

THREE SHIPS

Three ships there be a sailing
Betwixt the sea and sky,
And one is Nox, and one is Then,
And one is By and Bye.

The first little ship is all for you—
Its masts are gold, its sails are blue.
And this is the cargo it brings:
Joyful days with sunlight glowing,
Nights where dreams like stars are growing,
Take them, sweet, or they'll be going!
For they every one have wings.

The second ship it is all for me—
A-sailing on a misty sea
And out across the twilight gray.
What it brought of gift and blessing
Would not stay for my caressing—
Was too dear for my possessing—
So it sails and sails away.

The last ship, riding fair and high
Upon the sea, is By-and-Bye.
O Wind, be kind, and gently blow!
Not too swiftly hasten hither.
When she turns, sweet, you'll go with her—
Sailing, floating, hither, thither—
To what port I may not know.

"UMBRELLA HOSPITAL."

BY L. T. MEADE, AUTHOR OF "THE FLOATING
LIGHT OF RINGFINNAN."

CHAPTER II. (Continued.)

He stood there for some time, looking up and down—not that he enjoyed this occupation, for the afternoon was hotter than ever, but simply because he was in no humour for reading, and the umbrella he had to mend could keep until it grew dark. This time some ragged children just at the opposite side of the street were too much absorbed by their play—the manufacture of mud pies—to notice him, or run away as was their wont, at his appearance on the scene.

They formed a little group, seated together on the pavement; two or three ragged boys, a girl or two, and, pre-eminent among them, the grotesque girl and the baby.

Old Henderson never could bear these "city brats," as he called them, and he liked to exercise the wholesome awe with which he generally inspired them.

On this occasion they were even more obnoxious than usual, reminding him of the curate's disagreeable visit, and his own spoiled afternoon.

"Cush! Get out of that!" he shouted to them, when he found that they did not stir. "Get away, you little brats, and leave the path clear for honest folks!"

As usual, his loud voice and stern aspect had the desired effect. The children did not care to play under old Henderson's eyes; they scattered like frightened hares, all except the grotesque girl and the baby.

"Get away! Follow your companions!" he called to her.

He was surprised, however, when, instead of the obedience he expected, keen black eyes gazed full at him, and a shrill, pert voice replied:—

"I ain't a-goin'; this ain't your pavement, Mr. Umbrella Man, and me and the baby, we means to stay here as long as we likes."

Henderson was too surprised and too dignified to make any answer to this; he stood in the doorway a moment longer, then went back into his shop.

The small girl gave a short laugh, which he heard as he went in. But then the baby began to cry, and she turned her attention towards it. As she did so the pertness seemed instantly to die out of her tiny, sharp face, and a look of tenderness to fill the black eyes, and to soften the hard little mouth.

"Don't 'ee, don't 'ee," she said, kissing and fondling the little one. "There, Lizar Hanne, I can't abear to hear yer cry." Her caresses seemed to soothe the baby, who presently fell asleep in her arms.

She held it listlessly on her lap, gazing straight before her. She was a very, very thin girl; her face was pale; the cheek-bones almost starting from the skin. As she watched the baby, she coughed once or twice.

"Yes, I be bad enough," she soliloquized aloud. "There ain't no manner o' doubts as I aint up to the mark, and this 'ere 'eat seems to grind more strength from a body even than the cold." She gazed up at the sky. "Why, I'd real like it to rain fur a little bit; I'm fur athirst for sum'ut cool-lik."

There was no sign of rain, however, in the fierce heat of the sun. It beat on the old poke bonnet, and presently its owner, half tottering under the weight of the baby, staggered to her feet.

"I'm glad as I give old Umbrella a bit o' sarce, and druv him in," she said to herself. This fact seemed to give her great satisfaction, for she laughed shrilly, though she managed to hold the baby in such a position that it did not wake.

"I'll just go and take a look at the old 'un," she said again, and she crossed the street and once more peeped in at the door of the Umbrella Hospital. Henderson had returned to his little parlour, and Plato's Discourses lay on his knee; but he was not reading.

"My h'eyes!" said the small girl, and she came into the very centre of the open doorway to gaze more comfortably. As she did so her sharp gaze took instant note of the furniture and the little shop and parlour.

"It do look cool," she said. "Wouldn't Lizar Hanne sleep sound in yere?"

As she spoke she pointed with her finger to a small wool rug; seeing, in imagination, Lizar Hanne reposing peacefully on its softness.

