

## ❁ ❁ The Story Page ❁ ❁

### The Word of a Boy.

"What do you know about him, anyway?" asked Alfred Grierson, sharply.

"Not much, only he thinks a lot of his word," answered Charley, timidly.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, if he says he'll do a thing, he'll stick to it. His word is enough."

The questioner turned aside with a profound whistle. The boy who had won the approval of Charles Grierson was a newcomer in the school they attended, and more than a year older than Alfred. George Sanborn soon became popular, and Alfred was secretly jealous of his influence. The old Romans were not the only ones who admired great physical strength, and Sanborn was tall for his age, well built, and with muscles finely developed. His widowed mother was too poor, and too prudent to pamper him, but plenty of open-air exercise on hillside and river, frequent plunges, and good, wholesome food, were combining to build up an early, vigorous manhood, which was good to behold. Almost immediately on entering the school Charley Grierson's somewhat diminutive figure and delicate appearance had appealed to him as weakness always should appeal to strength.

"Hello," he said one day during play hour, passing a corner where he had seen Charley a short time before pouring over a volume profusely illustrated. The little fellow was now sitting with hands idly folded and a drooping lip, but no book. "Have you finished reading?"

"I had to give up my book," was the spiritless answer.

"Were you reading it?"

"Of course I was, and just in the finest part, where the bear—"

"Who's got it?"

"Murray."

"Never mind, old chap," said Sanborn, heartily; "another bear has got into the school; he must be tamed a bit. You shall have your book."

Charley never inquired by what means this desirable end was attained. He only knew that in ten minutes the book lay in his lap, and he was pursuing the bear through its pages. It was this incident which made the new boy a hero in Charley Grierson's eyes.

There are heroes in humdrum, everyday life, in humble homes, performing common tasks faithfully and unselfishly. They are in training, and perhaps some day hearts will be stirred by the account of some brave deed which brings one after another to the world's notice.

"What would I do without him?" said Mrs. Sanborn, stopping one moment in the porch to watch the active figure of her lad as he sped to the village on an errand. "He promised his father he'd be a help to me, and he never once broke his word."

The next morning as the gate to the school yard was about to open, a group of boys were seen talking excitedly.

"My father says I may bring three of you fellows along," exclaimed one, in a high tone. "You, Grierson, and Murray and Sanborn. We have a two-seat sleigh and a pair of horses."

Sanborn caught his cap and tossed it into the air with a wild "Hoorah!" but as it descended his face clouded.

"It is too bad," he said. "I hate myself for saying that, but it is too bad. I must go home directly after school this afternoon."

"Who said so?" asked the others.

"I did."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Alfred Grierson.

A flush rose to young Sanborn's face, but he answered steadily.

"I promised mother before I came away. I gave my word and I'll stick to it. It is something that can't be put off, or you know I would try all I could; I'm up to fun as well as any of you. Now, don't let it be harder, but do something for me, to make up. Will you take young Charley Grierson in my place? I can't tell how obliged I am to you and your father for asking me," he concluded, turning to the lad who had invited him. "It was real good of you."

There was a straightforward manliness in this that was catching, and the boy he addressed cried out: "Charley shall go," and Murray echoed: "Charley shall go," and even Alfred struck in.

So Charley went, and rubbed his little hands in glee, and laughed and shouted, while George Sanborn was ten times more his hero than ever before.

But previous to this, just as the gate swung open, George almost knocked against a gentleman who had come up unperceived and overheard the conversation. With a friendly nod, he said in passing: "That's right, my boy; stick to your mother. You never had, never will have a better friend."

Mrs. Sanborn had business in a town about five miles distant that afternoon, and her son was to drive her in a sleigh, a very shabby affair. At first the idea was agree-

able, and he thought little of the turnout. Now, however, as he contrasted it in his mind with a certain double sleigh he had seen, with a fur rug thrown over the back and another drawn up in front to keep the feet warm, while a pair of dashing horses proudly tossed their necks and set the bells a jingling, he was conscious of a glow of shame. He hated himself for the poor pride, but it had been there, and left a sore spot, as if scorched by fire.

