

resemblance to a Cheshire cat surrounded by serpents, with intense disgust, and laid down his pencil with an air of finality. His eyes, defiant, desperate, were fixed upon the framed picture of the horse, and then in appeal upon Herr Muller. "I do not wish to draw any more," said he firmly. "I do not like the drawing."

The Club gasped, and Herr Muller turned slowly pale. "Fiddle, Fiddle!" said he in a horrified voice. "And you with your great gift!"

"No," said Fiddle firmly, those frightened, loving eyes fixed unwaveringly upon the old man, "no, I have no great gift. At first I think perhaps yes, I have. But I have eyes. I see the work of ces messieurs. I see mine, and I do not like it. I do not like it, because I do not do it well. That is why. I will clean the palettes, I will wash the brushes in oil and hot water, I will three times a day feed Maximilien, I will do everything but this drawing. I do not do it well, and I do not like it."

There was a great silence. At last—"But the horse?" cried old Muller, looking suddenly aged, "the horse? You must have a great gift, Fiddle. The horse is wonderful. And you did it, child?"

"Yes," said Fiddle, sadly, shrugging his shoulders, the wistful, puzzled expression strong upon him, "yes, I did it. It was very easy. I found a beautiful calendar under the counter in the store, all gilded, with a horse upon it. The horse was all raised up, standing out from the back of the picture. I laid the brown paper upon it and I ran my pencil along the raised lines, and there was the horse again. But my mother told me I was not to tell you I drew it that way. I know now that was not the right way to do it, but it was easy."

He looked imploringly from one to the other, but the members of the Club would not look from their paper. At Herr Muller they dared not look. The old man stood motionless, stricken, his face in his hands. But they turned at the cry of Fiddle.

The child had leaped to his feet, and stood, white and trembling, his hands outspread. "Ah!" he cried, and the lads winced at the sound of his voice. "Ah! now I understand! You only loved me because you thought I drew that horse in the proper way, as these gentlemen draw! Ah! mon pere, only because of that. And now you do not love me any more! I will go away, I will go back to the little brothers! I did not know, I did not understand! Pardon! Pardon! I will go, I will go. You do not love me any more, mon pere. The gift was not great!"

His hand was upon the door, and the Club caught its breath in something like a sob. But Muller held out his hands.

"The gift was not great," he said in a shaken voice, "but thy heart is great, my little child. And mine also. Come thou to it."

Again there was no sound in the room but the sound of Fiddle's sobs as he fled to his master's arms.

# BILLY'S BEATITUDE

By JEAN BLEWETT

BILLY in the flesh—very much in the flesh, being of the round and rosy variety of boys—was in the gooseberry garden; but the incorporeal Billy was in the seventh heaven with the moon, the stars, and the milky way shining hazily leagues below.

He massed all the superlatives he knew into a sentence descriptive of his state of mind, then threw the superlatives and the idea to the winds together. When a boy is free from carping care, when every heart-beat is half smothered in joy, and a teasing angel of content is boring dimples in his freckled cheeks, words are flat, stale, unprofitable.

"Nice day, isn't it?" The melancholy voice of John Archie Hamilton broke in on Billy's blissful musings, the melancholy eyes of said John Archie peered through the ironwork of the back garden gate. Billy vouchsafed no answer. Who cared about the weather, anyway?

"What's tickling you?" the melancholy voice went on. "Sunday school picnic coming off, eh?"

Billy snorted derisively. What a fool John Archie was!

"To see you doubled up with fun makes me wish I was back in the happy care-free days of boyhood once more."

"Oh, Ann'll be in good humour to-morrow," was Billy's apparently irrelevant rejoinder.

"With Eric Brown, never with me," moodily. "I haven't had a decent word for a week. Your Aunt Ann is a heartless, fickle-minded young woman who—"

"Who cares?" broke in Billy. "We'll go down to the river and sit on the old scow awhile."

"We'll do no such thing," firmly. "Your mother is forever warning me not to take her only child where he'll run the least risk of being drowned."

This remark struck Billy as being very funny. He laughed until he lost his breath, and fell in the gooseberry bush nearest him. John Archie opened the gate and came through.

"What's the fun? Tell us all about it, Billy."

"You know how sick a fellow gets of being his mamma's only angel child, 'specially if he's had the job all his life. No matter what he wants to do he gets pulled up short with: 'You're all the boy mother has, her hopes are bound up in you.' The imitation of the voice and manner of Billy's maternal parent is so perfect that John Archie's melancholy dissolves in a grin. "Goodness knows," goes on Billy, "it's bad enough to be the only kid in the house without having the fact thrown up to you every time you try to have any fun. I've had a double dose of 'don'ts' right along; don't go swimming or skating for fear of drowning ma's only child, don't do any scrapping 'cause your dad's a minister. Gee! I've never had any fun, but—"

with a joyous whoop, "I'm going to, I'm going to."

"Be careful," urged John Archie, "be very careful."

"Sho! Haven't done a thing all my life but be careful. A chap that can't get off to school without his ma calling him back to remind him that he's all the boy she has don't need to take lectures in carefulness from no amateur like you, John Archie. He gets all that's coming to him, and don't you forget it."

"You've a lot to be thankful for just the same."

