

The Best Dog.

Yes, I went to see the bow-wows, and I looked at every one, Proud dogs of every breed and strain that's underneath the sun; But not one could compare with—you may hear it with surprise— A little yellow dog I know that never took a prize.

Not that they would have skipped him when they gave the ribbons out, Had there been a class to fit him—though his lineage is in doubt, No judge of dogs could ever resist the honest, faithful eyes Of that plain little yellow dog that never took a prize.

Suppose he wasn't trained to hunt, and never killed a rat, And isn't much on tricks, or looks, or birth—well, what of that? That might be said of lots of folks, whom men call great and wise, As well as of that yellow dog that never took a prize.

It isn't what a dog can do, or what a dog may be, That hits a man. It's simply this—does he believe in me? And by that test I know there's not the compeer 'neath the skies Of that plain little yellow dog that never took a prize.

Oh, he's the finest little pup that ever wagged a tail, And followed man with equal joy to Congress or to gaol, I'm going to start a special show—'twill beat the world for size— For faithful little yellow dogs, and each shall have a prize.

—Harper's Bazar.

Slaying the Dragon.

BY MRS. D. O. CLARK.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SOCIETY OF THE SILVER SKULLS.

"Oh, what is the matter?" cried Mrs. Strong, in alarm, as she caught sight of the blood on her husband's coat, and noted his pallid face, and half-closed eyes. With a calmness phenomenal in a frightened woman, she ran to Frank's room, and rousing the boy, sent him for the doctor. After chafing the cold hands and bathing the head of the wounded man, she had the satisfaction of seeing him open his eyes.

"Don't be frightened, wife," he said, "I've only got a scratch or two. It's nothing serious. I shall be all right soon."

When Doctor Blake came, he found that the minister had received an ugly gash in his shoulder. Mr. Strong narrated the circumstances to an indignant group of listeners.

"It was a dastardly act," said the doctor, "and I hope the coward will be made to smart. Things have come to a pretty pass in Fairport, if a man can't speak his mind without being assaulted. I shall go immediately to the town authorities, and have everything possible done to bring MacDuff to speedy punishment."

The news of Mr. Strong's narrow escape spread like wild-fire, and great excitement prevailed. The constables went to arrest the fisherman, but MacDuff was not to be found. His wife said he had not been home for several days. After attacking the minister he was seen in the village at one o'clock, and it was surmised that he had followed Mr. Strong in hopes of assaulting him the second time. Riley, who lived in the edge of Essex Woods, said that a drunken man went by during the night, singing and yelling in a most unearthy fashion. Beyond this, no clue could be found. Parties went out to search for the missing man, with no success. The disappearance of Peter MacDuff was a mystery which was not unravelled till years later.

The trouble in the church quieted down after the parish meeting, and affairs were moving with considerable harmony, when, some months later, an event occurred which again aroused righteous indignation. After the formation of the St. George League, ten of the young rowdies of the village had banded themselves together under the name, "The Society of the Silver Skulls." The existence of this society was known only to the members, and their meetings were held with such secrecy that even the vigilant temperance committees had not suspected its

existence. It originated from a dime novel, in the hands of Joe Chase, where, in a similar organization, with the same hideous appellation, was described in detail. Joe was president of the band, and the meetings were held in old barns or in the battered Powder House, and in cold weather in one of the back rooms at the Maypole.

The Silver Skulls flourished during the three years of academy life, and now that school-days were over for most of these boys, their meetings were held with greater frequency. The object of this society was to defend the rights of its members and to punish those who in any way disturbed those said rights. When any member had a grudge against a citizen of Fairport, his case was brought before the members of the Skulls, tried, and a penalty attached. John Chapman claimed that Deacon Ray abused him; accordingly the Deacon's gates were all taken off their hinges, carried some distance from his house, and left piled in a heap. Peter MacDuff, Junior, said the sexton had insulted him, so the bell rope was cut one Saturday night. The Skulls now met regularly once in two weeks, or oftener, if circumstances seemed to demand an extra session.

One night in August a special meeting was called by Charlie Chapman. After dark ten boys assembled in the shadow of Powder House, and after giving the countersign, "skull and crossbones," the meeting was called to order by the president.

"What is the bizness ter come before this meetin'?" he asked, pompously.

"I hev a complaint ter make agin Maurice Dow," said Charlie Chapman.

"Wal, out with it," returned the president.

"I can't bear that smooth-faced, lyin' rascal any longer," continued Charlie. "I hated him when I fust sot eyes on him, I hated him all the time he staid in school, I hated him when Deacon Ray gave him a better job in his store than he did me, an' I hate him now. Es if it want enuff for him to walk inter the Deacon's good graces an' git permoted afore me, he hes had the cheek ter blab ter the boss that I was in the tavern the other night, an' got drunk. I know he blabbed it, 'cause the Deacon took John an' me ter task fur it this mornin', an' said he should discharge us ef the thing happened agin. There's no one in the store that would blab, only that white-faced, pious Dow. Now I want ter git that feller inter a scrape tnat will fix him fur Fairport."

