

did he do but cut out pictures, and paste them all over baby's fuzzy little head.

I thought I should fall off my chair, I laughed so when Hannah brought her in to show me—she did look so funny! Her little head was bristling with pictures, and a dog was hanging to one eye-brow, and a cat to the other, while a paper bug clung to the end of her little pig nose.

"I can't see how you can laugh," said Hannah, in a very offended voice, "I shall punish Mary, and I think you ought to punish Gussie very severely."

"Pshaw!" I said, "why, no harm is done!" "No harm!" said Hannah, indignantly, "why, none of these things will come off; I don't know what kind of stuff he has stuck them on with, but water makes no impression on it."

It was true; the baby's head could not be freed from its pictured ornaments, till we had worked and worked with warm water and hot cloths, picking up an end here and there, and clipping them off with the scissors. Poor baby's little head was as red as a beet and as innocent of hair as a billiard ball when we got them all off, and her eyebrows were invisible as well.

Tom was awfully angry, and looked unutterable things, though he said very little. As for me, I went about the house looking sympathetic and grieved, but when I got into my room I laughed till I had a stitch in my side every time I thought of it. Upon my word, that boy of mine is original!—no one but Gussie would have thought of turning a baby's head into a bulletin board.

After this things were not very pleasant. Gussie was watched by either Tom or Hannah all the time, so the poor child could not have a bit of fun; and, to cap the climax, Tom began to devote all his leisure time to writing instead of taking Hannah and me for a drive or row as he used. Altogether, the place grew too stupid for anything; so I told Gussie we would not stay any longer, but go and visit cousin Matilda.

I must say neither Hannah nor Tom urged us very hard to remain, though I had been very kind indeed to them. I sent Hannah the pattern of my last year's dolman, and gave her my old cheese-cloth dress to make over for Mary, but she did not appreciate them one bit. Tom drove me to the station, and saw me fairly off. The last I saw of him, he was standing on the platform grinning like a Cheshire cat. I am sure I don't know what at!

When I got to cousin Matilda's, I found she had left home for a week or two. I should have seen her and made myself at home, but the girl said she had leave to visit her sister while her mistress was away, so that settled that question.

I did make the creature get me some dinner—very unwillingly, I must say. After dinner I got a carriage, a terrible old thing, and drove over to Cousin Jane's.

Judge of my surprise to learn that Jane, her husband, and one child, also Cousin Mary and her husband (who live in the same place), had all gone, three days before, off on a little trip—where, no one seemed to know.

I actually had to stay at the hotel that night, a miserable place, where I had the worst supper and breakfast I ever saw, and the mosquitoes were so thick poor little Gussie could not sleep at all.

Early in the morning I started for Aunt Fortune's. Aunt Fortune is a maiden-aunt of Henry's, and brought him up. I never had seen her but once, and had been undecided about visiting her when I left home, but everybody failed me so, I was really obliged to go.

She lives in a place even more beautiful than Aunt Sarah's, but I didn't like her face much—it was so stern I almost felt afraid of her. She seemed pleased to see us, and kissed Gussie affectionately, telling him that he looked like his father.

All went well enough the first evening, but next morning Gussie began to chase the chickens with the carriage whip in his hand, and one chicken ran right in the way, and I don't know how it happened, but the lash got around its neck and killed it.

I confess that I shuddered, for I expected Aunt Fortune would make an awful time, but she did not. She took Gussie by the hand, made him put the whip in its place, go get a little garden shovel, dig a hole, and bury the chicken; then she asked him to sit on the piazza with her and help shell some peas for dinner.

To my utter astonishment the little fellow seemed to like it. They sat there and chatted for the longest time and then they off together to look for eggs.

After dinner she brought me some muslin, lace, and ribbon, and asked me to make her a cap. "Henry says you are very clever with your fingers. Now let's see what you can do for me!"

Gussie and Aunt Fortune went off together to pick strawberries, and I sat there and sewed just as fast as I could. I am clever with my fingers, and I tried my best, and I made the prettiest cap I ever saw, if I do say it.

I showed it to auntie at tea-time; and she was delighted and I was pleased enough, but I was not pleased next morning when she brought me material for two more, and requested I should make them.

"I would with pleasure, auntie," I said, holding my head with both hands, "but I've a dreadful headache."

"Headache! hey!" and Aunt Fortune looked at me very sharply over her glasses. "Well, you go straight and lie down, and I'll come directly and bring you something good."

I tried to assure auntie that I didn't want to lie down, but would sit in the big chair in the parlor, but it was of no use. She fairly drove me to bed; and in about twenty minutes she appeared at my side with a bowlful of bonaset tea.

"Oh, mercy!" I cried, "I can't drink that stuff, and I won't!"

