



"THERE'S MANY A SLIP 'TWINX THE CUP AND THE LIP."

[For the MESSENGER.]
THAT PICNIC DAY.

BY GUSSIE M. WATERMAN.

"It's a pretty big cross, to have to stay at home when there's a Sunday-school picnic," Mabel Dunn was saying to sister Lou, as the pair watched the buggies going along past Sim Jaynes's wheat piece; going over to the Graves Farm, where the picnic was to be.

Mrs. Dunn had left out a plate of frosted cakes when she packed her basket, also some bits of chicken and a gooseberry pie; and the little girls meant to have a feast by-and-by when uncle Charles came back from cultivating corn at the south end of the Dunn claim.

"Mine's bigger!" Lou declared, her fat, smooth face wearing a bit of a frown. "Just because I've had the scarlatina, and mother's 'fraid folks'll think I ain't clear rid of it, 'n somebody'll catch it, I have to stay home!"

"You might take cold, and have a collapse, wasn't that what auntie called it?"

"I don't care! I just feel ugly to think of them girls having a lovely time over there, swinging in the barn and eating 'mong the trees, don't you, Mab? 'F I could have stayed alone, you might have gone, 'n told me all about it; but I don't believe mother'll remember every single thing! Course they had to have mother 'n all the women to fix things; but I do wish she could have stayed home too, 't wouldn't have seemed half so bad!"

"Well," said Mabel cheerfully, "it's hard of course; but we must bear it as well as we can. We'll think of poor little Bessie Ames having one good time playing beanbags in the grove. They haven't got one tree on their place, and we've got five!" Mabel looked out complacently on the five shiny cotton-woods, rustling and waving in the July breeze. "And she'll have nice things to eat, 'n so will Hetty and Tommy Grigg. And won't Lola Aiken enjoy wearing her new lawn dress and plaid sash! Oh, my!" Mabel almost cried at thought of Lola's finery, remembering her own blue and white dress hanging in the closet. She had planned so much about this very picnic ever since auntie had finished the dress, and dreamed of the beautiful groves over on the Graves Farm, and the tiny lake, and the splendid peacocks in Mr. Graves' yard. It surely was hard to be obliged to stay at home with Lou. "But Lou couldn't go, anyway," thought Mabel, bravely, "and she couldn't stay alone, either; she'd be running out in her bare head half the time! I'm three years older, so I can take care of her, and I mean to, and I won't wish anything I ought not to!"

So she brought out Eliza Georgina, and Matilda Sophia from their cradle box under the bench lounge, and amused Lou by cutting out wonderful paper bonnets trimmed with chicken feathers in which the dolls took journeys to and fro in the house. Jackets and gowns were made and re-made, and when the girls were tired of such play, Mabel got her paint box and painted huge pansies on the side of the dolls' box. By-and-by, after uncle Charles had eaten dinner with them, and gone out to work again, Lou spied a double buggy away on the road by the school-house.

"It's Mrs. Cramer, 'n she's got old Mrs. Cramer, 'n two other women, an' they've got lots of red lilies! Why, they'll be awful late! They're coming here, Mab." Lou smiled from her window as Mrs. Cramer reined in her horses at the door, and called out to Mabel, "Come, come! neither of you children at the picnic, now that is a shame!"

She sprang nimbly down as Mabel ex-

plained matters, and came in, her face full of kindly sympathy.

"Now, look here! I'll stay here with Lou and you may dress and go with grandma and the ladies. You'll have two or three hours to see the fun and play with your schoolmates. I'm sure your mother won't care!"

Mabel sprang to the closet door and seized the blue and white lawn, then she suddenly stopped and thought hard for a half minute. Then she shut the door, and turned to Mrs. Cramer, speaking very quietly and firmly. "It may be all right, ma'am, but mother gave me the care of Lou till she came home, and I think it'll be surer and safer for me not to go; but I thank you very much for your kindness."

"What a thoughtful little creature you are!" laughed Mrs. Cramer, as she kissed the girls and went out.

