

Choice Literature.

GRANDFATHER'S FAITH.

BY JULIA A. MATTHEWS.

But even this, enjoyable as it was, was followed by still greater pleasure. Neither Dr. Maynard nor his grandfather thought it best for Charlie to return to his studies immediately on his recovery; and Dr. Mason proposed that a little party, consisting of Aunt Harriet, Hattie Raymond, Harry, Charlie, and himself, should take a trip to the mountains, and spend a fortnight or three weeks of the bright October weather among the grand rocks and beautiful waterfalls of the Catskills.

The proposition was hailed with delight by every one interested in it. Mrs. Clifford gave a ready consent to her son's accompanying the party; and on the first day of October, Charlie and Harry, the former looking very much paler and thinner than was his wont, but very bright and happy, and the latter quite his old self again, left Melville under Dr. Mason's care for Lindon, to remain there for a week, and then to start on their journey, it being considered more wise to try the effect of a short jaunt upon Charlie, before the longer expedition was undertaken. The journey home proved a benefit rather than an injury, however; and at the end of the week the party set out, as happy a set of travellers as ever turned their faces from home for a pleasure trip.

Dr. Mason had been able to spend but little time at Melville, his duties at Lindon preventing him from making any thing but flying visits to his grandson; but Aunt Harriet and Hattie had grown to be old acquaintances with Harry now. In fact, the doctor, little as he had seen of him, seemed like an old friend too; for his genial manner had won Harry's heart at once, and he felt quite like a member of the little family at Lindon.

It was a beautiful morning, and as Charlie sat in the train with Hattie beside him, and Harry opposite, while Dr. Mason and Aunt Harriet occupied the seat behind the two which had been turned face to face to accommodate the young people, who had pleaded strenuously against being shut up in "those stupid compartments," as Harry expressed it, he thought he had never been so happy in his life. The sun shone down gloriously on the rippling little creek which ran for miles beside them, and on the burning red and orange and burnished gold of the groves and woods beyond; and the cool breeze came in softly through the open window against which he leaned, fanning the cheek that was growing in roundness and color every day, and seeming to brace with new strength the limbs that, hour by hour, gained in vigor and in health. But he was very quiet, and sat resting against the window, leaving the conversation entirely to Hattie and Clifford, until the latter said, suddenly,—

"Hallo, old man! what are you thinking about?"

"Thinking how jolly it is to be alive; isn't it," said Charlie, straightening himself up with a laugh, and coming out of his thoughtful mood in a moment. "Hattie, what have you got in that basket that's good? I didn't want my breakfast this morning, and I'm hungry now, I believe."

"Yes, I was afraid you would be," said Aunt Harriet, leaning forward. "You and Harry must need some nourishment, I think. There are some sandwiches there, Hattie. Give the boys some; but hand them each a napkin first; you will find some on the right of the basket. Don't spill crumbs, boys, and don't grease your clothes with the butter."

Charlie gave his friend a mischievous glance, but the old impatient toss of the head, and the vexed retort which had been the usual answer in times past to Aunt Harriet's fussy directions were seldom seen or heard now; for, in the first place, although Miss Mason could never be any thing less than uselessly particular and exact, her suggestions and remonstrances

were given far more kindly than of yore; and, in the second place, Charlie had learned that there was a very tender side to his aunt's character, and that, irritable and impatient as she often showed herself to be in trifling matters, in things of greater moment she could display exhaustless patience and untiring kindness. She had not tended him with self-forgetful, gentle, sleepless care during the first two weeks of suffering and nervous restlessness for naught. Peculiar, trying, and vexatious as some of her characteristics were, Charlie had found that these were but the upper crust, and that beneath them lay a true heart; hard to win, perhaps, but "faithful unto death" when won.

The boys, who had been too much excited in the prospect of their journey to be able to make a breakfast, were deep in the enjoyment of sandwiches, with the napkins dutifully spread over their knees, when a tall, gaunt-looking individual, with a basket on his arm, entered the car, calling out gruffly,—

"Ba-naa-nas! Ba-naa-nas!"

"Hallo! that bean-pole has bananas there," said Charlie. "You'd like some, wouldn't you, Hattie?" knowing that she had a weakness on the subject. "How much are they?" for the man was at his side with his basket.

"Twelve cents."

