

The Little Scissors.

Vol. I.

OTTAWA, MAY, 1870.

No. 1.

ONLY A BOY.

Only a boy, with his noise and fun,
The veriest mystery under the sun;
As brimful of mischief, and wit, and glee,
As ever a human frame can be,
And as hard to manage as—what? ah me!
'Tis hard to tell,
Yet we love him well.

Only a boy, with his fearful tread,
Who cannot be driven, but must be led;
Who troubles the neighbors' dogs and cats,
And tears more clothes, and spoils more hats,
Loses more kites and tops and bats,
Than would stock a store
For a year or more.

Only a boy, with his wild, strange ways,
With his idle hours on his busy days;
With his queer remarks, and his odd replies,
Sometimes foolish, and sometimes wise,
Often brilliant for one of his size,
As a meteor hurled
From the planet world.

Only a boy, who will be a man,
If Nature goes on with her first great plan—
If water, or fire, or some great snare,
Conspire not to rob us of this our heir,
Our blessing, our trouble, our rest, our care,
Our torment, our joy!
"Only a boy."

THE FELLOW THAT PUT ON AIRS.

I AM Jack Cade. I live on the hill yonder with mother. Mother takes in washing, and I carry home the baskets; and we are just as good as anybody, if not a little better than some. What's the use of being an American citizen, if that isn't the case? As for putting up with airs from any one, that I'll never do. It was his taking airs that made me hate him—a noisy, mean, contemptible, flat-backed, strutting, head-tossing dandy, dressed to kill, all the days of the week, with a shiny new pin in his tie, and a watch and chain, and gloves, kid gloves to school. I don't know why, but the gloves made me the maddest of all. There was I, you see, in my patched trowsers. Mammy had every color you can think of let into 'em in squares, I do believe; she never let 'em go ragged, she didn't, nor don't; and my old cap, and rough shoes. And I was just as good as he was; at least I thought so. And why couldn't he go to college, instead of the public school, he and the like of him? "His father's principles," said he. And up head he used to get, over us in the red shirts and rough boots, and have the medal too. I know it was partiality—at least I used to feel sure it was, then. Wasn't it enough for him to have his finery and his money, and his white hands, and his airs and graces, without being up head, and wearing the medal too? Put it on his watch chain he did. Bah!

So Ned Baker and Dick Rose and I we got up a party against him. We got a name for him "Stiffy Falkirk"—Frank Falkirk was his name. We spilt ink on his pants a-purpose, when we were ink monitors. We stole his composition on prize-day. We set all the other boys against him that we could, and we tried to get him into scrapes. We couldn't do that though, he was too cute. And as for spoiling his things, he had dozens of suits; and when we stole his composition, he went into a class-room, in recess, and wrote another.

Then, when Butcher Bill made him fight, and we all thought that would teach him a thing or two, he got the best of Bill and gave him a black eye, and strutted around next day as straight and as fair, and with his hair parted down the middle, all the

same as ever. Up in his lessons too. Bill was at home a week, and that made us all the madder. Oh! how I hated him! I used to sit wishing him to miss, wishing his good looks to leave him; hoping his father would lose his money, and he have to come to begging or digging in the canal along with the men from the city. It got so that I couldn't enjoy my nice rye bread and butter for thinking how he ate dainties; nor my new jacket, that mammy made herself and lined with her old red flannel petticoat, for thinking of his fine coat with quilted silk inside, and a velvet collar. If I could have got head in any class, it would have softened me a bit; but there he was, as if he was nailed head. I cursed him once—Lord forgive me!—and mammy made me learn a chapter for it. She said he was a fine boy. That's when—her to praise him—first I said a bad word, and then I choked. The whole world for him, nobody for me. Nobody seeing that it wasn't fair for him to have so much and me so little, when I was just as good as he was. Next day I threw a stone at him. It didn't hit him. He strutted away as fine as you please, and I went to the boys. They were playing ball—Bill and Ned and Dick, and a lot more. But when the game was over, I stopped them.

"Bill," says I, "Stiffy is taking on more airs than I can put up with. Let's fix him."

