

Janey a worsted bookmark.

Samuel J. Wetherbed cut a beautiful tree for us, taking us all into the woods to pick it out. Then he set it up in the parlor so firmly that it did not shake. He rigged some sockets for candles and helped us string popcorn for decorations and make candy bags. He could sew as well as mother. Samuel J. Wetherbed was the most industrious man I ever saw. He was not idle a minute. He milked and did all the barn chores, he made the fires and drew water and swept the floors and washed the milk pails for me, and all his spare time he was at work upon our Christmas preparations as busily as we were. He found some boards and tools of father's and made some wonderful things with them. There was a nice box, which he showed us how to line with flannel, for mother to keep knives and forks in, a little boat for Charley and a number of other things.

I felt much easier in my mind about the money after Samuel J. Wetherbed came.

We had given Samuel the bedroom out of the kitchen to sleep in. He said he would rather have that, because it was so handy for him to build the fire in the morning, and I did not have the first suspicion that anything was wrong until the night of the day but one before Christmas. I had been sleeping well since Samuel came, through feeling so safe, though I had, as I afterward remembered, often started awake, because I thought I heard a noise, but that night I did not go to sleep as soon as usual. I was very much excited thinking about Christmas and father and mother coming home. Samuel had gone down to the village that morning and got a letter for me from mother in which she said that they were coming home Christmas morning, since Uncle William was well enough to be left. We were all delighted, the more so because we thought that now Samuel could stay and have our Christmas tree with us. He laughed and thanked us when we said so, but in a moment afterward I noticed that he looked very sober, even sad. Well, thinking over everything made me very wide awake, and I guess it must have been as late as 11 o'clock when I was sure I heard somebody down stairs in the sitting room, which was directly under our room. I thought at once that it might be a robber and perhaps I ought to speak to Samuel in case he should not hear the noise. I waited till I heard the noise again very plain and was sure that I knew where it was—some one trying to open the door of the dark bedroom, which stuck and had to be forced down before pulling. The children did not awake, and I made up my mind that I would not speak to them and get them scared to death. I thought that I would go down stairs very softly, steal past the sitting room door and go through the other way to the kitchen and wake up Samuel.

I got up and put on my dress. Then I went down stairs, and I don't believe I made any more noise than a cat. I saw a faint light shining from the dark bedroom, and I knew I had not been mistaken. Then all of a sudden I thought that father and mother might have come home and father be looking to see if the money was safe. I thought I would make sure before I called Samuel.

I went into the sitting room and crept across to the dark bedroom, keeping close to the wall. I peeked in, and there was Samuel rummaging in the

chest where the money was. Then I knew that, however good Samuel might be in other ways, he would take things. It was an awful shock. I wonder why I did not scream and run, but I kept still. I went back up stairs and locked myself into the chamber and sat down on the edge of the bed to think. It did not seem to me that it was of any use for me to stay down stairs and watch Samuel. I did not think he could find out the secret drawer without any help. I could not stop his taking the money if he was determined. Then, too, I reasoned that

children began to cry.

"Now, don't you cry," said Samuel. "I'll go this minute and cut another tree."

So Samuel started off and Charley with him, and then I made Flory and Janey go up stairs. "You two have just got to go up stairs and stay there while I fix a surprise," said I. Surprises were a favorite amusement with us children. Flory and Janey laughed and ran off up stairs in a minute.

I set some molasses on to boil. Then I got the money out of the secret drawer and made six little parcels of it, roll-

came to the foot of the stairs and called me.

I went to my door. My heart was beating so hard it seemed to choke me. "What do you want?" I made out to say as softly as I could, so as not to wake the children.

"Come down here a minute," said Samuel, and I went down to the sitting room. "I want to ask you a question," said Samuel. He tried to smile, but he was very pale and looked as if he was as frightened as I was. I trembled so I could scarcely stand. I was so afraid he would ask me right out.



I PEEKED IN, AND THERE WAS SAMUEL RUMMAGING IN THE CHEST.

If he did not find it that night there would be time enough for me to hide it tomorrow, and father and mother were coming home next day.

I did not sleep any that night. I took off my dress and lay down. Before daybreak I had my plans all made. I tried to treat Samuel just as usual when I saw him in the morning, and I guess I did. After breakfast I carried a pail of water into the parlor as if I were going to water the plants. Then I lighted a match and touched it to one of the candles on the Christmas tree to make it appear as if I had only wanted to see how it would look, and then I touched it to the tree, and it blazed up. I waited until I dared wait no longer, and then I dashed on the water and screamed fire at the top of my lungs. They all came running in, Samuel first. He rushed for more water, and the fire was out in a minute, but the tree was badly singed, and the

ed as snugly as I could and wrapped in letter paper. Then as soon as the molasses was boiled I made popcorn balls. Luckily I had enough corn popped. When I called the girls down stairs, I had two plates of corn balls. The balls in one were of extra size, with strings attached all ready to hang on the tree, and in six of them were hidden the little rolls of money. The balls in the other plate were smaller, and those were to be eaten at once.

When Samuel and Charley came home, I gave them some of the little corn balls, and when Samuel had set up the tree I hung on the others. Then I thought the money was safe, but I wondered all the time what I should do if Samuel should come to me and ask me right out where the money was, for I did not want to tell a lie.

That night we all went up stairs as usual, but I did not go to sleep. It was not very late when I heard Samuel moving about below, and presently he

"Where is the money?" but he did not.

"I only want to ask if your father left some money in the house when he went away," said he, looking away from me as if he were ashamed.

"Yes, he did," said I. I had to or tell a lie.

"Well," said Samuel in a queer, shaking voice, "I would like to borrow that money for a little while. I need some money right away, and as long as your father ain't using it—"

"I would rather you waited and asked father," I said. "I don't think father would like it if I lent his money."

"I will make it right with your father," said Samuel. "Did your father tell you where the money was?"

"Yes, he did," I answered. I had to or tell a lie. I trembled for the next question.

"Where did he tell you it was?" asked Samuel.

"In the chest in the dark bedroom," said I. That was the truth, and it did no harm.

"Whereabouts in the chest?"

"In the secret drawer."

"Oh! So there's a secret drawer. Did your father tell you how to open it?"

I said he did.

"Well, you just come in here and show me how to open it," said Samuel.

I went with Samuel into the dark bedroom and showed him how to open the drawer. I could see nothing else to do. I stood back while he opened it. I wondered if it would be wrong for me to cry out as if I were astonished when he discovered that the money was gone. Then all of a sudden I heard a