"Twelve cents apiece?" repeated Charlie, glancing up at the tall figure. "That's high enough."

"Can't help that," said the man roughly, thinking that he did not wish to buy.

"Every thing is high."

"So I see," said Charlie, mischievously putting back his head, and looking up as if he had to exert all his powers of sight to get a view of the distant face. "How much would you sell yourself for, now? How much a yard, for instance?"

With an angry look and a muttered threat, the man passed on, for his sharp manner had already been noticed by the passengers, and a hearty laugh had greeted Charlie's sally.

"Charlie! Charlie! I'll have to call you to order," said the doctor; "this won't do;" but the boy caught a smile on his face as he turned to answer him.

"He's such an old gruffy, Grandpa, I had to pitch into him. But I wanted the bananas," he added ruefully, as the man passed steadily on, taking no notice of his beckoning hand, and his loud, "Hey, bananas! bananas!"

So the day went merrily by, fun and enjoyment won out of everything, from the solemn fruit-vender on, until they reached New York, where they were to spend the night. In the morning they took the boat for Catskill, and Charlie found it no less "jolly to be alive" than he had done on the previous day. Never were engineers, firemen, or captain more persistently beset by two investigating, inquiring eager boys, than were those of the steamer which plied her way over the smooth waters of the Hudson that morning. But, fortunately, engineers, firemen, and captain had once been boys themselves, and whether they recalled their own old thirst for knowledge on the subject of screws, paddles, and what not, or were simply won by the two bright young faces which went peering into every nook and cranny, or stood watching with excited interest the complicated machinery of the engine-room, they were ready to answer their questions, and satisfy their desire to see all that was possible, and to learn whatever could be taught. Charlie's journey with Mr. Bralsted had made him better acquainted with the mechanism of the machinery of a river steamer than Harry; for the latter had never travelled on any vessel larger than a ferry-boat, and his pride in explaining what he understood was only to be equalled by Harry's admiration of his knowledge.

But at last Catskill was reached; the stage-coach carried them safely over the hills to the very heart of the mountains; and they were set down late in the afternoon when the rosy sunset was just fading into twilight, at the little farm-house where they were to make their home for the next three weeks.

"So there you be!" exclaimed a wiry-voiced, hard-featured, but kindly looking woman, coming out of the house to welcome them. "I got your letter yesterday, doctor, and I'm all ready for you. No more parties for me, eh, Mr. Brown?" with an inquiring glance at the coachman. "Just as well. Come in, come in, sir, and I'll see to your supper, for you must be hungry. Never mind your traps. I'll send Stephen to bring 'em in. Here, Stephen!" she cried, with a shrill, piercing call. "Where be you?"

"Here, Martha," replied a meek, little man, appearing from the door-way of the house.

"Carry up them traps, and be lively," said the woman. "Now, doctor, if you'll bring your party in, we'll see to make you comfortable."

They all went into a neat little parlor, where their hostess left them.

"Oh, father, what a disagreeable woman this Mrs. Husted is!" said Miss Harriet, as soon as she was gone. "I hardly think we can remain here."

"When you come into the back woods, my dear," said Dr. Mason, laughing, "you must expect to meet back-woods manners. The woman is kind-hearted, generous, and a first-rate housekeeper and cook. Small as her house is, it is decidedly the best kept of any in the mountains. Besides, she will not annoy you, my dear. She will serve us at the table, but otherwise you will not probably meet her unless you have occasion to send for her."

Miss Harriet, mentally resolving that such occasions should be very infrequent, went to her room to prepare herself for supper, while the boys and Hattie went out, after they had washed off the dust of travel, to ramble about the garden until the tea-bell should ring. They were soon called in by the welcome sound, and sat down to a hearty meal, which was as neatly spread, and as deliciously cooked as if it had been prepared by hands far more learned in table arts than those of Mrs. Husted.

That lady sat at the head of the table, with the tea-tray before her, while her husband, the meek little man aforesaid, was seated opposite, with half-a-dozen tempting-looking dishes ranged around him. This was not Dr. Mason's first visit to the farm-house, and Mr. Husted, having carved the dish of meat which stood before him, and served his guests, was engaged in conversation with him, when his wife's sharp voice broke in upon their talk, in any thing but a musical key.

"Would you be so good as to serve the sarcee, Mr. Husted, or must I do that as well as pour the tea? Perhaps you think it's only to be looked at; but when I put victuals on the table, I like 'em ate."

