

## \* \* \* The Story Page. \* \* \*

### Then And Now.

What! You want grandfather to tell you the story of his life. Well! that's a large order. But still, I'll tell you something of the old and new things I've seen.

Now sit round and listen; and you, young quicksilver Bert, sit in the centre, and see if you can keep your restless energies quiet for a few minutes while I show you these pictures, and tell you the story. Are you all comfortable? No? Well, let Dolly come closer. Mag, cease chattering. There, we are a nice party.

Well, when I was a youngster, some sixty years ago, I well remember the good Princess Victoria being hailed Queen of England. The old king had died in the night and his ministers hastened to Kensington, where the princess was sleeping, and aroused the household. They said they must see her Majesty the Queen. "But said the ladies of the household, 'the princess is fast asleep.'" "Ah! but," replied these gentlemen, "the Queen's business is important, and we must see her Majesty." So the princess was awakened, and hastily putting on a dressing-gown, she came to the room where these gentlemen were awaiting her. They said they were sorry to disturb her Majesty's sleep, but events had happened which rendered it important that they should at once see the Queen of England. And so they delicately made known to her that the King was dead, and she was Queen.

For sixty years has she reigned; a model Queen, a noble woman. And, possibly, she, with others of us old folks, will be looking back over those years, and comparing what then was and what now is. Look at that old wooden battleship. That was the sort, when I was a mite in my dear old mother's arms, which swept the seas of our foes, and made England mistress of the seas. Good old wooden walls! But now what a difference. Wooden ships have given way to steel, and sails to steam.

Our fighting ships now have walls of steel twelve or eighteen inches thick, and are armed with monster guns which cost the country about twenty pounds at each firing, and which will send the destructive bullet to hit and damage at a distance of five or six miles; while for closer quarters, from the fighting tops on the masts, a storm of bullets are poured out as the gunners grind the handle. Terribly destructive are those modern ships of war. We are glad they are seldom called upon to show their teeth. May their strength and might long maintain our peace.

Travelling was slow when I was a boy, go where you would. Lands across the sea were only reached by sailing vessels. And if winds were contrary, it was slow indeed. But steam has altered all that; and we don't wait for favorable winds. The powerful engines thrust the steamer against wind and tide, and rapid travelling is now the order of the day. But more than that. Steam has brought within our reach the fruits and foods of other lands. These are so quickly carried that scarcely anything the world produces can now be considered perishable. Ice is not now sought for, but made; and in these steamships are ice chambers in which these fruits and foods are kept sweet and good. So that even the very poor may now enjoy what in my boyhood's days were considered by the rich as luxuries.

Ah! what a to-do there was when George Stephenson set about changing our ways of land travelling. We were all so satisfied with the coach. Nothing could be faster or more comfortable. What a mad-brained fellow Stephenson was to think of doing better than the coach and horses. What disasters, the knowing ones said, would take place when the first railway was made. Boilers would burst, cattle would stray on the lines and upset the train, and as for the idea of travelling at twenty miles an hour, it was wicked. People must expect to get killed if they rushed along at such a break-neck pace. But now you youngsters coolly step into the modern trains with their palace cars, so different to the stifling boxes of early times, and are whisked along at sixty or more miles an hour, making a journey in a day which we old boys would not have dreamt of doing in less than ten days.

I wonder whether the horse will one day be thought worthy a cage in our Zoo as a specimen of one of the animals which used to inhabit England. People used to ride him a good deal. Now the cycle takes his place. To-day we make him drag our carriages. By-and-bye, I suppose, he won't be wanted at all, for we shall all travel by motor car. And then poor old puss will have to find some other food than cat's meat.

How easily we get our light now. We take our box of matches, strike one, and immediately there is light. You would scarcely believe it, but there was not a match in England when I was a boy. When we wanted a light, we took a piece of flint and a steel, and got a spark like Bert does when he strikes his heel-tip on the curb. But

we took care to have some very dry tinder close by, into which our spark should drop, and then, having caught our spark, we would blow and puff, and puff and blow till we got a flame. Ah! often I've stood shivering with cold, click, click, clicking for the spark. What a feeble light our spluttering, guttering, tallow candles gave. Every few moments they needed snuffing, and sometimes, in snuffing them, out would go the light, because our snuffers had snapped off too much of the wick. And then we would have to go click, clicking again for another spark. At last, Sir Humphry Davy said we should have our streets and houses lighted with gas. Nonsense! how could it be? How could he get the gas to our houses? No; he was a dreamer, surely. But yet, we have got the gas in our houses, so bright with its incandescent mantle, that surely Sir H. Davy would open his eyes in astonishment at its brilliancy. And better than that, electricity is here with its powerful light; and electricity by which we may send messages, in a few moments of time, to any part of the world; and by which we may speak to one another, although hundreds of miles apart.

What an alteration, too, in farm work. The sickle and scythe are old-fashioned implements of harvest. Now the farmer employs a machine, which cuts the corn at one side, and throws it out at the other as a neat, tied-up bundle. And the old flail, shovel, and sieve are laid on one side, for machinery now beats out the corn, winnows it, and stacks the straw. All this is the result of intelligence. The harvest is quickly gathered, little is now spoiled; and so there is more and cheaper food for the people. But we old folks sometimes long for the swish of the scythe, and the song of the harvest home. Ah me! for the old days. But yet it is good to see the free schools and the free libraries, where all may acquire knowledge. What poky little rooms the old dames taught us in; and what a little they taught. What nervous old souls they were. How they cleared the room of all needles, and even the fender and fire-irons, when a storm came, and we all huddled together, shivering with fright, terrorized at each crash of thunder. Wonder of wonders was the penny post, when Sir Rowland Hill enabled us to send a letter to any part of the country for a penny. But you youngsters can beat that, for there is your halfpenny post. It was said the penny post would never do, for everybody would be wanting to write. Yes, it's true; these fine schools and the intelligent teachers are putting knowledge in every one's way.

