

## EVERYBODY'S CORNER.

Matty must stand in the corner till she is quite quiet and good, and willing to do as mother tells her.

Not pleasant words to begin a story with, or to be the first which greeted schoolboy Jack as he hurried into the parlor at home

NAUGHTY  
CORNER

one bright autumn afternoon. They made him stop and give a low whistle, and wish matters had been all right and smooth, as he had such a lot to tell mother and Matty; and, oh, such a lot, too, of nuts in his pockets! Not little dried-up things that you buy for monkeys; but really jolly filberts, fresh from the trees; in their pretty pale-green and brown coats—and such large clusters, too! Why, it had been quite hard work making them go into his pockets; and the other boys had said that he looked every bit like a nubby old artichoke his pockets stuck out in such queer shapes.

It was a sad sight, to see little Matty in the corner, her face usually so bright and smiling, buried in her pinafore and turned to the wall, and nothing but her soft, pretty golden hair visible above her small white shoulders, which were shaking with sobs, and at first, I fear, with naughty, wilful temper.

Mother's face, too, was sad, as mothers' and fathers' faces always are when their children are naughty and they have to be stern and punish them. Little children do not often believe it, but it hurts father and mother quite as much to punish them as it does the children to have the punishment.

But Matty never is long naughty, and she has soon sobbed out, "Mother, I'm quite good," and is sitting on mother's lap, having her soft curls stroked down, and her big blue eyes wiped dry from the tears by mother's own cool, soft cambric handkerchief. When her trembling lips have found the way to

smile again, there is schoolboy brother Jack kneeling before her and mother, emptying his pockets of the pretty greenish-brown clusters of nuts, and telling, as fast as he can, of all the fun he has had, his jumps and his scrambles, his lucky hits and his unlucky falls, while he shows sundry jags and tears in his jacket where the branches and brambles have caught hold of it.

"Oh, Jack! another job for me to-night, before you will be fit to go to school to-morrow morning!" says mother. And Jack, for just one minute, perhaps, feels a shade of remorse for his carelessness, but is far too anxious to get on with his story to give more than a passing thought and a loving little stroke to those fingers of mother, which presently must do so many stitches to put all to rights again.

Presently a slow step is heard on the stairs, and the tapping of a stick; and mother says,—

"Jack, dear, is granny's corner all right? Bring her chair a bit further forward."

Jack thinks to himself, as he puts granny's footstool as he knows she likes it, and sees that her book and knitting are both handy on the table,— "How funny that there should be two corners!—Matty's over yonder, where she was naughty, and granny's all comfortable by the fire!"

But Jack did not think of things more than other little boys; and he soon had to go up to the nursery tea, where there was plenty of fun and talk, to say nothing of bread and butter—good thick hunches, such as a hungry little schoolboy needed.

Then came the learning his lessons for the next day, which was not quite so pleasant, but which Jack did with all his might, as he was an honest little lad, and knew that work wants our best efforts spent on it to make it good work: and also that if his lessons had not been locked up safely in his brain-drawers, the half-hour with mother, and father, and granny, would not be half so jolly as it was when everything had been done his best by

When he came into the parlor Matty was just saying "Good night," and was a very smiling, good little Matty; and when she was gone Jack bustled up to his father, and thumped down the first volume, of Tom Brown's School Days, which father was

reading to him, and which caused father to look over his newspaper and say,— "All right, old boy," we will set to work with Tom directly I have finished this article."

Jack therefore filled up his spare time by seeing how comfortable he could make himself, and had well-nigh succeeded to his own satisfaction when mother's voice from the tea-table broke in with,—

"Leave a corner for me to work in, Jack."

"Well, I never!" exclaimed Jack, sitting bolt upright on the rug, there it is again!"

"What is again?" asked kind old granny, smiling down on the boy.

"Why the corner, to be sure, granny."

"Corner, Jack! What corner?"

"Why look here, granny," went on the boy eagerly "When I came in this afternoon, the first thing I heard was Matty naughty in the corner. Then, next thing, mother told me to see that your

corner was all right and comfortable for you. There were two corners. Then I went upstairs, and there were Matty and the other little ones hard at it, playing at "Puss in the corner!" There, you see, was another one. And now, down here, Mother is asking to have her corner to work in! Is it not odd; four corners

all different? Punishment, play, rest, work, not one alike, or wanted for the same thing!"

Granny sat quiet for a minute, looking smilingly into the fire. At last she said, stroking the little boy's curly head with her wrinkled old hand, "Jack, my boy, can you have patience with a bit of old woman's talk? It will not take long."

"Well, you see, Jack, most of us start in life with the idea that we are in some way or other somebody great, and that we have a great world of our own to live in; and one of the lessons we have to learn is—and it is a hard one to learn to most of us—that we are only little ignorant children, with just a small corner to live in."

The first little corner we are sent into in the world is that warm, loving one—the corner in mother's heart: which, because it is such a warm, loving one, makes her glad when her little baby has been granted a place (I hardly like to use the word corner about

such a great thing as this is) in Christ's Body—the Church; made a member of Christ, together with all the great saints and holy men. In the corner granted to it the little child grows, and finds it a bright, beautiful place, full of the sunshine of happiness, in which he may play and be merry. But play is not always good for children, so in each child's corner there is placed some work for it to do—just the kind of work that it is best and wisest for him to do. But the little child—aye, and the grown-up and old child, too—often think that they know better than the All-wise Giver of the corner and of the work; and because they like the play best, leave the work alone. Then, because they are doing wrong, the bright sunshine of happiness goes away, and the corner becomes dark and dull; and the wayward, naughty child, becomes cross and unhappy. His great Father then lays the kind hand of chastisement on His naughty child, bidding him to stand still awhile in his corner and be sorry for his fault; just like mother bid Matty this afternoon. When the child is sorry, then comes forgiveness, and his corner ceases to be sad and dark; and if he takes up the work he finds ready there, and does it with right good will, there is the sunshine of happiness all around him again, and he finds it just as bright as mother does hers when she sits by you and father and works. By-and-by the corner has another message for the child, which bids it stay still there. Maybe it is sickness that brings the message, and it says, "You have played and worked a bit, but that is not enough. Now

PUSS IN

THE CORNER



you must learn to be quiet, to lie still, aye, even to bear pain, if God sees it good for you. It is sent to rub away the dross on the silver image of our King, which each Christian wears; so that when the King comes He may see a faint likeness of Himself—poor, and little, and marred, indeed, but still Himself, made perfect through suffering"—Sunday.