

BOYS AND GIRLS

Luck and Laziness.

Luck tapped upon a cottage door,
A gentle, quiet tap;
And Laziness, who lounged within,
The cat upon his lap,
Stretched out his slippers to the fire,
And gave a sleepy yawn;
'Oh, bother! Let him knock again!'
He said; but Luck was gone.

Luck tapped again, more faintly still,
Upon another door,
Where industry was hard at work
Mending his cottage floor.
The door was opened wide at once;
'Come in!' the worker cried.
And Luck was taken by the hand
And fairly pulled inside.

He still is there—a wondrous guest,
From out whose magic hand
Fortune flows fast—but Laziness
Can never understand
How Industry found such a friend;
'Luck never came my way,'
He sighs, and quite forgets the knock
Upon his door that day.
—'Irish Temperance Leader.'

Rasmus, or the Making of a Man.

(By Julia McNair Wright.)

By special arrangement with the National
Temperance Society and Publication
House, who hold the American
Copyright.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued

'How long do the oldest men live now?'
asked Rodney.

'Seventy to eighty is now long life. I have met a number of people of ninety or a hundred. A famous man in England, named Old Parr, lived to be, they thought, over one hundred and fifty-two years old. An English author tells of a visit to an Irish family near Dublin, where a number of generations lived on a farm, the oldest of the men being one hundred and thirty. But you must consider how many children die under five; how many young men do not reach twenty-five; what numbers of the human race perish in the prime of middle life when they could be most useful. And it is very evident that our own follies shorten life. The greatest number of child deaths occur in the children of drinking parents; the children of drinking people are not likely to reach old age, even if they survive infancy. The hereditary effects of drunkenness are to deprave blood and shorten life. Then, drinking people themselves are more liable to disease, less likely to recover when ill, more subject to epidemics, and very seldom reach sixty.'

Such talks occupied the way, and helped the making of a man of Rasmus.

Every Sabbath was a day of rest for our travellers, and that it might not be a day of exhaustion instead of rest, they stopped early on Saturday, whether they camped in a wood or tarried at an inn or farmhouse. Among the Pennsylvania hills, especially in the districts peopled by those of German descent, the charges at the little, old-fashioned inns were very reasonable. Clean beds, a plain, good table, and quiet were to be had for a few dimes. The earth brought forth bountifully; all kinds of food-stuffs were at very low prices; many of the hamlets seemed a simple, little Arcadia, quite outside of the strife and troubles of the general world. To such a little village, with the odd name of 'Stalking Deer,' Mr. Llewellyn had had his letters directed, as he would there pass the Sabbath. Rodney had a letter from the blooming Sally Crew. She asked if 'Mr. Rasmus' had made any more speeches, and sent her regards to Mr. Llewellyn and the rest. Rasmus thought this a magnificent letter, when Rod read it to him, sitting on a bench by the inn door. Rasmus took it and looked at it carefully, wondering if ever he would write well enough to address a young man who could make such a good letter as that.

'Yes, indeed, before long,' said Rodney.

Mr. Llewellyn put his head from the window of the inn sitting-room. 'Rasmus, nine years is a long time, and many changes happen in it, but I think I have news of your little brother for nine years ago—'

Rasmus leaped up. Sally had vanished from his mind; he returned to the grand passion of his life—to Robin. He jumped through the open window; to go round by the door would take too long. The ruddy Rasmus was pale. 'Let's hear,' was all he could say.

'A lady in the West has seen the advertisement copied from the Pittsburg paper, as an item of interest, and she writes to the New York publisher and he sends the letter to me. She says that nine years ago she had in her Sunday school class, in Illinois, a little hump-backed lad, very sweet and pretty-mannered.'

'I know it! That's just like Robin!' cried Rasmus.

'He had been adopted from a New York Home, and all his friends were dead.'

'No such thing; I wasn't dead!' cried Rasmus.

'The Home people thought you were, and probably said so; but hear the rest of it. The little boy was named Robin, and she was very fond of him. He showed her a picture-book that had been given him when first taken by the family, and in it was a picture of a street-lad selling things, and he had had the lady he lived with write "Rasmus" beside it, because he thought it was like a brother he had had. And when she gave him a red Testament he got her to write "Robin and Rasmus" on the first page. He seemed to have a great affection for this brother, and finally told the lady "that he prayed God every day not to let his brother be dead." The lady was so interested in the case that she wrote to the Home in New York City, and finally traced the brother up to a farmer near New York, but found he had disappeared from there.'

'Oh,' cried Rasmus, with a burst of grief, 'if I'd stayed I'd found my Robin!' Then after a little silence he cried out fiercely, 'What I want to know is, was he happy and well took care of?'

'The lady says in this letter that he was much thought of by the good people who had him, and very happy.'

