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Tom's Carrier Pigeon.

BY ANNIE H. WOODRUFF.

Tom Nelson and his cousin, Harry Morton, were deeply interested in the rearing of pigeons. Their fathers owned adjoining farms, and the houses were about a quarter of a mile apart. Many were the journeys that the boys made to and fro in order to compare notes and to exchange ideas in regard to the care and training of their pets. Indeed, so urgent and pressing at times was the need of speedy communication that they so trained several birds of the carrier species that a messenger could be dispatched and received in an astonishing short space of time. Each boy carried home every night a pigeon from the other's dovecote, which he kept in a cage ready to send with a note when occasion required.

One rainy day Tom Nelson, having nothing to do, and finding time hanging heavily on his hands, thought it a favorable opportunity for him to pay his cousin a visit, and had caught up his hat with that intention, when his father, passing through the kitchen where he was, said:

"Tom, I am going to the village to be gone several hours, and I don't want you to leave the house. I have noticed several tramps around here lately, and they might be troublesome to your mother if they found her alone."

"All right, sir," said Tom, who felt somewhat disappointed, but he had long learned not to grumble about trifles.

"I feel uneasy about that money, George," said Mrs. Nelson, who had entered the room and was looking anxiously at her husband.

"What money?" asked Tom.

"Why," said his father, "the School Board, at its last meeting, made me Treasurer, and handed me all the funds, amounting to a little over \$500."

"Where is it?" asked Tom again.

"Safely hidden away where no one will be likely to find it," answered his father. "If you and your mother don't know where it is, you will not be able to tell any one, that's certain," and he went off.

"I never feel safe with so large an amount in the house," said Mrs. Nelson, and she went about her work with a pre-occupied air.

Tom busied himself writing a note to his cousin, and when it was ready he went to the woodshed and brought in the cage containing the messenger. He was just going to tie the note to the bird's wing when the kitchen door opened and a man walked in without knocking.

He demanded something to eat, and Mrs. Nelson, with a troubled glance at him, set about preparing a meal, pretending to take no notice to the furtive glances which her unwelcome guest was casting around him.

Tom, who was a slightly built lad of 15, did not seem a formidable obstacle to this burly rogue, for after one careless glance at the boy's direction he took the chair offered by Mrs. Nelson and sat down to his dinner.

Tom, remembering his father's parting words, was in a sore dilemma. He instinctively feared the man, for he knew he had not the strength to contend with him if violence was offered, and he felt sure there would be trouble when the tramp had refreshed himself. There were no near neighbors, and he could not leave his mother alone while he went for help.

While this was passing through his mind his glance fell upon the note he had written, and he started as a thought entered his mind. Seizing the pen he opened the note and hurriedly added:

"A rascally looking tramp has just come in. Mother is feeding him, but there is no telling what he will be up to when he gets through eating. Ask Uncle Mike and come over as soon as you can. Father is away."

Fastening the note securely to the pigeon he went to the door, and opening it, let the bird go. As he did so the man sprang from the table where he had been swallowing his food in great gulps, caught Tom by the shoulders and flung him across the room, saying roughly:

"Set down, sonny, and make yourself easy. Goin' to call the neighbors, was ye? You jest git me that there money and be quick about it."

Mrs. Nelson, pale and trembling sprang between them, trying to explain that they were ignorant as to the location of any money.

"Come—none of that," fiercely interrupted the man. Shut yer jaw and tell me where it is. It'll be the worse fer ye if ye don't. That school money yer man's taking care of. You know what I mean?"

Then he drew a revolver threatened to shoot them both if they persisted in their denial.

Mrs. Nelson shrank her head, she could not speak; but Tom, white to the lips, muttered hoarsely:

"You'll have to shoot, then, for I don't know where it is and I'm glad I don't. I might be coward enough to tell if I did," and then shut his eyes, expecting the worst. The tramp eyed them incredulously for a moment, and making up his mind that they were speaking the truth, after a pause of indecision, opened a door near where he stood. Discover-

ing that it was a dark closet, without windows or means of escape, he drove them into it at the pistol's point, and as there was a key in the door locked them in.