Suddenly an idea darted through her brain. Why might she not place the baby there for half an hour? Henderson would be sure to sleep for an hour, perhaps for two hours, and it would be so nice for the baby to rest in a place which was by comparison so cool; and, oh! what a relief to her own aching arms!

No sooner thought of than acted on—grotesque bonnet, bare legs, fat baby, and all, entered the shop; from the shop they went to the parlour, and the fat baby was laid at old Henderson's feet.

"I'll be back fur babby in 'arf an hour," said the girl as she scuttled away.

CHAPTER III.

Old Henderson slept on, not comfortably as he would in bed, but in that uneasy fashion which an upright position and the constant jerking of the head forward induce.

This sleep was sure to produce dreams, and Henderson dreamt. His dreams were very annoying, their principal figure being the curate, while round him revolved the most disagreeable and repulsive-looking street children he had ever seen.

The curate was taking these children into the country; but as they went they jeered at Henderson, and taunted him for contributing nothing to their enjoyment. Each of these children had the same style of voice and the same style of face as the grotesque girl who had refused to leave the steps at his bidding.

There were fat babies also in the group—heaps of fat babies—until it seemed to Henderson that not only did each child hold a baby, but the fattest and largest was held by the curate himself; and they all—curate, children, babies—were going country-wise, and laughing at him as they went. He almost fancied himself back in the days of the Egyptian plagues, and that this plague of babies and children was sent for his special benefit.

From so unpleasant a sleep he presently awoke, smiled with relief at its being but a dream, and stretched himself in his old arm-chair. The day was a little cooler now; the sun had left his parlour, and no longer beat with fierce power on his head. He sat still for a moment before exerting himself to put down the kettle for tea.

What an unpleasant dream he had had! But what a good thing that it was but a dream, that he was not really surrounded by those dreadful fat babies and pert children! Why were such things really to happen they would drive him mad. But, hark! What was that? He started forward, to perspiration even stood out on his forehead, for very, very close to him was a sound uncommonly like the sound he had heard so distinctly in his dream. It was the gurgling, contented sound which a baby makes when it crows to itself and sucks its thumb.

(To be Continued.)

HINTS TO HOUSEKEEPERS

To Cure Mosquito Bites.—A mixture of glycerine and carbolic acid is said to form a wonderful protection from mosquitoes as well as a cure for the bites. Take about twenty drops of the acid and put it into a bottle containing an ounce of glycerine and half an ounce of rosemary water. If used freely at night, the sting of the bites will be almost miraculously cured and the disfiguring blotches removed by morning.

Here is a dish called "sponge pudding," of which Southerners are very fond:—Beat seven eggs till they are light as seafoam; add six tablespoonfuls of sugar, and beat for five minutes furiously. Sift into this seven tablespoonfuls of sweet corn meal, one tablespoonful of salt, grated rind of half a lemon and its juice, freed from seeds. Stir quickly and bake in sponge-cake pans, serving hot with hot sauce or creamed butter, and sugar, with nutmeg.

Oatmeal Breakfast Cake.—Take one quart of Canada oatmeal, wet with one quart of cold water, and pour it into a baking tin, so that it will stand half an inch deep. Shake down level and bake in a hot oven half an hour, or until it is crisp and brown on the surface. Cut quickly into two-inch squares and serve hot.

Iced Tea.—Is now served to considerable extent during the summer months. It is, of course, used without milk, and the addition of sugar serves only to destroy the finer tea flavour. It may be prepared some hours in advance, and should be made stronger than when served hot. It is bottled and placed in the ice-chest till required. Use the black or green teas, or both, mixed, as fancied.

To make tough meat tender.—When flesh of beast or bird is so tough that it must be boiled, a tablespoonful of vinegar put into the pot hastens the process and destroys the tissue of the toughest and hardest muscle.

Success eludes the average cook in the making of those appetizing breakfast relishes—pop-overs. A teacher says it is simply a question of beating. Pop-overs belong to the class of batters dependent for their lightness upon the beating in of air bubbles, and this must be done. The two eggs should be beaten separately, the two cups of milk beaten in, and the two cups of sifted flour, to which the pinch of salt has been added, lightly folded in; then the batter beaten with a Dover egg-beater to the last degree of lightness. They are perfectly baked in small bowls of yellow ware, the small stone pans that don't seem to be procurable anywhere outside of Boston being especially suitable. But they will be perfect in the bowls or gem-pans if the beating is sufficient. They should bake a long time in a hot oven.

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