



THINK beautiful thoughts, and you become a beautiful character, and such a character is so extremely attractive that it attracts on every hand without trying to do so.—Larson.

In Defence of Babe

Farm and Home.

By ELIZABETH JEWETT BROWN

It was very pleasant and homelike in Miss Catherine Mason's big, sunny kitchen. The sun, when it shone at all, poured into the big south and east windows and kissed the blooming plants that the year through sat on the window sills or else grew luxuriantly in the deep window boxes outside. It shone lovingly on plump fair Miss Catherine herself, bringing out the gold in her still luxuriant chestnut hair, and finding the peachy bloom of the soft cheeks that time did not seem able to frown or wrinkle. It lay in golden bars across her spotless white floor, silvered the nickel on her highly polished range, and bestowed a benison of warmth on the growl-tawny cat, Babe, which always lay on the cushion of the big rocker under the southeast window.

"What do you keep that cat for?" growled her neighbor, Seth Winslow, coming in one bright June morning and trying to dislodge the cat by energetically shaking the chair. "I never come in this house but that cat is in this chair."

"That is Babe's own chair," said Miss Catherine, cheerily. "You have your choice of two others, so why disturb him?"

"But I want this one," he responded gruffly. "I don't believe in pampering animals that way. I don't believe the cat ever goes out doors or does anything but sleep. Come, aren't you going to get out?" he continued, as the cat ciling angrily to the cushion, its back raised in protest, lashing its tail and growling ominously. "Well, if you won't I'll sit down on you," he threatened, turning to plant his spare, bony frame on the beligerent animal.

Miss Catherine's eyes sparkled dangerously. She forgot that Seth Winslow was her landlord and a dangerous man to cross. She had lived for the past fifteen years in that house, and for five of it Babe had occupied that chair, as his mother and grandmother had done before him, as the rest of the time, but as Mr. Winslow deliberately sat himself on the indignant Babe, she cried out angrily that he ought to be ashamed of himself; even as the cat, with a heart-throbbed yawn, accompanied by a violent twisting and squirming, freed himself from the weight upon him, but not before he had bestowed a terrible scratch on one of Mr. Winslow's thinly protected knees. Then he fled under the stove and glared angrily and growled profanely at the intruder.

Mr. Winslow did not swear, but his face took on a deep purple hue, as the blood showed through his summer pants. "It serves you right, remarked Miss Catherine, coldly. "You had no business to sit on my cat. It's a wonder that you did not break his back."

"I wish I had," he said, angrily. "And what's more, I'll kill him, if I ever get a chance."

"You will!" All the softness had gone from Miss Catherine's pretty face. She bent down under the stove which put his white paws gently on her shoulder. "Why would you kill my pet?" she demanded, sternly. "He did nothing but defend himself. I wish he had scratched you ten times deeper than he did."

"We'll see about it," Mr. Winslow picked up his hat and started for the



The "Reaky," a Critical Point in a Fine Country Game
Around the home of H. R. Nixon, Brant Co., Ont., is a spacious and attractive lawn. Mr. Nixon's daughter Laura and a friend, Miss Nettie Saxen, may be here seen making good use of the lawn in a jolly game of croquet.

door. When he reached it he turned around and faced the angry woman, who was stroking the soft yellow fur. "Let me see," he said, with a forced calmness; "I think you have lived on this piece about fifteen years."

"Yes," she returned, crisply. "Well, I am thinking of making a change. The fact is I want to get rid of it; I give you a month's notice, which I think is legal. And furthermore, if I ever catch that critter out of my doorway, I'll kill him. Do you understand?" He banged the screen door after him and stalked down the path, bordered with blooming roses and fragrant with the sweet smell of things growing in Miss Catherine's wonderful flower garden. But she sat down by one of her front windows, with the cat in her arms, and indulged in a flow of angry tears.

