

TIMOTHY'S QUEST.

BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

SCENE XIV.

A Point of Honor.

TIMOTHY JESSUP RUNS AWAY A SECOND TIME, AND, LIKE OTHER BLESSINGS, BRIGHTENS AS HE TAKES HIS FLIGHT.

It was almost dusk, and Jabe Slocum was struggling with the nightly problem of getting the cow from the pasture without any expenditure of personal effort. Timothy was nowhere to be found, or he would go and be glad to do the trifling service for his kind friend without other remuneration than a cordial "Thank you." Failing Timothy there was always Billy Pennell, who would not go for a "Thank you," being a boy of a sordid and miserly manner of thought, but who would go for a cent and chalk the cent up, which made it a more reasonable charge than would appear to the casual observer. So Jabe lighted his corn-cob pipe, and extended himself under a willow-tree beside the pond, singing in a cheerful fashion,—

"Tremblin' sinner, calm your fears!
Jesus is always ready.
Cease your sin and dry your tears,
Jesus is always ready!"

"And dretful lucky for you he is!" muttered Samantha, who had come to look for Timothy. "Jabe! Jabe! Has Timothy gone for the cow?"

"Dunno. Jest what I was goin' to ask you when I got roun' to it."

"Well, how are you goin' to find out?"

"Find out by seein' the cow if he hez gone, an' by notseein' no cow if he hain't. I'm comf'table either way it turns out. One o' them writin' fellers that was up here summerin' said, 'They also serve who'd ruther stan' n' wait' 'd be a good motto for me, n' he's about right when I've ben hayin'. Look down there at the shiners, ain't they cool? Gorry! I wish I was a fish!"

"If you was you wouldn't wear your fins out, that's certain!"

"Come now, Samantha, don't be hard on a feller after his day's work! Want me to git up n' blow the horn for the boy?"

"No, thank you," answered Samantha cuttingly. "I wouldn't ask you to spend your precious breath for fear you'd be too lazy to draw it in agin. When I want to get anything done I can gen'ally spunk up sprawl enough to do it myself, thanks be!"

"Wall now, Samantha, you cheat the men-folk out of a heap o' pleasure bein' so all-fired independent, did ye know it?"

"Tremblin' sinner, calm your fears!
Jesus is always ready."

"When'd you see him last?"

"I hain't seen him sence 'bout noon-time. Warn't he in to supper?"

"No. We thought he was off with you. Well, I guess he's gone for the cow, but I should think he'd be hungry. It's kind o' queer."

Miss Vilda was seated at the open window in the kitchen, and Lady Gay was enthroned in her lap, sleepy, affectionate, tractable, adorable.

"How would you like to live here at the White Farm, deary?" asked Miss Vilda.

"O, yet. I yike to live here if Timfy doin' to live here too. I yike oo, I yike Samfy, I yike Dabe, I yike white tat n' white tow n' white bossy n' my boofely dusses n' my boofely dolly n' er day hen n' I yikes evelybuddy!"

"But you'd stay here like a nice little girl if Timothy had to go away, wouldn't you?"

"No, I won't tay like nite ittle dirl if Timfy do 'way. If Timfy do 'way, I do too. It's Timfy's dirl."

"But you are too little to go away with Timothy."

"Ven I ky and keam an kick an hold my bwef—I s'ow you how!"

"No, you needn't show me how," said Vilda hastily. "Who do you love best, deary, Samantha or me?"

"I yuv Timfy bet. Lemme twy rit-man-poor-man-bedder-man-fief on your buckalins, pease."

"Then you'll stay here and be my little girl, will you?"

"Yet, I tay here an' be Timfy's ittle dirl. Now oo p'ay by your own seff ittle while,

Mit Vildy, pease, coz I dot to det down an find Samfy an' put my dolly to bed coz she's defful seepy."

"It's half past eight," said Samantha coming into the kitchen, "and Timothy ain't nowhere to be found, and Jabe hain't seen him sence noon-time."

"You needn't be scared for fear you've lost your bargain," remarked Miss Vilda sarcastically. "There ain't so many places open to the boy that he'll turn his back on this one, I guess!"

Yet, though the days of chivalry were over, that was precisely what Timothy Jessup had done.

Wilkin's wood was a quiet stretch of timber land that lay along the banks of Pleasant River; and though the natives (for the most part) never noticed but that it was paved with asphalt and roofed in with oilcloth, yet it was, nevertheless, the most tranquil bit of loveliness in all the country round. For there the river twisted and turned and sparkled in the sun, and "bent itself in graceful courtesies of farewell" to the hills it was leaving; and kissed the velvet meadows that stooped to drink from its brimming cup; and lapped the trees gently, as they hung over its crystal mirrors the better to see their own fresh beauty. And here it wound "about and in and out," laughing in the morning sunlight, to think of the tiny streamlet out of which it grew; paling and shimmering at evening when it held the stars and moonbeams in its bosom; and trembling in the night wind to think of the great unknown sea into whose arms it was hurrying.