'They'd better think well of him!' shouted Rasmus, clenching his fist, 'or I'd go break every bone in their body! But where is he now? I'm going to start right after him, tonight. You can get Rod to his uncle. I'm going after my boy, I've waited long enough.'

'My poor Rasmus, you will have to wait longer, and the lady says these people moved away, and she does not know where they went, but their name was Long, and she gives the town they lived in nine years ago, and I will write to the postmaster there, and to some leading citizen, and we are that much nearer the lad; you have just so many more points for advertising again, and you know at least that he was in good hands, with people who cared for him, soul and body.'

The immediate effect of this news was to make Rasmus very uneasy and unhappy. His eagerness to find his brother was all renewed; the love of little Robin for him touched his heart. Earth seemed to have no good aside from Robin; the beauties of the way, the subjects of interest that Mr. Llewellyn tried to start, could not call his attention; he went his road in moody silence, his hands thrust in his pockets, his head down, his shoulders bent under the bag which he usually carried so easily. It was Rodney who found a way to rouse him.

'Rasmus, if those folks sent Robin to the Sunday school, of course they sent him to day school too, and by this time he must have learned a great deal. Of course he's alive, for if he lived through all the troubles he had when he was little, and three years after you lost him, it is likely he is living yet. In a good home and good care, what would make him die? If that strange lady saw the advertisement, he will too, or some other one you put in, and then you'll find him, and he'll like to find you some learned, too. He would feel hurt if you couldn't read and write.'

'Think so, Rod?'

'Dead sure of it.'

'Then here goes; I'll tackle my spellin' again. But, I say, I have the hardest luck ever fell to any man.'

'No, you haven't. S'pose circus folks had stolen him, and been banging him about all this while? You've found out he had a good home, and was happy, and you're growling at that! What would suit you?'

'Finding him!' cried Rasmus, with unction. 'That will come in good time,' said Mr. Llewellyn.

Rasmus roused himself and returned to his studies. He had now not merely the hope of finding himself able to write a letter to the milliner-maiden Sally, but he must see to it that Robin was not ashamed of him when they met. He spent hours along the road, spelling the name of all that he saw, writing words on bits of wood, or picking out chapters of the Gospel of John from Rod's Testament, Mr. Llewellyn telling him that no reading book in the English language is so well suited to a beginner, having so many and easy English words. Sitting by the camp-fire in the evening, Rasmus planned for the future. Would Robin care for him still, after these further nine years of absence? Did Robin think he had forgotten him, and gone bad, after running away from the farmer? Would Robin wish, like Rodney, to go to college? Was not Robin just the right age to go? How should he be able to put him through a college?

'I'll get my uncle to help,' said Rodney, confidently.

'My lad,' said Mr. Llewellyn, 'your uncle may be just as hard to find as Robin is, and when found, even, he may not be able or willing to do what you wish for you. Don't expect too much, for fear of preparing a disappointment too heavy to bear.'

'His letter was that of a very nice man,' said Rodney.

'Suppose you let us see it,' said Mr. Llewellyn.

Rodney got out a little yellow note-book, and sat by Mr. Llewellyn while he unfolded all his family records. Rasmus kneeling behind them, scrutinized all as closely as if he could by anxious looking read every word, while in truth he could not decipher one of the crabbed records made by Mr. Andrews.

'Now, first,' said Rodney, 'here is a little writing on this page by Mr. Andrews, telling that my parents were drowned crossing a ford, and left me, five years old. Under it is a line he wrote the day he died, saying that he sent the account of the drowning to my mother's uncle, and did not mention that I remained alive, and so my mother's uncle thought me dead. Next page he says that he was made my guardian, and the amount of all my parents left was one thousand dollars. And here he shows how he invested it, and here how he lost it. And here is the address of my mother's uncle, on Fulton Street, New York, where he used to be, that is. And this is the last line Mr. Andrews wrote, asking him to look out for me; and here in this pocket is the letter.' Rodney took out a crumpled yellow letter, written on square business paper, the short letter of a busy man:

'My Dear Mary:

'I am glad to know you and yours are in health, and like your new home. I hope you will prosper. If the day comes when I get so free of business care that I can travel, and see the great West, I shall call on you, and it will do me good to meet you once more. Left lonely as I am in the world, having lost all my dear family, I do not forget that you are the only child of my only sister, who is now in heaven. I have now good health, and nothing to complain of in my affairs. But what comfort is money to a lonesome man? I hope you will write me often. May God bless you.'

'Your affectionate uncle,

'PETER WALDON.'

'It seems the letter of a kind man,' said Mr. Llewellyn; 'but you have no reason to infer a very rich one.'

'Mr. Andrews said he was rich, he thought.' 'And I should fancy, also, an old man; he may not now be living. He had had much loss and trouble.'

'If the uncle don't turn up, I'll stick by