

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

TESTING A GRANDFATHER.

Mary Elizabeth stroked the neck of the little white horse with timid, tentative fingers, as if she feared that at her touch this fairy steed might unfold hidden wings and fly forever beyond mortal ken. The more prosaic admiration of a fat, rosy little maid at her side voiced itself loudly, enthusiastically, but the Boy was not satisfied.

"Grandad gave him to me," he answered proudly. Then, eyeing a downcast face keenly, he continued, tentatively, "I've the best grandfather in all this town."

Instantly every drop of blood in Mary Elizabeth's loyal heart flashed into her cheeks.

"You haven't—mine's the best!" she cried.

"Huh!" retorted the Boy, scornfully. "My grandfather was a contractor in the army, an' yours is nothing but a musician. An' we don't none of us like his pieces, nether."

Mr. Courtney Owen, a composer of classical music, in very truth fell far below the village standard of a successful man. When rumors of his somewhat more than national reputation reached the ears of his fellow-citizens, they were wont to demand of each other in wide-eyed amazement, "What in time can folks find to like in them meachin' kind o' pieces without a mite o' tune to 'em?" While the army contractor, having by dubious methods amassed a large fortune during the civil war, stood high in popular esteem as a man of unquestionable financial ability.

"Well" faltered Mary Elizabeth, at last, "maybe my grandfather isn't so smart as yours, but he's a lot kinder. Mercy, I just guess he is!" she exclaimed, inspired by a sudden recollection. "My grandfather'd never whip me the way yours did you the day you broke the parlor window, playin' ball."

She shuddered as she recalled a scene of which she had been a terrified spectator when a furious, purple-faced man had laid his stick across the Boy's shoulders. "Pooh, that was nothing," the Boy returned, nonchalantly, "an' anyhow, I'll bet your grandfather'd do the same to you if you broke one of his windows. But girls are such 'fraid cats they never get into mischief."

"He wouldn't!" flashed Mary Elizabeth, "I couldn't be so naughty that my grandfather wouldn't love me; if I broke every one of his windows he'd just be as kind as ever."

"Dare you to, an' double dare," yelled the Boy, tauntingly.

For an instant Mary Elizabeth hesitated.

"'Fraid cat! 'fraid cat! You know he'd whup you, good and plenty," jeered her tormentor.

Without a word Mary Elizabeth turned and led the way through the old-fashioned garden where she and Nellie Ingraham had played so happily all the summer day. They had set a trap for the brown bees in the guise of a quaint lacquered box filled with blossoms, fondly hoping to obtain thereby rich stores of honey; they had made "ladies" of crimson hollyhocks; wreaths of purple harknappur, and buried their laughing faces so deep in the hearts of white lilies that their noses looked as if they had felt the golden touch of King Midas.

Now Nellie clutched the brief skirts of her friend, beseeching her to desist from her rash purpose; but there was no one else to interfere, for all the grown-ups, including the servants, had

gone to attend the funeral of a neighbor as was the simple village custom.

With passionate determination Mary Elizabeth picked up a large stone and sent it crashing through one of the cellar windows. Even the Boy stood aghast as the sound of breaking glass smote the peaceful air of the neighborhood. But Mary Elizabeth continued her work of destruction with fanatical eagerness. The cellar windows were in ruins, and she had sent a heavy missile hurtling through the bow-window of the library, when the horrified countenance of Katy, the cook, who had hastened home in advance of the rest, appeared above the hedge that separated the two gardens.

"May the Lord in pity look down upon us this day!" she wailed, swooping down upon the culprit.

The Boy threw himself into his saddle and melted away as swiftly as if the little white horse had been indeed a winged Pegasus; Nellie Ingraham fled across the street sobbing violently, while Katy hauled home her charge and locked her into the attic, a place whose dim and shadowy recesses were fitted to bring the criminal to a sense of guilt.

But Mary Elizabeth, "her mind conscious of rectitude," remained obdurate even when confronted by a fearful mother and an irate father, although with the inarticulateness of childhood she failed in her attempt to explain the motive that had prompted her naughty deed.

"O Mary Elizabeth, don't tell me that you broke those windows just because your grandfather is so kind and good that you believed he wouldn't punish you!" implored Mrs. Carr.

