

## THE CHILDREN'S STORY.

## FISHING FOR STARS.

BY HAMILTON W. MABIE.

Newton stood at the window in his night-gown, waiting for his nurse to put him to bed. It was a beautiful summer night, and the stars were shining as if it were a pleasure just to stay out all night and shine. A great tree stood so near the house that its branches almost touched the window in which the boy stood, and as they gently waved too and fro in the soft evening breeze they seemed to whisper all manner of wonderful things. Newton's nurse did not come as quickly as usual that night, and he stood for quite a long time listening to the branches and watching the stars; he was not lonely, because he loved to get into corners and quiet places and dream of all kind of queer things. By-and-by there was a step on the stairs, and in came the nurse, a little out of breath, as if she knew she were late, and had been running up-stairs.

"Little boy, did you think I had forgotten you?" she asked.

"I wasn't thinking about it at all," said Newton; "I was wondering if the stars ever come down."

"Yes," said nurse, "the stars do come down sometimes. I saw one fall only a little while ago. Why, the pond in the garden is sometimes full of them."

Newton's big dark eyes were bigger than ever when he heard this.

"How do they get there?" he asked, looking up eagerly into the face of his nurse.

"Why, dear, how could they get there except by shining," answered the nurse, brushing the curly hair and getting everything ready for bed.

"Was it in our pond you saw them?"

"Yes in our pond last night, after you had gone to bed and I had gone out for a little walk in the garden."

"I wonder if they ever come down in the day-time," said Newton, half to himself.

"Oh no," answered nurse; "they get into the pond only when they shine in the sky, and of course they can't shine when the sun is up."

Newton asked no more questions, but got softly into bed, and lay there for a long time wide awake, thinking about the stars in the pond. Even after he fell asleep he did not stop thinking about them, for he dreamed that he was in a boat, and that the stars were floating on the water line shining lilies. He watched them a long time, and then he leaned over and gently put his hand under a little star, and was just lifting it out of the water, when he awoke.

All next day Newton thought of nothing but stars, and the hours seemed a good deal longer than usual, because he was so anxious for night to come again. At dinner his father said, "Newton, what have you been doing all day?"

"Catching stars, papa."

"Catching stars!" said Mr. Brooks, very much astonished at this queer answer to his question. "How did you do it?"

"Well they come down sometimes, nurse says."

"Yes," said Mr. Brooks, "they certainly do, or pieces of them do. I saw one fall last night."

"Did you," and Newton's eyes grew bigger and bigger. "Where did it hit?"

"I'm sure I don't know," answered Mr. Brooks smiling; "I was too sleepy to look it up. Just as I was going to bed I looked out of the window, and suddenly a bright star dropped down the sky, and seemed to fall into the trees at the end of the garden."

That was the very spot where the pond lay, and Newton was sure the star had

fallen into it. All day he had been wishing that he might go down there after dark and see for himself; but how could he do that when he was sent to bed every night at seven o'clock?

It happened that Mr. and Mrs. Brooks were going out that evening, and just as they were starting Newton ran after his mother, and caught her by the hand as she was getting into the carriage, and whispered,

"Can I stay up later to-night?"

Mrs. Brooks kissed him and said he might, and Newton ran down into the garden with a very serious face, as if he had important business on hand. He had made a careful plan, and he wanted to see that everything was ready. First he walked down to the pond and looked at the boat; it was fastened to the stake, but it was not padlocked, as he feared it would be. Then he went to the stable and took the crabbling net from the big nail on which it always hung, carried it to the pond, and hid it under a lilac bush, and then walked to the house as if nothing unusual was about to happen.