Here was a quiet pool where the rushes bent to the breeze and the quail dipped her wing; and there a winding path where the cattle came down to the edge, and having looked upon the scene and found it all very good, dipped their sleek heads to drink and drink and drink of the river's nectar. Here the first pink mayflowers pushed their sweet heads through the reluctant earth, and waxen Indian pipes grew in the moist places, and yellow violets hid themselves beneath their modest leaves.

And here sat Timothy, with all his heart in his eyes, bidding good-by to all this soft and tender loveliness. And there, by his side, faithful unto death (but very much in hopes of something better), sat Rags, and thought it a fine enough prospect, but one that could be beaten at all points by a bit of shed-view he knew of,—a superincumbent hash-pan, an empty milk-dish, and an emaciated white cat flying round a corner! The remembrance of these past joys brought the tears to his eyes, but he forbore to let them flow lest he should add to the griefs of his little master, which, for aught he knew, might be as heavy as his own.

Timothy was comporting himself, at this trying crisis, neither as a hero nor as a martyr. There is no need of exaggerating his virtues. Enough to say, not that he was a hero, but that he had in him the stuff out of which heroes are made. Win his heart and fire his imagination, and there is no splendid deed of which the little hero would not have been capable. But that he knew precisely what he was leaving behind, or what he was going forth to meet, would be saying too much. One thing he did know: that Miss Vilda had said distinctly that two was one too many, and that he was the objectionable unit referred to. And in addition to this he had more than once heard that very day that nobody in Pleasant River wanted him, but that there would be plenty of homes open to Gay if he were safely out of the way. A little allusion to a Home, which he caught when he was just bringing in a four-leaved clover to show to Samantha, completed the stock of ideas from which he reasoned. He was very clear on one point, and that was that he would never be taken alive and put in a Home with a capital H. He respected Homes, he approved of them, for other boys, but personally they were unpleasant to him, and he had no intention of dwelling in one if he could help it. The situation did not appear utterly hopeless in his eyes. He had his original dollar and eighty-five cents in money; Rags and he had supped like kings off wild blackberries and hard gingerbread; and, more than all, he was young and mercifully blind to all but the immediate present. Yet even in taking the most commonplace possible view of his character it would be folly to affirm that he was anything but unhappy. His soul was not sustained by the consciousness

of having done a self-forgetting and manly act, for he was not old enough to have such a consciousness, which is something the good God gives us a little later on, to help us over some of the hard places.

"Nobody wants me! Nobody wants me!" he sighed, as he lay down under the trees. "Nobody ever did want me,—I wonder why! And everybody loves my darling Gay and wants to keep her, and I don't wonder about that. But, oh, if I only belonged to somebody! (Cuddle up close, little Ragsy; we've got nobody but just each other, and you can put your head into the other pocket that hasn't got the gingerbread in it, if you please!) If I only was like that little butcher's boy that he lets ride on the seat with him, and holds the reins when he takes meat into the houses,—or if I only was that freckled-face boy with the straw hat that lives on the way to the store! His mother keeps coming out to the gate on purpose to kiss him. Or if I was Billy Pennell! He's had three mothers and two fathers in three years, Jabe says. Jabe likes me, I think, but he can't have me live at his house, because his mother is the kind that needs plenty of room, he says,—and Samantha has no house. But I did what I tried to do. I got away from Minerva Court and found a lovely place for Gay to live, with two mothers instead of one; and maybe they'll tell her about me when she grows bigger, and then she'll know I didn't want to run away from her, but whether they tell her or not, she's only a little baby, and boys must always take care of girls; that's what my dream-mother whispers to me in the night,—and that's... what... I'm always..."

Come! gentle sleep, and take this friendless little knight-errant in thy kind arms! Bear him across the rainbow bridge, and lull him to rest with the soft splash of waves and sighing of branches! Cover him with thy mantle of dreams, sweet goddess, and give him in sleep what he hath never had in waking!

Meanwhile a more dramatic scene was being enacted at the White Farm. It was nine o'clock, and Samantha had gone from

pond to garden, shed to barn, and gate to dairy, a dozen times, but there was no sign of Timothy. Gay had refused to be undressed till "Timfy" appeared on the premises, but had fallen asleep in spite of the most valiant resolution, and was borne upstairs by Samantha, who made her ready for bed without waking her.

(To be Continued.)

"YOUNG MAN, YOU WILL DO."

A young man was recently graduated from a scientific school. His home had been a religious one. He had been a member of a Christian church; had pious parents, brothers and sisters; his family was one in Christ.

On graduating he determined upon a Western life among the mines. Full of courage and hope, he started out on his long journey to strike out for himself in a new world.

