Stealing Water.

A STORY FOR THE CHILDREN

A STORY FOR THE CHILDREN,

"Annie," said Mrs. Hart, "I wish
you'd go down and tell Peter Nordeen
that I want to get my beets in tomorrow, if he'll come up."

"Yes'm," said Annie.

"And sek him if he can spare me
that shp from hie rose geranium he
promised me last week."

"Yes'm." Annie took her sunbonnet and moved toward the door.

"And don't run, shild—it's droad-

bonnet and moved toward the door.

"And don't run, child—it's dreadful hot. And don't bring home another hors toad. I simply can't abide
the critters." Mrs. Hart stood in the
doorway and looked out over the gray
hillside "A dreadful dreary country,"
she muttered. "If only the Lord
could have made it green to start
with!"

could have made it green to start with!"

She caught sight of a bent figure with a rifle at right shoulder shift, plodding slowly up the cannor road beneath her.

"For the land's sake!" she ejecultated. "Thore he is now—Mr. Nordsen, come up here a minute, I want to speak to you!"

Annie Tome back! Mr. Nordsen, one up here a minute, I want to speak to you!"

Annie ran back along the hillside, glad she had not gone beyond recall, and Nordsen toiled slowly up the steep path to the door of the little shanty.

"Come right in and sit down," said Mrs Hart, "If you have time."

"Plenty of time," said Nordsen, sitting down with his rifle between his knees. "I was just going up to fix my water-gate, and see if I oould shoot a jack rabbit."

"You're lucky to have a water-gate of w. Mr. Nordsen," he replied "I

fix my water gate, and see if I could shoot a jack rabbit."

"You're lucky to have a water-gate to fix, Mr. Nordsen." she replied. "I can't makeouth ow Henry same to leave me without any water-right unless it was that he was taken so suddenly."

"Yea'm," asserted Nordsen. "When the 'Miner's Delight' coves in, she ain't likely to leave a man much time to fix up water-rights for his widder."

"I said to Henry when we first came here," Mrs. Hart went on, "Henry," I said. "Il not live in a country where you have to buy your water, as if somebody owned it," I said. "It's just like supposing we had to buy air, and if the Lord don't rain it down here on the just and the unj st I want to stey in Vermont."

"And what did he say to shat?" ask d Nordsen.

sak d Nordsen.

"He said. 'We don't need water,
Mily, when we can have born silver
for the digging of it up. The upshot
of the matter was that not a drop of
Ride Creek do I own, from one and to

"But you raise some presty flutheath, "But you raise some presty flutheath, "I But you raise some presty flutheath, "I But you water."
"Only on ascount of Mr. Seymore's shiftlessness," she replied. "It all comes down from a leak in his big flume above here."
"Really now!" said Nordseu. "And he never fixed that flume? Well, that's one on him." He granned with a good deal of heartiness as he wiped an imaginary speek of dust from the front sight of his rifes. A regular good one," he repeated. "Yes, yes!"
"How so?" asked Mrs. Hart, with some above of interest.

guiar good one," he repeated. "Yes, yes!"

"How so?" asked Mrs. Hart, with some show of interest.

"Well," said Nordsen, slowly, "for a man of his disposition, that's gaid nigh ten thousand dollars for his water-rights, and makes every rancher below here pay two dollars an ascre for what water is left when he gets through, it seems to me'it' queer of him to let you have all you want without paying for it—especially as he never gave a thing to a living soul before in his life, as I ever hear."

"Ten thousand dollars!" echoed Mrs. Hart.

"Yes'm, to this one, and that one, and the lawyers. But it won't hurl him to give you a little of it. It'll stand him in good stead as the last. He'll need water finally," he added, with a chockle. "And you can depend on me to keep my mouth shut. Mrs. Hart did not reply. Her lips were shut tight, and she was gazing through the open door far out acroes the valley glimmering in the afternoon sunlight. The old man rose to go, "What I wanted of you, Mr. Nord sen," asid Mrs. Hart, with an effort, "was to know if you can help me get my beets in to morrow morning."

"I guess so," he replied, "as far as I know new."

"And if you'll be me have the use of your wagon," she went on, "I'll do your wagon," she went on, "I'll do your wagon," she went on, "I'll how your beets to the suear factory for you if you wish. "I'm certainly greatly obliged, Mr. Nordsen," she replied, "ou if you wish. "As you please. I'll be here to morrow with it ems. Gazad and and the part and and the seried, "as you please. I'll be here to morrow with it ems.

want specially to do."

"As you please, ma'am," he said,
"as you please. I'll be here tomorrow with it sure. Good day.
Good by, Annie. How's the hitten
emning on that I give you?"

"Nicely, thank you, sir," said
Annie, skyly.

"That's good "he said." Good.

Amnie, shyly.

"That's good," he said. "Goodby." He want cautionally down the steep slope again. Mrs. Hart said door, bearing on its ground glass shough she were "all beat out," as at hough she would have expressed is.

The water had meandered down the billade from a leak in the big dime above, had brickled under her "alat."

She waited long in a luxurious anteroom, and was at last admitted above, had brickled under her "alat."

and-wire" fence and tried to make things grow in her dusty dooryard. things grow in her dusty dooryard. Without thought of wrong she had used it all summer to ske out the scanty pension her husband had left her, and provide for herself and her orphan nieco by growing bests for the sugar factory at the town of Rifle Creek.

rees. She had lived among the green She had lived among the green Vermont hills, where water was not bought and sold, but here. "ten thousand dollars paid to this one, that one, and the lawyers!" Annie was sitting with one foot ourled up under her, bemming a dish towel. Mrs. Hart watched her reflectively for some time before she sooke.

spoke, "Annie," she said, finally, "did you hear what Mr. Nordson said?"
Annie pushed her hair back over her ear and looked up. "About the water?" sho asked.

water?" she asked.
"Yes," said Mrs. Hart.
"That we are taking it without
Mr. Seymore's knowing about it?"

