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THE PUNTING POLE.

Eric Tims was a clever, industrious boy of thirteen. He was handy with saw, axe, and plane; and during the long evenings he spent many hours in "making things." He used to say he liked making things all by himself. Many a time he delighted his mother with his work, and he used to surprise his little brother and sis. by the nice things he made for them.

But he is now preparing for the boating season. His father's house stood in grounds that sloped down to the Thames, and in the boat-house were a four-oared rowing boat, a canoe, and a punt. Punting was Eric's favourite amusement, and in the summer days he had rare times in punting and fishing. Eric trimmed and polished a punting pole, a regular beauty, light and tough, for his own use.

Unfortunately, Eric's father and brothers did their hardest day's work on the Thames on Sundays. Friends would join them; the lads donned their flannels, and the girls put on their boating costumes; the hamper was got ready, and away they went for all day on Sunday—till they often



THE PICTURE BOOK.

holidays Eric invited him to spend a day with him. In fact, when Eric went home, he felt quite dull without his companion. They sometimes disagreed, occasionally quarrelled; but they always made it up again, and were good friends. Eric's mother was pleased with her son's friend, and she told him if his parents would consent he might come on the following Sunday and go with them up the river. It was only natural that this should delight any boy, and Eric's friend would have been as glad as any other boy to enjoy a day in such company and in such a way.

But it was Sunday. So Eric's companion said: "I do not think mother will allow me to come on a Sunday; but she would, I am sure, allow me to come any other day." Eric's mother was rather annoyed at the answer, and said: "Oh, yes! I quite understand, there are some narrow-minded people who object to such things on Sundays; but as for that, five hundred boats

came home on Sunday night tired and irritable.

Now, Eric had a school companion whom he dearly loved, and during the

passed through Maidenhead lock before four o'clock last Sunday; but if your mother objects, there's an end of it. Come some other day."