"Yes, you will," said Aunt Fortune, firmly,

"don't you tell me you won't, Jane Carsons. You git up and drink every drop of this this minute or I'll hold your nose."

Ugh! I shudder to think of it! There was no use to resist that woman, and I actually had to drink all that loathsome mixture; and what was almost as bad, I was kept in bed all day, and only allowed a cup of tea and a slice of dry toast.

My head did not ache so hard, but I was hungry enough; and I could have cried with vexation.

Next day I took those wretched old caps and made them! Meanwhile Aunt Fortune had Gussie like a little lamb. I don't believe he did a naughty thing while he was there, and what was the queerest part of it, he loved Aunt Fortune devotedly, though she made him mind.

Every day for almost two weeks I was made to work like a slave. I could not get out of it; there was always something that required "nice" fingers, and Aunt Fortune would always say: "Jane, my child, you have nothing to do, and a little labor is wholesome." So the "little job" always fell to my lot to do. I got so tired of it, that I made up my mind to go home even if it was August.

One day, auntie took Gussie to the village with her, leaving me, as usual, with a little task; in this case, some mats to "crochet" for her bureau. I worked away for a long time; then having to measure, I went to Aunt Fortune's room to get the size I desired.

In lifting up the pin-cushion, I came across a letter, minus an envelope. Truly I never did such a thing in my life before, as to read any one's letters; but I caught sight of my own name, and before I really knew what I was about, I had picked it up, and read it from beginning to end. This was it:

"Dear Aunt Fortune:—Yours just received. Am sorry you refuse to join the retreat of the proposed victims! We know you are as wise as you are good, but in this case you're rash—awfully rash! You can have no idea of the nagging capacity of that young cub; and Jennie is one solid lump of selfishness. We have been severe sufferers, and know of what we speak. All the rest have promised to join us in New York, where we hope to see Henry, before Jane finds her way home. I will write you again from the city. Meanwhile accept my best love and profound sympathy. May the Lord help you!"

"P. S.—If you find you can manage, please confer an everlasting favor on your devoted relations by keeping the 'infliction' as long as possible. TOM."

The letter fell from my hand, and I stood stupidly staring at the floor for at least ten minutes. I was aroused by the sound of wheels, and knowing Aunt Fortune had returned, I recovered my wits sufficiently to put the letter where I found it, and escape to my own room, where I had a real good "crying" spell.

The whole selfish plan was clear as daylight to me: Tom's writing—which occupied all his leisure time—was letters warning all my relations to shut their doors in my face; and inviting them to join him in house—in my absence.

At first I thought I would go straight home—with-out one hour's delay; but then, I reflected, what excuse could I give for so sudden a flight! I could not say I had read that unfortunate letter, and I could not leave Aunt Fortune's house without some excuse.

I bathed my face and eyes, and tried to act as if nothing troubled me; but in spite of myself, I could not hide from Auntie's sharp eyes the fact that something was wrong. The moment I went down to tea she saw something was amiss.

"What is the matter, Jennie?" she asked, kindly. "Nothing—only my head aches, and I feel very tired," I answered with perfect truth, for, indeed, my head did ache furiously.

"Poor child," she said, stroking my head gently and tenderly, "your head is very hot, and your pulse too quick; I think you are ill, dear."

I answered I threw my arm around her neck, laid my tired head on her shoulder, and burst into a torrent of tears.

I was half frightened as soon as I done it, and expected to be sent to bed and dosed with "boneset;" but instead of that she put her arm around me, and soothed me as she would a little child.

"Poor little girl," she said, "there, there, don't sob so; Auntie will take care of her. Come to bed, my child," leading towards the stairs. "Come, Auntie will sit beside you and bathe your poor hot head."

So I was taken tenderly up stairs, undressed, and gently helped to fix my aching body in the most comfortable way on the soft, dainty bed, and Aunt Fortune's homely hand drew down the curtains, smoothed my pillow, and bathed my hot head with the softest touch.

After awhile, Gussie stole quietly in, and put his little cool hand on mine; but Aunt Fortune held up a warning finger, and he did not speak, and presently tip-toed away.

But, in spite of Auntie's care, my head ached harder and harder, and my ideas grew confused. I could not remember where I was without an effort which sent a cutting pain through my temples, and forced a groan from my lips in spite of myself. Then I began to grow frightened, and tried to set up and tell Aunt Fortune to send for Henry, but I could not say what Fortune's voice saying, "Jennie, dear, don't try to speak, your old Auntie knows just what to do; try to sleep, dear, try to sleep!"—then a burr-r-r-r in my ears, and I knew no more.