Mabel and Lou felt very sober the rest of the day, sometimes wondering if they really should have done as Mrs. Cramer wished; and sometimes trying to "puzzle out" the problem of their not being able to go to the picnic when every one else could go.

What glad little maidens they were when they heard father and mother coming at last! Mabel laid her hand on Mrs. Dunn's shoulder and told her everything.

"Mightn't she have gone, mother?" Lou cried, "'t wouldn't have been wicked, would it?"

"She did right to do just as I told her, dear. I am so glad that I can depend upon you, Mabel. Now for news. There's to be another picnic next week in the very same place, and I think that both of you may go to that one."

"Swings in the barn the same?" cried Lou, "and croquet an' everything?"

"Just the same, games and all," said mother. "Mrs. Perkins is getting up the picnic for some nieces who are coming to visit her. Uncle Charles will take you, and you will have a pleasant day, I hope."

Two little girls danced joyfully over their bedroom floor, when the great yellow moon came up in the clear eastern blue, and Mabel said as she spread out her pretty dress on the big trunk, "Oh, I'm gladder an' gladder that I didn't go this afternoon! Something might have gone wrong an' I'd have been sorry I didn't stick to my task. Stickin' to it's best, Lou, let's always remember that, won't we? And we'll have all the better time next week."

LIBBY PRISON.

It was Wednesday afternoon. The scholars were having a short vacation. Little Naneen had sent a dainty note of invitation to the boys and girls of her acquaintance to come and spend the afternoon with her and stay to tea. This was a great pleasure to her playmates, for Naneen's sweet, unselfish ways and bright happy face made them all love her dearly. Besides all this, it was Naneen who knew so many fine stories and enjoyable games, her stock seeming as unlimited and fresh as if never drawn upon.

The children had passed a busy, happy hour or two indoors, playing quiet house games suggested by the little girl's fertile imagination, when her quick eye discovered that some of the boys began to grow restless. She proposed that they all go out in the yard and play a new game: "Prisoner's base." She said the yard should be divided into two parts, the children into equal companies, each company to have possession of one-half the yard. Each side should have a prison in about the centre of the ground. The game was to run on the

side belonging to the other company, and if caught on that side they were obliged to go to prison, and stay there until rescued by some one of their own company. If one of their own side should run and tag them, while in prison, before being tagged themselves, they were free. The side which caught and kept the most prisoners beat. It was a new game to all the children, and they entered into it with a great relish.

"Let's call it 'Libby Prison!' shouted Harry Snow, who had been studying about that famous Southern prison. So the name forthwith became Libby Prison. The game was very exciting, and Naneen looked and listened almost as excited as the eager players themselves.

"There! you're a prisoner, Harry Snow; I tagged you, and you've got to go to prison."

Harry was tagged and he knew it, but he laughed carelessly and answered.

"Don't be too sure; you might get mistaken, Mollie."

Too deeply in earnest to notice what she did, Mollie quickly crossed the line on the enemy's side to explain and assure Harry that she had captured him. At that moment Tommie Brick, who was on Harry's side, rushed up and tagged Mollie.

"You're a prisoner, Mollie," he cried, gayly; "take her to Libby Prison, Harry."

"But that's not fair; I tagged Harry, and he ought to have gone to prison then," she answered.

Mollie was a good-natured girl, and although she felt as if it wasn't justice under the circumstances, she went rather than quarrel. In the meantime Harry was feeling uncomfortable, as anybody will if they stoop to cheat.

Lillie Mason tagged him, but he had cheated once, and he was excited, and determined his side should beat, so he pretended he didn't think he was caught, and, as there was no one that had noticed, his impetuosity gained the day. The more he cheated the more excited he got, and began to show himself very quarrelsome. Just as matters were getting in a pretty bad state, Grandma Dimon came to the door.

"Harry," said she, "will you take Naneen up a little lunch? I fear she is faint by this time."

Naneen had seen from the window how badly the game was likely to end, and had devised a plan, if possible, to save it from such an unpleasant close. By the time Harry had reached the little girl's room with the tiny tray of toast and a glass of rich milk, he had cooled considerably.

