

* * The Story age * *

"Little Sweetheart."

"I don't know whose child she is, officer. She's been playing around here for over two hours, and says she is waiting for her mother."

"That's queer. Such a pretty little girl, too. Must be a child of well-to-do parents from the way she is dressed."

The foregoing dialogue took place late yesterday afternoon, at the Arcade depot in this city. The station-master had noticed a little girl of perhaps three years playing about the waiting-room. Her dimpled face, framed in long, golden ringlets, was a picture fit for any artist, and her sunny smile would have won the heart of a pagan.

"I'm waiting for my mamma to tum and det me," was the only answer she vouchsafed when the big policeman stopped and lifted her in his strong arms.

"Thought I'd better speak to you about her," said the station-master, "so in case her mother don't show up before dark."

"I'll attend to her," was the reply; then the officer asked:

"Where's mamma gone, little one? It's getting pretty late. Are you sure she is coming back here after you?"

"I—I—dessa she is tummin back, tause she told me she was. Tan't you find mamma for me, p'ease?"

"We'll wait here for a little while and see if she is coming," and the big policeman carried her inside the waiting-room. "Won't you tell me your name?" he added.

"Jessie."

"Jessie; that's a pretty name. Won't you tell me the rest of it."

"I—I—don't know my uvver name, but mamma talled me 'little sweetheart,'"

"Well, your mamma has got a pretty good name for her little girl," and he drew the little one closer to him as he again asked:

"Do you live in Los Angeles, little sweetheart, or did mamma bring you here today on the cars?"

"We live way, way off," and the little arms both opened to their widest extent. She couldn't tell where; all she could recall was about "papa, an' mamma, an' nurse, an' Fido, an' Snap, an' Uncle Dim."

Question after question was plied in vain. She prattled on about her dollies and "Fido an' Snap" and presently seemed to have forgotten that she was a little waif, alone, seemingly, in a strange place.

"Guess we'll have to give it up," remarked the station-master.

"Looks like it," replied the big policeman. "Probably her mother will call at the station-house for information about her." Then, as the little "unknown" commenced humming a tune to herself, he said:

"Can't you sing me a song, little sweetheart?"

"I tan sing a Sunday-school song mamma learned me. Does you go to Sunday-school?" she asked, turning a pair of big blue eyes up toward the officer's face, and the big policeman blushed as he replied:

"No, little sweetheart; but I have a little girl just about as big as you who goes, and if you will sing me your song, I will tell her all about you."

"Tell me all about your little dirl," she pleaded, forgetting in her interest the promised song.

"Pretty soon, but I'll put you up here where everybody can see," and the officer lifted her on a high truck, while the few people who were waiting for their trains gathered curiously about, and the child, perfectly unconscious of the interest she had created, smiled her approval.

"There you are, little sweetheart," laughed the big policeman, "now sing us your Sunday-school song," and the spitting of hands lent encouragement to the little one, as in a voice as clear and sweet as a bell she sang:

"Thou, that once on mother's knee
Wert a little child like me,
When I wake or go to bed,
Lay thy hand about my head;
Let me feel thee very near,
Jesus Christ, my Saviour dear."

And the baby voice, without a quaver, sang the chorus:

"Keep me, Jesus; this I pray;
Lead me, keep me every day."

There was stillness in the Arcade depot such as has not been heard in many a day. The big policeman did something, too. He removed his helmet, and the station-master also uncovered his head, while every man in the room followed suit, as the little one with the blue, innocent eyes sang the second verse:

"Thou art near me when I pray,
Though thou art so far away,
Thou my little hymn will hear,
Jesus Christ, my Saviour dear;
Thou, that once on mother's knee
Wert a little child like me."

And then she sang the chorus again:

"Keep me, Jesus, this I pray;
Lead me, keep me every day."

More than one handkerchief came out, and a grizzled engineer just from his cab, sooty and begrimed, drew a

rough hand across his eyes and looked toward the clock at the opposite side of the room—to see what time it was.

"Bless the child," exclaimed an old gray-haired lady dressed in deep mourning, as she removed her glasses and wiped her eyes.

"That song makes me think of a little girl I used to have," said a tall man with a sample case in his hand, as he winked hard several times.