Half past six was a long time coming that evening, and Newton went a good many times to look at the clock in the hall; at last the nurse called him and he hurried through his tea in a way that would have shocked his mother if she had been there to see the performance. When he slipped down from the table it was seven o'clock, and he had just one hour before bed-time. It was early in September, there was no moon, and was already quite dark. Newton sat down on the piazza, steps and waited, watching very impatiently for the coming of the stars in the sky, and thinking how he could best get into the garden without being seen by the servants in the house. It was a still evening, and one by one the stars stole out of their hiding places, and began to shine through the branches of net-work of branches that overhung the veranda; the darkness seemed to be full of katydids, and everyone talked as fast and as loud as it could. At last the clock chimed half past seven, and Newton stole quietly down the steps and along the gravelled walk, and got into the garden before any one noticed that he was gone. Once among the shrubs and trees he ran swiftly along the dusky walks to the clump of tall trees that stood together at the edge of the pond. He was so excited that his heart beat like a little hammer. Would the stars really be in the pond, and could he catch one?

When he reached the pond he looked eagerly over the surface, and there, near the middle, and beyond the dark shadows which the trees seemed to cast on the pond, soft but very clear, shone the stars in the motionless water. The boy ran to the lilac bush, drew out the net, and threw it into the little boat; then he gave the boat a little push, which was sufficient to send it several feet in the pond, and to send him flat into its bottom. He picked himself up and found he was floating straight out to the stars; the pond was so small that a good strong push would have sent the boat almost over to the other shore. Newton crawled to the bow, drew the net after him, and waited until he should float exactly over the stars. He began to feel that it was pretty solemn business; it was very dark all about, and even the little pond seemed large and mysterious; there was no sound but the strange, weird noise of the rustling leaves; the stars overhead seemed to be looking down very tenderly at the stars underneath, and Newton wondered if they would be angry if a star was taken out of the pond. The boat made little ripples as it moved along, and when it had almost reached the middle of the pond the stars began to quiver and tremble, and then they seemed to fall to pieces, and get scattered into gleams of light. Newton was very much afraid they were going out entirely; but in a minute the boat became still and the water calm

again, and there was a splendid great star right in front and only a little way off.

Newton had never heard of anybody who fished for stars before, and he was not sure whether he ought to have had a hook with some sort of bait, or whether the net was the right thing; but as the star lay perfectly still on the surface of the water he made up his mind that the net was better than the hook.

He kept very quiet, for he did not know but what a noise would frighten the star away; in fact, he was so excited that he hardly breathed. Without a sound, and almost without a motion, he pushed the pole of the net over the side of the boat, and ran the net under the star. Then he pushed the pole down, and the net rose dripping, with the star in the middle; but, sad to relate, the star seemed to run through the meshes of the net, and fall back into the water with a thousand drops. Newton pulled the net in and looked at it; it was unbroken, and he could not understand how the star could have gotten through and out if it had once been inside. He waited until the water became quiet, and then pushed out the net again; again it seemed to hold the star in the circle of its meshes, but again, as it rose dripping out of the pond, the star fell back in a shower of drops. The boy was greatly disappointed, but he was not ready to give up yet; perhaps he had been too slow.

He waited until the water became quiet again, and then he suddenly stood up in the bow of the boat and gave the net a quick push into the water. Instantly there was a great splash, and boy, boat, and stars were all mixed up in one grand commotion; the whole pond was in an uproar. Newton had pushed too far, and fallen overboard! Fortunately for the star-fisher it was a very still night, and George, who happened to be standing in the stable door smoking his short black pipe, heard the first splash, and ran to the pond without waiting to hear anything else. When he got there the boat was bobbing up and down, and the ripples were coming ashore in great circles, and George looked about anxiously to see the cause of the commotion. He was not kept waiting long, for in a second Newton's head came up out of the pond, looking for all the world like a round black ball in the water. Before it had time to go down again George had caught the dark curls and was pulling curls and all to shore.

