



MAY'S FREAK.

Blossom—'May' — 'Mary Elizabeth Akers'—they were all three the names of a little girl, with hat decked and her hands filled with wild flowers, and her hair streaming in the breeze as she joins quite merrily in the very interesting game of 'Follow My Leader.'

I am going to tell you about 'May's picnic,' as her mamma called it; 'Blossom's freak,' as teasing Dick dubbed it; but the little girl whispered it to herself as 'My King's Daughter's work.'

To begin at the beginning we must go back two years to the day when Mrs. Akers began to wear a little silver cross and explained to her little daughter that the cross meant that her mamma was a daughter of the King—our Lord Jesus.

'But I belong to Him, too, mamma; I must wear the pretty cross too.'

'If Blossom wears the cross she must do a really hard thing.'

'Is it as bad as taking medicine, mamma?'

'It is to give up trying to make Blossom happy, and instead to think of Bridget, Tottie and Dick. It will not always be easy, my pet; it is not always easy for mamma.'

'Is that the reason you give away your concert tickets?' asked the little girl.

Her mamma whispered, 'Yes, but I did not mean any but the King to know.'

Blossom said no more at that time, but her mother noticed that the little girl was very careful to put others before herself, and about a fortnight later she said:

'I wish, mamma, you'd let me wear the cross for a "try" week. I'll take it off if I'm selfish.'

That was the beginning. Two years later came a summer in the country, when Blossom at once set about picking flowers twice a week for the Flower Mission. One day she came running in with her flowers, calling for mamma:

'Oh, I've such an idea! Such a lovely plan if you can only let me do it.'

'Well?'

'It's a big plan' said Blossom slowly, 'and a 'spensive one, I'm afraid, but—mamma, aren't you going to get me a lovely white sash and a Leghorn hat?'

'Yes, dear, I've promised myself that treat.'

Blossom's face fell. 'Why, did you care, mamma? I didn't know that your heart was set on it—just like mine.'

'Don't you love to see Tottie in her pretty new dress and slippers?'

'I guess I do! Isn't she cunning! And do you feel that way 'bout me? Oh, I see! And papa feels that way 'bout you! When you put on that pretty tea-gown he looked so pleased!'

'But what's your plan, Blossom?'

'Well, I thought if you didn't buy me the sash and the hat, perhaps you could buy tickets for some girls to come here for a week that can't go to the country. We'd have a picnic and give them lots of good times—"In His Name."'

'I am not sure that papa would care to have rough children spending a week with his youngsters.'

'I didn't mean truly poor, but friends, only we'd pick out poor friends. There's Maggie and Jessie Loring. Then the twins, Ruth and Rufus—Ruth won't go without her brother.'

'Four visitors mean a good deal of extra bed-making and dish-washing. I'll do all I can to help, mamma,' said Blossom, very earnestly.

Mamma hadn't the heart to tease her dear little girl another moment. 'Let me do the extra work for my share,' she said. 'I'm sure papa will agree, so you can plan your party for the first week in July.'

What a happy little girl Blossom was! She ran off to tell Dick, who, to tease her, called the picnic a 'freak,' but he went quietly to his mother and said:

'Mother, won't you put Blossom up to asking Joe Loring? He's a real nice fellow. Then there's a boy in our Sunday-school class that's an orphan; can't you ask him?'

'Certainly. I'll tell Blossom you—' Now, mother, don't! I wouldn't have her know! But you write to Miss Williams and see if Tom Driscoll can't come—I'd just like to have him see a real mother!'

That made six, and at the last moment Miss Williams asked if little Jim Parker could be taken with Tom. Ten children in one house! Can't you imagine the fun. They came out with Mr. Akers late on Friday afternoon.

The week fairly flew; but as the picnic was to be on Friday that did not matter.

And when Friday came and the picnic, the children sang and feasted, and, last of all, they started 'Follow My Leader,' and Tom led them such a dance!

And when the day was over Blossom lay in her own little bed with such a happy look on her fair face

that Mrs. Akers called her husband to see it.

