

JIM'S "DOUBLE-RIPPER."

BY ROSA A. MURDOCK.

JIM sat staring into the fire, with a rather doleful expression on his usually sunny countenance. The room was very quiet. No sound save the solemn tick of the clock on the mantel, and the gentle purring of Susie's pet kitten, who lay cuddled up in a soft white ball in the most comfortable easy-chair in the room, with the usual selfishness of the brute portion of the creation.

There Jim sat for half an hour, never moving a muscle and with the same fixed, gloomy look. How much longer he might have remained so I am unable to say; but as the clock struck the half-hour the door opened, and in rushed little Jack, his round, chubby face very rosy with the cold and his eyes and mouth running over with fun and happiness. Dear little Jack! He was the light of that humble home. "Little Sunbeam" his fond mother called him, and Susie and Jim both agreed in thinking him the dearest most light-hearted little brother in the world.

As I said before, he rushed in, at the end of that gloomy half-hour, exclaiming: Oh! Jim, ain't you glad? It snows?"

No answer came from Jim; only a restless moving on his stool and a scowl on his brow showed plainly that he heard his brother's eager question. Jack did not notice the scowl; but, after standing half a minute at the window, tore off his scarf and hat, throwing them both on the floor, and dumped himself down in the rocking-chair, right on top of the poor kitty. A yell from puss caused Jack to give a tremendous bound; and Susie to rush in from the next room, seize her beloved cat, and take her off to comfort and pet her. Jack, after a few chuckles at his own carelessness, repeated his question: "I say, Jim, ain't you glad it snows?"

This time Jim heigned a sullen "No, I ain't." Jack's big eyes opened still bigger as he exclaimed: "And why, Jim?" "Well," said Jim, in a voice that he seldom used to anyone, least of all to Jacky, "ain't you a little goose? What's the use of snow without a sled;

and where's a fellow to get a sled, when he hasn't a cent of money in the world?"

Jack's eyes grew smaller again and his face lost its happy expression. He only said, "Oh! I forgot," and softly left the room.

Now Jim was Jack's idol. He was simply perfect, in his eyes. Wasn't Jim the head boy in his class at school? Didn't all the teachers praise him and all the boys like him? How he could play base-ball, and foot-ball, too, for that matter. Hadn't Jack a right to be proud of his young brother? Then, too, he was always very kind to his little brother, shared with him all his pleasures, never thought him in the way, and was so much kinder to him than most big boys are to their little brothers. Above all, since father died and left them pretty poor, how nobly Jim talked about helping moshier and Susie when he was a little older and learned a little more. Yes, indeed, he was a brother to be proud of; and, as Jack walked slowly down the street, his small breast heaved with sorrow on Jim's account, and "Oh! that I had some money;" was the little boy's thought.

He dived down into his pocket; but alas! one two-cent piece was all he could muster. He looked sadly at it, and said, in a half-mournful, half-laughing tone: "That wouldn't buy even a piece of rope, I suppose."

A tall and elegant-looking gentleman passed him and walked briskly along. "Now, I know that's a rich man," said Jack to himself. As he followed him with his eyes, wondering how much money he really had, the gentleman drew his handkerchief out of his side-pocket; and with it came a heavy black object, that fell unnoticed by him to the ground.

It took but a moment for Jack to reach that round leather purse, and as he picked it up no wicked thought of keeping it came into the dear little boy's mind. His was too pure a heart for that. I will not say that he did not press it longingly to his bosom and whisper "Oh! that I might keep it!" for such was, indeed, the case.

The gentleman walked quickly on, and it took a pretty good run on Jack's part to get up with him; but at last he