

'I've been wondering what I could do. I don't even know what my one talent is,' sighed Stella.

'There is your elocution training, Stella. Granny Wilson would be so glad if you would read to her. Your articulation is so clear that she could understand you well. You see, since father opened my eyes I have seen opportunities I didn't see before,' Marion answered.

'What can I do?' questioned Bessie Morris.

Marion thought for a minute. 'When I had pneumonia last winter mother said she would feel safe when she left you with me. You could help nurse the little child at Mrs. Baker's.'

Bessie's clear laugh rang out. 'I've been thinking, too, I sat up there last night,' she answered.

Marion's father came in the gate and straight across the lawn to the girls. 'What are you magpies chattering about?' he asked. They told him.

'I haven't decided yet, Mr. Blair. What can I do?' asked Grace Russell.

'If I had your beautiful voice, I could find what to do, Grace. The children at the Orphan's Home need training, and any lonely home would be brightened when you had sung some sweet song. There are many places where a beautiful voice may be used. Mother is calling me, I must go; but let me say, dear girls, that you are gathering sheaves for the great harvest. Every good deed or kind word spoken, or, I might say, every talent spent, lifts your own and some other heart closer to God,' he said gently.

The Spider's Strength.

The strength of some of the spiders which build their webs in trees and other places in Central America is astounding. One of them had in captivity in a tree there not long ago a wild canary.

The ends of the wings, the tail and the feet of the bird were bound together by some sticky substance, which were attached the threads of the spider, which was slowly but surely drawing up the bird by an ingenious arrangement.

The bird, says 'Home Notes,' hung head downward, and was so securely bound with little threads that it could not struggle and would soon have been a prey to its great, ugly captor if it had not been rescued.

The 'Gallant Middy.'

'For I'm the gallant middy!' A boyish voice shouted uproariously this line from a naval chorus, as its owner descended the stairs of an English country house, clearing the last five steps at one leap. He alighted in a broad hall, which had quaint suits of armor ranged along its sides. Here he gave a triumphant whoop and caper, and repeated his line, 'Oh, I'm still the gallant middy, lads!'

The singer was only sixteen, but a man in enthusiasm. Two hearers listened to him with smiles that struggled to continue smiles, but ended involuntarily in tears. They were Caleb Jeffars, a coachman, who eight years before had mounted this boy, Richard Chumley Wainwright, upon his first pony; and a blue-eyed woman, seated in a pretty bedroom, marking the 'middy's' name upon his outfit—the 'middy's' mother.

As for the singer himself, his heart ached, as any hero's might; for in twenty hours more he must quit mother and home, and sail away to far China in the 'Flamer,' an English war-ship.

He had been in training for the British navy as a cadet, and had just passed the final examination which made him a little officer, a 'gallant middy' or midshipman.

The summer day on which he was to leave dawned with brilliant clearness for the majestic 'Flamer,' as she lay near the naval pier at Portsmouth. When the time for parting drew nigh, young Wainwright's mother took his hand in hers, and laid her arms tenderly about his shoulders. 'Chum,' she said; 'Chum, my own dear boy, I would feel more desolate at your going if you had not got the wish of your heart in entering the navy. But oh, I long that you may be a pattern sailor, pure-minded, generous, and gentle! I know you won't fail in bravery. When you are on deck by day or night, let the grandeur of the sea and sky make God seem near to you, and drive all mean and evil thoughts away. Be

true to God, and you will never be false to your duty or your fellow-men. I shall indeed be proud of my "gallant middy" if he tries to live in God's fear and love.'

And Chum answered quietly, 'I'll try, mother.'