'She does indeed "Follow the Leader," doesn't she?' said Mrs. Akers.—'Ladies' Home Journal.'

THE FIDELITY OF THE STARS.

Once, as I entered the observatory of Harvard College at the close of the day, a friend who had led me there asked that I might be shown the new instrument that had just been introduced. The professor replied courteously, 'Yes, I think there may be time enough yet for him to see a star, if you will find one.' My companion 'found one' by looking in a worn little book of astronomical tables lying there on the desk, and replied quietly, 'There is one at 5.20.' So in a hurried instant the covering was stripped off from the great brass tube, and prone upon his back, under the eye-piece, lay the enthusiastic professor.

While my friend stood by, with what seemed a tack-hammer in his hand, I noticed that he kept his eye on a tall chronometer clock near us. Suddenly two sounds broke the impressive stillness; we had been waiting for the stars. One was the word, 'There,' spoken by the professor; the other was the tap of the hammer on the stone top of the table by my companion. Both occurred at the same instant—the same particle of an instant; they were positively simultaneous. But the man who spoke the word could not see the clock; he was looking at the star that came swinging along till it touched the spider web line, in his instrument; and the other man who struck the hammer stroke could not see the star; he was looking at the second-hand on the dial plate. When the index in its simplicity of regular duty marked twenty minutes after five there fell the click on the stone; and then, too, there came on in the heavens, millions of miles away, one of God's stars, having no speech, but rolling in on time, as He bade it ages ago!

Then I was invited to look in and see the world of light and beauty as it swept by the next fibre in the tube. But afterwards I went curiously to the book, and found that it had been published ten years before, and that its calculations ran far away into the future, and that it had been based on calculations a thousand years old. And God's fidelity to the covenant of nature, here now almost three thousand years after David had made the nineteenth Psalm, had brought the glorious creature of the sky into the field of Harvard College's instrument just as that patient clock reached the second needed for the truth of the ancient prediction. Need I say that these two professors almost wondered

(so used to such things were they) at the awe-struck devotion, the hushed reverence, with which I left the room?—Dr. C. S. Robinson.

A FAT-TAILED SHEEP.

A sheep with an enormous tail, a tail so big that the animal is unable to get about, is now attracting the attention of zoologists at Hagenbeck's New York depot for wild and curious animals. The sheep hails from Kirchiz, which forms part of the Asiatic empire under the sway of the white Czar. It is a remarkable fact that the sheep was found in the steppes, in a desolate prairie district where the vegetation is of the poorest. Not unlike the American watermelon that flourishes on the driest sort of soil, this sheep has accumulated an unheard of amount of fat on pasture absolutely devoid of nutritious elements.

The animal is short, with soft, white wool. Though only three years old, the enormous development of its tail is such that it would have starved if left to care of itself in the plains where Hagenbeck's traveller discovered the phenomenon. The sheep was lying down when first seen, and when the stranger approached made ineffectual efforts to rise upon its forelegs, but the big tail dragged it down continuously. Noting this interesting animal freak, the agent placed the sheep in his carriage, and on the journey home attached a board below the tail to protect it from injury. In Hamburg a two-wheeled carriage was constructed, and by its aid the sheep now carries its tail gracefully and advantageously.

The broad-tailed sheep, which is quite common in the fertile parts of Asia, especially India and China, belongs to the same variety of the species as the fat-rumped sheep of southern Tartary. The latter is distinguished by an accumulation of fat on the rump falling in two great masses behind, and often entirely concealing the tail; in the broad-tailed sheep the accumulations are on each side of the tail.

The fat is less solid than that of other parts of the animal. It has the taste of butter, and is highly esteemed as a delicacy.

The tail of the animal pictured weighs twenty-five pounds. The animal without the tail weighs sixty pounds.

Be like the bird that, halting in her flight
A while on bough too slight,
Feels it give way beneath her and yet
sings,

Knowing that she hath wings.

—Victor Hugo.



THE SHEEP WITH THE 25 POUND TAIL.