"I'm your man," says Bill; "only you see, it can't be done. I own up that he knows how to fight, and he's a No. 1 with that confounded teacher, because he's rich."

"Yes," says Ned, "might as well let him have his way in school; he's swallowed the dictionary whole, and made way with the grammar in slices. As for compositions, I know he copies 'em, but nobody can find him out."

"No," says I, "but I tell you what we can do; we can duck him. You know, like his airs, he belongs to a 'Youth's Debating Society,' and goes there every Wednesday evening. Its ten o'clock before he gets home, and from the end of Pike's Lane he is quite alone. There's a pond, as we all know, just past that turning; and if four of us can't put Master Stiffy in, we're fools."

"Good for Cade," says Ned.

"Hurray," says Bill.

"Bully," says Dick. "We'll take the starch out of Stiffy for once in his life, and no mistake;" and we joined hands on it and made up our plan. Before nine, next Wednesday evening, we were all to be together at Pike's Pond, where, under the willow tree the "bread and butter bushes" grew as thick as a hedge, and would hide us; and when he came, whistling his opera tunes along the road, we'd surround him with a rush and souse him.

"Four to one is mean odds," said Bill the butcher. "I'd never jine in this if it was anybody but Stiffy."

"Three groans for Stiffy!" says I. And we groaned; and Aunty Comfort, toddling down the road, thought it was a ghost, and hollered, "Massy on us."

Of course I didn't tell mother; but I kept thinking of Wednesday, as if something good was to happen to me when it came—thinking and thinking, with a kind of fever inside of me, and my heart beating very fast every now and then.

On Wednesday mother was a-bed with headache;

and after I'd made her tea, and lit a candle, I went out to meet the boys. It was a bright night, and we took ourselves over to the pond, and waited. I never shall forget that evening: the sky so blue, and the air so still, and the frogs a-croaking loud close by me. As I listened, one big fellow seemed to say, "Stiffy!" "Stiffy!" "Duck Stiffy!" "Duck Stiffy!" over and over again.

"Won't I enjoy it!" says Bill. "I hope he is in his extra best."

And I remember he'd just said that, when we saw a red light down in the village; first nothing much, and struggling with smoke, and then a great red blaze.

"House a fire!" says Bill. "There's the engine."

"We can't run neither," says Ned. "What a shame!"

"Run, and lose our chance with Stiffy?" says I. "No indeed."

So we watched the light, steady and red for an hour, with the bell a-ringing, and the sparks flying, and sounds of voices coming to us now and then, but at last fading away, and leaving the stars all alone in the sky. It was nearly eleven now.

"Late for Stiffy," said Bill.

"He's stopped to see the fire," said Ned. "Hark! That's him now."

And sure enough, there was the step we all knew well enough strutting along the road, a little slower than usual; and he was not whistling neither, Stiffy wasn't.

The moon was set, and we couldn't see him very well, but there was enough light for us too. Just as we had planned, we gathered around him, and set up a howl.

"You are in for it now, Stiffy! In for a ducking. You might as well just give up. Over with him! Hurray!"

Stiffy didn't struggle. All he said was:

"Boys, dont! I think you wouldn't if you knew how I—"

But we were just glad to have cowed him. In he went. Once! He gave a gasp, and a feeble shudder. Twice! He gasped again, but did not stir.—Three times!

"Lord have mercy! Pull him out—quick!" cried Bill. "You put us up to this, Jack! We've drowned him! He's dead!"

We dragged him out, and he laid on the grass just as motionless as a statute, and dripping with the green stagnant water of the pond. Ned began to cry, Bill to swear, Dick to shake and cling to me. I struck a match, and lit a bit of paper I had in my pocket.

The light it gave fell over him bright and red. Then we all cried out again.

"Water don't burn," says Dick.

"Did we do it?" cries Bill.

The other two of us didn't speak.—There lay before us Frank Falkirk, certainly; and dripping from our ducking too. But his handsome coat was all burnt into holes, his hair singed, his hands blackened, and there was a great red burn on his cheek.

"How could we burn him a-ducking him!" says Bill. "Its one of them miracles."

You see Bill had just been coaxed into Sunday
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