Then he began his search. It was a long one, for the money was well hidden, apparently. Cursing and swearing, he emptied the secretary and bookcase in the sitting-room; the bureaus and wardrobes, scattering the contents over the floor; the sideboard in the dining-room and the clock on the mantel. He ripped up the mattresses and pillows, turning the house in disorder, but no money could be find.

Mad with disappointment, still he persisted in spite of the danger of discovery if he lingered. He was in the act of splitting open a tin savings bank, a relic of Tom's babyhood, which was heavy with the weight of one-cent pieces which Mrs. Nelson found convenient to have on hand, when a calm voice of authority was heard at the door saying:

"Give it up, my man; its no use. And come along with me."

It was the village constable who spoke, and almost before the tramp knew what had happened he was handcuffed and led away, while Mr. Nelson, who had returned sooner than he expected, quickly released his wife and Tom.—Boston Traveler.

Sunny Jim.

BY WILLIAM BYRON FORBUSH.

I was going uptown the other day when I noticed, wedged in between a Boston swell front and a colonial porch, a very curious little cottage. It interested me so much that I opened the gate and went up the broad walk to the front door. Upon this door was fastened a dingy wooden sign, on which with difficulty I could read the name, "Jim Dump's." Over it was a shiny new doorplate which said, "Sunny Jim." I happened to have a boy or two with me, as I often do, and we decided to make the genial philosopher a call.

We pulled the bell and before its merry jingle inside had ceased Mr. Sunny Jim himself was greeting us, in his joyful colored garments and with the funny curly queue on the top of his head twisted tighter than a pig's tail.

"Come in! Come right in!" he shouted. "Yes, of course! I shall be glad to tell you how to be sunny."

A curious and kickable dog ran after him as he led us, dancing, into his pleasant front room where, he told us, the sun is always shining.

"Mr. Jim," said I, "we come from a corner of The Congregationalist. We are of the family of a Mr. Martin who?"

"Mr. Martin!" he exclaimed; "I know him well. He came from the same place up north where Santa Claus lives. In fact, I believe he's the old fellow's first cousin. Well, well! we must shake hands all over again if that is the case."

"We have come to interview you," I continued trying to look serious.

"Were you always sunny, Dr. Jim?"

"Don't call me doctor, boys. I am not a member of the R. E. A. No, I was not always Sunny Jim. I was not born with any larger funny bone than other folks. The corners of my mouth grew down; I used to forget the things I didn't like; I cast shadows wherever I went, and all my family and even this little dog had to listen to my constant complaints, for I was known every where as Jim Dumps."

"But how did this change occur?"

"I will tell you. Mine was a serious case. The people who have been cured in the newspapers were none of them as badly off as I was. I had to take five medicines before I was well."

And here Sunny Jim held up his five fingers.

"Five bottles?" asked a big-eyed boy who was patting the little dog.

"No, my dear, five prescriptions. The first, as no doubt you have read in my book—"

"Your book?" I asked. "I didn't know you had written a book."

"O, yes. You will see it, bound in boards, with portraits of my family, in front of all the railway stations. The first prescription was at breakfast time. It was labeled 'Good Health.' I heard of one of you boys who was asked with the others in Sunday school by the superintendent, 'Now boys, which of the saints do you want to see first when you arrive at your heavenly home?' and he shouted, 'Goliar!' He wanted to see the strong man. An angel with nervous prostration couldn't be sunny if he tried. So I began to wash off my troubles with cold water, eat things that would make me strong and sweet, and beat down Satan with my punching bag."

"Good!" shouted strenuous young Teddy who was present.