"True for you. I'm so happy I've got to holler. Lot to be thankful for! Well, you'll say so when you know all."

John Archie sighed half enviously over the happiness in Billy's face, and Billy's voice and Billy's every motion. "There's a cooling ahead of you," to quote a country proverb. "You're in too high feather, altogether," he began sententiously, then broke off to laugh. Billy's hilarity was contagious. "What is it?" went on John Archie, "the pony you've been wanting so long?"

"Better'n that, oh, heaps better'n that!" John Archie was growing excited. "It—you haven't a new brother—eh?"

"Better'n that," cried Billy, standing on his head and kicking his heels in the air.

"You've always made out you were crazy to have a brother," complained John Archie.

"What do you say to two brothers?" Billy reversed himself, and stood with his legs wide apart. "What do you say to twins?"

"Twins!" echoed the other weakly; "twins!"

"When dad and I got home from preaching anniversary sermons out at Chalmers," beginning in the middle of his story after the fashion of boys, "the twins were here. Soon as we arrive up rushes Aunt Ann to break the glad tidings to dad. Right on her heels comes that Miss Beatty who has been visiting ma for a week or more—only now she's decked out in a sort of uniform with a nurse's cap on her head. She marches straight up to dad. 'Nice little boy,' says she uncovering the bundle in her arms. 'He is little,' says dad kind of disappointed like. 'Wait till you see the other one,' says she. 'Another!' gasps dad; 'you don't mean to say there's another?' Then Aunt Ann has her innings. 'Two of the dearest, sweetest, cutest things! Nothing in all the world is quite so nice as twin boys—unless it is twin girls.' I up and hollers hip, hurrah! as hard as I can, and dad gives me one of his pulpit looks, and asks me if I realise I'm a back number, and that the twins will take all the time and attention the family can spare. 'They can have my share,' I tell him in a hurry. I'm so blamed tired of being it I'd like no better fun than playing orphan for a spell, and dad forgets he is a minister and laughs out like a real man."

John Archie plucked a gooseberry, dusted it carefully, and put in his mouth. "Most young aunties would think twins a nuisance, but" with a horrible grimace due to the sourness of the gooseberry, "dear gentle Ann—"

"It's none of her affair," interrupted Billy with some heat. "They aren't her twins." Then as his companion subsides into a sort of sighing silence, "You're a nice sort of professor, you are. The Bible says you're to laugh with the folks that feel good, and cry with the other kind, but you never did the weeping act with me, or for me, all the time I was weighed to the earth with being ma's only child. And now when we've got twins, and live twins, and I'm so tickled I don't know how to hold myself, you can't scare up a solitary snicker. You make me tired."

"I'll tell you what," explained John Archie, "we'll go down to the river and talk it over. Come along."

"Aunt Ann'll blame it on you if anything happens," warned Billy.

"Let her blame, who cares?" courageously. "Besides," his boldness decreasing, "you can explain that you suggested it first, or" turning quite cowardly, "we won't tell her where we've been, then she can't blame anybody in particular."

"The twins are named already," confided Billy

as the two struck across the commons. "Mother called one Douglas Hope, after dad, and Aunt Ann called the other—you'll be mad as hops if I tell you."

"I can guess," melancholy marking him for her own once more. "She was telling me the other day that Eric was her favourite name. Who cares?"

"Nobody," chuckled Billy, "only it was Archie she tacked on to the poor kid; wanted to give him the John, too, but ma said she drew the line at that. I should think so."

"Like to get on the old scow for awhile?" cried John Archie gaily. "Drowned! Nobody ever gets drowned here. That's it, rock her a little if you want to. She's fast in the mud, couldn't tip if she tried."

Oh, the golden afternoon, with the sunset flaring yellow, and the ripples chasing each other merrily. Billy's hour of beatitude was perfect. He lay stretched out on the bottom of the scow, which was warm and smelled of pine-pitch.

"Ever notice how the rushes'll keep saying a word over and over till they make a song of it?" he asked at length.

John Archie nodded dreamily. He knew the word and the song by heart—Ann! Ann! Ann!

"Generally it's something you want more than anything, but—"

"It almost always is," but in John Archie with a fatuous smile,

"But to-day it's something we've got. Listen to 'em, will you—twins! twins! twins! I declare!" Billy's laughter was the very gladdest thing that ever startled heron or gall in the old marsh bordering the river. "You'd think every cat-tail of the lot had caught on! Twins! Twins-s! Twins-s-s!"

## The Good Earth

By C. G. D. Roberts.

THE smell of burning weeds  
Upon the twilight air;  
The poignant call of frogs  
From meadows wet and bare.

A presence in the wood,  
And in my blood a stir;  
In all the ardent earth  
No failure or demur!

O spring wind, sweet with love  
And tender with desire,  
Pour into veins of mine  
Your pure, impassioned fire!

O waters running free  
With full, exultant song,  
Give me, for outworn dream,  
Life that is clean and strong!

O good Earth, warm with youth,  
My childhood heart renew!  
Make me elate, sincere,  
Simple and glad, as you!

O springing things of green,  
O waiting things of bloom,  
O winging things of air,  
Your lordship now resume!  
—Windsor Magazine.