"You hev heard the case, boys. What shall we do about it?" inquired Joe.

"We'll fix that snivellin' Dow," responded Peter MacDuff, who was a chip of the old block.

"Go fur him, Chapman! Black his eye for him! Put him out of the store!" cried Paul Matthews, Willie Riley, and Tom Barton, together.

"Order! order! One at a time!" called out Joe. "This ain't no way ter do bizness. Those that's in favour of makin' Dow smart fur his doin's, raise the left hand." Nine hands went up.

"Those agin it, same sign. It's a vote. Now, how shall we trap the coon?"

"Hev somethin' stolen from Deacon Ray's store an' found in Dow's pocket," suggested George MacDuff.

"Pooh!" sniffed the president. "Everybody would see that was a put-up job. Dow thinks too much of the Deacon ter do that. Try agin."

"I've got it," said Charlie Chapman, with an evil look in his eyes. "It's a plan which we can carry out ef we use great caution. You all know there's trouble between Phoebe Dow and Jedge Seabury. Maurice knows all about it, an' he hates the Jedge like pisen. I've heard dad talk it over lots of times."

"What was the trouble? I never heard about it," interrupted Paul Matthews.

"You see, the Jedge wanted Maurice, when he was a baby, ter come an' live with him, but the Widder Dow wanted to keep the chit, an' so they hed it nip an' tuck for a while. There's allus bin feelin' between these two, ever sence."

"Do give us your plan," said Peter MacDuff, impatiently. "You're an awful long-winded feller at tellin' a story."

"Who's a better right ter be slow, I should like ter know?" growled Charles. "But ef I was sayin', ef some one should set fire ter the Jedge's barn, and the suspicion could be sung on Dow, it would be the most nat'ral thing in the world. People wd id say that he was workin' out an old grudge. Dyer see?"

"First-rate! You're a deep one," responded the boys.

"I'm achin' ter see a blaze," said Tom Barton. "There hain't bin a fire in Fairport sence the new injine was bought. It'll give 'em a good chance ter try it. We shall be killin' two birds with one stone."

"Isn't it a bit risky ter play such tricks?" asked Max Schmidt.

"Ho, ho! So we have a coward in our society," sneered the president.

"Going ter back out?" cried Charlie Chapman, lifting his arm thrsateningly.

"Oh, no, I didn't mean that at all," replied Max, cringing under the rebukes he received. He was not a bad boy at heart, neither were Tom Barton, Willie Riley, and Paul Matthews, but they were all completely under the influence of Joe Chase, and where he led they followed.

"Remember, young man," said the president, severely, "that the Society of the Silver Skulls hes bin known ter issue death warrants. So you'd better be careful how you walk, or you will meet the displeasure of the Skulls. Now ter bizness. How shall we manage ter git Dow inter this scrapo?"

"That's easy done," replied John Chapman. "Hev one of Dow's handkerchiefs, which are marked with his name, caught in the hedge which is back of the Jedge's barn. Then we must manage some way, ter git his harmonica, an' set where it will be found at the right time. We can hev a letter written ter the Jedge, tellin' him he'd better look after his property, es Dow hed bin heard ter threaten. Ef that letter got ter the Jedge the afternoon before the fire broke out, everythin' would turn out es click es grease. The Jedge would read the letter, tnat it inter his waste basket, an' think nothin' more about it till his barn was gone up. Then he'd remember it."

"Grand idea!" said Joe, admiringly. "Charlie Chapman, you are an ornament ter this society. How soon hed the affair better come off?"

"The sooner the better, as far as I'm concerned," replied Charlie.

"What d'yer say ter to-morrow night?" asked Joe.

"First-rate," answered the boys. Further plans were matured, and the meeting was adjourned.

"Remember to-morrow night — at twelve sharp—Powder House."

(To be continued.)

SOME LESSONS TWO BOYS LEARNED.

BY FANNIE DAY HURST.

"Can you read a while this evening, Aunt Mary?" Fred asked, coming to her side and sitting on the arm of her chair. "Tom's gone for the book. We're dreadfully disappointed about not being able to go on that ride. It seems as though it might have waited a few hours to rain. It has spoiled all our fun."

"Then some one else would be wishing it had waited a few more hours, and by morning a great many others would be wondering why it could not have rained in the night, when people were at home. But I'll tell you—go quickly to the dining-room and bring four tumblers glasses without stems, you know — and get back before Tom comes."