For she was very angry. Never before in her placid life of forty years had she been so stirred. Not that she regretted her defense of the cat. Of course, she might have sympathized with him and punished the cat, and so have avoided the trouble, but she

was glad she had not done so. The cat had rights the same as he, and she only wished that the scratch had been deeper than it was. Let him kill Babe if he dared; she would have the law on him if he did. And then thoughts of the law led her to thinking of the one lawyer she knew, John Allen, who lived in West Fenway, a town some five miles from Fenway, where she lived.

Twenty years before Miss Catherine had been a school teacher; a Normal graduate, full of ideas for teaching the young idea the best way to shoot. Her first school had been the grammar department of the West Fenway school, where she had had a very unruly seventh grade. After two years of struggling with it, she resigned abruptly, on account of trouble which, as now, had its beginning in a cat—the maternal ancestor of Babe. Billy Allen was the cause. He was the worst boy in her room. Aside from being mischievous and lazy, he delighted in cruelty to defenseless animals; not malicious cruelty, but in teasing and tormenting, such as tugging cats to dog's tails, pinching and pulling kittens around by their ears, and such little acts of petty meanness, that nearly drove his teacher distracted.

One noon she caught him teasing a little yellow kitten; evidently a gutter stray, that with ragged fur and sore eyes had drifted into the school-

small, unused closet, and turning the key, told him that she would give him plenty of time to do this over his misconduct by himself, and would meet him free when she chose and not before.

The school, awed by her disciplining of Billy, instantly became well-mannered, and the afternoon work progressed smoothly. After the first few moments of violent kicking at the student into silence, and after the session was ended, Miss Catherine had forgotten him. Her work kept her until nearly five. Then, as her mind was out of a social for the evening, she went to her boarding place, with no thought of either the kitten or the boy.

The clock was striking two when she awoke with a start; for her subconsciousness at work had aroused her wary brain with the thought of the prisoner in the closet at school. She sprang from the bed and dressed with lightning speed. The night was dark, with heavy scudding clouds and occasional bursts of rain, but that did not stop her. Leaving the house noiselessly, she hurried, without a lantern, along the dark street to the little town. The few electric lights, however, and there, only made the shadows deeper, but with fear clutching her heart for the boy, she did not think of either the dark or the sound of herself at all, as she hurried to the big, ghostly-looking schoolhouse, which silent as a tomb, loomed before her.

As she turned the key in the lock she was frightened by a man's voice. Out of the gloom of the night appeared a tall young man with a lantern in his hand which he flashed directly in her face. "Miss Mason," he asked harshly. She gasped that she knew her name, as she tried to turn the key in the lock.

She could never remember exactly what followed. She knew that he pushed her aside rudely, unlocked the door and swung it open, before he spoke. Then he demanded that she lead the way to the place where she had imprisoned his brother and left him to die.

With the fear of a tragedy on her soul, she had sped up the shadowy stairs into her own room, and then into the small roomy closet, the man following with heavy tramping feet. Then, as his lantern illumined the room, she caught sight of the boy curled up on the floor and sleeping soundly. And then the reaction was so great that she sank down on a chair in a fit of weeping, which he cut short in a rush of angry words:

"You call yourself a woman," he said, "and yet you let him here to die of fright; it is he should wake up and find himself alone in the dark. I've heard all about it," he stormed in mighty wrath, as she vainly tried to speak. "You have had spite against him, for some damned reason. He has told, at home, how you have always blamed him for what the rest have done. To-night, when he did not come home, we were not alarmed, as he had asked permission to stay all night with one of his friends, and I should not have known anything about this, except by next-est accident."

"Coming in on the midnight train I met the father of his boy friend, and as I had a book Billy wanted, I gave it to Mr. Jones to give to him. He said he had not been at his house at all. Still I wasn't uneasy, but when I reached home and found he hadn't been there, we began to get frightened. I didn't like to scare mother about it, so I went right to his chamber and found that you had locked him in and probably got off and left him. And let me tell you, if he is injured by this experience, you shall suffer for it."

(Continued next week)

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