

COLUMBUS.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

Four hundred years ago, boys,
There were no palace-cars,
No telescope to peer within
The open doors of Mars,
No steamers rushing o'er the deep,
Like planets cleaving space;
Four hundred years ago the world
Was but a little place.

Four hundred years ago, boys,
A brave, keen-sighted man
Said, "Ere him find who most shall dare,
And let him keep who can!"
Then, stepping on his "Pinta's" deck,
He faced the seas unknown,
And boldly turned his vessel's prow
To seek another zone.

Four hundred years ago, boys,
There were no schools like ours,
We sat on rank of children
As summer flowers.
The continent untrodden
So richly teeming now,
Lay like the Sleeping Beauty, till
She felt Columbus' prow.

Four hundred years ago, boys,
There were no easy ways
Of fighting or of learning,
Or yet of winning praise.
The world was for the soldier,
The world was for the brave,
When great Columbus launched his fleet,
To cross the Western wave.

Four hundred years ago, boys,
What prophet's eye could see
The wondrous things revealed to-day
To folks like you and me?
What ear could hear the music
Of voices miles away,
As you and I may listen
To music any day?

The dear old earth, our mother,
Has learned no end of lore
Since the sturdy old Columbus
Across the ocean bore.
All honor to the Genoese
In fourteen ninety-two,
Four centuries ago, my boys,
Who pattern set for you?

—Harper's Young People.

TIMOTHY'S QUEST.

BY KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.

SCENE XI.

The Honeysuckle Porch.

MISS VILDA DECIDES THAT TWO IS ONE TOO MANY, AND TIMOTHY BREAKS A HUMMINGBIRD'S EGG.

It was a drowsy afternoon. The grasshoppers chirped lazily in the warm grasses, and the toads blinked sleepily under the shadows of the steps, scarcely snapping at the flies as they danced by on silver wings. Down in the old garden the still pools, in which the laughing brook rested itself here and there, shone like glass under the strong beams of the sun, and the baby horned-points rustled their whiskers drowsily and scarcely stirred the water as they glided slowly through its crystal depths.

The air was fragrant with the odor of new-mown grass and the breath of wild strawberries that had fallen under the sickle, to make the sweet hay sweeter with their crimson juices. The whirr of the scythes and the clatter of the mowing machine came from the distant meadows. Field mice and ground sparrows were aware that it probably was all up with their little summer residences, for haying time was at its height, and the Giant, mounted on the Avenging Chariot, would speedily make his appearance, and buttercups and daisies, tufted grasses and blossoming weeds, must all bow their heads before him, and if there was anything more valuable hidden at their roots, so much the worse!

And if a bird or a mouse had been especially far-sighted and had located his family near a stump fence on a particularly uneven bit of ground, why there was always a walking Giant going about the edges with a gleaming scythe, so that it was no wonder, when reflecting on these matters after a day's palpitation, that the little denizens of the fields thought it very natural that there should be Nihilists and Socialists in the world, plotting to overturn monopolies and other gigantic schemes for crushing the people.

Rags enjoyed the excitement of haying

immensely. But then, his life was one long holiday now anyway, and the close quarters, scanty fare, and wearisome monotony of Minerva Court only visited his memory dimly when he was suffering the pangs of indigestion. For in the first few weeks of his life at the White Farm, before his appetite was satiated, he was wont to eat all the white cat's food as well as his own; and as this highway robbery took place in the retirement of the shed, where Samantha Ann always swept them for their meals, no human being was any the wiser, and only the angels saw the white cat getting whiter and whiter and thinner and thinner, while every day Rags grew more corpulent and aldermanic in his figure. But as his stomach was more favorably located than an alderman's, he could still see the surrounding country, and he had the further advantage of possessing four legs (instead of two) to carry it about.

Timothy was happy, too, for he was a dreamer, and this quiet life harmonized well with the airy fabric of his dreams. He loved every stick and stone about the old homestead already, because the place had brought him the only glimpse of freedom and joy that he could remember in these last bare and anxious years; and if there were other and brighter years, far far back in the misty gardens of the past, they only yielded him a secret sense of "having been," a memory that could never be captured and put into words.

Each morning he woke fearing to find his present life a vision, and each morning he gazed with unspeakable gladness at the sweet reality that stretched itself before his eyes as he stood for a moment at his little window above the honeysuckle porch.

There were the cucumber frames (he had helped Jabe to make them); the old summer house in the garden (he had held the basket of nails and handed Jabe the tools when he patched the roof); the little workshop where Samantha potted her tomato plants (and he had been allowed to water them twice, with fingers trembling at the thought of too little or too much for the tender things); and the grindstone where Jabe ground the scythes and told him stories as he sat and turned the wheel, while Gay sat beside them making dandelion chains. Yes, it was all there, and he was a part of it.