But this was only the beginning of the humiliation. Returning home, some hours later, a sleigh swept past, going in the same direction, the bells and glad young voices mingling in merry music. Sanborn's schoolmates shouted their recognition; only one failed in a fraternal greeting. As the gentleman in charge of the party turned to look at the object of their salutation, his eyes roamed over the homely figure of the mother, the poor, shabby vehicle and the heavy horse, with a sort of comprehensive pity. Alfred Grierson, catching that look, was ashamed to shout.

"Never mind, there will come a time when they won't be ashamed to know me," George muttered to himself. "Money means influence, and influence and money mean labor. The road doesn't lie before me as clear as this I'm driving on now, but I'll learn all I can, and it will come to me or I shall come to it."

And it did, sooner than he thought. Mr. Grierson kept his eye on the lad, and at the close of the school term offered young Sanborn a place in his office.

"I want him there," he explained to his mother, "because I can depend on his word, and if he is what I think, he will get on. He shall have leisure and advantages for evening study. And now my wife is coming to see you. If there is anything you would like to have done, let her know."

Mrs. Grierson was a kind-hearted, Christian woman, with tact and judgment. She avoided wounding the widow's feelings and her son's boyish pride, but their home had more refining influences, and Mrs. Sanborn added comforts from that time.

And in after years, when people commented on the prosperity of a certain man of business, he was wont to say:

"It all came of my keeping my word to my mother."  
—New York Observer.

### ❁ ❁ The Rainy Day Club. ❁ ❁

Twenty young ladies in a village received a little note in the same mail. It was as follows:

Dear Friend:—Will you meet the young ladies of our church, at my residence, to-morrow at three p. m., to organize a "Rainy-Day Club?"

Ella White, the writer of the letters, was a very popular young woman, who had just returned from a visit of several weeks to a neighboring city. Every recipient of the mysterious letter was interested. Those who saw each other before the time of meeting had many questions to ask, which no one could answer. But at the hour appointed every girl was in her place. They talked about everything else but the one thing that filled every mind, until all were assembled. Then a chorus of voices almost in unison exclaimed:

"Will our old dresses do, or shall we have to get new ones, with a uniform color and pattern?"

Ella smiled mysteriously as she said:

"Let me tell you a story. My cousin in the city, whose guest I have been for several weeks, is an enthusiastic golf-player. She tried to teach me the game, but did not succeed very well. I have to acknowledge I hacked my pretty white ball shamefully, and dug some surprising holes in the green turf, while I was learning. At last I began to be enthusiastic myself, and, if I had stayed long enough, I might have become golf-crazy, too."

"One Saturday we had a merry party appointed for the golf-links. When the day came, it was drizzly, with a raw, cold air, that threatened to spoil our game. We all met at the appointed place for starting, and waited a bit to discuss the question whether or not to go. One jolly, sturdy girl laughingly said:

"I'm not going to be cheated out of my sport by a miserable little drizzle. I am well protected from rain. My mackintosh and rubbers make me independent of the damp, whether it comes from above or below. I move we play in the rain. It will be something new, and splendid fun."

"A hearty shout of approval was the answer. It was declared carried by a unanimous vote. We did not mind the rain a bit, and we had the most enjoyable party of the season. The next day it rained. My cousin said:

"Isn't it too bad to have it rain on Sunday? It is so slow and poky to stay at home all day!"

"Why not go to church on rainy Sundays as well as play golf on a rainy Saturday?" I asked.

"The idea! You can't wear your good clothes to church in the rain. I never think of going when it is wet or stormy. In fact, I never thought much about it—

whether it was right or not. But it doesn't seem just the thing to be able to play golf in the rain, and stay at home from church because it rains. Let's hurry and dress in something that water won't hurt, and go to church. How surprised our pastor will be to have some one in our pew on a rainy Sunday!"