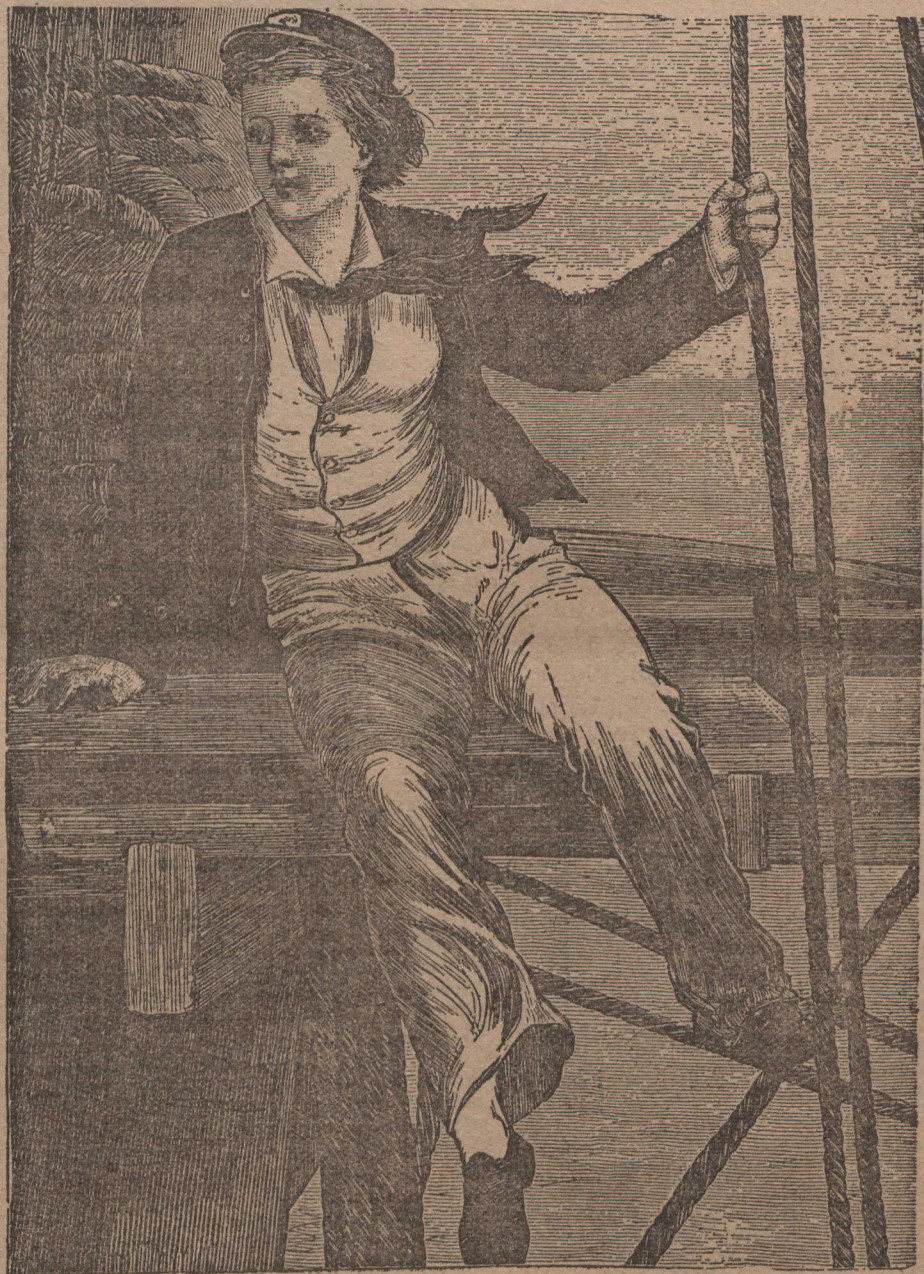
Time rolled on, until blue-eyed Mrs. Wainwright was grey-haired, and Chum was no longer a 'gallant middy,' but a first lieutenant. When he gained this rank, he was put in command of Her Majesty's gunboat 'Firefly,' and very pleased he was with the post. He had a crew of brave tars under him, who greatly admired their commander; but the most devoted of all was the youngest and least important of the band. This was a mere lad, a son of Chumley's old friend Jeffars the coachman, who hoped in due time to become an able seaman, and was preparing for it by acting as the lieutenant's cabin-boy. Rob Jeffars found that he had a very kind master, and consequently he was a happy

No one remembered him even when Lieutenant Wainwright at last ordered his crew to lower the boats and endeavor to escape in them. The command was quickly obeyed. First the lifeboat was launched, and filled with wearied sailors, who succeeded in getting safely away from the sinking craft. A second company likewise escaped. Then the third and 'last' of the 'Firefly's' boats was got afloat.

She too rapidly filled, until there remained only one place in her, reserved for the sorrow-stricken commander, the last man to leave his doomed deck. With a pang through his brave heart, he had his hands and feet already upon the rope-ladder, preparing to descend, when a piteous cry startled him, and he lifted his head to see the cabin-boy, Rob Jeffars, who had just dragged himself from the berth where he lay.

Now came a terrible moment.

'Don't mind the youngster, captain!' yelled



sailor laddie, who sang and whistled like a bird, and threw dull care to the breezes that made music in the 'Firefly's' rigging.

But, alas! there dawned one dreary morning when his spirits were crushed. His lips were white, and a sweat of pain and fear lay like ice upon his forehead. A terrible gale had suddenly overtaken the gunboat not far from English shores. It continued to rage, until Lieutenant Wainwright groaned with anxiety lest his first command should come to a mournful end, and his fine crew perish in watery graves. During the storm, while the 'Firefly' was driven by merciless winds and great waves swept her decks, Rob Jeffars fell headlong down the saloon stairs, and fractured his knee. He was laid in a berth, and at first received careful attention; but as the tempest increased, it was found that the gunboat was leaking badly. Then an order was given that every man on board should work at the pumps, and in the desperate labor which ensued the injured lad was forgotten.

a sailor from the swaying boat below. 'Your life is worth more than his, and two would swamp us. Be quick, for we can't hold on another minute!'

But already Lieutenant Wainwright had lifted Rob carefully and placed him on the slippery ropes. He waited till the boy dropped safely into the boat. Then his clear voice rang out firmly above all the tumult of the storm.

'Pull away, lads, and God go with you!'

Not a man of his crew would have been guilty of this. They would have gone to the bottom with him rather than leave him to die alone. But a mighty wave suddenly swept the boat to leeward, baffling every attempt to return, and he for whom his mother had fondly prayed that he might be a pattern sailor, looked at the raging sea and leaden sky with these words in his mind: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'

Yes, the 'gallant middy' proved himself a