



THE PARROT.

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What strange horny-beaked creatures parrots are. They have a dry, horny tongue that makes one wonder how they can speak so plainly. They are very fond of sugar and of rice. It is very funny to see them try to eat rice off a table or a plate. Their upper bill is so long that they cannot pick it up without bending the head flat on its side. They have very beautiful plumage, but their voice is harsh and discordant. Yet some of them can say a good many words quite plainly. The lady in the picture is the Princess Mary of England. How pleased the little boy looks as the parrot eats a bit of cracker!

THE JACK-A-LANTERN.

One hot day in summer twenty little children stood in the railroad depot waiting for a train. They were children from tenement houses in the city, and were being sent to the country by the managers of the Fresh Air Fund. One little fellow was lame,

and he moved about on his crutch following two little girls. They were his sisters, and he was Joe Fayther.

Presently the train came and the children were put on board. They were set down at a pleasant little country town. The three Faythers were sent together to the Emmons' farm. Grandpa Emmons took special care of lame little Joe.

"Here, little fellow, jump on the waggon," he would say, and away they would go through the fields and over the brook; such rides as Joe had never even thought of. One day Grandma Emmons took them on a picnic in the meadow. Such cakes and lemonade they had never had.

After supper Grandma Emmons always brought out the Bible and read a chapter, and they all knelt in prayer.

"I like that book," said Joe. "It has such nice stories in it." Joe had never paid much attention to the Bible before, and he did not know how interesting much of it is.

"If I can find a pumpkin that's just right I'll make a Jack-a-lantern for

those children," said Grandpa.

Grandpa found just the right pumpkin and Joe sat close by and watched while he scooped out the inside, and cut holes for the eyes and mouth. After dark, while the girls were helping Grandma with the dishes, Joe's little crutch went softly along the hall. He and Grandpa Emmons were going to light the candle inside the pumpkin. How it grinned at them when it was lighted! Grandpa told Joe he must not frighten the girls with it, because that is cruel. So he told them what it was and they all enjoyed it.

The children were sorry when the day came to go back to the city. Grandma hugged and kissed them, and gave them some ginger cookies to eat on the way, and Grandpa added a bag of apples and pears and a bunch of dahlias and other flowers for their mother. The stay at the farm had browned their pale faces, and they all looked stronger than when they came.

About Thanksgiving Day there came a barrel to the tenement house. It was addressed to Joe Fayther, and when opened was found to contain pumpkins and apples, besides potatoes and some nuts and a big turkey. The children were wild with delight, for they needed no letter to tell them that it came from Grandpa and Grandma Emmons. Joe begged for one pumpkin to make a Jack-a-lantern. He enjoyed cutting it as he had seen Grandpa Emmons do, and before dinner it was all ready to light.

After the good Thanksgiving dinner of turkey and pumpkin-pie Joe said to his mother, "I wish we'd have prayers as Grandpa Emmons does." Joe had already told his mother about it.

"Well, Joe, we will," said his mother. "I've got a Bible in my box, but I haven't looked at it as much as I ought to."

Mrs. Fayther found the Bible and read a few verses, and then they all knelt down and prayed to God.

After that they blew out the candle and put the Jack-a-lantern on the table and lighted it. Oh, how happy they were!

THE SNOW-FLAKES.

Floating, whirling, drifting,

Strange little specks come down—
Dainty, fairy crystals

From a distant wonder-town,
Out of the dim cloud-spaces

That seem so soft and gray,
Are they dust from diamond blossoms
That grow where storm-winds play?

I learned a pretty lesson
From the little flying flakes;
One, added to another,

At last a worldful makes.
They are like the little minutes—
Easy to waste indeed,
But thousands put together
They give us all we need.

"Pa," said a little fellow to his unshaven father, "your chin looks like the wheel in the music box."