

What The Grandmothers Say.

O sixty years ago to a day,
Three maidens lived, so the grandmothers
say,
In a farm-house under an old elm-tree,
And they were as busy as maids could be,
And as fair and busy, the grandmothers say,
O sixty years ago to a day.

For Molly must spin, and Dolly must bake,
And Polly had all the butter to make,
And never an idle moment had they
To spend with the village girls at play;
For Molly must spin, and Dolly must bake,
And Polly had all the butter to make.

Those were good old times, so the grand-
mothers say,

O sixty years ago to a day,
When the bread was baked in the proper
way,
And butter was sweet as new-mown hay,
And yarn was yarn, so the grandmothers
say,

O sixty years ago to a day.

Know you who were these maidens so clever
and quick,
Who never were idle, or naughty, or sick,
Who were busy and healthy and handsome
and gay,
O sixty years ago to a day?

I think you will not have to go very far
Before you find who these maidens are;
Your grandmother's one, and my grand-
mother's one,

And, in fact, every grandmother under the
sun

Was one of the Mollys or Dollys or Pollys
Who did such wonderful things, they say,
O sixty years ago to a day.

A BOY'S FRIENDSHIP.

A Story of Boy Life in England.

CHAPTER VII.

"I WILL ARISE."



RESENTLY a flickering light
was seen through the trees,
and they reached a spot where
a dark-skinned woman sat
over a fire. The red glare of
the faggots lit up the leaves hanging
high overhead, and threw into deeper
shadow the still darkness of the wood
around. Now and again a bat flew
through the curling smoke, or a hare
—startled by the footsteps of the
gipsy and his companions—darted
across the grass.

The man said something in a lan-
guage which Ben and Frank could not
understand, at which the woman
looked up sullenly, and led the way to
the wigwam close by. The two visit-
ors crept under the dusky yellow
drapery after her, and found them-
selves in pitchy darkness, and silent—
save for a deep breathing somewhere.
In tones far gentler than they had
expected, the old woman spoke: "Ay,
poor child, here's two gentlemen come
to see ye. Are ye awake, dearie?"
The breathing stopped for a moment
—the sick boy was listening intently.

"Will the old gent creep up to the
other end? Ye'll find the poor boy
lying there."

Ben drew near as directed, and felt
the prostrate figure of poor George
stretched on some dry shavings. The

boy touched his arm, and drew his
head down towards him.

"Father," he whispered hoarsely;
"father, will you forgive me?"

The moment Ben's voice spoke, the
hand slackened, and the boy fell back
in despair.

"Dear heart, is it you, Master
George? So the good Lord has brought
you home again."

But he never answered, lying quite
still, breathing as before.

Then Frank drew near, and found
his face, pushing back his thick curls
from his damp forehead, and kissing
him like a sister.

"Who's this? It isn't mother, is it?"

"No, George, it's only Frank."

"God bless you, Frank. I know
you have forgiven me. I've suffered
enough."

"Oh, George, dear George," and
the tears fell fast from the eyes of
Frank, "I forgave you that very
night; and have been praying for you
ever since that the Lord would bless
you."

"I can't talk now—it will be over
with me in an hour or two, I can
feel; but do one thing for me, Frank,
please."

"What's that, dear fellow? I'll do
anything."

"Take me to—mother—and tell
father I'm dying."

No time was to be lost. Indeed, it
seemed very unlikely that the poor
boy would keep his hold on life for a
journey of five miles that dark night.
The man brought in a lighted candle,
and, by its glimmer, Ben lifted George,
carrying him in his brawny arms as
easily as if he were a child. Frank
followed close behind, with a few
clothes and things belonging to him.
The gipsy, without speaking, led the
way again—a still more difficult jour-
ney, and slowly made with such a
burden, the man having constantly to
wait, holding back the boughs and
straggling brambles to permit Ben
and George to pass unharmed.

The sick boy never spoke. When
Ben put his foot in a hole, and, with
all his care, jolted him, a groan passed
his lips; but otherwise the way
through the wood was threaded in
silence. At last they reached the
road where the gipsy had met them,
and here, for a moment, they halted
to take breath and counsel.

"It'll take you a good two hours to
get to the village at this rate, Master."

"I'm afraid it will," said Ben, "and
time is precious."

"Shall I run forward alone," sug-
gested Frank, "and get help from
some cottage?"

"No, boy; or p'raps we shall be
having you knocked up or lost. I'll
tell you what," continued Ben, so-
lemnly, "we will just ask God to help
us, and send relief."

It was only for a moment or so, the
old man standing in the starlight,
with his eyes uplifted, pleading with
his Lord; Frank hiding his tearful

face in his cap, and the gipsy looking
on with amazement and awe.

