

ALPHABET OF HEALTH.

A—s soon as you are up shake blanket and sheet.
 B—etter be without shoes than sit with wet feet.
 C—hildren, if healthy, are active, not still; D—amp beds and damp clothes will both make you ill.
 E—at slowly, and always chew your food well;
 F—reshen the air in the house where you dwell.
 G—arments must never be made too tight; H—omes should be healthy, airy and light.
 I—f you wish to be well, as you do, I've no doubt,
 J—ust open the windows before you go out.
 K—eep your rooms always tidy and clean;
 L—et dust on the furniture never be seen.
 M—uch illness is caused by the want of pure air;
 N—ow to open the windows be ever your care.
 O—ld rags and old rubbish should never be kept;
 P—eople should see that their floors are well swept;
 Q—uick movements in children are healthy and right;
 R—emember, the young cannot thrive without light;
 S—ee that the cistern is clean to the brim;
 T—ake care that your dress is all tidy and trim.
 U—se your nose to find if there be a bad drain;
 V—ery sad are the fevers that come in its train.
 W—alk as much as you can without feeling fatigued.
 X—ercises could walk full many a league.
 Y—our health is your wealth, which your wisdom must keep;
 Z—eal will help a good cause, and the good you will reap.

THREE BOYS AND A GIRL.

BY ROSE TERRY COOKE.

"Oh! dear!"
 Little Sue wiped her eyes with her checkered apron, as this half sob escaped her. Bert and John and Davy all looked at her; but none of them knew what to do about it. They echoed the cry in their hearts; but they were boys—big boys too, the elder ones. Bert and John were sixteen and fifteen years old; but they felt, to-day, at least ten years older; Davy was thirteen, but Sue, the baby of the family, was only ten.

"No wonder she said, 'Oh! dear!' Yesterday their Mother was buried, and had left them alone; for their Father died when Sue was a little baby. There was a dark outlook now; for they were very poor. The father's little pension had been continued to his wife, and hitherto they had had enough to eat, and clothes to wear to school and church; very plain clothes, to be sure, but warm and whole. What should they do now, the pension was gone!"

"Come, Jack! you and I are the oldest," said Bert, leaning against the mantel. "We've got to look out for this family. Let's take account of stock to begin with. Uncle Mather left this house for Mother to live in while she did live; but it goes now to Aunt Pillary. So we've got to leave here. But the chairs and things are ours, and the bed-clothes. Then there's the ten-acre farm up on the hill. That's our's, sure."

"Ten acres of poverty, Bert!" growled Jack.

Bert laughed.
 "That's really good farming land; is it? But there's a good deal of wood on it."

"What sort of wood? Chestnut, good for nothing; but railroad ties, young hemlock, about twenty sugar maples, and a lot of pussy-willows."

"Well, we shan't make any money lumberin'; that's clear. But there's the house."

"Older'n Noah's ark. Now, you know 'tis leaky and shifless as an Elwell hovil!"

The Elwells were a half-breed race, who lived from hand to mouth a few miles away from Brookville, and found shelter and food where they could. Jack could not have said anything more about the old purchase than to liken it to an Elwell "hovil" as he called it.

"Oh! Jack! 'top growlin'! You'd take the stiffness out of a crowbar!"

Jack's face darkened. The truth was his heart ached after his Mother. But, rather than say so, he scolded; for he had an in-born feeling that it was better to be cross than to cry, at least for a boy.

"Well," said Bert again, "I don't propose to live up on the mountain; it's too far from school and meeting; and Dave and Susy must have their Winter school. But there's a kind of a cabin, down nigh to the traveled road, where father used to keep his steers and their fodder. I guess it could be p'titioned off and mended up, and a shed clapped on 't, and make us a real good shelter; no great style, but room enough."

"Sho!" growled Jack.
 "I think it would be perfectly splendid!" cried Sue, sidling up to Bert.

"Just like Robinson Crusoe!" shouted Dave.

Bert laughed, and even Jack smiled. But Bert had his way about the cabin. Sim Jenkins owed him a week's work for driving his lumber team in the Winter; and when Jack crept a little up out of his sorrow he fell to work manfully, and found that work is the best help in this world for trouble. Before April the cabin was mended, a bed-room for the boys partitioned off one end, a curtain hung across one corner and one window, to shut in Sue's cot-bed, and a shed run out behind, into which a mountain spring was guided by a rough trough, a hole in the sink-side letting out the surplus water. Then Bert and Jack went to work in the woods, and soon a great wood-pile was laid up for Winter; for Summer they could get brush enough to use in the stove; and their strong, old-fashioned furniture was more than enough for their present necessities. They sold some of it, and put ten dollars in the savings bank for time of greater need. Sue had learned a good deal of simple cookery during her mother's illness, and was quite able to do her share. Bert helped her with the heavy washing, and hung out the clothes for her at noon, when he came back from work; for both the elder boys got work in the little village for a while helping the farmers drive, plough, harrow, set potatoes and pick up the abundant stones that the ploughs turned up every Spring in their fields. Dave still went to school, and Sue kept house, and things went on quietly till the last week in April, when Bert called another council.