It was always pleasant to wait upon Naneen, and no one ever seemed to be in a hurry to leave the little cripple whatever the attractions might be elsewhere. Naneen welcomed him with a bright smile, and both were soon gazing intently out of the window, following the game with deep interest.

"There! Tommy did tag Lillie!" ejaculated Harry.

It was plain enough that Lillie had been tagged, but she began to discuss quite hotly about it. After considerable delay and not a few angry words Tommy decided to let Lillie off this time. Mollie was rescued, and the tide of battle seemed to turn in favor of Lillie's side. Both children at the window said little, but watched the game closely. Every little subterfuge or attempt at cheating seemed so different to Harry when witnessing it in others. He had been able to tolerate it in himself a few moments before, but now he felt within him the contempt it deserved. Presently, he withdrew from the window.

"I am going down," he said, abruptly.

Naneen read his thoughts, but she only said:

"I wish you would ask Lillie Mason to come and sit with me a few minutes."

Harry went down two steps at a time and soon rejoined the children at their play. Greatly to Naneen's satisfaction she saw him, after a few moments' explanation, take his stand in the prisoner's base, on the other side.

"There is nothing like seeing ourselves as we see others," thought Naneen, shaking her curly head wisely as Lillie entered the room.

By this time, Lillie had witnessed, with increasing disgust, some of the little cheating ways that were occasionally practised by the excited boys and girls, she burst out, impulsively:

"Well, I needn't say anything, for that's just what I did, but I won't do it again, for now I see how mean and hateful it is."

Naneen smiled gently and said: "I knew you wouldn't if you saw it from the window as I did," then added: "Please ask Charlie Stone to come up and stay a while with me."

Lillie's eyes opened very wide. "O, Naneen," she half-whispered, stopping to kiss her affectionately, "you are our good angel. I should always be good if I lived in the same house with you. I'll send Charlie right up and let him see himself as I saw myself."

Naneen's little plan succeeded. Most of the boys and girls who had cheated had a good chance to see how their unfair actions must look to other eyes. As they went homeward late that afternoon many were the sincere, honest expressions of shame at the way they had played their game.

"I know one thing," said Harry, emphatically, "hereafter, beat or not, when I play a game I play fair. I used to cheat at croquet last summer, and that was the reason I used to beat you so much, Tommie."

"But it isn't really beating when you cheat," said Joe. "I always think of that when I am tempted to cheat, and then I think I'd rather be beaten than to take what isn't mine, and the game isn't mine, of course, when I cheat."

"As Naneen said this afternoon, 'it is a good thing to see ourselves as others see us,'" said Charlie.

"I tell you, fellows," remarked Tommie, his lips quivering a little; "it would do us all good to think of, not only how other people see us, but of how Christ sees us."

There was a thoughtful silence, then Joe said:

"There's lots in that, Tom, for what might seem only a little wrong, or even right, to others, would seem so different to him."—*Belle St. J. Pearson, in Presbyterian Observer.*

A LITTLE GIRL ON CONVERSION.

"You've been converted?" she said at last.

"Have I?" said Reuben; "I don't know. I don't even know what the word means."

"I do; Miss Hunter told me. She said there were two sides to it; God had one side, and folks the other. God called to people, asking them to belong, you know; that is his side. Then they said either 'I will,' or 'I won't'; and that is their side. And she said even God couldn't do anything for them so long as they said 'I won't,' because he had promised, himself, when he made them, that they should have the right to decide things for themselves, and that was their side. Then she said just as soon as they made up their minds to say 'I will,' he put new feelings into their hearts, so that they wanted to do right, where they hadn't cared, or hadn't thought anything about it; and all at once they knew that the thing they wanted most was to follow the Lord Jesus, and please him. And she said that new feeling in their hearts was called 'being converted,' and there wasn't anybody else who could do it only just God; and I know you have been converted."—*Pansy.*

A GENTLEMAN in Buffalo, N. Y., many years ago promised his nephew \$5,000 if he would neither chew, smoke, drink nor gamble until he became of age. The conditions were agreed to, and after the death of the uncle, the executor having refused to pay the claim, the case was tried in court, and finally decided in favor of the nephew.