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Lucy and the Boy Bandits

It was Saturday in Summerville. Mr. Wells stood for a moment on his doorstep in the early morning, looking under the trees, down the quiet street.

"Well, he called to his wife, turning to look inside. "Come part way with me."

Mrs. Wells joined him, and they passed slowly down the walk together.

"It is so peaceful here," said Mr. Wells. "I can't get over it! I don't understand how any one can prefer the city to this, especially if they have children."

"I am sometimes troubled about Lucy," said Mrs. Wells. "What about her?"

"Lucy? Why, what about her?"

"I don't know. She is such a tender-hearted little girl, and I know she wants to be good, but she is so thoughtless, or careless, or something—I don't know what. She seems to be just as careful and quiet as she can be when she plays around home, but the moment she is out of my sight something happens. If she goes away, she comes back half the time all mussed or torn and in some distress. When her little friends come to see her, she is lovely to them, but sometimes when she goes to play with them, she comes back in disgrace."

"Oh, that's the way with all children," said Mr. Wells soothingly. "Don't worry about Lucy, she's all right. How about Johnnie?"

"Oh, he is a boy!"

A far-away whistle of a locomotive sounded faintly, and Mr. Wells hurried away, the bustling city already spreading before his mind's eye.

Lucy was sitting on the lawn, by the side of the house, two of her little children leaning against a tree, their eyes staring straight before them, one lying by her side, as naked as when she was born; her eyes closed, and a fourth, a poor little cripple, in her lap. This last had no eyes. They had been rubbed off, rather faded away from old age. There were boxes overflowing with hats and clothes, a baby carriage, a crib, and a work-basket.

"Are you getting the little ones ready for the party?" asked Mrs. Wells.

"Oh, don't you remember only Anna was invited?" said Lucy, looking earnestly, almost tearfully up. "It's a party of just last Christmas dolls. They're all six months old, you know."

"Oh, yes, that will be nice, won't it?"

"Yes," answered Lucy ruefully. "But Marjorie feels so bad. I'm coming her now." She held up the dress, weather-beaten form.

"Marjorie," she said, "she's all in pieces."

"Kittie and May feel bad, too."

"Oh, a little. But not so terrible as Marjorie does. She hasn't had a party in years and years, and she can't get, I guess, any more."

"You should say she has not, Lucy."

"I mean she has not—oh, dear, it is very sad, don't you think so?"

"Why don't you give her one? I'll tell you what. You make a party next Saturday for Marjorie, and invite all the scarerows to it. You can call it an old maids' tea."

"Oh, good—oh, can I?"

"You may."

"I mean mayn't I?"

"Yes, may I, Lucy?"

"Yes, may I?"

"You have a nice, pleasant time, and don't get into any trouble, and come home in good order and everything is all right, you may. I'll have Martha make a little frosted cake for each of the party."

Lucy hugged Marjorie to her breast and closed her eyes tight. Such a measure of expectation was almost too much for her.

She laid the tattered creature in the crib with a little pat and a maternal smile, and picked up the naked one. She could continue the interrupted preparations for the party with nothing to disturb her delight in them. Anna was a beautiful child, with golden curls, rosy cheeks, large blue eyes, with long brown lashes. The white kid body was firm and plump. Lucy was proud of her and of her fine wardrobe, but tempered her admiration and affection with the precautions of a wise mother.

The party was to be at the parsonage, on the lawn. The guests had been invited to come at ten in the morning, and they might stay until noon. There would be games before luncheon, and the making of dolls' clothes in the afternoon.

As she stood by the open window, in her petticoat and under waist, she saw her mother crushed her hair, and saw her brother Johnnie come bustling around the house, and walk away into the woods. A few moments later she saw Daring Dick come stealing out, a bowie-knife in his belt, a cross bill, two-edged sword in his hand, and a long hen's feather in his hatband. He moved stealthily, but not with the stealth of cowardice. It was only the wise caution, the bold cunning of a brave brigand, who finds himself alone and undisguised in a civilized community.

Lucy wondered in what wild fastness Bold Billy Sure Shot and his brigand band would gather for the day and what adventures they would encounter. In a moment the Little Mother Lucy vanished, and from the same blue eyes there peeped the bandit maiden, making them to dance and sparkle. Which would she rather do—have a quiet luncheon on the parsonage lawn, play pussy wants a corner, and make doll clothes; or take her chance with the free, bold spirits of the bush?

She stood up to let her mother tie the new ribbons on her hair, and as she did so, she saw Anna, clad in all her loveliness, her red lips arching sweetly, her eyes fixed dreamily upon her nickel shoe-buckles twinkling in the sunlight, the very picture of innocent, expectant helplessness.

Lucy gathered Anna to her arms, holding her carefully, so as not to rumple her clothes, and went with her mother downstairs. Her mother got the shears and led her outside to a little bush at the end of the porch, snipped off a pink bud, partly open, and pinned it to her breast.

"I hope you will have a nice time. And, Lucy, will you try and be careful and polite and do nothing to make your friends vexed with you?"

"I will try, mamma; indeed, I will try."