When Fred returned with the four glasses, Aunt Mary had a neat little board ready, about a foot wide and a foot and a half long, and she directed Fred to place the glasses on the floor, bottoms up, and then to place the board on them, so as to make a stool. On this she told him to stand, and wheeling her chair near him, she began to strike him on the shoulders with a cat skin she happened to have in her hand, explaining in the meantime:

"As I strike you with the skin, your body becomes filled with electricity. As electricity cannot pass through glass, it is not possible for it to escape. It is for this same reason that telegraph poles are supplied with glass holders for securing the wires."

She stopped and dropped the cat skin into her lap. Tom came in.

"What's this I've run into?" he asked. "Is it statuary you are representing, Fred; or has Aunt Mary put you on the dunce stool?"

"Fred is playing magician," said Aunt Mary, "and if you'll put your hands behind you and then touch the tip of your nose to the tip of his and stand one moment without removing it, he will tell you what you are thinking."

"That's easy enough to do!" Tom exclaimed, and putting his hands behind him, he walked up to Fred, and the two touched noses. They felt a sharp sting, heard a popping sound, and in an instant Fred was off the stool, rubbing his nose and looking at Tom, who had jumped back several feet and was equally busy with his nose.

Mr. and Mrs. Peobles had heard the merriment and now came in to enjoy the fun. Aunt Mary then explained to the boys that Fred's body had been filled with electricity, which could not escape until the two noses touched each other.

"Had you thought, boys, that these little sparks are of the same nature as the strong currents of electricity that light our cities and move monster machines, or the lightning that tears great trees apart?"

"Well, I was so surprised when I touched Fred's nose, I guess I almost thought I had been struck by lightning," said Tom. "But who would ever have thought a little thing like this, stroking the skin, could make us forget our disappointment about the ride, Fred?"

"There will be many times, Tom, when you will think your lot a very hard one, but if you will take advantage of the pleasures and opportunities at hand, you will find that it is 'a pretty good old world, after all,'" said Mrs. Peobles.

"You must not only use the pleasure at hand, but you must get clear away from the spirit of grumbling and complaining. If Fred had not had the glasses between him and the ground, he would not have been able to surprise you as he did with the bright spark," said Mr. Peobles.

"What is your lesson, Tom?" asked his father.

"Well, I don't know that I can express it very well, but I did not know Fred had that spark in his body till I touched him. I thought he was trying to make a tableau or a piece of statuary, and I judged him wrongly. We ought to be sure we understand people before we say what we think of them."

That night at prayers they read for their Bible lesson the first twelve verses of the seventh chapter of Matthew.—S. S. Visitor.

JONATHAN RIDGON'S MONUMENT.

"Jonathan Ridgon died very poor, didn't he, deacon?" I asked.

"Yes, they buried him in a pauper's grave. Poor Ridgon! He had a big heart, too," said the deacon. "He spent his whole life and a big fortune building a monument to another man."

"Was the monument ever finished, deacon?"

"Yes, and Jonathan did it."

"How?"

"Well," said the deacon sadly, "Jonathan commenced it early. He commenced putting money into the monument at seventeen and finished it at fifty."

"He gave his whole time to it?"

"Yes, he worked night and day, often all night long, and on the Sabbath. He seemed to be in a great hurry to get it done. He spent all the money he earned upon it—some say fifty thousand dollars. Then he borrowed all he could, and when no one would loan him any more he would take his wife's dresses and the bedclothes and many other valuable things in his home and sell them to get more money to finish that monument."

"How self-sacrificing!"

"Yes, Jonathan sacrificed everything for this monument," said the deacon, sadly. "He came home one day and was about to take the blankets that lay over his sleeping baby, and his wife tried to stop him, but he drew back his fist and knocked her down, and then went away with the blankets and never brought them back, and the poor baby sickened and died from the exposure. At last there was nothing left in the house. The poor heartbroken wife soon followed the baby to the grave. Yet Jonathan kept working all the more at the monument. I saw him when he was about fifty years old. The monument was nearly done, but he had worked so hard at it that I hardly knew him. he was so worn, his clothes were all in tatters, and his face and nose were terribly swollen; his tongue had some how become very thick, and when he tried to speak, out would come an oath."

"But the good man did finally accomplish his great work?" I said.

"Yes, he finished it," said the deacon, his eyes moistening with tears.

"Does it look like Grant's monument?"

"Yes, it's a great deal like Grant's monument. It is a grand house. There it is; look at it!" said the deacon, pointing to a beautiful mansion. "See! it is high and large, with great halls and fireplaces, and such velvet carpets, and, oh, what mirrors!"

"Who lives in it, deacon?"

"Why, the man who sold Jonathan Ridgon nearly all the whiskey he drank. He lives there with his family, and they wear the finest clothes, and—"

"And poor Jonathan?"

"Why, he's in the paupers' graveyard. Aish!" sighed the deacon. "the world is full of such monuments, built by poor drunkards who broke the hearts of devoted wives and starved sweet children to do it."