

BOYS AND GIRLS

The Lonesome Dog.

(Annie Willis McCullough, in 'St. N'cho'as.)

When I am feeling tired, and would like to take a nap,
I wish I was a kitten snuggling down in someone's lap;
I wish I might grow smaller, 'cause I frighten people so;
I am a kind and gentle dog, but that they do not know.

The other dogs are 'fraid of me, and will not come and play,
And almost every child is scared, and starts to run away;
They never let me romp with them, no matter how I coax,
Oh, dear, it's very lonesome being bigger than your folks!

Rasmus, or the Making of a Man.

(By Julia McNair Wright.)

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CHAPTER XIII.—Continued.

'You don't owe me nothin', as I knows of. You gave me a werry good dinner, and I've had an uncommon nice time. I guess we're square. That you, Rod? You've been dinin' with quality, I reckon? Well, you are a high-flier, and no mistake. Come along, now; the perfessor will be looking for us. There's one good thing about you, you never get stuck up with attentions give to you.'

Having thus craftily conveyed to by-standers a proper notion of Rodney, and the company he kept, Rasmus escorted his ward up the hill.

As they were about making their evening meal, a middle-aged man, who looked like a traveller, came by. Rasmus was the soul of hospitality and good fellowship. He had himself often been lonely, and sometimes hungry, on his rambles, and he could not forget those experiences. At once he hailed the stranger, as one would hail a ship at sea—few speaking-trumpets, in fact, would have got the better of Rasmus in a noisy contest. Mr. Llewellyn frequently observed to him, that in the days of town-criers he would have made lasting renown; and now that those functionaries were discarded, he need never go hungry while there were auctioneers in want of assistants. 'Hillo, brother!' cried Rasmus. 'How's the world goin' with you?'

'It's turning round, as usual,' said the stranger.

'Would it go against your grain any, to sit down and have supper with us? We ain't proud, and a singed herring, a brown loaf, and a pot of coffee makes a very good spread, in my notion.'

The stranger looked about hastily, as Rasmus made the proffer, to see if it were seconded. There was a certain delicacy in the glance, as if he did not wish to intrude, that hinted of former better circumstances, though evidently here was one on the down grade. Mr. Llewellyn waved his hand toward a place, and Rod moved a little to make room. The stranger sat on the grass by them.

'Seems to me I saw you selling lemonade down yonder,' he suggested to Rasmus, as they waited for the coffee to boil, and the herrings to singe on a little bed of green sticks before the coals.

'And seems to me, you asked me for suthin' stronger than lemonade, and I remarked to you, that that wasn't my style.'

'Just so,' said the stranger, 'and nothing stronger did I get. It seems, there's a kind of local option round here, and also liquor is prohibited round this camp, while it's here. Dry word that.'

'There's some things,' said Rasmus, 'that the more you drinks of 'em, the drier you gets. I think I heard you singing, down yonder, and a very proper voice you had.'

'Yes, I sang. I pick up a little living that

way. So far, I pay my way, though sometimes it is poor pay, and a poor way. Not having had any of the strong waters you objected to, I'm in rather a melancholy mood to-night, but I won't give way to it. That's a very fair supper cooking there, and while it cooks, I'll sing you a song for my share of it. It is a new song, just out from England. I observe in the midland counties they like sea songs, and on the coast they are better pleased to hear about the mountains, and "when the kye come home," and so on. This is a new song called—

"Captain Alexander Hill."

"Come all you jolly seamen and landsmen likewise,
Come listen to my story, 'twill put you in surprise,

It's of a sloop, a voyage took, from Ireland to England—

Our sloop being new, I'll tell you true, belonged to fair Scotland.

"We had a pleasant sailing breeze, till the sixth hour that night,
When a dreadful storm it did arise, and put us in a fright.

The seas they ran like mountains high, and our sloop it ran,
The captain cries, 'My brave boys, let's cut for the Isle of Man.'

"Our captain cries, 'Let us run for Ross, and try the raging main';
But we had no water to get in, which did increase our pain.

We heaved out our anchor, to wait upon the tide—

But oh, and alas, my brave boys! our ship it would not ride."

Mr. Llewellyn had sat looking fixedly at the ground. He now raised his eyes, and said abruptly, 'You sang better than that once, and better songs.'

'No doubt,' said the man, uneasily.

'You started out in life to be one of the leading tenor voices of the day; you were—'

'Don't say it! Let the name, at least, lie in peace!' cried the man, holding out his hand. 'Now I am Tom Rowley, and my past is dead and buried. How did you find me out?'

'I love a good voice, and going to hear great singers has been one of my few luxuries. I heard you sing with—shall I say whom?'

'No; let it drop! When I think of what I was, and now a mere strolling roadside singer!'