"Dat's de kind uv singing dat hits us kind uv fellers," put in a rough, husky specimen as he smiled—actually smiled at the little girl with the blue eyes who had caused such a sensation.

As for the big policeman, he gathered the little waif in his arms, and printed a kiss upon the rosebud mouth.

"Come, little sweetheart, you are going home with me, and mamma will come for you there," he said, as he carried her out of the station.

She was quite contented, evidently, as long as she was sure of going to mamma, and at the First-street station the matron was delighted with the little girl, and when the big policeman recounted the scene in the Arcade depot there was nothing to do but to have it repeated.

It was close to nine o'clock when an excited almost hysterical lady presented herself at the First-street station-house and requested assistance to find her "little lost Jessie."

"Sound asleep in the matron's room," was the reply of the sergeant at the desk.

"I'm tummin' adin to see your little dirl—some time," Jessie announced as she waved a sleepy farewell, and the big policeman went over in a corner and looked at a little stamp photo inside his watch.—Los Angeles Times.

The Truants.

BY ANNIE D. WALKER.

There were several children on the farm, and in the morning they had some studies, a little school life which made them enjoy play the better when playtime came.

One bright morning, when the sunshine and dew made nature gleam and sparkle as if for very joy, Lulu, a girl of twelve, proposed to Larry, a boy of nearly the same age, that they stay out of school and enjoy a holiday.

"We won't be let," answered Larry wistfully, as he gazed over at the green, shady pasture lot and the placid river just beyond it.

"But can't we hide at school-time and have a morning full of fun instead of a morning full of study?" cried Lulu, persuasively.

Larry's face was full of longing and yet troubled. How he did want to spend that lovely morning out of doors, that dewy, sunny morning! But he knew it was wrong. "I would like it," he said, "but it would be bad, wouldn't it?"

"Pooh! Larry, you are a boy of no pluck," returned Lulu; "it wouldn't be wrong at all, only funny." And the girl's voice was full of vehement expression.

Larry's desires and his companion's persuadings prevailed over the clamoring of his conscience, and at length he hesitatingly said, "Well, I'll do it, if possible."

"It's possible enough; we'll just hide in the haymow till Uncle Henry and the boy, Israel, go down in the lot to work and then we'll come out and have fun," exclaimed the daring Lulu.

The two managed to secrete themselves in the mow, but the plan did not further itself according to their desires. The school-bell rang at nine, and just before that time Mr. Henry came out to the barn and bade Israel bring out the carryall and give it a greasing. The truants heard this order with dismay, for they knew that the work would be done in front of the barn, and so they would be kept in hiding till it was finished. Nearly an hour passed by and the children grew weary with waiting; but at length they rejoiced to hear Israel say, "Well, that job is done."

Now they could soon come down, they were sure. But, alas, before the tools were put away, Mr. Henry again appeared and said to the chore boy, "Israel, I intend to go to town after dinner, and, as it is warm, I will spend the morning cleaning and oiling the best harness. Bring me the harness, then run down to the kitchen for a chair, and I'll sit right here in the great barn door to work."

"Now, what can we do?" whispered Larry, "this stuffy old haymow, I can scarcely bear it here!"

"I can't bear it, either; it's horrid mean to be fixed this way! I'd rather be in the school-room!" and by a strong effort Lulu suppressed a cough that might have betrayed them. In a moment she added, "Do be patient, Larry; I hope Uncle Henry will soon be through with the harness!"

Larry, with a reproachful look at his companion, "I didn't want to do this thing, Lulu, and I knew it would be better to go to school."

"You always blame me, Larry, but what can we do? I won't stay here! This horrid old hay is choking me!"

"You'll have to stay here or let Mr. Henry know of

our badness," returned the irritated and perplexed boy.

"I planned for us to have a nice time, and see what it has come to! But I'm not to blame, for I didn't know it would turn out so badly," and Lulu assumed a martyr-like attitude that was very provoking to Larry.

"I hope you will not plan another such time!" he cried. "Your uncle will not be done with that job till noon, and we might as well set letters, tell stories, or do something to amuse ourselves."

"Do keep cool, Larry!" retorted the mischief-maker. "Oh, yes, it's easy to say 'keep cool,' but how am I to do it? Here I am, covered with sweat and with hayseed and nearly choked; keep cool, eh? h'm! And Larry's tone was fiery indeed."