After a long time—filled with strange dreams, restless wanderings and burning pains—I awoke. It was night, and by my bedside sat—Hannah. At first I could not believe my eyes served me rightly, and I tried to stretch out my hand to touch her, but the

poor, thin, colorless hand, which seemed to belong to me, refused obedience, and fell over the bed's edge, weak and helpless; but my motion had disturbed my nurse, and she arose and bent over me. Hannah, and none other!

"What is it, dear?" she said.

"Have I been sick? Why are you here?" I asked, feebly.

"Yes, Jennie, very sick," she replied, "and I am here to help Aunt Fortune nurse you—but you must not talk."

"Is Henry here?" I persisted.

"Yes, Jennie, and you shall see him soon; the poor fellow is worn out, and is lying down."

"And you are worn out, too!" I said, in spite of her efforts to keep me quiet. "Go and lie down; please do, I'll go to sleep if you will. If you don't!"—for she began to shake her head—"I'll talk all the time."

So she laid down on the lounge, and soon by her breathing I knew she had fallen asleep.

I lay very still, but I was too weak to keep the riddle, and, while groping helplessly for the clue, I fell asleep.

When I next awoke Aunt Fortune was in the room. As soon as she saw I was awake she came to my side and kissed me tenderly, saying in her brisk, cheerful way, "Now you are a very nice girl to look so bright, and I am going to give you some nice beef tea; and then if you are very good you shall see Henry and Gussie."

I did just as I was bid, and succeeded in finding favor in dear Aunt Fortune's eyes, and was allowed to see Henry and kiss dear little Gussie. Henry was completely unnerved, and trembled like a child as he took me in his arms and held me closely and silently to his heart. And Gussie came in so softly, but oh! how tightly he held my hand, and how lovingly he stroked my cheek and whispered, "Mamma! Mamma! don't be sick any more; I love you so!"

One day I was lying in that delightful state—neither sleeping nor waking—but partaking of the delights of both, with Hannah sitting near to see that I lacked for nothing, when Aunt Fortune came softly in.

Thinking I was sleeping, they began to talk in gentle tones. Said Hannah: "I am really sorry to go home, Auntie. You were right—Jennie is much better than I thought her, and I own I did her great injustice. If she had died, I should never have forgiven myself that I made no effort to discover the virtues that underlie her faults."

You are a good woman, Hannah," replied Aunt Fortune, "and have nothing of which to repent. Jennie is selfish and vain; but she is patient and lovable, too. We should remember that her father and mother spoiled her by over-indulgence, and she has never learned the lesson which all must learn before they can grow into great and good women—the lesson of self-sacrifice and self-discipline—but I love her, Hannah, and I love her boy, and I will not let her ruin her own life or his, if a word from me can prevent it."

"It shall prevent it!" I cried, sitting up in bed, and the tears streaming down my cheeks. "I never knew that there were such good people in the world as you and Hannah are, Aunt Fortune; and I did not know how bad and selfish I was—indeed! indeed, I didn't! If you'll only teach me, I'll do everything you tell me."

"I've been so ashamed," I went on eagerly, wiping off my tears with the corner of the sheet in my excitement; "so ashamed, all the time I've been living here, and you have been doing everything for me—and if you will only forgive all the selfish things I've done to you, Hannah, I'll try very hard to be just as good as you are."

Aunt Fortune and Hannah were so surprised that I had got most through speaking before they recovered themselves; then they both came and kissed me, and Hannah asked me to forgive her and Tom, who was sorry for what he had done, that he had insisted upon doing penance by staying home and taking care of all the children, while Hannah came to help nurse me.

And Aunt Fortune told me that Aunt Sarah and Uncle John had come as soon as they heard that I was sick, and offered to take me home and care for me; but as they were not allowed to do that, they were waiting till I got well enough to travel, to take me to the White Mountains to "get back my roses."

Well, I did get better, and I did go to the White Mountains, and had a splendid time. I tried, oh, how I tried, to be thoughtful and unselfish, and I did not altogether fail, for one day Aunt Sarah said: "Jane Carsons, I declare you're another critter! I believe it done you good to git sick." And Uncle John patted me on the head, and said: "You are not so bad—not so s-o-b-a-d."

I repeat it, I tried; but needed help, and when I got home I wrote to dear Aunt Fortune, and begged her to come and stay with me all winter, and, to my supreme delight, she came.

I intend to return her visit next summer, for I think she loves me, and I know I love her. As for Gussie, it is a question already under discussion who shall keep him longest with them, Uncle John or Aunt Fortune; and with Tom and Hannah he is also a favorite, having improved so much as to need only to be put on his honor to do whatever he is made to understand is right.

We ought always to make choice of persons of such worth and honor for our friends that if they should cease to be so they will not abuse our confidence, nor give us cause to fear them as enemies.