I thought you had one of the noblest tenor voices I ever heard; there were notes in it I could not forget. And to-night I caught the echo of such tones again, and I set myself to associating those tones with my past, and so, step by step, as you sang, I went back to where I had heard you, and to whom you were.'

'Yes; you are right. And this is all that's left of me—a couple of shirts, a patched shoe, a few dimes in my pocket, a fugitive and a vagabond upon the face of the earth; and yet, though I have Cain's fate, I have not sinned Cain's sin.'

'What has done it?' asked Mr. Llewellyn.

'Whiskey did it,' said the ex-tenor, bitterly.

Here Rasmus announced supper. He had laid the herring on a clean plate that Rodney had woven out of oak-leaves, put the broken loaf into a basket that he had himself whiled away an afternoon hour in plaiting from rushes; the sugar was in the cups, and the coffee was steaming and fragrant. The eating put an end to conversation for a while. But the words of Mr. Llewellyn had recalled the past, and the singer reverted to his former life. He must discuss his fate, although he concealed his name. They were all sitting under the trees, watching the glories of the sunset, and the sifting of the light through the leaves.

'Yes, whiskey did it,' he said, mournfully.

'But I thought that strong drinks were of the things that singers, for the sake of their art, must eschew?'

'So they ought; but the passion for drink became by degrees stronger than devotion to music. Other people warned me. I knew myself where I was going. I knew what I might

be, sober—what I would be drunken; but wine and brandy had their fascination for me. I drank, though I knew every cup stole something from the purity, sweetness, and strength of song.'

'And if it had not, if to all outward sound the notes had remained the same, yet, prostrate as a slave under the feet of strong drink, your song would have lost the grand element of rightness, it would have been no true song. Do you not know that in all art, whether music, statuary, painting, we must have rightness, the true and honest soul expressing itself, or the art is worthless, and will never aid in lifting up men? We must have truth in ourselves, or we shall have no mission in any art, and the result of all our efforts will be to deprave.'

'I have been most unfortunate,' said the singer, gloomily; 'fate has been against me.'

'Let me answer you in the words of Carlyle, "No man oppresses thee, oh, free and independent franchiser, but does not this stupid pewter-pot oppress thee? No son of Adam can bid thee go or come, but this absurd pot of 'heavy wet' can and does! Thou art the thrall, not of Cedric the Saxon, but of thy own brutal appetites, and of this accursed dish of liquor, and thou patest of thy liberty! Thou entire blockhead."'

'That's good,' said Rasmus, with serene approbation, 'very good. I don't believe I could have said anything better myself. Do you, Rod?'

But Rod went into his fits of laughter, which were frequently induced by the naive vanity of Rasmus, and laughed till he went rolling down the green grass of the hill.

'What's the matter of that boy, now?' demanded Rasmus, with the greatest interest, of Mr. Llewellyn.

Unable to get any explanation as to the conduct of Rodney, Rasmus took the part of mentor to the tenor-singer. 'I say, what seems wrong with you is, you haven't sand enough in you—grit, mortar, I mean; if you knowed that drinking would spoil your singing, you shouldn't ought to drink. Seeing you know it now, you'd ought never to take another drop.'

'It's too late to get back my voice, now; it's gone.'

'Well, 'tain't too late to be a honest man, is it? Seems to me that's some account,' said Rasmus.

'See here,' said the singer, taking a round boulder, and giving it a gentle impetus on the shoulder of the hill. It rolled along, as if uncertain whether to go on or stop, then it came to a steeper curve, and gathered swiftness of descent, then on faster, then whirling along the sharp declivity, then it leaped from jut to jut, and spun out of sight, and was lost with a crash in the gorge below.

'Behold me and my fate,' said the tenor, 'it is on the down grade, darkness and loss await it. So for me. I began on the down grade slowly, but then I went faster and faster, and now I shall never stop till I am lost forever to the light of day.'

Mr. Llewellyn offered him the shelter of their cabin for the night, and a share of breakfast in the morning. It rained in the night, and was cloudy and dark, but with dawn Nature rewrought her divine alchemy, and turned all things to gold in the crucible of the sunrise, and in that blaze of splendor they parted with the man on the 'down grade.'

CHAPTER XIV.

Questions and Answers.

'Look down there,' said Rodney, waving his hand toward a village in the valley, 'there is a funeral.'

They saw beneath them the village, with its white houses, its long, straight street, the church in the centre, with the white spire pointing to the sky. Beside the church was the graveyard, a small green field, sown with white or gray headstones, in the centre a column taller than the others, marking the resting-place of some rural magnate. Toward this graveyard a funeral was moving, while the church-bell, slowly tolled, kept time with the mourners' steps. From the distance there was no sound or motion in the hamlet, except those connected with the funeral.

'I don't see why everyth'ng has got to come to an end by dying,' said Rasmus, with great