"I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon, ladies," said the little man, hastily. "I quite forgot myself in the doctor's pleasant chat. What can I do for you, Miss Mason? Shall I give you baked apples and cream, or some of the sarcee?"

"Thank you," said Miss Harriet; "I will take an apple."

Her quiet, precise manner was in most marked contrast to the hasty embarrassment of her host, and it annihilated the little man even more effectually than his wife's sharp words had done. In deep dejection he silently attended to the wants of the rest of the party, simply saying to each in a awed tone as he extended his hands, one bearing a plate of apples and cream, and the other a plate of preserved plums, "Apples or sarcee?"

As soon as his duties as host were accomplished, the doctor took him under his wing again; but poor Mr. Husted was too much abashed to be easily lifted into confidence sufficient to carry on the conversation.

The three young people had hard work to maintain their gravity, and no sooner were they safely established in the parlor again, than Charlie and Harry broke into a peal of laughter, which was merrily echoed by the doctor and Hattie, while even Miss Harriet's face dimpled with a smile.

"Oh, Aunt Harriet," said Charlie as soon as he could speak, "I thought I Why didn't you say, 'Thank you, I'll

should just roar when you took that take some sarcee?" and Charlie bent forward, slapping his knee, and making the room ring again with his merriment.

"I did not wish to use that word," said Miss Harriet, catching the contagion of his enjoyment, and fairly laughing now, "and as I could not see what the dish contained, I took an apple lest Mrs. Husted should ask me again, as she did when I refused lettuce, if country victuals didn't suit."

"Yes, I heard her," said Charlie with another burst; "and didn't you look snappy? Oh, I don't mean to be saucy, Aunt Harriet, I'm sorry."

Miss Mason's face had flushed suddenly, but the flush died out, and she smiled as she said,—

"We must try to bear with the woman, for, as father says, she seems good-hearted, and very anxious to please us."

"Harry," said Charlie, as they lay in bed together that evening, "you never saw any body so different as Aunt Harriet in your life."

"Yes, I have," replied Harry, very positively.

"Have you? Who?"

"You."

Charlie colored a little under cover of the darkness.

"Oh, well," he said, half apologetically. "She don't peck at me half so much as she used to, and when she does fuss, she isn't so cross."

"And you've learned to stand a little fault-finding, and even some fretting, without answering back or scowling, as Hattie says you used to do. Did you ever say anything to each other about it, Charlie?"

"Well, yes," said Charlie, the color rising higher still. He felt it, and was so glad that Harry could not see it. "She was sitting by my bed one day, trying to amuse me, and I was as cross as a Turk. My head was pretty bad that day. It did not hurt so much as it sometimes did, but it felt prickly and grindy, and—well, just awful; and I kept growing crosser and crosser every minute, and Aunt Harriet was as patient and good as any thing, until at last I felt as if she was kind of throwing all the blame on me, by being so good, you know, when I was so ugly; and it made me mad, and I said, 'I wish you'd go away, and let me alone.' You ought to have seen her face, Cliff, how red it got; and her black eyes jumped, I tell you. She never spoke a word for a minute, and then she said in a queer voice, as if she was kind of holding herself in somehow, 'I'll call Harry. Perhaps his pleasant talk will make you feel brighter.' Oh, didn't I feel like a mean old snap-dragon though! I just took hold of her, and told her that I was sorry, and that I had been sorry for ever so many days; and that she hadn't been putting up so with all my whims and nonsense and ugliness since I had been sick, for nothing. And so," said Charlie, with an effort to hide the quiver which he felt creeping into his voice, "we had a little making-up time there. She said some jolly kind things to me, and I tried to pay her back in the same coin, and we've agreed to be the best of friends after this."

And so they were. Not but that there was much yet to bear on both sides, for no two characters could well have been more diametrically opposed in all minor points; but each was ready now to see the good in the other, and to judge with that charity that "thinketh no evil."

Those glorious, gay, October days! How swiftly they passed away, and how happily! Day by day the ruddy glow came back to Charlie's cheek, and the old strength to his limbs, until he could tramp with the strongest over the beautiful mountain roads, or up the beds of the roaring, tumbling brooks, which wound their turbulent, noisy, frolicsome way down the mountain-side to the valleys below.

(To be continued.)

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