

The Ballad of Tannhauser.

BY JOHN T. NAPIER.

*Oh, sweet is the blue of the summer sky
And sweet is the whisper of the
And sweet is the earth to a soul escaped
From the treacherous joys of hell,
A cool breeze kisses his burning brow,
And plays with his tangled hair,
And again in his burdened heart there stir
The words of a holy prayer!*

To the little church by the Venus Hill
Tannhauser, weary, came;
And in the ears of the awe-struck priest
He poured his tale of shame:
How in despite of the grace of our Lord
He had sold his soul to ill. [dwelt
And for seven long years with fiends had
Within the Venus Hill.

And his eyes were hollow, his cheek was thin,
As he knelt his tale to tell,
And still in his sunken orbs there gleamed
An ember lit of hell.
But the trembling priest in silence heard,
And looked in the passionate face,
As it made confession of sin and prayed,
For the words of pardoning grace.

The tale was told, yet the words came not
To answer his eager prayer; [filled,
For the old priest's eyes with doubt were
And his face was seamed with care:—
Till in horror he spake: "Go forth, my son,
Nor wait for words of mine;
God gives no message of pardon or peace
For a guilt so great as thine."

Forth from the church Tannhauser went,
And he wandered a year and a day;
And ever his tale to God's priests he told,
And ever he went away
Without the words of absolving power,
Without a message of hope; [Rome
Till the weary wanderings brought him to
And our Holy Father, the Pope.

In the ears of the Vicar of Christ he told
The tale of his guilt and shame;
And he prayed for the words of pardon, spoke
In Christ's most holy Name.
But Urban, with horror and loathing, cried:
"As soon will this staff of mine
Bear blossoms and fruit, as God will cleanse
To whiteness a sin like thine."

So Tannhauser bitterly turned away,
Rejected of aught but ill; [again,
And he hastened, unshriven, to the fiends
Who dwell in the Venus Hill.
But three days after he went to Rome
The Pope's staff blossomed again,
And Urban learned, too late, to grant
What the pilgrim had sought in vain.

*O ye who are set the message to bear
Of our dear Lord's pardoning grace,
Who lift at His altar holy hands
For His people in every place,
Let not your harshness or doubt offend
The sinner for whom He died,
But know that the blackest sin grows white
In the blood of the Crucified!*

*How crimson soever the stain of guilt,
How shameful soever the sin,
Shut not the gate on the penitent
When he faint would enter in.
For the rock may bud, and the dry bones live,
And the midnight be the clearest day,
But our Lord's sweet mercy will never turn
A seeking soul away.*

Florence Nightingale.

WHEN the celebrated philanthropist, Florence Nightingale, was a little girl and living in Derbyshire, England, everybody was struck with her thoughtfulness for people and animals. She even made friends with the shy equines. When persons were ill she would help nurse them, saying nice things from her own meals for them.

There lived near the village an old shepherd named Roger, who had a favourite sheep-dog named Cap. This dog was the old man's only companion, and helped in looking after the flock by day and kept him company at night. Cap was a very sensible dog, and kept the sheep in such good order that he saved his master a deal of trouble.

One day Florence was riding out with a friend and saw the shepherd giving the sheep their night-feed; but

Cap was not there, and the sheep know it, for they were scampering about in all directions. Florence and her friend stopped to ask Roger why he was so sad and what had become of his dog.

"Oh!" he replied, "Cap will never be of any more use to me; I'll have to hang him, poor fellow, as soon as I go home to-night."

"Hang him!" said Florence. "O Roger! how wicked of you. What has dear old Cap done?"

"He has done nothing," replied Roger; "but he will never be of any more use to me, and I cannot afford to keep him. One of the mischievous schoolboys threw a stone at him yesterday and broke one of his legs." And the old shepherd wiped away the tears which filled his eyes. "Poor Cap!" he said, "he was as knowing as a human being."

"But are you sure his leg is broken?" asked Florence.

"Oh! yes, miss, it is broken, sure enough; he has not put his foot to the ground since."

Then Florence and her friend rode on.

"We will go and see poor Cap," said the gentleman. "I don't believe the leg is really broken. It would take a big stone and a hard blow to break the leg of a great dog like Cap."

"Oh! if you could but cure him, how glad Roger would be!" exclaimed Florence.

When they got to the cottage the poor dog lay there on the bare brick floor, his hair dishevelled and his eyes sparkling with anger at the intruders. But when the little girl called him "poor Cap" he grew pacified and began to wag his short tail; then he crept from under the table and lay down at her feet. She took hold of one of his paws patted his rough head, and talked to him whilst the gentleman examined the injured leg. It was badly swollen, and hurt him very much to have it examined; but the dog knew it was meant kindly, and, though he moaned and winced with pain, he licked the hands that were hurting him.

"It's only a bad bruise; no bones are broken," said the gentleman at length; "rest is all Cap needs; he will soon be well again."

"I am so glad!" exclaimed Florence. "But can we do nothing for him? He seems in such pain!"

"Plenty of hot water to foment the part would both ease and help to cure him."

"Well, then," said the little girl, "I will foment poor Cap's leg."

Florence lighted the fire, tore up an old flannel petticoat into strips, which she wrung out in hot water and laid on the poor dog's bruise. It was not long before he began to feel the benefit of the application, and to show his gratitude in looks and wagging his tail. On their way home they met the old shepherd coming slowly along with a piece of rope in his hands.

