

## The Story Page.

### A Strange Bear Trap.

When Mr. Edgar moved into the North-Western woods to work for a large lumber company engaged in clearing up the timber region around Clearwater he took his small family with him, and installed them in a small house on the outskirts of the great forest.

Clement and Clarence were both at the age when they could appreciate the wild freedom of the woods and country, and instead of being homesick for their quiet eastern home, they found endless pleasure in roaming through the forests and finding adventures with the birds and animals.

Shortly after getting settled in their forest home they built a house among the tree branches. This was an ingenious contrivance made by fastening young saplings in the crotches of four trees, and raising a floor to this foundation. Then they built up the sides and roof of small stakes and sticks, until the house looked as if it was actually growing out of the leafy branches of the trees.

They built a ladder to carry them up to the treetop house, and then a trapdoor in the bottom through which they could let down a rope ladder.

"We might need this some day," said Clem, the oldest and prime leader in the enterprise. "Suppose a wind or a tramp should take away our wooden ladder. Then we couldn't get down without this rope ladder."

Now, tramps were not likely to appear in that region, and windstorms could hardly blow down the heavy ladder; but for all that the boys had occasion to use their romantic ladder sooner than they expected, and in a way that made a deep impression on their minds.

It was one day when their parents had gone to Clearwater, and the two boys had the whole afternoon to play in. Naturally they thought of their treetop house, and decided they would take their dinner up there to eat. So they carted several baskets full of provisions up to the house, and then proceeded to make themselves comfortable.

"This seems just like living in Africa," said Clem, who had read of a race of Africans who lived in treetops. "If we only had a few enemies to come around to attack us it would seem real enough."

"We wouldn't leave our ladder hanging down for them to climb up on," said Clarence, with his mouth full of cake. "I guess we'd better pull it up to make believe there was danger."

"Yes, we will," answered Clem. "I'll go. You stay here."

Climbing out of the house, Clem started to grasp the end of the ladder, but he suddenly let go of it with an exclamation that attracted Clarence.

"What's the matter?" the latter exclaimed, poking his head out of the doorway. Then he uttered a queer exclamation.

"Look, coming up the ladder!" gasped Clem, pointing toward the ground.

Clarence had already caught sight of the disturbing element. Standing on the ladder, looking queerly at them, was the largest bear he had ever seen. The animal was thin and hungry, and the boys did not like the look in his bloodshot eyes.

Bruin was as much surprised as the boys, and he stood on the ladder and returned their gaze. He might have decided to return to the ground after discovering the boys, had not Clem tried to frighten him away.

"Get away from here!" he shouted loudly, and hurled a small stick at him. This struck the bear plump on the nose and made him sneeze. Then, with a low growl, he began to ascend the ladder. He was not so easily frightened as a small bear might have been.

Clem turned a little pale, but still showed pluck. He shook the top of the ladder so that the bear hesitated once more. But it was in vain that he tried to push the ladder off the tree trunk. The weight of the big bear held it in position, so that no one could move it.

Once more Bruin started upward, climbing deliberately and carefully, so that he would make no misstep. Half-way up the ladder the boys grew more frightened, and then, when he had covered half the remaining distance, Clarence called out nervously: "Come away, Clem! Come in the house."

Clem found this advice sensible, and after casting a last look at the approaching bear he hurried into the house with his brother. Now, they had not prepared against such an invasion, and the rude sort of a door which they had provided was no protection against the bear. With one blow of his paw he could knock it down.

"We must get out our rope ladder," said Clem quickly. "When he gets up on the platform you go through the trapdoor first and slide down the rope. I'll come right after you."

"But I can't open the trapdoor," said Clarence, in desperation. "This bolt sticks."

"Let me try it," said Clem, grasping the rude wooden bolt.

They two tugged away at the door, but for some reason they could only get the bolt half-way back, and there it stuck. Meanwhile the bear had reached the platform, and the boys could hear his angry snarl just outside.

"O. quick, Clem!" shouted Clarence. "He's at the door now."

The perspiration was rolling down Clem's face, and he could only gasp, "I can't move it!"

Then there was a bang on the door. It sounded like a clap of thunder, and the two boys jumped up with alarm.

"Throw the rope ladder out of the window, and climb out," shouted Clem, still keeping his wits about him.

He did not wait to be obeyed, but caught up the rope and flung one end out of the open window. Then, boosting Clarence up, he said, breathlessly, "Quick! Get down as fast as you can, and let me have a chance."

Clarence needed no urging, for a second bang at the door had made it tremble and shake. He was out of the window and sliding down the rope in a few seconds. Clem then just had time enough to get up on the sill of the window when the door fell inward. Old Bruin stood before him, but he had the chance to escape.

While the bear was walking across the room he was sliding down the rope, and when he reached the ground he saw the animal's face gazing at him from above. But the bear had no intention of following them down their frail support. Curiosity and the odor of good things attracted him. He walked around the house several times and peered into every corner. Then he came back to the rude table and proceeded to eat up all the dinner the boys had prepared for themselves, beginning first with the cake and honey, and winding up with plain, ordinary bread.

Clem and Clarence could not see all this from their positions from below, but from the noise they judged pretty accurately what the bear was doing. "He's eating up everything," said Clarence, ruefully.

"I don't care, if he will only stay there until father comes home," replied Clem. "I think then we'll have bear meat for dinner to-morrow."

But Bruin did not intend to locate permanently in the treetop house. He probably scented danger, and did not propose running any unnecessary risk. He had eaten his fill of the good things, and he now walked to the window and looked down at the two boys. For a long time he gazed at them and dangled the rope ladder in his paws, as if deciding whether it was strong enough to hold him.

