

### Rob's Gymnasium Ticket.

'Mother, can't I buy a ticket to the gymnasium for this summer?' asked Rob Royse.

'How much does it cost?'

'Four dollars; but that includes baths, and—and just lots of things.'

'Could your little brother go in on your ticket?'

'No, of course not, but—'

'Then I am sure we can't afford it, Bob,' she said firmly.

But, mother, I need it so! I'm all stooped over and weak-armed, and thin as a rail,' he pleaded.

Mrs. Royse sighed, for what Rob said was true, and her great anxiety was to see her two boys grow strong and straight. Still, they could hardly afford the four dollars just now and she could not give to one and not to the other. So she answered quietly.

'Alden needs it, too, dear,' adding after a pause, 'I wonder if we could not have a gymnasium of our own?'

'If we had a big barn we could, but we can't stand up in our coal-shed.'

'What about the back yard—an outdoor gymnasium?'

'That big, old bare lot?'

'Yes. It needs to be big and bare, and the high fence around it is just the thing. The dead apple tree will make a fine hold for our swinging ropes, and we can easily fix up the place for basket ball, horizontal bars, and all those things.'

'And we'll have swinging ladders,' put in Rob, suddenly all enthusiasm, 'and Dollard Wright has a pair of saw horses he'll give us. Say, mother, wouldn't it be nice to have Dollard in our gym?'

Mrs. Royse looked dubious. 'We don't want a crowd of boys—it would soon give us trouble; but three would make it nicer than two, so if you promise to ask no one else, you may have him in it.'

'And between us we have money enough to buy our Indian clubs right off. Mayn't I go over and tell him about it?'

Away he bounded, leaving his mother smiling over her work and planning how to trans-

form the ugly back yard into a first-class gymnasium.

'I'll make them a floor-mat by sewing together those two old mattresses in the attic, and covering them with denim. It can be kept in the lattice porch at night. The best thing about the plan is that the boys are developing their muscles and they are in the open air at the same time, and happy at home where I can be with them. Maybe I shall get a little physical culture myself!' laughed the wise little woman.

That night the charter members of the Royse gymnasium held a caucus as Rob called it, and the most enthusiastic member of all was Mr. Royse himself.

'Well, we must all get to work and clean the yard till it looks like nev,' he said. 'Then I'll see that the ropes are up good and strong. If a punching-bag doesn't cost too much, we will have one in the corner.'

This was greeted with cheers, Dollard, exclaiming: 'Oh, let me buy that! Father was going to give me a gym ticket, and I'll just take the four dollars to get apparatus. We can invent so many nice games with the apparatus.'

'I know one already!' cried Alden. 'It's to put a tin can—an opened one—on the end of a pole, and see how many times you can throw it up and catch it on the pole again. It takes lots of practice.'

The older boys smiled over this, but Mrs. Royse declared that it would be fine training for the muscles of the back. Although they tried it next day 'just for Alden's sake,' Rob and Dollard got plenty of fun out of the tin can during that jolly summer.

Indeed the whole gymnasium was a grand success. To be sure no grass grew in the Royses' back yard that year; but there are many things better than grass. The boys developed some respectably big muscles, and became very skilful in their games. And since there were only three of them and it takes four to play most games, Mrs. Royse was often coaxed to leave her work and join them.

When she declared she was 'getting more physical culture than the housework could stand,' the boys resolved to help. They washed dishes, made beds, swept rooms, and, in fact, as Dollard said they 'turned girl' so that she could turn boy when the work was done.

'We're a Mutual Aid Society' she explained to Mr. Royse, while Alden whispered, confidently: 'Do you know, father, I never used to love mother as much as I do now. She's so jolly and always plays so fair!'

When fall came, Mrs. Wright offered the use of her big attic for the winter, and here, though somewhat hampered by low rafters, the boys continued their muscle training.

'Are you satisfied with your summer's gymnasium ticket, Rob?' asked Mrs. Royse, with a smile, as she helped him gather up his school books on the opening day.

'Well, I guess so!' he exclaimed, heartily. 'And it didn't cost four dollars, either, did it?'

'No. Did you notice how sturdy Alden has

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grown during the summer? He looks like a different boy.

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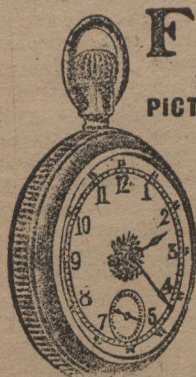
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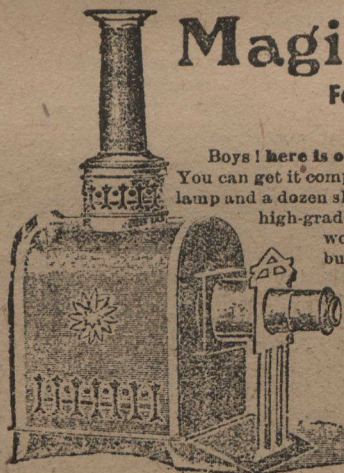
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