

## For Girls and Boys.

### KINDNESS REWARDED.

Some time ago, a poor old widow woman lived on the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway, where it passes through a wild district of Western Virginia, in which are very few inhabitants. She had an only daughter. They lived in a log hut near a very deep gorge, which was crossed by the railway bridge. The widow and her daughter managed to support themselves by raising and selling poultry and eggs. In the summer season they gathered berries, and, with other little articles, carried them to market. But it was a long and weary walk to the town where she sold these articles. The railway passed by her cabin to this town; but she could not afford to ride, and so trudged contentedly along on foot. The guard of the train came to know this good old woman. He was a kind-hearted man. He had learned the lesson of gentleness, and loved to practise it whenever he had a chance; and so he often called to the old widow when she was in sight, and gave her a ride to, or from, the market town. This saved her many a weary mile. She felt very grateful to the guard for his kindness, and the object of this story is to show how profitable his kindness proved to him.

One spring, in the stormy month of March, heavy rains had fallen. Roaring torrents of melting snow and ice came rushing down from the mountains into the gorge near the old widow's hut. The flood arose in the darkness of the night, and she heard a terrible crash. The railway-bridge was torn from its place, and its broken timbers dashed against the rocks below. It was almost midnight. The rain fell in torrents. It was dark as Egypt. The storm was howling terribly. In half an hour the express train would be due. What could be done to give warning of the awful danger threatening that train? It was terrible to think of the destruction that awaited it. But what *could she* do? She had hardly a whole candle in her hut; and no light she could make, of this kind, could burn in that wild storm. Not a moment was to be lost. Quick as thought she resolved what to do. She cut the cord of her only bedstead, and shouldered the bedding, the bed-posts, the side pieces and head pieces. Her daughter followed with their two wooden chairs. They climbed up the steep embankment, and piled all their household furniture in the middle of the railway line, a few rods in front of the awful gorge, through which the wild flood was dashing. She kindled the fire; and the distant rumbling of the train was heard just as the dry, broken furniture began to burn. The bright blaze leaped up, and threw its red, glaring light a long way up the line. But the fire would not last long, and she had nothing more with which to keep it burning.

The thunder of the train grew louder. But it was still five miles distant. Will they see it in time? Will they put on the brakes soon enough? The thought almost makes her wild. What else can she do? She tears off her dress. She fastens it to the end of a pole, plunges it into the fire, and then runs along the line waving the blazing signal round her head. Her daughter seizes a piece of the blazing bedstead and follows her mother's example in waving it round. The next moment will decide the fate of a multitude of passengers. The ground trembles under the old widow's feet. The great red eye of the engine bursts upon her as it turns a sudden curve. The train is at full speed; but the driver sees that there is something wrong. A shrill whistle echoes through the hills. Its cry is—"Down brakes! down brakes!" The guard springs to his post, and bends on the wheels with the strength which desperation gives. The wheels move slower and slower, and the panting engine finally stops in front of the widow's fire. It still gave light enough to show the bridge gone, and the yawning abyss, where the train and its passengers would have plunged into death and destruction, too horrible to think of, had it not been for the good widow's signal fire.

The guard, the driver, and the whole of the passengers, came to see what was the matter. And when they saw the bridge gone, and the dreadful gulf, into which they had so nearly plunged, we can imagine how they felt. They did not thank the widow first; but kneeling down by the side of the engine, in the dim light of the burnt-out pile, amidst the rain, and wind, and pelting storm, they first thanked God, who had made use of the widow woman to save them from such a terrible death. And then, with many tears, they thanked her for what she had done. They then made a collection for her on the spot. Afterward the railway company, on hearing of her noble act, gave her money enough to make her comfortable for the rest of her life. This was right, and generous, and noble.—*From "The King in His Beauty."*

## MEANWHILE.

BY KATE W. HAMILTON.

"I really cannot take the class," answered Mr. Nelson, with the reins hanging loosely in his hands.

"I am sorry; we need teachers," said the superintendent, disappointedly.

"Yes I suppose so. I am sorry too, but lack of time is the trouble. I haven't time to prepare the lesson each week.

Down the road, carrying a basket of flowers for the town market, and finishing his lunch as he walked, was Bob Greyson. The carriage overtook him, and Mr. Nelson, noticing the basket and guessing his destination, called out pleasantly:

"Jump in and ride, Rob."

Rob accepted with evident satisfaction, and answered cheerily all questions concerning the garden and farm; but when Mr. Nelson dropped the conversation, he drew a book from his pocket, and was soon deep in its pages. "A story," thought the gentleman, and smiled; but a second glance told him that it was a school-book.

"You are industrious," he remarked.

Rob looked up and laughed.

"This is one of my meanwhiles."

"A 'meanwhile?'" repeated Mr. Nelson, bestowing a more curious gaze upon the volume.

"Oh, the book is only a physiology, but I call it a 'meanwhile' this term, because I am just studying it in odds and ends of time," explained Bob. "I always have my 'regulars' and my 'meanwhiles'—things that there is a regular time and place for, and other things that I want to do you know, but can't unless I crowd them in around the edges. You see, the class is taking this study this term, and I didn't want to be behind them; but the garden takes a good deal of my time out of school. I thought I'd keep the book at hand, though, and work away at it when I had a chance. There are so many waiting times when somebody, or something isn't quite ready to go ahead, or a few minutes here and there when it doesn't seem worth while beginning anything, unless one has something like this all ready. But it is strange how much it counts in a day. I've kept up with the other boys so far."

"You are industrious," said Mr. Nelson again, but as if he scarcely thought what he was saying.

"Oh, it happens to be study this term, but sometimes it's only fun," answered Rob, with his eyes once more on his book. "My 'meanwhiles' are for any extras that may come along."

Mr. Nelson did not interrupt him. He was beginning to wonder whether it was not possible himself to find room for a certain "extra;" and he decided to stop again at the house on the hill, on his homeward way, and give the superintendent of the Sunday-school a different answer.

Rob saw a new teacher in the school next Sunday, but he did not dream that it was because more lessons than one had been crowded into his "meanwhile."—*Forward.*

## THE LOOM OF LIFE.

All day, all night, I can hear the jar  
Of the loom of life; and near and far  
It thrills, with its deep and muffled sound,  
As, tireless, the wheels go always round.

Busily, ceaselessly, goes the loom,  
In the light of day, and the midnight's gloom.  
And the wheels are turning, early and late,  
And the woof is wound in the warp of fate.

Click, click! there's a thread of love woven in;  
Click, click! another of wrong and sin.  
What a checkered thing this life will be,  
When we see it unrolled in eternity!

When shall this wonderful web be done?  
In a thousand years, perhaps, or one;  
Or to-morrow! Who knoweth? Not thou, nor I;  
But the wheels turn on, and the shuttles fly.

Are we spinners of good in this life-web, say?  
Do we furnish the weaver a thread each day?  
It were better, O my friends, to spin  
A beautiful thread, than a thread of sin.

—*Temperance Record.*