"O Roger!" cried Florence, "you are not to hang poor old Cap. We have found that his leg is not broken after all."

"No, he will serve you yet," said the gentleman.

"Well, I am most glad to hear it," said the old man; "and many thanks to you for going to see him."

The next morning Florence was up early to bathe Cap. On visiting the dog she found the swelling much gone

down. She bathed it again, and Cap was as grateful as before.

Two or three days later when Florence and her friend were riding together they came up to Roger and his sheep. Cap was there, too, watching the sheep. When he heard the voice of the little girl his tail wagged and his eyes sparkled.

"Do look at the dog, miss," said the shepherd, "he's so pleased to hear your voice. But for you I would have hanged the best dog I ever had in my life."

"This is quite a true story. It happened many years ago, and is now told with pleasure of that lady who, in later years, grew up to be the kind, brave woman who nursed so many soldiers through the Crimean war, and has done so many other things for the poor and suffering wherever she could. —*Temperance Advocate.*

The Pail with a "B" on It.

"Don't the sap run nicely, papa?"
"Yes; I never saw it run better, Benny."

"Could I have a tree, papa?"
"Yes, if you want it."

"And a pail to catch sap in?"
"Yes."

"And then may I boil it, and have the syrup as mine?"
"Yes."

"And then may I have the money when I sell it, and give it to our Sunday-school?"
"Certainly."

"Oh-h-h!"

Such a prospect of happiness, wealth, and benevolence was certainly worth a pretty big "Oh!" The spring sun winked and flashed among the tall, gray trunks of the sugar orchard, and seemed to be in a happy frame of mind. But its ecstasy did not begin to compare with that of the small-legged Benny capering around clapping his hands and making his mouth into a good-sized "Oh!"

"Here is your pail, Benny; and you may commence this morning."

"May I?"
"Yes. And see: to tell your pail, I will put a B, a big B, on it."

So Farmer White took a nail from his pocket, and scratched a B on the bottom of the pail.

"There! now you will know just what is yours."

"Thank you, papa, very much." And Benny commenced capering over the ground again.

All day Benny was busy carrying maple-sap from his tree to the kettle on the fire—a kettle that was to boil his sap. Toward night he saw one of his father's pails hung at a tree, and how he wished he could have it! He could put his pail there instead, and carry the sap he found to his kettle. The pails were all alike, and who would know the difference? The little fellow stood debating the question.

Can't you seem to see him, swinging his empty pail in his hand, the tall maples overhead, the sinking sun making a great splendour in the western sky?

Benny, run! Run from that temptation! Run as fast as those small legs will carry you!

No; he stood and thought it over. Suddenly he thought he heard some one whistling as they neared the sugar-orchard. He seized his father's pail, with its nice, clear sap, left his own behind, and ran off for the fire where

hung his sap-kettle. Benny, if you will only say "Oh!" now—a very mournful as well as a big one!

That night Benny could not sleep very easily. "What is the matter with my bed?" he thought. "I can't rest." At last he had a dream. He thought he was carrying sap, and carrying it in his father's pail. The pail was very full. He thought that as a punishment for his sin he must carry it a great way.

"Where are you going?" said Billy Brown, whom Benny seemed to meet.

"Don't know, Billy."

"What are you doing?"

"Carrying this pail."

"Is it heavy?"

"Fearful."

Here Benny thought he wished Billy would lift his pail, and he would run and leave it with him.

"Here, here!" a voice seemed to say. "Up to your old tricks! Want to run away again? You did enough running in the orchard. Take up that pail and carry it. Start! Don't stop."

Oh, dear! He carried it and carried it and carried it. He took it over hills, and through swamps, and across big meadows, but he could never seem to find the kettle or the fire where he could empty his pail. So tired!

He was so tired that he began to cry—and awoke.

"Why, Benny, what is the matter? I heard you sobbing, and hurried in."

It was his dear papa. It was morning, and the sunlight was coming through the windows—a big gush of gold, all at once.

"O papa, do forgive me! I am so sorry I took your sap-pail. I have had such a dream! Do forgive me!"

Then Benny confessed all his sin, and told his dream.

"I am sorry, Benny, you did it. Papa will forgive you, but you have made him feel very badly."

"You? you, papa? How did you know it?"

"I took up the pail you left last night in the place of mine, and I saw the B on the bottom of it; then I knew my little boy was a thief. How I did feel about it!"

Benny began to cry again.

"I didn't think there was a mark to tell about me. I forgot about the B."

"Yes; every sin leaves a mark behind—a big B. Don't forget it. God sees the B at once; He may make men see it, and the whole thing come out before the world."

"I am sorry, papa. I will never do it again. I won't take the latest thing again."

Benny felt his sin, and felt it keenly. I do not think he will take anything again. If he should live to be as old as Granny Bright,—white-haired and bent, and ninety years old, and all that time have nothing but an old, rusty, dented pail that held only a spoonful, he would not take the pail of another.

If tempted, I am sure he will think of that big B on the bottom of his sap-pail.—*The Child's World.*

NOT long back an Irishman was summoned before a bench of county magistrates for being drunk and disorderly. "Do you know what brought you here?" asked the chairman. "Faix, your honor, two policemen," replied the prisoner. "Had not drink something to do with it?" said the J.P., frowning. "Sortinly," answered Paddy, unabashed, "they were both drunk."