Timothy had all the poet's faculty of interpreting the secrets that are hidden in every-day things, and when he lay prone on the warm earth in the cornfield, deep among the "varnished crispness of the jointed stalks," the rustling of the green things growing sent thrills of joy along the sensitive currents of his being. He was busy in his room this afternoon putting little partitions in some cigar boxes, where, very soon, two or three dozen birds' eggs were to repose in fleece-lined nooks: for Jabe Slocum's collection of three summers (every egg acquired in the most honorable manner, as he explained), had all passed into Timothy's hands that very day, in consideration of various services well and conscientiously performed. What a delight it was to handle the precious bits of things, like porcelain in their daintiness! — to sort out the tender blue of the robin, the speckled beauty of the sparrow; to put the pee-wee's and the thrush's each in its place, with a swift throb of regret that there would have been another little soft throat bursting with a song, if some one had not taken this pretty egg. And there was, over and above all, the never ending marvel of the one hummingbird's egg that lay like a pearl in Timothy's slender brown hand. Too tiny to be stroked like the others, only big enough to be stealthily kissed. So tiny that he must get out of bed two or three times in the night to see if it is safe. So tiny that he has horrible fears lest it should slip out or be stolen, and so he must take the box to the window and let the moonlight shine upon the fleecy cotton, and find that it is still there, and cover it safely over again and creep back to bed, wishing that he might see a "thumb's bigness of burnished plumage" sheltering it with her speck of a breast. Ah! to have a little humming-bird's egg to love, and to feel that it was his very own, was something to Timothy, as it is to all starved human hearts full of love that can find no outlet.

Miss Vilda was knitting, and Samantha was shelling peas, on the honeysuckle porch. It had been several days since Miss Cum-

mins had gone to the city, and had come back no wiser than she went, save that she had made a somewhat exhaustive study of the slums, and had acquired a more intimate knowledge of the ways of the world than she had ever possessed before. She had found Minerva Court, and designated it on her return as a "sink of iniquity," to which Africa's sunny fountains, India's coral strand, and other tropical localities frequented by missionaries were virtuous in comparison.

"For you don't expect anything of black heathens," said she; "but there ain't any question in my mind about the accountability of folks livin' in a Christian country, where you can wear clothes and set up to an air-tight stove and be comfortable, to say nothin' of meetin'-houses every mile or two, and Bible Societies and Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, and the gospel free to all with the exception of pew rents and contribution boxes, and those omitted when it's necessary."

She affirmed that the ladies and gentlemen whose acquaintance she had made in Minerva Court were, without exception, a "mess of malofactors," whose only good point was that, lacking all human qualities, they didn't care who she was, nor where she came from, nor what she came for; so that as a matter of fact she had escaped without so much as leaving her name and place of residence. She learned that Mrs. Nancy Simmons had sought pastures new in Montana; that Miss Ethel Montmorency still resided in the metropolis, but did not choose to disclose her modest dwelling-place to the casual inquiring female from the rural districts; that a couple of children had disappeared from Minerva Court, if they remembered rightly, but that there was no disturbance made about the matter as it saved several people much trouble; that Mrs. Morrison had had no relations, though she possessed a large circle of admiring friends; that none of the admiring friends had called since her death or asked about the children; and finally that Number 3 had been turned into a saloon, and she was welcome to go in and slake her thirst for information with something more satisfactory than she could get outside.

The trip was a fruitless one, and the mystery that enshrouded Timothy and Lady Gay was as impenetrable as ever.

