

## YOUNG FOLKS.

## A "TALE OF MY GRANDFATHER."

A TRUE STORY.

A lonely farmhouse, about three miles from a border town; a spacious kitchen, and a large family; a blazing log fire, and an eager-faced youth reading by the hearth.

Deeply absorbed is the lad in the wonderful and fearful doings of fairies, sprites, and hobgoblins, almost panting with excitement as he traces the fates of illustrious princes and beautiful princesses on the magic pages before him.

More thrilling, and more thrilling still, grows the tale; the boy's eyes gleam, his hands clench; then his frame quivers, a sob—

"Jem! d'ye hear!"

With a spring the lad is on his feet—"Eh!"

"Eh! Is that only answer to gie your mither?"

"Eh!"

"Bless me, laddie, are ye moonstruck?"

"Eh—Oh-h-h-h!—Ay!" All this was produced by a good-humored shaking; and, the boy being thus restored to a consciousness of present realities, the hobgoblins, for the time being, vanished.

"Ay!" he repeated.

"Now, that's sensible, somethin' like, shows yer brains are no exawcky wood gatherin' atowgether."

"Boy," now says the father, "d'ye hear?"

"Ay, father."

"Weel, gawn yer mither's errand at ance, Tak' the powny, an' look sharp—the night's dark."

There is no hesitation in the boy's response to the command; but, as he turns to obey, what a look overspreads his face!

He receives his mother's directions in silence, and, with a lingering glance at the cheery hearth, walks out into the dismal night. It is midwinter; the ground is hard with frost, and there is only a glimmering light from a few scattered stars.

Jack, the pony, saddled, Jem gives a rather wobegone "A' richt," and trots off. The road is dreary and ghostly in the extreme, and the very extreme of all is a disused quarry, surrounded by spectre-like trees, and possessing most uncanny shades, about a mile out of town.

Jack, knowing every foot of the way, steps briskly along. Jem sits very quietly indeed, but the lad's mind, whirling as it is with strange thoughts and fancies, is possessed with a queer foreboding, in which the shadows of the "quarry" figure with a dread significance, that weighs heavily on his spirits.

Thus, starting at the echo of Jack's hoofs, listening fearfully for every unusual sound, and trembling at the sight of the gaunt trees along his path, poor Jem's hitherto undoubted courage is rapidly reaching vanishing point; yet with a sinking heart and an excited brain, on and on he goes.

What a ghostly gloom! and what weird sounds! The very sighing of the night wind has something uncanny in it. Bathe the journey, awful as it may be, Jem means to do, so he trots on.

Now, though still determined to do or—Jem would rather not say die—he is well-nigh overwhelmed with that terrible dread of the "quarry." Nearer and nearer he comes, more and more intense grows the strain, until, before him, all black and grim and awful, it lies.

One wild impulse to turn and fly, one dogged, reckless resolve to go on! He goes on, and on his right to Jem at that moment is the uncanny place in all the earth. Breathlessly terrified, he enters the shade.

He dreads the sharp sound of Jack's hoofs lest some dread foe should be brought upon him from the gloomy depths, and each stroke falls like a knell on his quaking heart.

Were all the evil spirits of the earth and air assembled to tear him limb from limb in their mad orgies, poor Jem could hardly feel more certain that an awful fate awaited him. He imagines ghostly creatures behind, before, and all around him; he feels speckled hands upon him. He would yell if he could, and if he dared.

But now, at last, he is past! Jem is puzzled. How and why is he still unharmed! As yet he knows not. But now the road, still so bleak and dismal, seems like a path of roses. He could sing and cry at one and the same time, and yet he does nothing of the sort. Relieved as he is, he goes quietly—very quietly—on.

He reaches the town, transacts his business like one in a dream, and, laden, at last sets forth for home. The dread has never really left him, and hardly has his return journey begun than it returns with tenfold force. Again, he feels a grip of uncontrollable terror; again the shades and all they may hide oppress his soul; and now he goes like one to meet his doom. But there is a wild light in his eyes; he is surely desperate now! Yes; and he declares to himself that he will make an effort, and, if need be, a great one, for his life.

That strange magnet, the quarry, draws him on. Again, though dangers lie in front, he must go on! Trotting this time manfully up, he dives into the quarry shades, and horror gathers round. What is that his or rustle! Jem casts one look behind. Bang!—a loud report. "I'm shot!"

Jack leaps forward. Jem, with his left hand pressed to his side, clutches the bridle with his right, and then his only thought is for home—home, and there to die! He clings on, convulsively striking the pony's ribs with his heels, and Jack lays himself out with a will. There is a gurgling sound at Jem's side; he feels his life-blood trickling down, and on he flies for home!

With his head bent forward, his hand pressed tightly over the wound, and holding desperately on, he labors manfully against that dreadful draining, whose bubbling is ever present in his ears, and still he urges Jack faster and faster yet.

The gallant little animal nobly responds, and races swifter and swifter yet for home, foam flies from its mouth, but there is never a stumble. The wind rushes in the ear, and trees and hedges fly past as if possessed of wings. Never slackening, on they go, Jack's gallant strides never faltering as still he bears his rider up.

