

THE LITTLE CLIMBERS.

A PARABLE FOR YOUNGER READERS.

Once upon a time the house-mother went into her garden on a bright morning. She stepped by a tiny plot of ground by her latticed porch and looked down. What did she spy but two or three morning-glory vines, struggling into the light through the moist earth.

"Why, here are some of my dear little climbers on this side of the porch where I did not expect to have any!" she cried out, as if very glad to see them, whether they were expected or not. The house-mother called all her vines "climbers," and said she loved climbers better than anything because they went up and up.

"Well, well!" she said again. "I will have to put some strings here for these stray vines. But I will only put two, for that will surely do."

So she put up the strings in plenty of time for the little curling fingers of the vines to wind themselves around. This they presently did, and went up, and up, and spread out more fingers, and shook out a quantity of green leaves and made a fine appearance.

But behold! after these two or three close by the strings had gotten a good start, up came other vines, more and more of them, a most astonishing number, and they must needs go up the lattice too. There was plenty of support for twenty vines to thread themselves in and out of the lattice, and hang out pink and purple bells of beauty, but how could the little new vines reach it! For it was a long way from the ground to the lattice above the high porch floor. There wasn't an inch of string to be seen now; the earlier vines had wrapped themselves around it.

But the little climbers must go up somehow, and they straggled and crawled along till they reached the vines that had gone up before them. Here they lifted up their wee, curling fingers as if they begged to be helped up.

Now the thrifty vines that had gone up first, soon felt the newcomers clutching at their green skirts, and they said to each other,—"in leaf-whispers you know, of course, "Why, here are some climbers with nothing to climb on. We have something to hold fast to, and we must help them up while they are so little, down there on the ground."

And so they did, these vines that had used up all the string and had a place to hold on themselves, till they reached the lattice. They reached down and took hold of the little fingers and lifted them up. They could give them no more string, but they could give them a chance to lean on their strong stalks that had run up first, and before very long the newcomers had reached the lattice too, and could take care of themselves, which they proceeded to do, and spread themselves wonderfully, ringing their beautiful bells in a sweet good morning chime to the house-mother when she opened the door and looked at them lovingly, when first she came down stairs each day.

Now there were four children in the house, two of a good size and two who were quite small. One

day the house-mother found them all four in very bad humor, the older ones refusing to show the younger ones anything about a new game they had, which was very improving, they said, as well as very amusing, but the little ones must just keep away.

When the house-mother heard about this and some other grievances, she took the four to the place where the climbers had gone up and up.

"Let me read you a little story-lesson, a little parable, here, children," she said. "I only put two strings down for the first vines, but when the others came, they ran up on the first ones, holding fast to them, and the stronger vines helped the younger ones, and made a way for them to reach a place where they could hold on by themselves. Now you older children ought to do for the little ones what the first vines did for the later ones. You have had a chance to be taught first, and to learn a great deal. You are strong, and you should lend a hand. The little ones lean on you, and you should let them, then you will all grow sweet and beautiful together. Don't give the little climbers a push, but give them a hand and help them up along with you. They will be happier and you will be better.

Although the medicine business should, above all, be carried on with the utmost conscientiousness and sense of responsibility, the unfortunate fact is that in no other is there so much humbug and deception. The anxieties of the sick and their relatives are traded upon in the most shameful manner; impossible cures are promised; many preparations are absolutely worthless, and some are positively dangerous to health.

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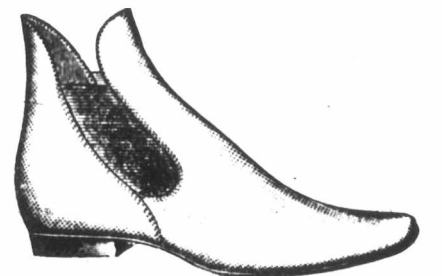
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