The home prayers followed him. As he went he fell into company with older men. They liked him for his frank manners and his manly independence. As they journeyed together they stopped for a Sabbath in a border town. On the morning of the Sabbath one of his fellow-travellers said to him:—

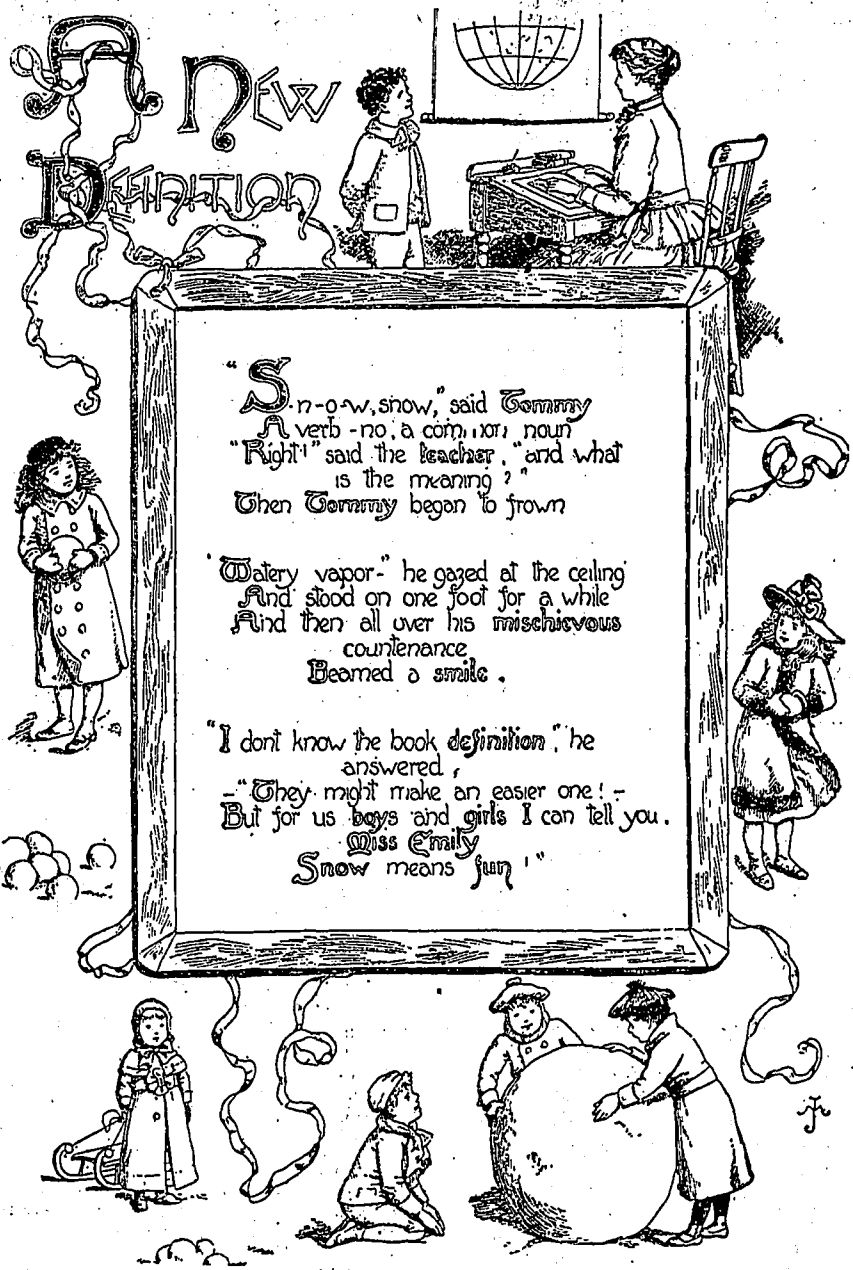
"Come, let us be off for a drive and see the sights."

"No," said the young man, "I am going to church. I have been brought up to keep the Sabbath, and I have promised my mother to keep on in that way."

His road acquaintance looked at him for a moment, and then, slapping him on the shoulder, said:—

"Right, my boy! I began in that way. I wish I had kept on. Young man, you will do. Stick to your bringing up and your mother's words, and you will win."

The boy went to church, all honor to him, in that far-away place and among such men. His companions had their drive, but the boy gained their confidence and won their respect by his manly avowal of sacred obligations. Already success is smiling upon the young man. There is no lack of places for him.—Mid-Continent.



"S-n-o-w, snow," said Tommy
A verb - no, a coin, nor, noun
"Right," said the teacher, "and what
is the meaning?"
Then Tommy began to frown
"Watery vapor," he gazed at the ceiling
And stood on one foot for a while
And then all over his mischievous
countenance
Beamed a smile.
"I don't know the book definition," he
answered,
"They might make an easier one!" -
But for us boys and girls I can tell you.
Miss Emily
Snow means fun!"