For a minute or two Newton was so stunned that he hardly knew what had happened or where he was. The water ran out of his ears and eyes, and flowed in little streams from his clothes. George had read that something ought to be done with drowning people as soon as they were pulled out of the water, but he couldn't remember what it was that ought to be done; however, he did the only thing he could think of, and held Newton head downward for a minute, and then gave him several hard shakes. This brought the boy to his senses, and in a moment George carried him to the house. The nurse was too much frightened to scold him; she took off his wet clothes, gave him something warm to drink, and got him into bed as fast as possible. The next morning it was all so like a dream that Newton couldn't make up his mind whether it had really happened or not until he saw his clothes hanging before the kitchen fire after breakfast.

Black glace, black surah, and black Indian silks are trimmed to excess with wide platings and gathered flounces and frills of chalk-white Valenciennes lace, while the corsages are elaborately draped and made decorative with arrangements of Valenciennes fichus, berthes, or barbes, or sometimes a full gathered waistcoat of piece Valenciennes or laize, and festooned pannier draperies of the same or lambrequin draperies of full festooned flowering lace.

## GOOD THINGS TO KNOW.

To clean painted walls mix whiting with water till as thick as paste; apply with a flannel rag and wash off with warm water and a cloth.

Color taken out of dark colored goods with acid may be restored by the application of liquid ammonia.

To remove ink stains; as soon after the ink is spilled as possible, dip a sponge in milk and rub the spot, cleaning the sponge again in clean water before putting it again in the milk, to avoid smearing it; continue the operation until the ink is out.

A good polish for linen cuffs is made as follows: Three ounces of white wax, three drachms of spermaceti, one-half pound of borax, one and one-half ounces of gum tragacanth. Melt together and put a piece the size of a walnut into a quart of starch made in the usual manner.

To whiten and soften the hands, rub them every night with a mixture made by melting together thoroughly one half pound of mutton tallow, one ounce of camphor gum and one ounce of glycerine.

EGG PUDDING.—Make a custard of one quart of milk, four beaten eggs, two teaspoonful of sugar, lemon flavoring, one tablespoonful of corn starch. Pour over stale cake and set away to cool.

RYE MUFFINS.—One cup of flour, two cups of rye meal, one pint of sweet milk, one tablespoonful of sugar, pinch of salt, one teaspoonful of soda, one and one-half teaspoonful of cream tartar. Bake in muffin rings.

COOKIES.—Two teacups of sugar, three quarters of a cup of butter, one cup of sour milk sweetened with soda, nutmeg; roll thin; bake brown.

DOUGHNUTS.—One cup of sugar, and cup of sour milk sweetened with soda, three eggs, spice; mix soft. Roll and cut in rings, and fry in boiling fat.

GINGER COOKIES.—One half cup each of sugar, butter, water and molasses, one egg, one teaspoonful of soda stirred in the molasses, one tablespoonful of ginger. Mix smooth with flour.

BEEF CAKES.—Chop rare done roast beef very fine; season with salt, pepper and a little chopped onion; mix, make into small cakes and fry in beef drippings.

CHIPPED BEEF.—One pint of milk, one half-cup of water, two tablespoonful of flour stirred in one beaten egg. When it has boiled up once stir in chipped dried beef and cook three minutes.

A STOCKING BAG.—The materials needed are one and one-half yards of print or cretonne, eight small curtain rings, a stick of braid and a large piece of pasteboard. Cut three pieces of pasteboard each six and one-half inches wide and seven and one-half inches long and round one end of each. Tear a strip seven inches wide from one side of the print and the whole length; cover the pasteboards with this. Cut a piece nine inches long and the width of the remaining print, hem one side and round the corners of the others; gather the ends and rounded sides, and sew to one of the pieces of pasteboard, running an elastic into the hem; this is to hold the yarn; hem the ends of the remaining print, gather the sides and sew one side to the piece that holds the yarn, and the other to another piece of pasteboard; put in flannel for needles on this piece, and put the last piece over it and fasten at the top; fasten the rings to the top of the bag and run in the braid.

"La, me!" exclaimed an old lady who had been reading the hotel arrivals in a daily paper, "how many people there be who come from 'Do!'"