"I wish I'd 'a' gone to the city with you," remarked Samantha. "Not that I could 'a' found out anything more 'n you did, for I guess there ain't anybody thereabouts that knows more 'n we do, and anybody 't wants the children won't be troubled with the relation. But I'd like to give them bold-faced jigs 'n' bussies a good piece o' my mind for once! I declare I don't know what our Home Missionary Societies 's doin' not to regenerate them places or exterminate 'em, one or 't other. Somehow our religion don't take hold as it ought to. It takes a burnin' zeal to clean out them slum places, and burnin' zeal ain't the style no way. As my father used to say, 'Religion 's putty much like fish 'n' pertettors; if its hot it's good, 'n' if it's cold 'tain't wuth a' — well, a short word come in there, but I won't say it. Speakin' o' religion, I never had any experience in teachin' but I didn't s'pose there was any knack 'bout teachin' religion, same as there is 'bout teachin' readin' 'n' 'rithmetic, but I hed hard work makin' Timothy understand that catechism you give him to learn the other Sunday. He was all upst with doctrine when he came to say his lesson. Now you can't scare some children with doctrine, no matter how hot you make it, or mebbe they don't more 'n half believe it; but Timothy's an awful sensitive creeter, 'n' when he came to that answer to the question 'What are you then by nature? An enemy to God, a child of Satan, and an heir of hell,' he hid his head on my shoulder and bust out cryin'. 'How many Gods is there?' s' e, after a spell. 'Land! thinks I, 'I knew he was a heathen, but if he turns out to be an idolater, what ever shall I do with him?' 'Why, where 've yer ben fetched up?' s' I. 'There's only one God, the High and mighty Ruler of the Univarse,' s' I. 'Well, s' e, 'there must be more 'n one, for the God in this lesson isn't like the one in Miss Dora's book at all!' Land sakes! I don't want to teach catechism agin in a hurry, not tell I've hed a little spiritual instruction from the minister. The fact is, Vilda, that our b'liefs, when they're picked

out o' the Bible and set down square and solid 'thout any softening down 'n' explainin' that they ain't so bad as they sound, is too strong meat for babes. Now I'm Orthodox to the core" (here she lowered her voice as if there might be a stray deacon in the garden). "but 'pears to me if I was makin' out lessons for young ones I wouldn't fill 'em so plumb full o' brimstun. Let 'em do a little suthin' to deserve it 'fore you scare 'em to death, say I."

"Jabe explained it all out to him after supper. It beats all how he gets on with children.

"I'd rutner hear how he explained it, answered Samantha sarcastically. "He's great on expoundin' the Scriptures jest now. Well, I hope it'll last. Land sakes! you'd think nobody ever experienced religion afore, he's so set up 'bout it. You'd s'pose he kep the latch-key o' the heavenly mansions right in his vest pocket, to hear him go on. He couldn't be no more stuck up 'bout it if he'd ben one o' the two brothers that come over in three ships!"

"There goes Elder Nichols," said Miss Vilda. "Now there's a plan we hadn't thought of. We might take the children over to Purity Village. I think likely the Shakers would take 'em. They like to get young folks and break 'em into their doctrines."

(To be Continued.)

HOW BERTHA DID IT.

"Five lovely white kittens, and mamma says they must all be drowned!"

Bertha cried about it; the twins, Corn and Clarence, cried too; Walter looked gloomy; and little Jamie wiped his eyes on his pinafore. "Why? Why? Why?" wailed the chorus.

"Because," said mamma, firmly, "it is the most merciful thing to do. We can't keep five cats, and I'm sure you don't wish to give up old Tabby, even for one of her kittens. It is better to drown them while they are little than to send them away to be starved or neglected."

"Wait till they get just a little bigger, and let me try to find homes for them," begged Bertha.

"Well, you may try," said mamma. So after a few weeks Bertha wrote five little notes. This is what each one said: "I am a poor little homeless kitten. Please give me a morsel of milk and a corner of the hearth to sleep."

One note was signed "Snow," one "Snow-flake," one "Snow White," one "Snowdrop," and one "Snowball."

"People will know that's each one's name," said Bertha. Then she tied a note around each kitten's neck with a pretty ribbon. One day Bertha took a walk, with the five kittens in a basket, and when she came back the basket was empty.

"I left Snow at old Mrs. Gray's," she said. "Old Mr. and Mrs. Gray have nothing to amuse them, so I guess they will keep Snow. I took Snow-flake to Mrs. King's door. Jimmie King is lame, and I'm sure he will be glad to see Snow-flake. I put Snowdrop into Miss Spinster's window. It was open. There isn't a soul in the house besides her, and Snowdrop'll be splendid company. I left Snowball in the yard of the house where the two pairs of twins live at the end of the road. If they only won't pull her tail! Then I stopped at Aunt Susie's for a drink of water. And I told her all about it, and she laughed, and said she'd keep Snowball herself. Snowball's the prettiest."

And, strange to say, the kittens really did find a welcome and a good home just where Bertha's loving hands had left them. —Harper's Young People.

IF I CANNOT REALIZE my ideal, I can at least idealize my real. If I am but a rain-drop in a shower, I will at least be a perfect drop; if but a leaf in a whole June, I will at least be a perfect leaf. —W. C. Gannett.

IF I HAVE FAITH in Christ, I shall love him; and if I love him, I shall keep his commandments. If I do not keep his commandments, I do not love him; and if I do not love him, I do not believe in him.