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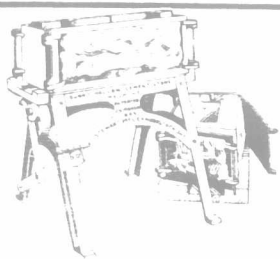
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last week when the ink-bottle bust too soon and burnt Fusie's eyebrows, and the week before when you shot Aleck Dan, and it was the week before that you began, and that'll make it four."

"How much?" asked Hughie, desperately, resolved to know the worst.

Foxy had been preparing for this. He took down a slate-pencil box with a sliding lid, and drew out a bundle of crumpled slips which Hughie, with sinking heart, recognized as his own vouchers.

"Sixteen pennies," Foxy had taken care of this part of the business.

"Sixteen!" exclaimed Hughie, snatching up the bunch.

"Count them yourself," said Foxy, calmly, knowing well he could count on Hughie's honesty.

"Seventeen," said Hughie, hopelessly.

"But one of those I didn't count," said Foxy, generously. "That's the one I gave you to try at the first. Now, I tell you," went on Foxy, insinuatingly, "you have got how much at home?" he inquired.

"Six pennies and two dimes," Hughie's tone indicated despair.

"You've got six pennies and two dimes. Six pennies and two dimes. That's twenty—that's thirty-two cents. Now, if you paid me that thirty-two cents, and if you could get a half-dollar anywhere, that would be eighty-two. I tell you what I would do. I would let you have that pistol for only one dollar more. That ain't much," he said.

"Only one dollar more," said Hughie, calculating rapidly. "But where would I get the fifty cents?" The dollar seemed at that moment to Hughie quite a possible thing, if only the fifty cents could be got. The dollar was more remote, and therefore less pressing.

Foxy had an inspiration.

"I tell you what. You borrow that fifty cents you found, and then you can pay me eighty-two cents, and—and—" he hesitated—"perhaps you will find some more, or something."

Hughie's eyes were blazing with great fierceness.

Foxy hastened to add, "And I'll let you have the pistol right off, and you'll pay me again some time when you can, the other dollar."

Hughie checked the indignant answer that was at his lips. To have the pistol as his own, to take home with him at night, and to keep all Saturday—the temptation was great, and coming suddenly upon Hughie, was too much for him. He would surely, somehow, soon pay back the fifty cents, he argued, and Foxy would wait for the dollar. And yet that half-dollar was not his, but his mother's, and more than that, if he asked her for it he was pretty sure she would refuse. But then, he doubted his mother's judgment as to his ability to use firearms, and besides, this pistol at that price was a great bargain, and any of the boys might pick it up. Poor Hughie! He did not know how ancient was that argument, nor how frequently it had done duty in smoothing the descent to the lower regions. The pistol was good to look at, the opportunity of securing it was such as might not occur again, and as for the half-dollar, there could be no harm in borrowing that for a little while.

That was Foxy's day of triumph, but to Hughie it was the beginning of many woeful days and nights. And his misery came upon him swift and sure, in the very moment he had turned in from the road at the manse-rectory, for he knew that at the end of the lane would be his mother, and his winged feet, upon which he usually flew from the gate home, dragged heavily.

He found his mother, not at the door, but in the large, pleasant living-room, which did for all kinds of rooms in the manse. It was dining-room and sewing-room, nursery and play-room, but it was always a good room to enter, and in spite of the playthings strewn about, or snippings of cloth, or other stour, it was always a place of brightness and of

peace, for it was there the mother was most frequently to be found. This evening she was at the sewing-machine, busy with Hughie's Sunday clothes, with the baby asleep in the cradle beside her, in spite of the din of the flying wheels, and little Robbie helping to pull through the long seam. Hughie shrank from the warm, bright, loving atmosphere that seemed to fill the room, hating to go in, but in a moment he realized that he must "make believe" with his mother, and the pain of it and the shame of it startled and amazed him. He was glad that his mother did not notice him enter, and by the time he had put away his books he had braced himself to meet her bright smile and her welcome kiss.

The mother did not apparently notice his hesitation.

"Well, my boy, home again?" she cried, holding out her hand to him with the air of good comradeship she always wore with him. "Are you very hungry?"

"You bet!" said Hughie, kissing her, and glad of the chance to get away.

"Well, you will find something pretty nice in the pantry we saved for you. Guess what?"

"Don't know."

"I know," shouted Robbie. "Pie! It's muzzie's pie. Muzzie tept it for 'oo."

"Now, Robbie, you were not to tell," said his mother, shaking her finger at him.

"O-o-o, I ffordot," said Robbie, horrified at his failure to keep his promise.

"Never mind. That's a lesson you will have to learn many times, how to keep those little lips shut. And the pie will be just as good."

"Thank you, mother," said Hughie. "But I don't want your pie."

"My pie!" said the mother. "Pie isn't good for old women."

"Old women!" said Hughie indignantly. "You're the youngest and prettiest woman in the congregation," he cried, and forgetting for the moment his sense of meanness, he threw his arms round his mother.

"Oh, Hughie, shame on you! What a dreadful flatterer you are!" said his mother. "Now, run away to your pie, and then to your evening work, my boy, and we will have a good lesson together after supper."

Hughie ran away, glad to get out of her presence, and, seizing the pie, carried it out to the barn and hurled it far into the snow. He felt sure that a single bite of it would choke him.

If he could only have seen Foxy any time for the next hour, how gladly would he have given him back his pistol, but by the time he had fed his cow and his horses, split the wood and carried it in, and prepared kindling for the morning's fires, he had become accustomed to his new self, and had learned his first lesson in keeping his emotions out of his face.

But from that night, and through all the long weeks of the breaking winter, when games in the woods were impossible by reason of the snow and water, and when the roads were deep with mud, Hughie carried his burden with him, till his life was one long weariness and dread.

And through these days he was Foxy's slave. A pistol without ammunition was quite useless. Foxy's stock was near at hand. It was easy to write a voucher for a penny's worth of powder or caps, and consequently the pile in Foxy's pencil-box steadily mounted till Hughie was afraid to look at it. His chance of being free from his own conscience was still remote enough.

(To be continued.)

What They See.

Nothing about a boy or girl is more noticed by others than their manners. Yet many a girl frets because her hat is shabby, and never worries because her manners are unlovely; and many a boy thinks that a better suit of clothes might help his chances in life, without dreaming of bettering his manners instead.