"Just as if you couldn't bear a little discomfort for the sake of a holiday! I'll never plan anything for you again!" And now Lulu was indignant.

"I hope you won't, Lulu. Such planning!" But now the two in a desperate case drew near together and began a whispered game, just to while away the weary time. They did not enjoy it, but it was better than sitting silent or quarreling.

A half hour passed, and then to their dismay they heard Mr. Henry say to Israel, "Here, boy, go up to the haymow and bring me that new bottle of lamp-black. You told me you left it up there in one of the ledges, did you not?"

"Yes, sir!" and Israel commenced the ascent of the ladder.

The truants exchanged frightened glances. Larry whispered, "Here's a fix!" and motioned to Lulu to lie down as quickly as possible. The girl was not slow to obey, and she was at once covered with hay, but before Larry could conceal himself, Israel had reached the mow, and was gazing with astonishment at the guilty boy.

"What in wonder!" cried the farm lad. "Why, Larry, what are you doing here? We thought you were in school!"

"It's—not—very—late, is it?" stammered the culprit, his face as red as scarlet, both from heat of the place and from shame.

"Late! I should think it was! What are you hiding here for, eh?"

At this juncture Lulu was obliged to cough, which led to her discovery.

"Moses!" cried Israel, as he uncovered her from the hay. "Another one?" he added. "Come up here after lamp-black, but found something better! Never did see such red faces in my life!" and the great boy was delighted at the discomfort of the children.

The two uncomfortable, guilty-feeling youngsters begged Israel not to tell of them, but he stoutly said he should tell as soon as he went down, so there was nothing for the pair to do but to descend to the floor and be confronted by Mr. Henry. Down they went—and with shame of face admitted their fault and were taken by Mr. Henry to the school-room. The good governess was bidden to have them study some extra lessons, and they were deprived of the usual afternoon ride. Besides this they were openly disgraced before the family.

Thus the way of transgressors was hard.—Christian Intelligencer.

A Baptist Farmer who Preached to the Queen.

Queen Victoria has listened to thousands of sermons from the most distinguished preachers the Church of England has produced, but she would probably say, if asked which of all the sermons pleased her most, that it was a sermon preached at Windsor Castle by a Nonconformist farmer. Her Majesty has heard few Nonconformist preachers; there is a case on record where the lord chamberlain returned a loyal sermon sent to the queen because it had been preached in a chapel; but Theophilus Smith was a man who testified to the faith that was in him whether his audience were princes or peasants, and when the pious farmer found himself face to face with his queen, the desire to "testify" was so strong that it could not be resisted.

Theophilus came of a sturdy family of Norfolk Baptists, and he found time, in the intervals of farming, to take his share of the work of the little chapel at Attleborough. He had found time, too—and brains—to effect a useful improvement in the plow, and it was his inventive genius which brought him, one day in the summer of 1841, to Windsor Castle. The Earl of Albemarle, at that time master of the horse, had taken a kindly interest in Theophilus and his plow, and it was to the earl that the Norfolk armer was indebted for his opportunity of seeing the queen.

The simple farmer was not versed in the ways of royalty. It was late at night when he reached Windsor, and he made straight for the castle. There was some merriment in the royal household when Theophilus Smith, from Attleborough, asked for a bed, but a kindly

colonel, taking Mr. Smith go to castle in the morning objected to do.

"If you was to find you a bed, if you was as hungry something to eat."

The colonel w his rooms, gave the castle the n

The prince shook hands afterward, "and showed him how much that he called it the 'Albion'."

Then came the had expected a and her gown pictures. But the with a kind lo and farms, and then the c

"By-and-by, friend, 'I beg myself, 'you'r you must testi and 'tworn't le

The "openin' Mr. Smith, clever inventio now quite at h took the plow sermon.

"Well, your had it in my come straight, but I couldn't thowt, an' I t

So at last I m the whole this what you see

"Why, Mr. you pray about The queen I Theophilus w

"Why, then I? My Father about it, and o' one of my bowt him a w

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new—but it v down my boy I wiped his te

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jects such as "Your maj

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The prince Mr. Smith, Then her m suggested th your majest the honest r

And so Theo royal, the m came away, ing off his h the first-bor

Theophilu Attleborough church. H

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