"Just think of poor Marjorie, too."

"I know it—oh, I hope nothing happens."

"Lucy, I don't think anything will. Of course, you can't play all day and not muss yourself some, you know, but ladies at sewing parties ought not to tear their clothes or get them all muddy, and they ought not to be sent home by their hostess. That's all I mean, and I am sure you will have a good, happy time today."

Lucy put her free arm about her mother's neck and kissed her, and ran down the walk between the peonies and bleeding hearts to the gate. As her hand was on the latch she was startled by a low "hiss" from the lilac bush at her left.

"Don't look. Don't speak," said the well known voice of Daring Dick. "Just listen and do as I say. Turn up the first street, keep on this side; go slow as you get near the alley."

In the silence that followed, Lucy heard the latch rattle under her shaking hand, and felt her heart battering at her breast.

"Remember your oath," hissed the voice from the bush.

"Come, hurry up," said the voice impatiently. "Get a move on, and hustle, Lucy; they're a-waiting."

She looked once toward the house and saw her mother watching her from the writing-room window.

"Good-by," said her mother smiling, all unconscious of the brigand in the bush.

"Good-bye," said Lucy, with a plaintive quiver in her voice. She waved her hand feverily, and, clutching Anna to her breast, walked slowly down the street. Of course, she knew nothing of what might be before her. There had been times when such mysterious commands had brought a boundless, expectant delight, while they frightened her; but today she wished—oh, how she wished—to be just a quiet, little girl—good in her mother's eyes.

There are plenty of girls, of course who would have gone right on past the corner and avoided the threatening alley, but Lucy had never yet faced her brother, or disobeyed any of his commands, or those of his friends, the outlaws. She looked down the street, it is true, and saw the church spire rising above the trees, and longed to be safely in the yard of the parsonage next door, but for all that she turned up the street she was told to follow, and came to the alley, walking slowly.

"Don't be scared," she whispered to Anna. "Don't be—oh, don't be—don't be—scared."

"Halt!" said a voice from the alley. "Up with your hands, postilion! Get out, lady, and come here."

"Better blow off his head—deaders tell no tales—bang!"

"You missed him—I'll—"

"I didn't, either, miss him. I blew him to smithereens."

"No, you didn't. He's still up there. I'll—"

"Bang! Bang! There, he's done for now, anyhow."

"Oh, shoot—you're always doing everything. Can't you let a feller—"

"Silence! Who's chief here, anyhow? Dick, you hind and rag the

coachman. Pete, cut the horses loose. We'll need them later. Now, lady, you come here."

Lucy walked a few steps into the alley, and stood before Bold Billy, her doll hugged tight to her shoulder.

"We'll not harm you," said the chief proudly. "We held you up 'cause we want you to do something. We know where you're going and— and everything. We want them sandwiches, and the cake."

"They're on a shelf at the end of the parsonage," broke in Friar John. "I saw ma put 'em there this morning."

"Now, you get 'em out, and leave 'em under the gooseberry bushes by the fence—"

"Oh, I can't—I can't—I—"

"You can, too. You've got to. You can put 'em on the window sill, and go around to the back porch when no one is looking, and take 'em off as easy as nothing. You can play hide and seek, and do it then."

"But I can't. Oh, don't make me, please. Just this once, won't you, please?"

"Aw, come on, Lucy," said Dick. "you'll go and spoil everything. All right for you if you don't— you'll see."

"I have it," cried Friar John. "We'll torture her kid till she does."

"We'll burn her at the stake," said Slippery Pete.

"Good!" said Bold Billy. "That'll bring her to time, I guess."

He led the way through the alley, and the rest followed, with Lucy in their midst. She walked along with them, hugging her doll close.

At the end of the block they came out upon a pasture, with a little grove of maples in one corner. From here Lucy could see the second-story windows of the parsonage, not half a block away.

They took the blue silk sash from Lucy's waist, and gagged her with it. They tied her to a tree with the grimy rope Bold Billy carried about his middle. They gagged Anna with Lucy's handkerchief and bound her to a driven stake with the ribbons of her leghorn hat. Lucy watched them do all this with dilating eyes and a brave effort to act her part with propriety, trying to control her fright and grief that it might not become too real. She saw them bring twigs and leaves, and pile them about Anna until only her rosy wax head was visible. It seemed to Lucy that the wide-open eyes of her darling were fixed in a stare of terror.

"We don't like to burn her," said Bold Billy, "but we must have them sandwiches and cake. Just wave your hand if you give in." He took a match from his pocket and struck it on a stone, his eyes fixed on Lucy. The rest of the band held their breath. Lucy was wiggling and prancing in agony. When the flaming match almost touched the leaves, she flung up her arms and waved them frantically. In a moment the leaves and twigs were scattered, and the bandits, with the eagerness of great relief, unbound their captives. Lucy took Anna to her arms and began to cry. There was no make-believe now. She was all unstrung and heart-broken, her own clothes and Anna's were crumpled and dirty. She would be obliged to rob her party of its feast. Her mother would look at her in astonishment and reproach. How could she ever go to the parsonage in such a mussed state? And Marjorie, her poor, rag cripple, could have no party now.

