

close to Alan's hands. He saw Alan grasp it, and he told him to hold on for a few minutes.

Then he crept gently back on his hands and knees to the bank for another rail, which he took to the hole in the same way. He placed it under his chest as he lay down flat upon the ice, and, reaching out his hands, he helped Alan to lift himself upon the rail which he was grasping.

Pushing the rails before them, in case the ice broke again, they crawled slowly back. The other boys had now recovered from their fright, and, joining hands upon the ice, they came to meet them.

As soon as they could reach the hands of Alan and Charlie, they all ran hand in hand, like a rope of boys, to the bank, and drew them in safety off the ice, just as Mr. Ferguson and some other gentlemen were coming to their help.

They made Alan run all the way home, to restore the circulation of his blood, and to prevent him taking cold. There they put him to bed, and next day he was no worse for his adventure.—'Child's Companion.'

### Penuriousness.

There is hardly one of the unpleasant traits that grows upon a man more insidiously, or fastens itself upon him more firmly, than that of penuriousness. A fine old gentleman, who lived and died in one of the pleasant old towns of Essex County, Massachusetts, once astonished one of his nieces, a widow with a large family, by sending her a sum of money, which was a great help to her, and which it must have cost him a sacrifice to give.

In answer to the grateful letter of thanks which the recipient sent, Uncle Darius wrote, 'I must confess to you that as I grow older I find my natural stinginess increasing. So I make it a rule to force myself to give, until I feel that it is a sacrifice. But, my dear niece, it is not so hard to give to you as it is to some others.'

Of a very different temper was a lawyer who once lived in Northern New York. He had made a fortune, not by his practice at the bar, but by letting out money at usurious rates of interest.

His habits as a money-lender clung to him after he had become a rich man, and had gained a standing in the community. One day a friend, meeting him a few miles from home, borrowed a dollar, which he happened to need. An hour or two after they had returned home, the friend said:

'Mr. —, here is the dollar you kindly lent me. How much shall I pay you for its use?'

'Sixpence will be about right,' was the answer, and from that day he was known as 'Six-penny —.'

A merchant in Calcutta, noted for his great wealth and niggardliness, is the hero of a story illustrative of the power of a mean, covetous disposition.

'Coming out of church one day,' says the author of 'Our New Zealand Cousins,' 'a merry wag, seeing the rupee for the plate ostentatiously held between the finger and thumb of the merchant, and wishing to test him, whispered to him, "I say, S—, can ye lend me a rupee for the plate?"'

"On aye," readily responded S—. Then second thoughts having intervened, he muttered, "It's a' richt! I'll pit it in for ye."

He did so, but the wag, watching him, saw that he only put in one rupee, instead of the two. The next day he sent his servant to receive payment for the rupee which he had pretended to drop into the plate.—'Youth's Companion.'

### A Bit of Brightness.

(Mary J. Porter, in 'Christian Intelligencer.')

It not only rained, but it poured; so the brightness was certainly not in the sky. It was Sunday, too, and that fact, so Phoebe thought, added to the gloominess of the storm. For Phoebe had left behind her the years in which she had been young and strong, and in which she had no need to regard the weather. Now if she went out in the rain she was sure to suffer from rheumatism afterwards, so, of course, a day like this made her a prisoner in the house. Then she had not very much to occupy her. She and her husband, Gardener Jim, lived so simply that it was small matter to prepare and clear away their meals, and, that being attended to, what was there for her to do?

Phoebe had never been much of a scholar, and reading even the coarse-print Bible seemed to try her eyes. Knitting Sunday was not to be thought of, and there was nobody passing by to be watched and criticized. Altogether Phoebe considered it a very dreary day.

As for Gardiner Jim, he had his pipe to comfort him. All the same he heaved a sigh now and then, as if to say, 'O dear! I wish things were not quite so dull.'

In the big house near by lived Jim's employer, Mr. Stevens. There matters were livelier. There were living five healthy, happy children, whose mother scarcely knew the meaning of the word quiet. When it drew near two o'clock in the afternoon they were all of them begging to be allowed to go to Sunday-school.