Then apparently he was not satisfied, and he turned to retreat the way he had come up. Suddenly Clarence shouted: "Now's our time. Let's take away the ladder. Then we'll have him."

"O, no, we won't," replied Clem, who was older and knew more about the ways of bears. "He can climb down the trees just as easy as you."

Clarence's enthusiasm cooled off, and he stood by the base of the ladder looking up. "I wonder what he's doing," he said, meditatively, as he heard the bear scratching at the bottom of the house.

"Trying to dig his way through, maybe," said Clem, laughingly.

Then suddenly he grew serious, and he grasped Clarence by the hand, saying: "Look! He's fooling with that trap-door. If—"

He did not finish his sentence. In some way Bruin in his curiosity had accomplished what the boys in their anxiety and haste had failed to do. The trapdoor in the bottom of the house suddenly opened and fell downward with a click.

Bruin had been seated on it, and when it opened he shot down through the opening as if ejected from a cannon. There was a wild grunt and squeal, a vain attempt to grasp something that would hold him, and then a few queer turns in the air. Before either boy had time to run the big black carcass fell plump at their feet, making a noise and jar that startled the birds around.

When the bear struck the ground the two brothers started on a run for the house, but when they turned to look around they saw the bear running in the opposite direction. The boys turned and raced after him, jerking loudly; but Bruin had no eyes for them. His experience with the strange house in the trees had been sufficient to satisfy his curiosity for the day. What frightful trap had been sprung on him he could not imagine; but he probably thinks to this day that it was a narrow escape for him.

As for Clem and Clarence, they felt that their house in the trees was a better place to entrap an enemy than they imagined, and they planned eagerly for the next bear which should attempt to invade their home—Geo. Ethelbert Walsh, in Christian Advocate.

### The Boy that "Betted".

BY JESSIE LENORA BRITTON.

He was one of those jolly, sweet-tempered, obliging boys whom every one likes; and grandma declared that he had but one fault,—he would use slang, and his pet verb was "bet."

"It is strange," grandma said, "that a boy who has been brought up to use good language should form a bad habit."

He was seldom if ever heard to use the verbs "think," "guess," or "perhaps" or "probably." If he liked anything, it was "out of sight," if not, he "bet" it wasn't "worth a kick." He "bet" he should miss in spelling, and he "bet" it would rain great guns.

The whole family had tried to break him of the habit, but it did no good. After a time his brothers nicknamed him "Betty," and then his friends thought the name was very appropriate, and in a little while nearly every one except his mother and grandmother seemed to have forgotten that he had any other name. But that didn't trouble him; he seemed to like the name Betty just as well as the name Henry, and he "beted" just as much as ever.

One day his brother Charles was at the railway station when quite a crowd of passengers were waiting for a train which was late.

"Hello, Charles Spenser!" one of his boy friends called.

Then a lady came to him and asked "Was your mother Elizabeth Porter? I used to know an Elizabeth Porter who married a Charles Spenser, and I think she lives in this place."

Yes, Charles's mother had been Elizabeth Porter and the lady was one of her old friends.

"When I found that I must change cars in this place, I thought of my old friend, and should have tried to find her if I had had the time. You tell your mother that Mary Graham sends her love and will write soon. Now tell me how many brothers and sisters you have."

"There are three of us," Charles told her. "Arthur is fifteen, I am twelve, and Betty is ten. Betty looks just like mother," he added.

"Dear little Betty! I'd like to see her. I suppose she is named Elizabeth, after her mother."

But just then the train whistled, and there was no time to explain that Betty's real name was Henry, instead of Elizabeth.

This happened in November, and a Christmas box came by express for the Spensers. There were pleasing things in that box. Mary Graham had remembered them most generously; it seemed that she was trying to make up for the years in which she and her old friend had lost sight of each other.

There were books for father and mother, a camera for Arthur, a magic-lantern with some delightful views for Charles, and for "dear little Betty" there was a beautiful doll. Just think of it! a doll for a big boy of ten!

Perhaps you can imagine how keen "Betty's" disappointment was as he looked at the presents, and wondered what his present would have been if the lady had known that she was buying a present for a Henry instead of an Elizabeth.

"I am so sorry! it was my fault, and you may have a half claim on the lantern," Charles said.

But Henry shook his head, "It is my own fault; but I wish that nobody would ever call me 'Betty' again."

Of course, he was called "Betty" a good many times afterwards, and, of course, it was a hard struggle to overcome the bad habit, but the Christmas box "did the business," as Henry would have said.

Now grandma says, proudly, "There isn't a boy in town who uses better language than our Henry."—Sunday School Times.

### Robbie's Right-About-Face.

Robert Bruce Brown straightened his stout little back, squared his sturdy shoulders and took a long breath,—two, three, four. Then he tilted his head back, and looked up at the bright sky beyond the bare beech boughs with almost a scowl.

Yes, it was hard work. That was certain. When Uncle Hugh first told him he would pay him ten cents a quart for all the beechnuts he would pick up, it seemed the most delightful and easy way in the world to earn money. And Robbie wanted money very much indeed for a special purpose. That purpose was to buy a warm golf cape for his dear little mamma, who worked so hard and whose winter coat was getting so thin.

He had kept the secret shut in his eight-year-old brain (or wasn't it his heart?) so that nobody even suspected it; and Uncle Hugh began to be rather puzzled as to what he should do with five pecks of beechnuts,—and Robbie was beginning on the sixth! When the last pint was picked he would take the money Uncle Hugh paid him, and put his twenty cents with it, and take mamma down to the big store and say, "Take your pick!" For the window was full of the "beautifullest" ones, each bearing a big placard—\$5!

He wanted it for a Thanksgiving present, but, when Thanksgiving came, he had only just begun on the last half of the last peck; and it was growing harder and