

A Nutting Party.

(Anna D. Walker, in 'Christian Intelligencer'.)

The party consisted of five people; Freddie and Jamie Wilsey, Larry Irvin, Israel Clarke, and Mr. Wilsey. Yes, there were two more, little five-year-old Jessie Wilsey and Shag, the great St. Bernard dog.

The Wilseys were from Shady Dell farm, and Mr. Wilsey was the grandfather of Freddie, Jamie and Jessie. Israel was the chore boy of the farm; and Larry was a poor boy who had spent the summer with the Wilseys.

The day was crisp and bright—a genuine October day, when we may be sure the nuts are only waiting for our coming. The horses were lively, the children merry, grandpa genial, and Israel just the indispensable person who could drive the team, shake the trees, laugh with the children, and obey Mr. Wilsey's orders. Shag ran with and after the waggon, so glad that he had occasionally to stop and bark just to express himself upon the pleasant subject, a nutting party.

After a most enjoyable ride of eight or nine miles, our party came to the foot of a mountain, and upon the top of this mountain the nuts were to be gathered. The children deemed it a wonderful thing to ride up an ascent of a mile, and they laughed and shouted when the feat was accomplished.

And now they all fell to gathering nuts. Freddie and Jamie, little farmer boys, were very quick in finding the red-brown chestnuts, or the round white walnuts, generally hidden in their green cover till a little force brings them out of it. But Larry made poor work of it, so poor, that to his mortification he discovered that little Jessie's calico bag filled as fast as his own.

Now upon this mountain Mr. Wilsey owned a lot and a log house. The latter had been built for the convenience of the men when they came to look after the cattle which were put out in this rugged place to pasture.

After the hours of the morning had been occupied in gathering nuts the whole party went to the log house. Here they ate their lunch and rested from their rather



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laborious work. And now it was concluded that they would better start for home early, and not try to obtain any more nuts.

Everyone but Larry was satisfied with this decision. But he, poor boy, had so few in his bag that he was ashamed to let the comparison appear between his and the other boys'.

Now what a great pity it is that sin and Satan try to force themselves into even the pleasantest gatherings! They uninvited thrust themselves into the great farm waggon that afternoon and caused Larry to do a wicked deed.

The boy sat in the bottom of the vehicle upon a pile of straw; the bags of nuts lay within his reach, and the thought came to his heart to rob others to increase himself. Larry had not been well taught before coming into the good Wilsey family and without much parley with conscience he yielded to the wrong suggestion. First, he slyly took Jessie's bag and emptied it into his own, and threw the bag

away. Then he as covertly untied that belonging to Jamie and from it took two generous handfuls; purposely leaving the bag loose so it might by accident seem to have slipped the string. Now he drew a sigh of temporary relief, feeling that his quantity of nuts would compare favorably with Harry's and Jamie's.

All went well enough outwardly till home was reached, and then some discoveries were made. Jessie's bag was missing, the string of Jamie's was untied, and the nuts were rolling around the wagon. And when he had gathered up the scattered ones he stoutly declared that his quantity was considerably lessened, and that Larry must have taken some of them, for his bag was much fuller than when they left the woods.

Larry as stoutly insisted in a denial of his guilt. He cried, and with sobs exclaimed that he was a very badly used boy; and it was just because he was poor that the others dared to accuse him.