"What's the matter with you, anyhow?" said Daring Dick in vexation and disgust. "Here you go crying like a baby. You're a regular old spoil-at today."

"All right, let her cry, then," said Bold Billy. "We wouldn't have touched you if we'd known you was going to act that way."

"I don't mean to," wailed Lucy. "I'm— I'm all right now."

"You ain't neither; you're spoiled everything. We don't want your old things, anyhow. Come on, fellows; let's go swimmin'!"

Lucy watched them scamper away whooping and hallooing; then she sat upon the ground, and flung herself flat upon it, kicking and sobbing in a passion of shame and grief.

An hour later, when her mother saw her coming hesitatingly up the walk from the gate, her head bent, her face stained with dirt and tears, her blue silk sash twisted and tied askew, her dress in wrinkles, she was sick with disappointment and hopeless perplexity. Lucy came to where she sat sewing by the window, and buried her head in her lap.

"What is it, Lucy? Now, what in the world can it be? Were you sent home again?"

"I didn't go."

"Why, waht did you do?"

"I— I played with the boys and got dirty—and I couldn't go."

"Oh, Lucy, Lucy, what shall I do?"

"Whip me, mamma. Won't you please whip me, and let Marjorie have her party?"

"You know I will not whip you,

Lucy. Why didn't you think of Marjorie before? Why didn't you remember?"

Lucy went tearfully to the corner, and put Anna away. She took the rag cripple from its bed and went out under the tree where she could explain their misfortunes unheard. But though Marjorie understood and forgave her, she was for a long time unhappy. The scorn and desertion of the brigands was hard for her to bear.—Arthur Henry in New York Post.

Roul Sartout.

If Roul Sartout had not transgressed against the laws of Martinique, and as a consequence been thrust into prison, he would probably have been one of the victims of the cataclysm instead of its sole survivor. Sartout is the only soul who lived through the terrible hurricane of fire that assailed St. Pierre. He was in his underground cell when the disaster occurred, and his punishment was his salvation.

The Debt to the Negro

A colored minister from Georgia talked to the members of a Chicago club last week about "The Contribution of the Negro to the National Life." He considered the subject chiefly from the point of view of the capacity for production of the black men. The agriculture of the south depends upon them now, as it has done since they made their involuntary appearance in this country in considerable numbers. The descendants of the white men who first settled in the south are acclimated. They can do field work to as good purpose as the black men and do not suffer from it. Their forefathers, accustomed to the climate of England, could not have done what their descendants can. The difficulty of obtaining white labor led to the introduction of black labor and to greater agricultural productivity.

The black men can claim credit for the crops of cotton, rice and tobacco raised by them when there were no white men to do the work, and they can allege that they have contributed indirectly to national territorial expansion. If had not been for the ability to use slave labor the westward march of settlement south of Mason and Dixon's line would not have been so rapid as it was. The northern farmers with their system of small farms moved westward at a more deliberate pace than the southern planters with their large plantations. The latter often exhausted quickly the fertility of their lands and then moved on in search of virgin soil.

If it had not been for the occupation of the lands nearer the coast by the slave-holding owners of large plantations the non-slave owners would not have pushed into the interior to make homes for themselves at so early a day as they did. They would have been slow in making their way into the valley of Virginia or into Kentucky or Tennessee.

Slavery was urgent in its demands for new territory for industrial and for political reasons. Possibly under any circumstances the Pacific coast would have become a part of the United States. It would not have become a part of the United States so soon as it did had it not been for the Mexican war, which hardly would have been fought had there been no slaves in the United States. If the climate of Texas had resembled that of Oregon the advocates of annexation of Texas would have lost their zeal.

The presence of the African race on this continent led to four years of bloody war. If the black man had not been brought here there would have been no civil war—no North and South. But if the black men had not been here the march inland of American settlement might have been so slow that the Mississippi would have been the western boundary of the republic.—Chicago Tribune.

Swimming Championship

New York, June 18.—Amateur athletic union swimming championships will be held this year under the auspices of the New York Athletic Club at Travers Island. In order to allow competitors to compete in all five championships the program will be distributed over three days, July 12, August 23 and October 1.

On July 12 the 200 yard and half mile Amateur Athletic Union championships will be given, also a 110-yard handicap and a novice 110-yard.

On August 23 the quarter mile and one mile national championships will be held; also a novice 110-yard and a 230-yard handicap.

On October 4 the national 100-yard championship will end the Amateur Athletic Union contests.

Visiting U. S. Official

E. R. Stiver, United States mail and postoffice inspector, was among the passengers arriving on the Canadian last night. He is permanently stationed at Skagway and came to Dawson more on a pleasure than business trip. He expects to leave for Skagway tonight.

A \$20,000 Race

New York, June 18.—It has been definitely settled that the match race between Thomas Lawson's Borlma and E. E. Smither's Lord Derby for a side stake of \$20,000 shall take place at Hartford on Saturday, August 2. The horses have been matched and forfeits of \$5,000 have been posted for some time.

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