"If ever a child deserved a whipping it is you, Mary Elizabeth," Mr. Carr declared sternly. "I only hope your grandfather will agree with me, but we've promised to leave your punishment to him, and he wishes to see you at once."

The culprit with downcast head retraced her steps along the box-bordered garden walks and entered a white cottage, where she found the old housekeeper sweeping up fragments of broken glass.

"It's lucky for you, miss," snorted Miss Durbin, angrily, "that there ain't no bears round here such as there was in the time o' Elijer, fer them children that got et up was saints an' angels sot up agin a little girl that's broke the winders of the best gran'ther that ever lived."

"That's why I did it," said Mary Elizabeth, stonily.

Amazement banished every particle of expression from Miss Durbin's winter-apple face as she gasped, feebly, "Well, if I die I must say—"

Then recovering from the shock of listening to such a brazen confession of depravity, she added with energy, "I've cut a good stout switch from that willer out there, an' I've laid it handy by your gran'ther's elber, 'n ef he don't make no use of it this time, it seems as ef give up I should."

Mary Elizabeth quailed. Not that she feared the physical pain, for the blood of generations of soldiers flowed through her veins, but she felt that if she were obliged to confess to the Boy that her grandfather had failed her trust, life henceforth would be a desert. Blind and dizzy with apprehension, she crossed the hall and entered the quiet, shady room where her judge awaited her. A hand was outstretched to her as she stood trembling on the threshold.

"Now, Mary Elizabeth," said a kind old voice, "come and tell grandfather all about it."

At the sight of the shrunken figure in the great arm-chair, the ice that had gathered about the queer, loyal little heart gave way, and Mary Elizabeth was in her grandfather's arms, sobbing tempestuously as with a world of delicate patience he drew the story from her.

A little later Miss Durbin was displaced to hear the soothing notes of a cradle hymn wafted from the chamber of justice where a poor little penitent, exhausted by weeping, had been laid on a worn old couch and bidden to rest, shriveled and forgiven.

It was not long before the brown eyes dropped and the child slept. But from the parted lips still came deep-drawn, quivering breaths, for in her dream Mary Elizabeth was wandering through a bleak world strewn with shattered glass that cut her tender feet, while dear familiar forms stood aloof with stern, averted faces. But as the musician played softly, steadily on, the pitiful sobs ceased, and Mary Elizabeth smiled in her sleep, for she had a vision of an old man resting his wrinkled cheek on the brown breast of a Cremona. In his heart was love unchangeable, and in his faded eyes the look of one who understood.—Mary Barrett Howard, in *Congregationalist and Christian World*.

This is the gospel of labor—

Ring it ye bells of the kirk!
The Lord of love came down from above
To live with the men who work.
This is the rose he planted

Here in the thorn-cursed soil;
Heaven is blest with perfect rest,
But the blessing of earth is toil.
Henry van Dyke.

"There must be no exercise as exercise for the consumption patient," says Eugene Wood, in "Everybody's Magazine." "If you are able and feel like it amuse yourself, but don't take exercise to build up your system. I know, I too have heard those stories about men given up to die, who began work in a gymnasium and by violent exercise entirely recovered their health. You mustn't believe all the physical-culture people tell you any more than all the patent-medicine people tell you. They're both in the miracle business. When the lung tissue is attacked by tuberculosis, it heals, if it heals at all, by this fibrous, scar material filling in the cavity. No new lung tissue is formed to replace what has been lost, and this scar material is useless for breathing. Suppose you had a deep cut in your hand, and you kept working that hand violently, how long do you think it would take the cut to heal up? When exercise is taken or you "expand the lungs," you have to work the lung tissue just as you work your hand, and if it is wounded there will be a much larger proportion of scar material useless for breathing when it does get well. It is the practice now to make the affected lung immobile with strips of adhesive plaster, and to inject it with nitrogen gas, so that the lung won't work."

Pay attention.—At a little school in the North of Scotland the master keeps his boys steadily at their task, but allows them to sometimes nibble from their lunch-baskets as they work. One day, as he was instructing the class in arithmetic he noticed that one of his pupils was paying more attention to a small tart than to his lesson. "Tom Bain," said he, "pay attention, will ye?" "I'm listening, sir," said the boy. "Listening, are ye?" exclaimed the master, "then ye're listening wi' one ear an' eating tart wi' the other!"