"My second prescription followed the first one. It read 'Always walk on the sunny side of the road.' A friend of mine cured pains in his bones by doing this. When I was

a boy I once went up into the cupola of a great mansion. On one side was green glass, on another red, on a third yellow and on the last white glass. You could have spring, summer, autumn or winter in the landscape according as you looked. So now I always look at life on the springtime side."

"My next dose," continued Sunny Jim, "was 'Self-Control.' Once I went over to call on a neighbor's boy at Christmas time, thinking he would give me a present, and all I got was the measles. He was not to blame, I suppose, but it makes me think that since a gloomy disposition is equally catching and a good deal more serious a fellow had better get over it quick or shut up. I hear there's a law against carrying concealed weapons, but somebody told me there isn't any against carrying concealed troubles. If so, I propose to carry mine out of sight. Can you boys move your ears by their own muscles?"

"I can't," confessed Joe, "But Hugh can."

"Well, the reason everybody can't is because folks stopped trying to, and after they got out of practice their children never caught the trick. If everybody would cease pulling down their mouth muscles, soon all children would be like my children—with faces always smiling. And now, boys, I mustn't preach to you any longer," said our good friend, jumping to his feet, "for you want to be off tramp-ing."

"My fourth prescription," he said, as we moved toward the door, "was 'Build a sunshine for other folks,' and I have found that building and running this factory gives one no time or room to grumble."

"And last," said Sunny Jim to the boys, as he held their warm hands at his doorway, "to be sunny we have to trust our good Father in heaven. What's that our great Book says? 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.'"

It was starlight now as we looked up we heard him say, "Earth and heaven are our Father's house, and, here or there, let us learn to shine."—The Congregationalist.

The Ghost at the Manse.

"Porter, is this the train to Blaxton, please?"

"Yes sir, the back part goes through," said the man addressed, rushing along the platform as fast as he could.

As we sped along the iron railway I fell to reckoning, and began to anticipate the pleasures of Christmas, and the joy of meeting my old friend, Rev., the Baptist pastor at Bothdale.

I had received a pressing invitation to spend Christmas with him, and as this year's holidays were a little longer than usual, a good opportunity offered itself, and I had accepted.

At last we arrived at our destination, and a hearty greeting awaited me from my friend's loving wife and family, so that the little discomfort was forgotten.

Old times were talked of, and bedtime had arrived ere we had thought of it. We parted for the night with the best of wishes for the morrow—Christmas Day.

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With a start I awoke.

Surely I had made a mistake. Did I hear some one speak? All was quiet. Not a sound could be heard.

I imagined I had been dreaming, and I was in the act of folding the bedclothes around my shoulders preparatory to going off to sleep again, when, alas! a voice distinctly said, "O man prepare!"

I was wide awake now, and heard the words distinctly.

I began to perspire freely, and my hair seemed to stand well nigh upright. What was I to do?

Was the room haunted? Why had not my friend told me? I was paralyzed and could not move. All was still for a time, and I regained some courage. I had distinctly heard the voice, and there was no mistaking it.

Terror upon terror! In the solemn midnight hour, when all is still, "O man, prepare!" was again reiterated, and this time I felt back helpless and breathing hard indeed.

My kind thoughts about my friend by this time had vanished. What an upheaval! A lifelong friendship had been severed in the few hours that had passed since we parted for the night, and what a mockery the expressions of good will were! There was a plot in it all, I was firmly convinced, and, oh, dreadful thought! to be wounded in the house of one's friend.

I would have got up and left the house at once, but I dared not move. I lay in this state of mind for a long time breathing inward threatenings on my friend's head—or enemy, as I now called him.

After a time I grew desperate, managed to strike a match and lit the candle. Everything seemed to be so quiet now, and I began to feel better. Minutes and hours seemed to go, and in due course the candle burned itself out.

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Christmas morning dawned. I was awakened once more by a loud knocking at the bedroom door, and my pseudo-enemy was earnestly inquiring if I intended to stay in bed