

A Corner for Junior Readers

By Annie Margaret Pike

CHAPTER VI.

Mr. Bevington-Smith

Denny made the acquaintance of Mr. Bevington-Smith at a birthday party at the Flynns.

Mr. Bevington-Smith was Alfred Flynn's godfather. To be correct, Alfred Francis Theodore Flynn's godfather; the Francis Theodore being Mr. Bevington-Smith's names, too. The old gentleman used all three names in speaking of and to his godson. Alf. had once ventured to protest, but had been met with a "Tut, Tut!" and told "These are your baptismal names, my dear godson, and very good names they are. By all means make use of them," and of course he himself consistently went on setting Alf. the example.

As he shook his head two or three times during the conversation his large and ill-fitting brown wig slipped to one side, a circumstance that did not disconcert him in the least.

The Donnellys and Flynns had pews in the Harold's Cross Church, but Mr. Bevington-Smith was a regular attender at St. Patrick's Cathedral, which was within easy walking distance of his home.

Mr. Le Page, the Cathedral organist, from whom Robert took lessons, wished the boy to hear some special music he had arranged for a particular Sunday, so Robert asked his father's permission that he and Denis might go there that day.

As they were leaving the Cathedral they caught sight of Mr. Bevington-Smith and he of them.

He insisted that they should all three walk together as far as George's Street, where the boys could get the tram.

It was not their nearest way home, but neither of them liked to risk annoying the old gentleman by saying so. As things turned out they devoutly wished they had parted company with him at the Cathedral door.

It was one of Mr. Bevington-Smith's habits to wear elastic-sided boots. They were easier to pull on and off than those that laced or buttoned. Perhaps he may have been a little vain of his small feet; they were certainly unusually small for a man; but whether his boots really were too small for him or simply too new for comfort, he had not gone many yards when he stopped, pulled them off, produced a cake of soap from his pocket, rubbed his stockinged feet with it, and pulled on the boots again.

The dispersing congregation continued to disperse, but many furtive glances were cast at the trio. Robert and Denis felt distinctly uncomfortable.

After that all went well until they reached Dame Street. Mr. Bevington-Smith had anecdotes to tell, and the boys were beginning to forget their discomfort when, with the remark, "This is intolerable!" he stopped again, and again pulled off the offending boots.

This time he made no attempt to put them on, but carried them, one on each hand.

He has been discoursing of the latest fashions in summer suitings, and on resuming the subject his eye caught sight of the effigy of a very yellow and very fat lamb that hung outside a large tailoring and outfitting establishment.

He stood stock still to assure the boys that it was undoubtedly copied from a

young sheep, and was put there to show the origin of the tweeds on sale inside.

"How invaluable and how happy," said he, pointing dramatically to it with his booted right hand, "are the bootless four-footed!"

At this opportune moment Robert and Denis were thankful to see their tram coming, and lifting their hats to their companion, made haste to board it and escape.

CHAPTER VII.

What Ailed the Finger?

Although Denny was her favorite, Bridget took care that he should not think he had vested rights in her kitchen, so when he appeared at the door one Saturday afternoon she promptly told him to be off to his piano practising.

His mother had gone to spend an hour or two with her invalid neighbour after setting Denny to his half-hour of scales and exercises.

Denny had sense enough not to argue with Bridget, so he returned to the deserted piano, and for a while scales and exercises were the only sounds to be heard in the quiet house.

Then came a short pause, then more scales and exercises, a longer pause, a few random notes, and then Denny's face peered in at the kitchen door again.

"Bridget, me jewel," he said, "have ye such a thing as a bit of rag?"

By this time he was standing beside the table where Bridget was making pies, but she might have been peeling turnips for anything Denny appeared to notice.

His face showed no interest whatever, and he held one of his fingers wrapped in his handkerchief.

"Sure I have so," replied she, taking a strip from the contents of the rag bag and giving it to him.

Denny thanked her, and, turning his back to the pastry-making, with a show of sublime indifference, went to the sink and let cold water run on his finger before he slowly bound it up.

"Did ye cut yourself wid the ould jack-knife?" asked Bridget.

"Sorra a cut," said Denny, "but I'm thinking maybe I'm getting a wart."

This was a subject, as he well knew, on which Bridget loved to hold forth; so, although he made a feint of opening the door to go out of the kitchen, he was quite ready for Bridget's invitation to sit down and she'd tell him what to do for it.

"Me step-uncle's gran'mother," said she, "was a great ould body for curin' warty hands."

"How did she do it, Biddy?"

You could not have told from Denny's manner that pies were within a mile of him.

"An' this is how she done it;" with a flourish of the rolling-pin, that was not meant as an illustration but merely to impress what followed.

"She had a bit of the skin of a five-fuffed pig, and she left it for a night on the turf-rick in a new moon, and thin she wrapped it in a paper she'd begged from the priest's housekeeper, and laid it in the hole in the wall where she did be keepin' her rosary of pink beads; an' whin annyone came to her for a cure she'd rub the warts wid the pig skin, and tell them to walk backwards to the end of the breen, and then they should turn an' run as if the constabulary was afther them, and not to come next nor nigh the place again for a twelvemonth."

"How much did they pay her, Biddy?" asked the shrewd Denis.

"Bedad thin, it was nothing but a trifle of six potatoes for every wart."

"Have you anything like it yourself?" asked Denis, artfully leading up to the real object of his visit.

"An I have not. More's the pity, but I was manin' to tell you to ask your Ma to put a drop of acetic acid on it."

"But she's out at the Flynn's!" said Denny, and then added, "perhaps an oven-tester would do me good while I'm waiting for her."

Now Bridget was very particular to have her oven at exactly the right heat when she baked pies, and her custom was to try it with a small piece of pastry before putting them in, an "oven-tester" as Denny called it.

There was a beauty in Bridget's hand. "Just put a sprinkle of sugar on it, mavourneen," said Denny coaxingly; and what could Bridget do but humour him?

If the fact that there was no wart on Denny's finger next day proves anything, we are justified in saying that to eat "oven-testers" is at least as good a cure as rubbing with the famous bit of pig skin.

The Lady of the White Silence

Lovers of the beautiful would read with joy "The Lady of the White Silence" by Mrs. Alice M. Winlow, which appeared in a recent number of "The Canadian Magazine."

Mrs. Winlow is a prismatic artist and radiates color. Her flower-studies in water-colors are delicate and dewy; her piano playing of modern impressionistic music shows a keen perception of color values; in literature she creates an atmosphere of color by a deliberate choice of ideas and words.

In "The Lady of the White Silence" the author has given us a picture in white and silver. The imagery is elusive as "the filmy shimmering of a dragon-fly's wings." And this quotation "The silver flutes made me think of a garden of white hyacinths in the dusk" illustrates the rhythm of the prose.

In the climax the black velvet drapery, throwing into vivid and luminous relief the purity of the statute, which is an interpretation of Beethoven's "Appassionata" Sonata, is a symbol of the entire story.

We may look to Mrs. Winlow for unusual stories for she has an unusual outlook upon life.

—B. L.

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