"I've made up my mind to something, boys!" he said. He always called them all boys, because it was too much trouble to put in "girl"; besides it sounded queer.

"You know there's a real nice piece of level land round the old house up there; and it's good land. The leaf dirt has washed down into 't quite a good deal, and there's a spring up on the rocks, runnin' down 't'her way into a swamp like, that could be turned just as easy as nothin', and save luggin' water. Now that little lot is just as full of wild strawberries as it can stick, and I think the store sorts would grow there like all possessed. I've got this plan into my head; to hire a horse and plough for two days, and break up half the lot, and set strawberries—the big kind—into 't."

"But where'll you get the plants?" asked objecting Jack.

"Why over to Harris's, on the turmpike. He ploughs out the rows of his'n every year, and throws away lots of runners; and now's his time for doin' 'em! I don't doubt but what I can get enough to set the hull acre for a dollar."

Neighbor Harris—a real neighbor, though he lived three miles away from the cabin—was better than Bert hoped; for he asked nothing for the runners of Crescent Seedling that he cast aside, cultivating between the rows. He had twice as many as he needed to set his own new beds. Then the horse and plough cost two days' work on Bert's part, helping Deacon Snow on his wood lot. Jack held the handles and Bert led the horse over the acre they began with, and, when the ridges of soft black soil were turned over, and had lain a day or two open to the sun, Jack set potatoes two days for the Widow Mann, and made enough to hire the horse and a harrow one day more. After the lines were marked for the berry plants and the holes made, Sue dropped them in. Dave followed and poured water into each hole, and Jack straightened the roots, filled up the holes and stepped round each one to set it firmly, while Bert, with hoe and spade, made a little gutter beside

the lines, and, turning the overflow of the spring down another channel, made little dams at the head of every runlet, so that, by removing a stone, he could send a tiny stream of water down by all the thirsty plants whenever it was needed. Once a week the plants were hoed about, and weeds cleaned out. It was a good place to work; for up the wild mountain road that led to the farmhouse nobody ever cared to drive, it was so stony and narrow. Nor did the village boys know at all what the Hyler children were doing up there; for they kept their own secret. Their great trouble was the solitude that enticed so many birds to its shelter, and promised to bring guests to eat their berries, more numerous than welcome; but this first year there was not fruit enough to tempt them. The plants grew very fast and large. Whenever there was a day that Bert and Jack could not get any work to do they went up to the farm and wheeled leaf-mold from the woods to enrich their lot. They planted sweet corn where there was more room than the strawberries could cover, and many a nice snacking pile of ears helped out Sue's scanty bit of pork, fried for dinner just to make the potatoes savory. They got along nicely through the Summer, and this encouraged them to hope that their Winter would not be hard to bear.

"We can work, all of us, I'm thankful to say," said Bert.

"Yes; if we can get work to do," put in Jack.

"I declare for 't," exclaimed Bert, a little provoked. "You ought to be called the Great American Objector, Jack. Seems as if you had to find something to growl about always."

Jack scowled; but Sue put both her arms around his neck.
 "I love you, Jack," she said, in the very sweetest voice. Jack couldn't help pulling her up to his knee and hugging her silently.
 "Hooray for Sue!" shouted Dave. "She's a real'ar molasses jug. Makes everything taste good; don't she, Sonny?" and Jack really had to laugh then.

Sue certainly was the family sweetest, and was all the dearer to her brothers that she looked as much like their dear lost mother as a healthy child of ten can look like a worn-out woman of forty. There were the same calm, brown eyes, straight, low forehead, and tender lips, that they so well remembered had never failed to cheer and comfort them; and there was, besides, the brightness and hopefulness of childhood, long ago vanished from Mrs. Hyler's heart and face.

In late October, when the leaves began to fall, all the family went up the hill for a few days, armed with rakes and old baskets; rough rakes, indeed, which Bert had nailed together at odd hours, but quite good enough to gather up the fallen leaves and make large heaps, from which the rest filled their baskets, and then covered the rows of strawberry plants thickly. Sue and Davy and Jack did this, while Bert cut down hemlock boughs to lay over the leaves and keep them from blowing away. Then they bid good-bye to their precious plantation, and went back to the cabin.

