

HOW THE CAT BUILT A CHURCH.

IT was only a few words in the corner of a newspaper. It read thus: "Last week, the little church, which we built with much toil and self-denial, was burnt to the ground. The insurance is small, we are poor. We were so happy in having made ready a place in which to worship God. Will no one help us to rebuild?" That was all.

Aunt Maria glanced it through, and said to herself, "Yes, I will send them something," and she marked the lines with her pencil. But Aunt Maria was one of the directors of the Orphan Asylum, head of the Industrial School, and secretary of the Auxiliary, so the next day she rolled up the paper and sent it to her nephew in Maine, without thinking again of the burnt church.

"Hurrah!" cried all the little Newgents, "here's a paper from Great-aunt Maria; let's see the puzzles; please read the children's column; what's that marked place?"

Nellie read about the burnt church. "Poor things," cried the little Newgents, "think how we'd feel if our church burnt down! Let's help them."

"Well," said Allan, who always was ready with ideas, "we might speak pieces; I know that one about Spartacus, with gestures. Or we might have a sale, or give a play, or maybe have a circus; Tom can stand on his head first-rate." But the other six heads shook discouragement, and Nellie said, "Mother wouldn't let us do such things to get church money." Then "I have it," cried Allan, the inventive, "molasses candy!"

"Why," cried little Katie, "a *molatheth* church would be *thplendid*, but it would melt away when it rained, if the *vetltrymen* didn't eat it up before."

The children laughed. "We'd make the candy and sell it and send the money, goosie," exclaimed Allan.

"Let's do it," cried all.

Mamma said they might make it in the brick kitchen, which was behind the regular kitchen, and was the children's playroom and treasure-house. So papa built a big fire, and hung the kettle on the old-fashioned crane, and Allan collected pennies, and bought the molasses, and poured it into the kettle. Then seven necks were stretched out, seven noses sniffed, fourteen hands snatched at the spoon, and fourteen feet trod upon one another. It was wonderful that nobody tumbled into the fire.

But that molasses did not seem possessed with the missionary spirit that made the children so eager; it would not boil. In vain they scorched their faces in watching, and lamed their wrists in stirring. At last a few lazy bubbles appeared. "There she blows!" cried

Allan; "bring us a cup of cold water and let's see if she's ready to pull."

She wasn't ready, in the least, and although about a quarter of the molasses was wasted in these tryings that which remained in the kettle seemed in no hurry to harden.

"I'll tell you what," said Allan; "I'm going to run over to the woods and get some foxberry leaves to mix in; they'd improve it ever so much."

"So am I," said Tom.

"Let's draw lots for one to stay and stir," said Nellie.

The lot-fell to Joe. Now, Joe was next to the youngest, and pretty small to leave in charge; but the kitchen was hot and the woods cool, so Joe must stay. "We won't be long," called the others, cheerfully, as they ran off.

Joe sat down on the low stool when he wasn't stirring. Tabitha sat opposite. Tabitha had eaten all the molasses that had fallen to the floor, and that was a good deal. She had a "sweet tooth." She very much approved of the candy-making. Joe stirred manfully, winking his scorched eyes, and rubbing the knuckles that had hit against the hot kettle. He took the spoon in both hands and went round ten times; then "tried" to see if it were ready to pull; then went into the front kitchen to look at the clock. Stir, try, clock; stir, try, clock. It was weary work.

"Oh, hum!" sighed little Joe. "Maybe I'd better help 'em look for those foxberry leaves." He started toward the wood, leaving the molasses to bubble and the cat to watch; but he bethought him of the charge not to let it burn, so ran back and pulled the crane forward till the kettle was directly over the stool.

"There, she can't burn there, and I'll be back soon," he said.

The children rebuked Joe for deserting his post, but concluded to remain a few moments longer. As there didn't happen to be any clock in those woods, they did not realize how fast time was passing till it began to grow dark. Then they hastened home.

What a sight met their eyes! Tabitha was standing on the stool with her head and fore-legs in the kettle. But she was not happy. Far from it. Her paws were stuck fast in the soft candy, and the more she struggled the worse it was. The children had a sad time getting her clean, and of course the candy was spoilt.

"I didn't mean to," sobbed repentant Joe.

"It's just as much our fault as yours," said Nellie. "We'd no business putting all the hard work on you. It's our fault that that poor minister can't rebuild his church."

It was a sad evening for them all; but the next day things looked brighter. "We've begun, and we must do it," said Allan. "I'm going to write that the money's coming, and