The latter interrupted them with a
whisper: "Excuse me, gov'nor, stop-
ping yer in yer prayers, but I hears
wheels."

"And while they are yet calling,
I will answer," was the pious ejacula-
tion of old Ben.

The sound became plainer and
plainer, and presently a small phaeton,
driving at a rapid pace, drew near.

"Why, it's Dr. Anderson! Thank
the Lord!"

At these words the vehicle pulled
up with a jerk, and the doctor was on
his feet in a moment.

He took off his carriage lamp and
closely scrutinized the face of George,
pale, and drawn with an expression of
pain. Then he held the limp wrist
between his fingers, and put his ear to
the boy's breast. It was but an in-
stant, and he had taken in the whole
state of things, and refixed the lamp.

"Now, Ben, lift him very carefully
—there; keep his head well up; now,
slowly down on this rug; that will do.
Jump up—both of you."

Before he started, he said a kind
word to the gipsy, as he put a shilling
into his hand.

"How's Nannie! Not getting
younger, I expect!"

"No, sir. It was very kind of you
to send her that beef-tea, doctor."

"All right; you're very welcome.
Good night."

The church clock was just chiming
a quarter to twelve as they drove past
into Crickleford. The doctor had chat-
ted pleasantly with Ben and Frank,
as they dashed along. He was a
quick driver, and the mare was fresh
from pasture.

As they drew near to the Squire's
house, a candle was seen burning in
one of the rooms, and a woman's
figure could be seen at the window.
She softly opened the casement and
looked out, straining her eyes towards
the approaching wheels. The next
moment and she had rushed down
stairs and opened the door.

"We're getting him out, ma'am.
Thank God, he's come back to ye."

It was Ben's voice, breaking the
good news. But the mother's love
had outrun him. Quickly, but very
tenderly, she had folded her arms
round the neck of her boy, tears of
joy welling up from her long pent-up
feelings.

"George, my darling George, look
at me—it's mother! Oh, doctor, does
he still live?"

Oh, yes. Don't be alarmed—he
will know you presently."

They carried him in, and laid him
on his own bed; while his mother,
running hither and thither so quietly,
and yet as briskly as any young
woman, came at last to kneel by his
side, and catch, to her unspeakable
joy, the first glance of his eye.

"Mother, is that you?"

"Yes, darling. Don't speak if it

hurts you. You are safely at home
once more, my precious boy."

"Thank God."

He lay very still for a few moments,
holding his mother's hand, with his
eyes shut; then, without opening
them, he said, with a slight quiver on
the pale lips:—

"Does he know I'm here?"

"No, dearest; but he will be here
presently."

The poor old Squire was not at
home. It was one of his "bad
nights." He had been very unsettled
all day; and now, late as it was, he
was out in the fields, with Griff and
the empty gun, calling loudly, "George,
George, come home lad—my heart's
breaking!" Mrs. Christie was watch-
ing for him when the doctor's phaeton
drove up.

"Ben, will you go and find my
husband, please, and tell him—not too
suddenly, the news?"

The old blacksmith hastened across
the dark, quiet fields, in search of
him. For a long time it was in vain,
until the Squire's hoarse, shaking
voice was heard, calling among the
trees facing the Church Meadows:
"George, George, won't you—won't
you come, my lad?"

The sudden appearance of Ben
hardly roused him.

"Want me, Ben? Never mind, my
good fellow, the rent audit won't be
till next month, and I'll take care
that y u're not pressed. George,
George, are you coming home?"

"I will arise and go to my father,
and will say unto him, Father, I have
sinned before heaven and in thy sight,
and am no more worthy to be called
thy son."

"Ay, those were the words of the
prodigal, Ben; but you see he came
back."

"You've been calling your boy in
these woods a long time, haven't you,
sir?"

"Yes, Ben. I thought to-night I
heard him answer me once, and say,
'Father, I'm coming,' and I ran in
the darkness to the fence, and listened.
But I could only hear the distant
sound of wheels."

"That was the doctor's gig."

"Where was he going, Ben?"

"To your house."

"Ah, Ben, it's no use—no use at
all. He gives me medicine, and talks
to me very kindly, to comfort my
heart; but it's no use, Ben; it's broke
—broke—broke."

And the old Squire turned away,
and cried again, in a hoarse, low voice,
"George, George, I thought I heard
you, lad—I did."

"No, sir; the doctor's brought you
no medicine, but something else, that
will do you a lot more good, please
God."

"What's that, Ben?"

"News of George."

The Squire took up his gun quickly
from the ground, and called Griff.

"Ben, I'm off home. You're not