It was a long, cold Winter that followed; but Bert found work in Chester, five miles west, that at least, paid his board for a time and furnished him with clothing. Jack went every day to Deacon Snow's house, and also to Parson Miner's, where he fed the cattle and horses, milked the cows, filled the wood-boxes from the shed outside, drew water, and was a "handy man" in both families; for the Deacon was old, and cold weather made him rheumatic, and the Parson was always feeble; but Jack earned two dollars a week in this way, and Cynthia at the Deacon's sent many a basket of apples or pan of doughnuts to Sue, when Jack went back to the cabin, at night. The Parson gave him his two weekly papers, when he had read them himself, and in the long evenings, while Sue mended or knit, Dave read aloud all the news, which was as good as new to the three solitary children, and gave them plenty to think and talk about.

Bert came home Sundays, when the snow was not too deep, and the winter went away much faster than they had expected; but it was not till the middle of April that they thought it time to go up the hill, and peep at their plantation.

Two or three warm days then had melted the last snows, and Bert said they could lift off the boughs and leave the strong Spring

winds to dry and scatter the leaves, before he dared to rake them away entirely; and by the first of May they were hard at work again, uncovering the thifty rows of plants, hoeing about each till all the ground was loosely stirred to drink in the sunshine, and fetching fresh leaf mold to futher enrich the soil. Bert also brought from Chester some cuttings of large currant-bushes, which he set in lines on another ploughed and harrowed piece of the mountain meadow; for he had heard in Chester that there were very few currants to be had there, and the boy hoped that the currant worms would not find their way to the East Hill farm.

The strawberry plants grew and spread and blossomed under this care. Plenty of water fed the vigorous roots, and the rich soil seemed to suit them exactly. When there was a long day's work to be done, Sue baked some pies and filled a pail with bread and butter and hard boiled eggs, and the four stayed all night in the old farmhouse, sleeping on a ragged buffalo robe, or some venerable quilts, which were delightful to the tired boys. Sue fared better, for Jack nailed a piece of sacking across a rickety four post bedstead standing in the chamber above their room, and brought up a sack of corn-bushes for a pillow, and the only thing that ever disturbed her sleep was the wild, doleful cry of a screech owl that sometimes came about the clearing, or the sharp bark of a fox hunting for itself in the wood. The air was keen and sweet, and the boys roused each other before sunrise to get a long day's work done. There were no dishes to wash; for they ate their breakfast on the doorstep, out of the big basket, and drank only fresh water from the old well; but it seemed as if they were never so hungry or thirsty, or had such a happy Summer before.

When the berries began to redden, their troubles also began. The wild birds found out what a treasure lay in their midst, and it took most of the day to keep them off the tempting rows. Bert had bought a scythe and mowed the short, fine grass from the land they had not ploughed, and laid it carefully around and under every plant, so thickly that the clean scarlet fruit showed every berry, and the birds fought well for their share. But it was great fun to dress up wonderful images and tall poles with all the fluttering rags and odd hats and bonnets they could find; and Jack walked over to Chester one night and brought back a sack full of tin scraps and two balls of coarse string, which they tied across the beds from one stake to another, and hung with the glittering, tinkling tin, till not a bird dared to invade the strawberry rows, and the crop was saved. It is true they had some anxieties. There were long cold storms that threatened to blast the flowers, and some days a frost in May glistened on the "legs of the cabin," but they found frosts did not reach the higher ground, and the cold rains never blasted a blossom. In July every plant was loaded, and Sue and Davy had made dozens of birch-bark cans or baskets into which the berries were carefully packed, carried to the cabin, and packed in lidless boxes for Bert to take to Chester.

They sold fast and well; for all were ripe and of good size. The smaller ones Sue kept and put up in jars for Winter, to eat with their bread and butter. It saved pies, the frugal little house-keeper said, and was wholesomer, a great deal.

I can't tell you how many dollars they made, for I don't know; but it was so much more than they expected that Bert let his plans run at their pleasure that Fall, and ploughed up another acre for another year. It made more work, of course; but every year they were all older and stronger; and before five years were passed Bert had cleared up some of the woodland, with Jack's help; and, besides berries, they fetch great red and white currants to market now. There is a barn near the shanty, and a new front built on to that shanty, with three nice rooms in it, and Bert has bought Deacon Snow's house. It is old, to be sure; but then it won't jolt the berry-crates or run away with them.

It would do you good to see the long rows of thrifty berries, and the lines of green currant-bushes; for the worm never has found its way up to East Hill farm yet.

I happened to find myself there, the other day, as Peter and I, wandering about in search of new drives, made our way over the stony track they call a road.

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