby's bashfulness was a great trial to himself and his mother. His two older brothers and two younger sisters were by no means so afflicted. Bobby's trouble dated from the time, when he was a very little boy, that his mother sent him to the market for a beefsteak.

"Ask for it politely," she had said. When he had arrived at the shop the day being chilly, the door was closed. So Bobby, mindful of his manners, had knocked and then waited until a red-faced man, wearing a white apron, had opened the door.

"Please, my mother wants to buy a beefsteak here," he said.

A stater living through the butcher's loud laughter, Bobby had thereafter begged and implored them not to send him to the shops.

But Bobby's birthday was at hand. And when a boy is six years old, and his birthday comes on the Fourth of July, it is time to stiffen up his backbone.

So Bobby himself said he would buy the beefsteak, at least the fire-crackers. The rest of the fireworks were coming out by father in the afternoon.

"That is right, Bobby," said mother, smiling encouragingly. "There is a new twenty-five cent piece for you to buy them with."

So Bobby, with a quaking heart, but outwardly calm, took his way to the village drug store, where they also kept groceries and fireworks.

This time Bobby walked in, but he stood a long time in front of the counter before any one paid the slightest attention to him.

Then a young man with a condescending manner looked at him languidly and said, "Well, sir, what do you want?"

Bobby's rehearsed speech flew to the winds. All the way down he had practiced saying:

"Twenty-five cents worth of fire-crackers, if you please."

But now he stuttered something, of which the clerk only understood the word "crackers." Nodding carelessly, he began to weigh—what do you think?—soda crackers!

And Bobby, with horror-stricken eyes, let him!

He took the bundle and rushed up the street as fast as he could fly. At the bridge he paused and look at the water, in which he had often fished; then, with a bursting heart, he threw the bag as far as he could.

"There's a fourth of July dinner for the fish from that dunce that doesn't know enough to buy the right kind of crackers," he cried, then he marched on, unaware that the young minister had heard him.

Bobby was at home a few dreadful minutes before the other children came, and the minister came to the yard.

"Hello, Bobby," he said, in a cordial fashion. "You are the very chip I am after. I want to have a regular old-fashioned Fourth-to-morrow; lots of noise, you know."

Yes, Bobby knew. And he knew all that twenty-five cents worth of so beautiful noise was now feeding the fishes in the mill stream.

"Will you go down with me to help select some things?" continued the minister.

Bobby could and would, although his heart was not in it.

But it was by the time they reached the store. By that time he had found out that the minister, who he had heretofore regarded as a walking dictionary and a born orator, had been as afflicted as he.

"Yes, Bobby," said the minister, "I was suddenly called on to tell my class at the seminary about a great service that I had attended, and I said, 'Then the bishop went up in the pulpit and began to pulp!'"

After Bobby had laughed at this he said, "How did you ever get over it?"

"By keeping at it, Bobby, and not minding being laughed at now and then," said the minister.

Bobby, at his ease now and in fine spirits, entered the drug store again and the young man waited on him.

Bobby, with the air of an adept, selected a fine lot of the right kind of crackers with unlimited powers of banging.

"Charles-Andre-Etienne-M. Quentin, Co. de Mar."

and twenty, agate, tall and was dressed yesterday in blue plain falling band; carries a arm in a sling—

"Is my arm in a sling?" he demanded.

"No, in a handkerchief," the laughed, at the same moment dragon exclaimed: "His right hand is bandaged, though."

"That is nothing! It is scratch. I did it myself by Lucas shouted, striving with perched left hand to pull the foot to show it. But he could not, silent, wide-eyed, like one who had fated drawing in about a captain went on reading from paper.

"Fair hair, gray eyes, aquiline nose, you will still tell me, sir, that you are not the man I am not the. The Comte and I are nothing alike. We young, tall, yes; but that is all slashed all up the forearm; is but scratched with a knife—has yellow hair; mine is brown."

"It is plain to me, monsieur, if interrupted, 'that the fits you in every particular.' It did."

"I who had heard M. Etienne's twenty times, had mistaken Lucas for him; it was remarkable because the action was more alike than that of Lucas had set down his catalog a thought that he was drawn picture. If ever him caught in his own gait, Lucas."

"You lie!" he cried furiously, "it is not Mar. You whole pack of you!"

"Gag him, Ravelle," the commanded, with an angry frown. "I demand to be taken before Belin!" Lucas shouted.

The next moment the sold twisted a handkerchief at mouth.

"Ready?" the captain asked, pard, who had come back just to aid in the throttling. "M. then."

He led the way out, the two following with their

And this time Lucas' fertile

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(Continued.)

"The name of Etienne do," the captain returned; fancy for aliases at the B. "It is a plot," cried Luc.

"It is a warrant; that I about it."

"But I am not Comte de repeated."

His uneasy conscience his. In his dread of done little to dissipate now he pulled himself to or intention, he would know it must be an error.

"My captain, you have take likely to cost you straps. I tell you I am a landlord, who knows him you are not Mar. Ask know M. de Mar; ask them. They will one and all tell not he. Ask that boy the darts not say to my face."

His eyes met mine, and that, even in the moment of me, he repeated. He believed would give the lie. But who was bending over him of his sword-belt, spate necessity.

Captain, you need give uneasiness; this is the enough. I live in the Q. rails, and I have seen this score of times riding with Quentin."

Lucas, at this unexpected looked so taken aback that burst out laughing.

"Yes, my dear monsieur, little hard for me. My nephew—you are a nephew not?—to explain how he co with the Duc de St. Quentin."

It was awkward, but explaining well that there was for him who betrayed the simo's secrets, cried out ang de St. Quentin. I never rode of him."

"Oh, come now. Really, a great deal of breath," he said. "I regret the cruel arresting you, de Mar; but nothing gained by blustering. I usually know what I am."

"You do not know! No, you do not know. Felix B. up there. If you have told my back that I am Etienne defy you to say to my face."

"I know nothing about sieurs." I repeated my th. "Monsieur captain, remember, please, I never saw him till he may be Paul de Lorraine know. But he did not of that, yesterday."

"You hallucinate!" Lucas. "Go tell Louis to drive a cabaret door, Gaspard," bad tain.

Lucas gazed at him as if of him the truth of the matter was still a prey to suspicion in this, and it par tongue. He so reeked with that he smelled the wheeze. He was much too clever that, this arresting officer, thick-witted."

"I say no more," he began, ready to retreat. "I am a clerk of you. I go as you but I go as Paul de Lorraine. Duke of Guise."

He said it with a certain near; but the young captain of the bourgeois, did not in himself he put down by any snoblesse.

"Certainly, if it is any, you, he retorted. "But you dull, monsieur, not to be a your identity is known by others besides your lackey my man. I do not come to without a minute's description from M. de Belin himself."

"Ventre bleu!" Lucas shouted the description. I may information against Mar. to make sure you took him, before Belin; he will know I trembled lest the officer, but see that the man spoke to had need to be a description, bination of stupidity and va nothing can move."

"I have no orders to take de Belin," he returned, and you wrote the description. Perhaps you will deny that it He read the paper."

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