"The congregation was very small. Not a young girl of our crowd was there. The young men we knew were also absent, with one or two exceptions, who were astonished to see us, and congratulated us on our courage. The pastor did not do himself justice. He seemed greatly depressed. He brightened up a bit at the end, and at the close of the service came to us and thanked us for coming out. My cousin felt ashamed when the minister said, with a faint smile:

"It does not rain quite as hard as it did yesterday, but a Sunday rain at church time is always wetter than a Saturday rain on the golf-links."

"Neither of us spoke as we walked home from church. We sat for a while in our room, thinking seriously, but saying nothing. Suddenly my cousin sprang to her feet, and shouted:

"Eureka! I have found it! I will organize a Rainy-Day Club. We will get every young man and woman in the congregation to join, and agree never to miss attending church on a rainy Sunday unless prevented by illness."

"The Rainy-Day Club was organized, and was a great success. Over a hundred young people were pledged to attend church rainy Sundays, and invite others to do so. The largest congregations are on rainy days."

"Now you girls understand what kind of a Rainy-Day Club I wish you to organize. The first Sunday after I came home was a rainy day. Not one of you was at church. The congregation was less than one-fourth the usual number. The choir omitted all their new music. The pastor seemed so heavy-hearted that I thought at one time he would break down. We can change all that if you will help organize the club."

The idea was approved enthusiastically. The girls determined to pledge everybody to secrecy so that they might have a delightful surprise for their pastor. They took the choir into their confidence, and the chorister began to prepare a programme of choice music. They divided the church and congregation into twenty divisions. Each girl took one division, and visited every person, and fully explained the plan. There was not a single objector in the whole parish.

After the organization was completed and the programme arranged, the weather persisted in remaining fair and pleasant. Some of the girls were discouraged. They were afraid the enthusiasm would die out before it could be exhibited. But at last Old Probability predicted a regular cyclone. The fearful velocity of the wind, the terrific rainfall which the forecast announced, frightened the Rainy-Day Club at first. One girl, who had been enthusiastic from the beginning, said a little petulantly:

"We have been praying for rain, but we didn't want a hurricane. It's just the way with you girls; you always over-do the thing. If you had been moderate in your enthusiasm, we might have had a delightful storm, and water not too deep to wade through. Now we are to have a deluge, and how are we to go to church when not half of us can swim?"

Sunday morning dawned, and found the town just in the outer rim of the sweep of the storm. The weather was bad enough to nerve everybody to extra effort, but not bad enough to discourage anybody. Beginning about nine o'clock, a stream of uncouth-looking individuals, with bundles and umbrellas, began to struggle through the wind and rain toward the church. Every girl had a flowering plant. The local florist, who had learned of the plan the night before, sent a dozen of his nicest palms. Nearly every home had co-operated in sending decorations, so that the pretty church was a mass of plants, palms, bouquets and flags. Everybody was on hand early, and quietly seated before the organ began to play the opening voluntary.

As the organ voluntary began, the pastor's study-door opened. He stepped inside the audience-room, and was so astonished that he stood still and looked around. He looked at the crowded church, noticed the beautiful decorations, and then saw by the smiling faces of the people that his surprise only increased their pleasure and delight. One enthusiastic young member of the club clapped her hands. The effect was startling. Everybody joined in the applause, and then gave a snow-white salute by waving their handkerchiefs. The pastor blushed, wiped his eyes, and at last bowed with a beaming smile as he started toward the pulpit. The choir began the service with a stirring anthem that quickened every pulse beat. The first hymn by the people was electrical in its power and fervor. The pastor was so aroused that he outdid himself by the best sermon he had ever preached.

Just as the benediction was pronounced, the hurricane which Old Probability had predicted swept over the village. Such rain as pounded on the roof and against