

LITTLE FOLKS

Never Thought.

A travelling showman with a small company of performing curs, had passed through the village, and his show had greatly amused and amazed the younger portion of the population. The doctor's dog, 'Toby,' was getting old, and fat, and heavy; and besides, his form had neither the grace nor the activity necessary for a performing dog, to say nothing of the neglect of his education in time past. But all this went for nothing with Master Bob Bindwell, his two brothers—Bertie and Fred, and his sister Mina, the doctor's children. They came home from the wonderful entertainment given by the showman and his four-footed company, fired with zeal to make 'Toby' a performing dog!

'Now, Toby, for your first lesson!' said Bob, placing the dog in a proper attitude for what he considered an easy jump, while Bertie stood near with a switch to enforce his brother's teaching.

'Jump, Toby, jump!' ordered Bob, with authority, holding his arms in a tempting circle to excite the dog's ambition.

But Toby declined to show the smallest interest in the science of jumping.

'Now isn't this provoking!' exclaimed Bob, at last, after many unsuccessful attempts. 'The dog is as obstinate as a mule! Give me that switch, Bertie, he wants breaking in.'

'Don't hurt the poor old dear!' said Mina.

'Don't be absurd, Mina,' replied Bob, in a tone of superior wisdom. 'No dog can be taught anything without thrashing; and I won't give him more than is good for him.'

In another moment the switch would have descended upon Toby's back, had not the house-door opened, and Dr. Bindwell suddenly appeared in the little yard. His quick eye took it all in at a glance. 'Ha!' said he, 'teaching that poor old dog? Stop a bit, Bob; come with me all of you, children, I want you a minute or two.'

Wondering not a little, the boys and Mina, with the released Toby at their heels, followed the doctor.

He led them into the garden first, where the gardener was busy training a creeper on the brick wall.

'Raymond,' said the doctor, 'tell these young people how long you've been a gardener.'

'Oh, sir, a matter of thirty years or so,' replied the man, touching his hat.

'Well, would you not like to be something else now?' said the doctor, slyly, glancing at Bob. 'Say a telegraph clerk, or a sailor, or—'

'Bless me, sir,' said the gardener, laughing, 'you're a-sayin' this for a

joke! Why, sir, if you was to beat me with a cat-o'-nine-tails, I couldn't learn no other trade at my time of life.'

'Yes, I dare say you're right,' said Dr. Bindwell, smiling. Then he turned away, taking the children with him.

When they were alone, the doctor said: 'Bob, my boy, I'll propose something to you. Let me see you perform some of the feats of strength and agility that we saw those acrobats do the other day. Come now, begin, and if a little switching will help you at all, I can easily oblige you.'

Bob blushed; he was just understanding a little of his father's meaning.

'You know I can't papa,' he said; 'you told me yourself the other day, that for all those things children have to be taught very young, before the bones and muscles become set and rigid.'

'D.d I?' replied Dr. Bindwell again. 'I am glad you remember so well. But did it never occur to you, Bob, that what was true in one instance might be true in another? Surely,' he added more gravely, 'had you thought a moment, you would never have been so unkind to poor old Toby, to whom you were trying to teach things which it must have taken those performing dogs years of training to acquire. If our good Raymond can't change his trade now, nor you become an acrobat, why should you expect more of our little Toby?'

'Papa, I never thought of that before,' replied Bob.

'Poor old Toby, was I very cruel to you?' Bob continued, taking up the little dog and kissing his rough head. 'Please forgive me.' And more forgiving than many of us, perhaps, dear readers, Toby put up his face, and gave his young master the kiss of peace.—'The Children's Messenger.'

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Pets.

Nelly has a doll,

She loves her dolly dearly,
Although 'tis made of wood,
And its hair is painted merely:
Though it wobbles on its feet,
Nelly thinks it simply sweet.



Teddy has a horse;

He loves his Dobbin dearly,
Although one ear is gone,
And it cannot gallop really;
Though it isn't very fleet,
Teddy thinks it simply sweet.

Betty has a kit;

She loves her pussy dearly,
Although its claws are sharp,
And its eyes look at you queerly;
Though that kit cares but to eat,
Betty thinks it simply sweet.

—Alice Scott, in 'Our Little Dots.'