And is it not good to know that pain is lessened nowadays? With chloroform and ether our surgeons put us to sleep while they cut away or examine our diseases; and our dentists, with their gas, make us unconscious that we are having ever so many of those aching teeth removed. We have police to protect, firemen to save; while out at sea the sailor in peril sends up his rockets, assured that some brave lifeboatmen will bring their unsinkable life-boats to his rescue. And there are papers and books by the hundreds for us to read; and children's books are cheaper, ever so much larger, and twenty times more interesting than when Victoria became Queen. Surely it is good to live to see it. We are all happier and more comfortable for all this intelligence. Let us use our intelligence to make others happier.—Our Boys and Girls.

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### The Ten-penny Piece: A Story of the People.

(BY WILHELM UNFELD.)

It may be some twenty years ago since I made a journey to the sea shore, and visited a dear friend in the little town of N—, who had a position in a large paper-making establishment. I could merely give him a short salutation at the office, but in the evening we were to meet in the inn where I was to spend the night.

That short visit served to impress upon my mind a picture which kept my thoughts busy all day, and which I still retain to-day in all its freshness. At my friend's office I saw an old hump-backed man, whose snow-white hair was covered with a small velvet cap, a wooden leg completed his crippled condition, but in his head there glistened a pair of eyes which betokened both intelligence and goodness of heart.

Who was the man? How came he in that office? and what might be the history of his life and of his suffering? This thought haunted my mind continually, and when at last my friend came to the inn in the evening, I could scarcely wait until the proper time for broaching this question. My friend smiled and said, "You did not observe badly, and what I have to tell you is well worth the telling." And now he began to give me the information which I here repeat for the benefit of the gentle reader.

"Luke Taylor," he began, "was the son of a day-laborer. He owes his hunch-back to an unfortunate fall

when he was a child, and from that time all that life held for Luke was bodily pain and mental anguish. His school education was that which falls to the lot of the poor, and even if he had a clear head, what was to become of a cripple? He was, like many others, sent out by his poor parents to beg when he was quite young.

"It was midsummer, and Luke might be about fifteen years old when my present master came to this place in order to buy up a water-power and to arrange for this business. The sale, contrary to his expectation, had gone off well, and so at the station he gave a ten-penny piece to Luke who was standing there. Luke was surprised and called the master's attention to the largeness of the gift. He laughed and said jokingly that Luke might buy a little flower business with the money. That was a word in season which fell in good soil.

"Luke went straightway to a gardener, told him of his purpose, and from that time he begged no more, but sold his little nose-gays. As he was kindly and respectful he always had customers, and his life did not seem now to be such a heavy burden. The year long he might be seen now up and down the station as if he was part of the regular staff. My master also was glad on Luke's account, but had no further thought about the future.

"Then was Luke's destiny for all time to be settled. He might be about three and twenty years old, and he stood again on the station steps. Comers and goers pressed to and fro, and my master was among the travellers. He was trying to get out of the way of the post-man's handcart, and unfortunately stepped on the track. A cry of alarm rang through the crowd as a locomotive was just rushing along. All were paralyzed with excitement. Then Luke rushed upon my master and threw him over the rails. My master was saved, but Luke was carried a moment later into the station house; one of his feet had been torn off.

"My master was inconsolable, but Luke's opinion was he was a cripple at any rate, and a little more or less did not matter much. Under the careful treatment provided for him, Luke got better sooner than was expected. Of course he had in future a wooden foot as well as a hump-back. What now? Luke could no longer do business at the station; the thought of it was repugnant to my master; and so a plan was carried out that Luke should buy up rags and old metal. My master took the rags at a good price, and also took the trouble of corresponding with the firms for the sale of the metal.

"Luke paid the rag-gatherers fairly, and so it came about that his business increased more and more. With the help of my master he was soon able to call a little house and garden his own, and so good fortune was drawn out of his many trials. But, strange to say, as Luke's prosperity increased my master went to the bad. A commercial crisis and the failure of friendly firms brought great loss, and when one day a note for \$750 fell due there was no money in the chest. Like wildfire ran the news of the protested note through the town and came to Luke's ears. He said nothing about it, but went quietly home and dressed in his Sunday clothes, and half an hour after he left my master's house the note was paid. Two days after he had sold his house, and for some weeks he might be seen again at the station with his nose-gays.

"But, as if fate had been appeased by such loyalty, my master's business began from that time to improve. The firm ranks today among the most solid and most respected in Germany. But Luke from that time belonged to the house, and is to-day the first book-keeper in the business. Only his white hair, which he got through the railway accident, his wooden foot, and his hump-back, remind him daily of the time when fate greeted him in such an unfriendly fashion. But my master gladly tells this short story again and again, and from that time he has been enrolled among those who are privately counted as benefactors of the poor."

So ends my friend's story. But if it has pleased you, gentle reader, as it pleased me, then be good enough to think constantly when a poor man comes to your door, "It is better to give than to receive" and "Every man's destiny is written in the stars."

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### Some "Might Have Beens."

(BY SUSAN TRALL PERRY.)

"There, I meant to have sent that coat and hood of Elsie's to the mission rooms!" said Mrs. Warner, as she began to clean out the closet in her little daughter's room, in the early spring morning. "I am sorry, for it would have kept some little body so comfortable during the very cold weather we had. But now the weather has come off so mild, I think I had better pack it away in the camphor chest until another winter."

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