



THE YOUNG ARTIST.

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Young Hans is a little German boy who lives in the quaint old town of Nuremburg. He has not yet gone to the kindergarten, but is learning many useful and clever things at home. On Christmas, good Chris Kringle, as the German children call Santa Claus, brought Hans a drawing slate with a number of patterns to be traced on the glass. The little boy has traced them all many times, and indeed so much of an artist is he that he often adds strokes and lines which are not printed on the pattern, and greatly does he improve on his copy sometimes.

BAD COMPANY.

Bad company is a dangerous thing. A lady had a parrot that learned to swear by hearing a bad boy swear. Its owner took it to a neighbor's house, where there was a parrot which had learned to pray by hearing some one pray. The lady thought her parrot would stop swearing, and learn to pray, but the swearing parrot could out-talk the praying one, and taught it to swear. It was an unfortunate thing that the praying parrot fell into bad company. The swearing parrot would not have learned to swear if he had not had the company of some one who swore. So keep out of bad company.

TODDLEKIN'S VISIT.

When Toddlekin found they were going down the steps again he leaned his head against Aunt Lizzie's cheek and crowed in baby satisfaction. He liked to be out of doors, and he was glad they were going away from the house instead of going into it.

But Aunt Lizzie did not share his delight; she was greatly disappointed. She had taken him with her for a visit while the family moved into their new house, because it was "the only way to keep Aunt Lizzie out of the work and Toddlekin out of mischief," they all said. And now she had come back a day earlier than she was expected, and found the house closed and locked.

"They have all gone off somewhere, Toddles, and I don't know what we can do," she said.

Toddles did not know either, but he only laughed and did not care. It was a new neighborhood, and Aunt Lizzie was not acquainted with any of the people living near; but as she walked slowly down the street, she saw a little girl looking from the window of a small house around the corner. It was such a sweet, pleasant little face that Aunt Lizzie went right to the house.

"May I leave my satchel here for a few minutes?" she said. "I have just come home and found the family all away. I want to go down the street a little way and telephone to my brother's store, but this satchel is too heavy to carry."

"Yes'm," answered the little girl, her eyes fixed on Toddlekin. "Wouldn't—wouldn't—oh, couldn't you leave the baby, too? I'm lame, so I can't go out to play, and mother has to go away to work, and it would be such company to have him stay with me a little while. I just love babies and I'd take good care of him."

Aunt Lizzie looked around and saw how clean the little home was, and how little Sue's eyes shone as she watched the baby. Toddlekin was looking around too, and the minute he saw Sue's black kitten he wanted to play with it. So he and the kitten and Sue had a grand romp together; and Toddlekin cried to stay, so Aunt Lizzie left him there.

All the time she was gone she thought of the poor little girl who had to be left alone so often, and who was too lame to go out and play like other children. Aunt Lizzie wanted to do something for her, and when she went back she carried oranges, grapes and cookies, and she, Sue and Toddlekin had a picnic dinner together.

"It's been the beautifulest day I ever saw. I guess the reason you got locked out of your house for a while was so you could get 'quainted with the neighbors," said little Sue shyly.

Aunt Lizzie thought so, too. She was afraid they might all have been so busy and so happy in their new home that they would not have learned who lived in the little house.

But they know now, and the baby is often taken to visit Sue, and sometimes they bring Sue to spend long, lovely days at Toddlekin's house while her mother is away. Toddlekin thinks there is nobody like Sue, who is always so gentle, and knows such lovely plays. And best of all, they have so much work that Sue's mother can do at home that she does not often have to leave her little girl now.

PUSSY WILLOW.

The brook is brimmed with melting snow,
The maple sap is running,
And on the highest elm a crow
His coal-black wing is sunning.
A close green bud the Mayflower lies
Upon its mossy pillow;
And sweet and low the south wind blows
And through the brown fields calling goes,
"Come, Pussy! Pussy Willow!
Within your close brown wrapper, stir,
Come out and show your silver fur!
Come, Pussy! Pussy Willow!"

Soon red will bud the maple trees,
The bluebirds will be singing,
And yellow tassels in the breeze
Be from the poplars swinging.
And rosy will the Mayflower be
Upon its mossy pillow.
But you must come the first of all—
"Come Pussy!" is the south wind's call,
"Come, Pussy! Pussy Willow!
A fairy gift to children dear,
The downy firstling of the year,
Come, Pussy! Pussy Willow!"

Out West, some children in school last winter heard a queer noise in the entry among their dinner pails. They thought it was a visitor, but no one came in. So when they heard the noise again the teacher looked out, and there was—a bear! He ate all the children's dinners and then went away. The next day he came again, but he found a man with a gun, and the man and the gun kept the bear from ever coming again.