

A Kitchen Quarrel.

There was a grave dispute going on, and high words might have been heard (by anybody whose ears were sharp enough to hear) between the two jars of Rice and Sago which stood side by side in the kitchen cupboard. The reason of it was the cook's cry when she came to get some rice for a pudding, 'Well, now, if this jar is not nearly empty, and rice only had in last week. But then it is not a wonder, when missus was a saying yesterday that she did not care how much rice was used, because it is the best thing for the children, and cheap, and no trouble either.'

The Sago fired up at this, for its own just rights, thinking that to put one thing up was as good as putting everything else down—a foolish mistake made in other places besides this kitchen cupboard. 'Hey-day!' it cried; 'and can't I feed people, babies and all, just as well as the Rice? If you only knew how much I am thought of in my own country, I should not be put aside like this!'

'Hoity-toity!' cried the Rice in return; 'you had better not give yourself such airs, especially when you know that I belong to one of the oldest families in the world. Didn't I feed the world ages ago before anybody ever heard of you?'

'Well, you don't carry the trace of your high birth at any rate,' remarked the Sago, 'and it's very fine for you to talk about antiquity when everyone knows you have got to be planted fresh every year, and then when you have done what is expected of you, you die, and there's an end of you.'

The Rice did not condescend to answer this, but took another line.

'And not only have I fed the world so long, but I feed so many. Two hundred millions of people and more eat rice and little or nothing else.'

'But look what a poor, meagre thing you are all the while,' said the Sago with contempt. 'Only a few feet high at the best, and with neither strength nor beauty, while I am tall, and strong, and stately, so that it does anybody good to look at me. Ah! if you could see me as I was in my early life, and know all I have gone through since, you would not wonder that my temper should be a little touchy now;' and the Sago forgot its present grievance, and began to grow quite sentimental over its reverse of fortune.

Let us look back a minute to the Sago's past years, and we shall think it was a change certainly.

It was once a beautiful palm tree in the Indian Spice Islands, not so tall as the coconut tree, but still forty or fifty feet in height; not stiff and firm, like our oaks and elms, but, though straight and upright, bending down gracefully in the breeze, and then rising up again. It had no branches on its stem, but at the top it was crowned with one tuft of feathery spreading leaves. Neither did it blossom every year, as our trees do, but only once in its life. It was the one great thing it had to do, and it took fifteen years getting ready—at the end of that time it flowered and died. Or at least it would have done so had it not been cut down first.

'What a pity,' you say; 'then it might as well not have lived at all.'

Not so; its true work was only just beginning. Men came and took out the pith inside the stem; then it was soaked and pounded, pressed, and baked in the sun or in the oven—not pleasant work, any of it, but necessary, and at last it made its appearance as sago-cakes, the chief food of the nations

who live under the shadow of the sago palm-tree, never tired of by the old people, and relished by the children as much as bread and butter is with us.

If the sago is to be sent across the sea to other countries, it has still more to go through; when soft it is passed through a sieve full of small round holes, and that makes it look like little seeds just as this does in the jar before us. It is a sore change, is it not? After living in air, and beauty, and sunshine, to be shut up in a dark, stuffy kitchen cupboard.

Even the Rice melted into something like a fellow-feeling, and began to sigh in concert. 'Ah! it was very much the same with me. I, too, have known grievous changes, though my nature is very different from yours and my roots require to be soaked in water, or they would never grow, so I had a watery cradle. Then when I did shoot up I was left to blossom and bear fruit, but alas! my time of trouble came as yours did, only it was a little later. Just as I was beginning to look about and think I might enjoy life, I was rudely cut down, and then, to get the outer husk off, I was bruised and beaten much the same as you were. So as we are companions in trouble, I see it is no good to go to words, and we had better be friends.'

And so ended the quarrel in the kitchen cupboard, and they lived very happy ever after; at least till both Rice and Sago had all been turned into nursery puddings.

