

ately after his father's death. But the vacation this year belonged to Herbert, and Frank had given the matter no more thought than to wish sometimes as he walked wearily home at night that he could control time enough and money enough for a few weeks of rest away off in some place where everything would be new to him.

A few days before the 'Mary Thomas' was to sail for the north, Herbert, while out of the store for an hour on an errand for the firm, was attracted by a flock of English sparrows that seemed greatly interested in something down in the gutter near the street corner. There were probably fifty of the little creatures in the flock, and they were hopping about and chirping and chattering in a way that betokened some very unusual excitement in sparrowdom. Occasionally one or two of the birds would leave the others, and fly up the street as if in search of information of some kind, and when they came back they evidently brought some report which increased the general excitement.

Herbert approached quite close to the scene of the commotion, and soon found that the interest centered upon an old tin fruit-can that lay in the gutter. This the birds were trying to push along from the place where it lay, and the observer on the walk soon saw that they were also trying to roll it wholly out of the gutter. It seemed to be no easy matter to do this, though claws and wings and beaks were used to the best possible advantage. Finally, however, the can was pushed up the side of the gutter, and rolled well out into the street.

Upon examination, Herbert found a sparrow imprisoned in this can. The top had been but partly cut off, and hung by a small piece of the tin that served as a hinge. Probably the little bird in search of food had been tempted to enter the can, and in some way had tipped it over so that the 'door' had been closed, and birdie was a prisoner.

Herbert, of course, released the little captive, and it flew away with its companions. Just then a party of workmen connected with the waterworks came along and began to flush the gutter. This they had been doing further up the street, and suddenly it occurred to Herbert that the birds had seen them, knew they would soon be down to this point, and that their unfortunate comrade would be drowned if he re-

mained much longer in that can in the gutter.

'The knowing little things!' he exclaimed: and then he told the story to the workmen.

'It's a pity the human race don't look after its unfortunate ones as well as the birds do after theirs,' commented a great, burly fellow, with a sour-looking countenance, who evidently fed his mind much upon pessimistic views of human affairs. 'A bird gets into a tight place, and the other birds set to work and help him out; but when a man gets into a tight place, who cares?'

As Herbert walked away he found his thought turning again towards a matter that had flashed into his mind that morning as he happened to notice Frank's pale, pinched face, and rather weary movements. 'Frank needs a vacation more than I do. I wish he could go with me on that ocean trip up the coast. Perhaps—perhaps I ought to give it up and let him go in my place.'

'I'll not be outdone by the birds,' he said to himself as he walked along with the workman's sweeping criticism fresh in his ears. 'Frank's in a tight place, and he ought to be helped. He must have a vacation or probably he will soon break down. I am strong and can get through the year better than he can. He shall fly away to the red-woods on the schooner "Mary Thomas" and pick up all the strength he can find, and I'll take a day off now and then when I can get it, and go down to the beach for a plunge in the surf. It's easier to think of than it is to do it, but I'll do it!'

And he did. Frank was not easily persuaded, but he finally yielded to Herbert's importunity; and when the 'Mary Thomas' sailed she carried the pale young salesman who most needed the salt air, the sight of the great red-woods, and all the freedom and freshness of a voyage from the south to the great lumber region of the northern coast.

It is needless, perhaps, to add that Herbert's employers took pains to make his 'days off' come around as often as possible that summer; and his mother was thankful that she had one less matter to worry her than at one time she thought she would have.

### Johnny's Marble.

Seven little marbles lay huddled together in Johnny's pocket. They rattled merrily against one another,

and when Johnny went hop, skip and jump, they went hop, skip and jump, too, for they were so glad that marble-time had come again. Only the big green marble that Johnny called a 'real' did not stir at all, and was not glad a bit.

'Oh, dear, I wish it was winter again!' said the big marble. 'Then I could sleep all day in Johnny's play-room, instead of rolling about on the pavement.'

'I think that is fun,' said the little brown marble.

'What fun is there in bumping together and knocking each other about?' asked the big marble. 'And as soon as one game is done, another begins. It is so tiresome!'

In fact, he began to feel so cross that he made up his mind to run away. So the next time that Johnny sent him flying against a row of the other marbles, he contrived to slip down under the fence; the green grass covered him over, and as it was just the same color as the 'real,' Johnny's sharp eyes failed to find him.

At first the lazy marble thought it was fine fun to lie still and do nothing, but soon he was tired of that. He could hear the boys on the sidewalk shouting their funny jargon, while his brother marbles rattled to and fro, and had such jolly games! How he wished that he was with them!

One day Johnny was digging a flower-bed by the fence, when his spade struck something hard.

'Why, here is my "real"!' he cried. 'What made you run away, you naughty fellow?'

Then Johnny took his other marbles from his pocket, and they had a fine play all together again; and the big, lazy marble was now as lively and jolly as the others, and clicked merrily against his neighbors as if he quite enjoyed the game. —'Youth's Companion.'

### The Rain.

Let us watch the rain-drops falling  
Till the sun is bright again;  
Though we lose our walk this morning,

We are thankful for the rain.

For the rain must help the sunshine,

Or no flowers would ever grow,  
And no yellow corn would rustle  
In the pleasant fields we know.

Surely with our books and pictures  
We can be content and good,  
While the rain abroad prepares us  
Pretty flowers and wholesome food.

For a woeful world it would be  
If God kept the rain away,  
So we will not fret nor grumble  
That it is a rainy day.

—J. Fyfe in 'Adviser.'