

## The Rockwood Review

"If this doesn't beat everything!" the woman said, and gazed at him.

Jimmie gasped for breath.

"Well, look here," said the woman—and in a labored way she suddenly removed suspicion from her voice—"I wouldn't like to go for to disoblige your mother. Just you come in and set down in the kitchen a bit, and I'll step round and borry one from my friend Mrs Andrews. Unfortunately all mine are broken."

But Jimmie recognized the suspicion.

"She'll go for the police," he thought wildly; and wrenching himself free from the hand she had just put on his shoulder, he rushed madly down the steps and into the road again.

He durst not, however, report himself a failure to the redoubtable Billy. When he had run breathlessly half a dozen streets away from the woman he feared, he came across a little girl, about the age of his own youngest sister, playing in a tiny garden. On the window-sill of the cottage actually stood the desired article—a small basin—placed there presumably for the milkman.

"Hi," said Jimmie, in the insinuating manner that always proved too much for the little sister at home—"look! What's this?" He displayed one of the green apples.

The little one put out an eager hand for it. Jimmie drew it back.

"You lend boy pretty basin, then he give you," he said.

The child trotted off for the basin, gave it to him, and again held out her hand for the apple.

Jimmie thrust one upon her and darted off thankfully with his piece of crockery.

But before he had gone more than a hundred yards compunction seized him. Little Baby at home was never given green apples. It had been impressed upon him always by his mother and Allie and Hannah that a single bite of green fruit might mean a sudden and terrible death for the sweet little girl. What if that other child were to die from eating his gift? There seemed no mother about to object. He put his basin beneath a bush and hastened back.

"Hi!" he said.

The little girl was munching happily.

"Hi, nasty! Make you ill!" he said, snatching at the remains of the delicacy.

The little girl went red in the face, stiff in the back. She opened her mouth wider, wider, and finally there issued from it the wildest of agonized shrieks. Jimmie turned round and incontinently fled. Then he heard feet behind him, swift feet that gained on him, caught him up. He turned desperately and faced a large, rough girl of about fourteen, who had, in fact, been asked to keep an eye on the child in its mother's absence.

The boy was no match for her. She did not fight him and give a chance to stand up to her; she simply showered blows upon him, boxed his ears till he reeled with giddiness, banged him about, shook him by the collar of his jacket.

"Teach you to steal from a baby again!" was her parting salutation.

Jimmie went on his way, sadder and wiser, picking up the basin as he passed.

(To be continued.)