

The Inglenook.

Frankie's Visit.

BY C. A. PARKER.

"The egg-man is coming, mamma!" cried Frankie Clark, rushing into the house. "He's most here." Then he rushed out again.

In a few minutes he came back, escorting an old man who carried a basket on his arm.

"Good morning, madam," said the egg-man, bowing politely, and setting the basket on the table. "The usual number, I suppose?"

Frankie climbed on a chair and watched while the eggs were being counted out of the basket into a pan which Mr. Clark had brought. When this was finished, the man picked up a very small egg and handed it to the little boy.

"There, sonny," he said, "I brought that for you."

"Oh, thank you!" cried Frankie, in delight. "Isn't it dear! I wish you'd bring all this kind, won't you, please?"

The egg-man laughed. "I'm afraid I'd lose your mother's custom if I did," he said.

Frankie turned the egg round and round admiringly. "You pick 'em out o' nests, don't you?" he said.

"Yes," replied the man, laughing again.

"I'd like to pick eggs," said Frankie, longingly. "You live on a farm don't you?" he added. "I s'pose they's lots 'o chickens and little bosses and sheeps there, isn't there?"

"Well, I have only a small place," replied the man, taking up his basket and hanging it on his arm. "There's a pile of chickens and two calves and a colt and six little pigs, cunning as can be. I don't keep sheep; but Mr. Stowe, on the big farm next to mine, has over three hundred."

Frankie sighed.

"I'd like to go to a farm," he said wistfully.

The egg-man's face lighted up.

"Let me take him home with me, madam," he said. "I'll take good care of him, and bring him back all safe and sound in a few days."

Frankie jumped off the chair.

"Oh, can I go?" he cried, looking up pleadingly into his mother's face. "Please say yes, mamma. Please do!"

Mamma hesitated.

"Are you sure it would be convenient for your wife?" she asked.

"Perfectly, madam. She will be delighted. She is very fond of children. Ours are all grown up and married. We are all alone."

Mrs. Clark still hesitated.

"He has never been from home over night," she said. "He would be home-sick I am afraid."

"No, I wouldn't, mamma," cried Frankie, earnestly.

The egg-man smiled. "I think we can manage about that," he said.

"I am going out to look after my horses," he added. "Perhaps you would like to speak with your husband while I am gone."

So Mrs. Clark went to the telephone.

Papa did not object. He knew the egg-man very well. It would be all right, only, of course, the boy would be home-sick, he said.

"Well, I'll get him ready as soon as possible," said mamma.

"Let him go just as he is, madam," said the egg-man. "I hose clothes are all right for the work he will have on hand for the next two or three days."

So mamma wrapped up a night-gown and another gingham waist, and Frankie kissed her good-bye and ran out to the wagon.

"Can I drive?" he asked, as he clambered in, without waiting for help.

"Well, I guess I'd better till we get out of town," said the egg-man, taking the lines. "Then you may."

Papa was on the lookout, for mamma has said that she would like to have them drive round by the office.

"Good-bye, papa!" shrieked Frankie while they were still half a block away.

"So you're going to leave us, my boy?" said papa when the wagon stopped.

"Yes, I'm going home with the egg-man, out to the farm," cried Frankie, his eyes shining with happy excitement. "I'm going to drive soon as we get out o' town. I'll be gone a long time, too."

"I'm going to pick eggs out o' nests, and feed the chickens and the little piggies. 'Nother man's got a whole lot o' sheeps, more'n a fousand. I'm going to see them, too."

"Well, I guess we'd better go. Maybe it might rain or be dark 'fore we get there. Good-bye, papa. Don't be homesick."

Papa laughed and kissed him.

"Good-bye," he said. "I suppose we shall be a little lonesome; and, if you are homesick, you must be a brave boy, and do not cry."

Then they drove away, and papa felt quite lonesome as he watched them.

About nine o'clock that evening there was the sound of wheels stopping at Mr. Clark's gate; and very soon a familiar little voice was heard, and familiar steps running up the walk.

Mr. and Mrs. Clark both started for the door, reaching it just as it was opened from the outside.

Frankie rushed at them, throwing his arms first around one and then the other.

"I'm so glad to see you!" he exclaimed. "Wasn't I gone an awful long time, though? I picked the eggs, and fed the chickens. The little piggies squealed just like this, we-ee-ee!"

"But I didn't see the sheeps, so I've got to go again. Then I guess maybe I'll stay all night. I didn't this time, 'cause I was 'fraid you'd be homesick to see me."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Mr. Clark. "This is a great performance."

"I'm very sorry, indeed, that you have been put to so much trouble," he said to the egg-man, who responded with a polite wave of the hand.

"Don't speak of trouble. It is all right. I intended to bring him home to night if he really wanted to come. He has enjoyed the day greatly, and so have we. My wife could hardly let him go; and as for me, the pleasure of his company was worth much more than the extra trip. Don't feel any uneasiness about it."

Frankie followed him to the door.

"Good-bye!" he called cheerfully. "Don't forget to feed the shickens. They'll be lonesome without me, I expect. Next

time you bring us some eggs I'll go home with you again."—Christian Register.

How to Encourage People.

It is a great art to know how to administer encouragement wisely. Perhaps the best you can do for any one who is in perplexity and difficulty is to manifest your faith in him. The secret of discouragement is self-distrust. The man thinks he has done all he can, or fears that he will fail. The friend who shows that he believes in him, sends him away with a new inspiration and confidence. It is a capital mistake to seek to encourage people by underrating their trials. You say to your friend, "Oh, that is nothing at all; you can do that easily enough;" and you have made his burden heavier. The difficulty is a real one to him. You cannot help him until you take his point of view, and see how hard the conditions are in his conception of them. Then you can encourage him, and you will do it by telling him that you understand the difficulty, but that you believe that he can conquer it. Then you have appealed to the man with the man. He knows that some one understands him, and the next time you meet him he will say by his glowing face, "I thank you. It was hard, but I did it. I did it because you believed in me, and that made me believe in myself."—The Watchman.

The Kingdom of Women.

In the province of Smolensk, Russia, is to be found a little state practically governed for the greater part of the year by women.

The state is about forty miles square, and is known as the "Kingdom of Women," because the entire male population of the district emigrates at a certain time each year to seek employment in other parts of the country, leaving the local government in the hands of their better halves. The scheme is said to work extremely well, and the financial condition of the little place appears to be excellent.

Only a Boy.

There is a striking story of a certain missionary who was sent out, on one occasion, to go to a little village in an out-of-the-way corner of India to baptize and receive into church fellowship sixty or seventy adult converts from Hindooism.

At the commencement of the proceedings he had noticed a boy about fifteen years of age sitting in a back corner, looking very anxiously and listening very wistfully. He now came forward.

"What, my boy! do you want to join the church?"

"Yes, sir."

"But you are very young, and if I were to receive you into fellowship with this church to-day, and then you were to slip aside, it would bring discredit upon this church and do great injury to the cause of Christ. I shall be coming this way again in about six months. Now, you be very loyal to the Lord Jesus Christ during that time, and if, when I come again at the end of the half year, I find you still steadfast and true, I will baptize and receive you gladly."

No sooner was this said than all the people rose to their feet, and some, speaking for the rest, said, "Why, sir it is he that has taught us all that we know about Jesus Christ."

And so it turned out to be. This was the little minister of the little church, the honored instrument in the hand of God of saving all the rest for Jesus Christ.—Forward.