Well, the Rice and Sago had their bruising and bakings, their pressing and pounding, and you and I, as we go through life, shall meet with something of the same kind. But if only it makes us more useful, it will be well worth it all. If the bruising bring out the heart's sweetness; if the fire melt what is hard there, and strengthen what is soft; if the rough husk is removed, that the true grain within may stand forth the clearer; if suffering makes us more fit for God's service here, and for the glory of God, then it will not have been in vain.—'Friendly Greetings.'

Only One Way is Right.

'My boy,' said Uncle Hiram, once, while giving me advice,

'The saw that doesn't wobble is the one that cuts the ice.

The saw that close applies itself within its narrow groove

Will soon or late fulfil its work by keeping on the move.

When halfway through temptation may beset it, like as not,

To leave the place that seemeth hard and seek a thinner spot;

But shifting saws will learn, at length, when failure they invite,

There's many a way o' doin' things, but only one way's right!

'And bear in mind, my boy, through life, if tempted tasks to shirk,

Success is but a second crop, the aftermath of Work.

A lubricator tried and true is Perseverance Oil,

And Fortune's smile is rarely won except by honest toil.

A safe cross-cut to Fame or Wealth has never yet been found.

The men upon the heights to-day are those who've gone around.

The longest way, inspired by the sayin', somewhat trite:

There's many a way o' doin' things, but only one way's right!

I knew my Uncle Hiram had achievement's summit reached;

I knew him as an honest man who practised what he preached—

And so I paid the lesson heed, and rapt attention gave,

When, in an added afterthought, he said, 'My boy, be brave!

Act well your part; tenaciously to one straight course adhere;

Though men declare you're in a rut—work on, and never fear;

You'll realize, when you, at length, have reached achievement's height,

There's many a way o' doin' things, but only one way's right!

—Roy Farrell Green, in 'Success.'

How Tom Went to the Academy.

'Deestisk school and 'rithmetic was good enough for me, and there ain't no sense in your X-Y-Z-in', anyway,' said Uncle Daniel.

'But I want to study philosophy and history, too, you know.'

'Yes, I know. You want to dress up in your go-to-meetin' clo's, and leave the chores for somebody else to do—'

'Why, no, uncle—'

'Yes, you do. Anyway, I hain't got any money to pay anybody's schoolin', 'specially for a boy who don't earn his salt.'

Tom, to the surprise of Aunt Mary, (he often surprised her) said not a word.

'The first boy who has lived with us for six months without getting into hot water,' she mentally expressed it; for Uncle Daniel was an unreasonable, close-fisted driver, always domineering, and particularly so to a boy, each year having a new one to 'do the chores,' giving him his board and twelve weeks' of winter schooling for pay. This year his wife's nephew, left an orphan, had come to them, and being their own, so to speak, had extra tasks put upon his young shoulders, in spite of Aunt Mary's mild protests.

'Tommy, if it's best, the Lord will provide a way,' she whispered, when she slipped into his room to see if he needed another blanket on his bed.

'Dear Aunt Mary,' was Tom's reply. But she had so cheered him he began anew to study how it could be done.

While he dreamed he was selling snow-balls from door to door, he opened his eyes, and heard Uncle Daniel shouting:

'Get up, lazy-bones! It's five o'clock, and not a chore done!'

Tom soon had 'an idea.' Neighbor Johnson was over to transact some business with Uncle Daniel, and casually remarked, 'I'll soon have a horse to sell, for I'm going to give up my milk route. It doesn't pay to run a team for fifty quarts when I can get twenty-eight cents a can at the door.'

Tom, quick at figures, instantly thought, '8 into 28, 3½; 3½ from 6, 2½; 50 times 2½ is 125, and 7 times 125 is 875—eight dollars and seventy-five cents!'—and exclaimed:

'Oh, uncle!'

Uncle Daniel took no notice, except to say, 'You here? Just feed the pigs and the hens, and then saw wood till dinner time—an' be about it, too!'

'Uncle, how much do I earn, any way?' he inquired, a few days later.

'Earn? Why, you don't earn your salt!'