Poor Jem! if he can only hold up till he reaches the hearth he left scarcely two hours ago, there to close the most dreadful experience of his life, he will be satisfied. But still he hears that sickening sound, and feels the awful stream. He may fall, and then all will be over. Will he—can he do it! Yes! yes! for there at last is home!

Almost falling from the pony, he staggers against the door. It bursts open. With a haggard death-like face he enters, sinks into a chair, and utters once again the dreadful words, "I'm shot!"

With a piteous cry and angonized looks the family gather round. The father tears open the jacket of his lad. Then he quietly makes known Jem's awful fate—

"Mither, the yeast-bottle has burst!"—*H. F. P., in the Boy's Own Paper.*

A TON OF ROPES made from the women of Japan is used in building the \$3,000,000 Buddhist temple at Kyoto.

## FIRE ON A PRAIRIE.

"What are your precautions against fire?" Admetus had asked a few days before.

"Such as will make you wonder," answered the prairie farmer. "A can of kerosene and a bundle of matches to set back-fires with, though the fire-guards of ploughed ground that you have seen all over the ranch are the ounce of prevention, better than any cure. Then we always keep a hoghead full of water at the stable ready for carting to the spot."

"A hoghead of water! What good can a hoghead of water do against a prairie fire?"

"Oh, we don't put it on with a hose, I assure you. My imagination gasps at the conception of managing a prairie fire with a hose. We dip old blankets and old clothing in it, or boughs of trees if we can get them, and beat the fire down with them."

The illustration followed soon. All day smoke had been drifting over us and at nightfall the scouts reported that the whole force had better be put on. The "whole force" consisted of about twenty men who had come in to supper, and who started at once in wagons and on horseback. Ponies were ordered after dinner for the entire household, even the ladies riding far enough to have a view of the exciting scene. There were no tumbling walls or blazing buildings and there was no fear of lives being lost in upper stories; but there were miles upon miles, acres upon acres, of low grass burning like a sea of fire, while in the twilight shadows could be seen, men galloping fiercely on swift ponies, while the slow wagons crept painfully, lest the precious water should be spilled, from every homestead, each with its one pitiful hoghead. It seemed incredible that such a mass of flame could ever be put out by such a handful of workers; and it was only, indeed, by each man's laboring steadily at his own acre of the great circle, trusting blindly that others were at work on the other side, as of course they always were, that the lurid scene darkened down at last.

## A BUSY MAN'S CLEVER DEVICE.

A man of note found that his time was frittered away by idle callers. How he secured himself from interruption is told as follows: "Walking down the street one day, a well-dressed female in a store caught his eye, and wondering why the lady tarried so long he approached and discovered that the figure was a dummy. He passed on, meditating first about the figure, then by a natural association of ideas to women in general, and next about the politeness of southerners to women, and just here an original idea struck him. He was sure that no one, at least no southerner, would attempt to interrupt him while he seemed to be talking to a woman. If a quick-sighted New Yorker could mistake a dummy for a lady, why should not other people? No sooner thought than done. The figure was made and placed in his office. He worked with his back to the door and his face to the figure. People came and looked and walked away. The thing acted like a charm, and the few cents for calico, buttons, hooks and eyes and a chignon were amply repaid by the saving in the valuable time of the busy man."

**GENT—**Why, I have just given you something!

**BEGGAR—**Yes; that was for playing the fiddle—but I also do something in the begging line!

## WIVES OF CHINAMEN.

It has come to be a saying that when a Chinaman arrives in this city with the intention of going into business all he requires is a room, a wauhat, a stove, two flat-irons and a wife. The wife is considered as much a necessity as any other article of the house, and she is generally chosen with more of an eye to business than to love. A Chinaman is particular to get a healthy wife, and a woman with a fair knowledge of washing and ironing is preferable, but it is not imperative that she should know all about that business. She can soon be taught it. Health and strength are the first requisites after these the rest will follow.

Five years ago prejudice was so strong against Chinamen that they could not get women to marry them, but prejudice against them has gradually died away, until now a Chinaman can get a wife, as one said the other day, "Aallee samnee as a Medican man." In a few instances they have secured young and pretty wives, but more often they have chosen companions less beautiful than Helen of Troy.—*Philadelphia Times.*

## IN ANSWER TO "A. M. T."

MR. EDITOR.—In reading the interesting pages of the *Weekly Messenger*, I came across a letter written by "A. M. T." I agree with her in saying that agreeable people are sought at all times, and that being with them affords us a great deal of pleasure. The society of such persons is sought in the school-room, at home, everywhere. If being agreeable is a gift, it is one that needs a great deal of cultivation. A pleasant look a kind tone, an interest in the sorrows of others as well as in their joys all go far toward making agreeable impressions.

We should cultivate our minds so that we may be able to converse well on various subjects, for we must remember that a subject which is very interesting to one, may not be at all interesting to another.

If we are with persons who do not impress us favorably, we may show it as well by look or tone, as by words.

If we wish to please others, we must not think too much of our own appearance, but strive to interest ourselves in what is going on around us.

H. C. S.

GALLATIN, N. Y.

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THE WEEKLY MESSENGER is printed and published at Nos. 321 and 322 St. James street, Montreal, by Jons Doucail & Sons, composed of John Doucail, and J. D. Doucail, of New York, and John Reispah Doucail, of Montreal.