'You'll let me go, won't you, ma?' cried Jessie, the oldest, and Tommy and Nellie and Johnny and even baby Clara echoed the petition. Mrs. Stevens thought the thing over and decided that Jessie and Tommy might go. For the others, she would have Sunday-school at home.

'Be sure to put on your high rubbers and your water-proofs and take umbrellas.' These were the mother's instructions as the two left the family sitting-room. A few moments after Jessie looked in again. 'Well, you are wrapped up!' exclaimed Mrs. Stevens, 'I don't think the storm can hurt you.' 'Neither do I, ma, and O! I forgot to ask you before, may we just stop at Gardiner Jim's on the way home?'

'Yes, if you'll be careful not to make any trouble for him and Phoebe, and will come home before supper-time.'

Tommy, who was standing behind Jessie in the door-way, suppressed the 'Hurrah!' that rose to his lips. He remembered that it was Sunday and that his mother would not approve of his making a great noise on the holy day.

He and Jessie had quite a hard tramp to the little chapel in which the school was held. The gravelled side-walks were covered with that uncomfortable mixture of snow and water known as slush, which beside being wet was cold and slippery, so that walking was no easy thing. Yet what did that matter after they had reached the school?

Their teachers were there, and so was the superintendent, and so were nearly half of the scholars. There was a wide-awake school, you see, and it did not close on account of the weather.

Each of the girls in Jessie's class was asked to recite a verse that she had chosen through the week.

'To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'

The teacher talked a little about it, and Jessie thought it over on her way to Gardiner Jim's. The result was that she said to her brother:

'Tommy, you know mother said we must not trouble Jim and Phoebe.'

'Yes, I know it, but I don't think we will, do you?'

'No, I'm sure they'll be glad to see us, but I was thinking we might do something to make them very glad. Suppose that while we are in there, I read to them from the Bible, and then we sing to them two or three hymns.'

'What a queer girl you are, Jess! Anybody would think that you were a minister going to hold church in the cottage. But I'm agreed, if you want to; I like singing, anyway. It seems to let off a little of the "go" in a fellow.'

By this time they had reached the cottage, and if they had been a prince and princess—supposing that such titled personages were living in these United States—they could not have had a warmer welcome. Gardiner Jim opened the door in such haste that he scattered the ashes of his pipe over the rag-carpet on the floor. Phoebe, too, contrived to drop her spectacles while she was saying 'How do you do,' and it took at least three minutes to find them again.

At length, however, the surprise being over, the children removed their wraps, Jim re-filled his pipe, and Phoebe settled herself in her chair. But she was slowly revolving in her mind the question whether it would be best to offer her visitors a lunch of cookies or one of apples, when Jessie said:

'Phoebe, would't you like to have me read you a chapter or two?'

'Deed and I would miss, and I'd be that grateful that I couldn't express myself. My eyes, you see, are getting old, and Jim's not much better, and neither of us was ever much of a scholar.'

So Jessie read in her sweet, clear voice the chapters beloved in palace and in cottage, about the holy city New Jerusalem, and about the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal; about the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations; about the place where they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.

'Dear me, dear me!' exclaimed Phoebe, it seems almost like being there, doesn't it? Now I'll have something to think of to-night if I lie awake with the rheumatism.'

'We're going to sing to you, too,' was Tommy's rejoinder.

Then he and Jessie sang 'It's coming, coming nearer, that lovely land unseen,' and 'O, think of the home over there,' and Phoebe's favorite:

In the far better land of glory and light  
The ransomed are singing in garments of white,  
The harpers are harping and all the bright train  
Sing the song of redemption, the Lamb that was slain.'

Jim wiped his eyes as they finished. He and Phoebe had once had a little boy and girl, but both had long, long been in the 'better land.' Yet though he wept it was in gladness, for the reading and singing had seemed to open a window through which he might look into the streets of the heavenly city.

Thus Tommy and Jessie had brought sunshine to the cottage on that rainy Sunday afternoon. They had given the cup of cold water—surely they had their reward.

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