Mt. coymore s anowing access. "Yes."

"But, aunty, that means we've been—"abe hesitated.

"Yes, that we've been stealing it!
There's no other word for it."
Annie looked awestruck. "But, aunty,"she said, earnestly, "we didn't know it."

know it."

1 ought to have known it," said Mrs. Hart, rocking gently, "if I'd atopped to think."

"When you steal without knowing it," said Annie, softly, "is it stealing just the same?"

"Yes, it's virtually stealing; that is taking without the consent of the owner what does not belong to you," said Mrs. Hart. "A person ought to know."

said Mrs. Hart. "A person ought to know."

But the water just came and ran into the ground. We didn't fetch it, and we couldn't give it back."

"But we ought to have told the owner it was coming. I're same as if a neighbor's hens had been laying in our shed and we'd kept the eggs,"

"But, aunty," said Annie, suddenly sitting up and pulling her little gingham skirt down over her bare feet, "Mr. Beymore should keep his flume mended if he didn't want us to have the water.

"Mr. Seymore should keep his flume mended if he didn't want us to have the water.

"Just because Mr. Seymore's too lazy to mend his ditch is no excuse to us for stealing his water," said Mrs. Hart, relentlessly. "Nobody's going to let off a norse thief just because he stole nothing but stray horses."

There was a pause of a few moments, britten only by the creaking of Mrs. Hart's rocking chair.

"Aunty," said Annie, finally, "what are you going to do about it? We can't give him back the water?"

"No, but we can give nim back all thu good the water did us. The beets," she explained, in answer to Annie's puzzled look.

"But, aunty," she said, faintly, "you don't mean to give him back all our bests?"

"They sin's ours st. sl., child," said

all our bests?"

"They aln's ours at all, child," said Mrs. Hart "it's his waser, that he paid for, that male 'on grow, and he has a right to every blessed one of 'em And I'm going to take 'em to him the minute they're out of the ground."

"Ru!"

him the minute they're out of the ground."

"But we bought the seed, aunty," protested Annie, "and it was out land, and we took care of 'em, and you're washing for Mr. Norden because he's going to help us with 'em, and lend us his team."

"Yes," said Mrs. Hart, "and the seed would have been no good, nor the land either, if it wasn't for the water."

the hand either, it is wear to character.

It was well nigh half of R fie Oreek that want slipping quietly around the hillsides in John Seymore's big flume, and wandered in a thousand tiny streams about the roots of his myriad peach-trees. Seymore had paid a goodly sum in establishing and defending the right to call it his, and was naturally not disposed to part with it on any light terms.

Hence he had the name, both in the town and among the ranchers, of being rather "close" at a bargain and a hard man to deal with. There were but few people, however, who really knew him or were qualified to speak with authority of his obstracter.

Mrs. Hart and Annie drove in sil-

with authority of his character.

Mrs. Hart and Annie drove in silence along the dusty road from the mouth of the canon to the busy little town of Rifle Greek. Both were thinking with vain regret of the things they were to have brought back withem, purchased with the money paid for those bests, and each knew well what the other was thinking of. As they drew up before the new brick office building that bore Mr. Seymorés name. Mrs. Hart handed Annie the name, Mrs. Hart handed Annie the

name, Mrs. Hart Institute values the reins.

"You sit right still, Aunie," she said, "and I'll be out again just as soon as I can tell him about it, and find out wher? be wante em put. And find out wher? be wante em put. And heaven known," she added, groping under the seat for the hitching strap, "that I shall be glad enough when it," over." Annie sat wrapped in a messe of childish fancese set in motion by the aver-changing crowd before her, until her aunt reappeared.

Mrs. Hart knocked timidly at an oak door, bearing on its ground glass panel the legend:

Rive. Camex Reseavous and

ously scann og the face of Mr. Seymore. He did not look like a harl man, she thought; on the contrary there was something about the mouth that made one think he might at any time be concealing a smile beneath the drooping mustache.

"My name is Hart," she found herself saying, after he had motioned hor to a chair. "Eluza M. Hart, widow of Honry Hart, who was killed when the 'Miner's Delight' caved in last spring."

the 'Miner's Delight' caved in iass spring."

Mr. Beymore nodded.

"I live at the trouth of Rifle Creek Canon" she went on, "right under where your big flume turns round to the north, there—and that's what

too north, there — and that's what I come to see you about."
She paused and cleared how Mr. Say more was playing with an ivory paper-knife, resting one end on the deak and aliding his thumb and foreinger down

anie, resung one ent on the desk and iding his thumb and forefinger down it.

"I—I've been raising some beets this summer," she continued, determinedly. "for the sugar factory here, and I came to tell you I—I did it by stealing your water."

Soymord's fingers stopped midway on the paper knile and he darled a quick glance at her. He saw her evident distress and his eyes softened.

"How was that?" he asked.

"There is a lesk in the finme," she said. "It is right where it ruus through a path of sornb oak, so your men didn't find it. "he water ran right under my fence, and I sunk a barrel there for a kind of a reservoir, but truly, Mr. Seymore, I bad no idea how much that water was worth, and I never thought of stealing a thing from you; and I'd give it back this blessed minute, every drop of it, if I could, but I can't—so I did the next beet thing—I brought you all the bests I raised, and I only bope they'll be worth as much as the water."

Seymore had tipped back his obsir and was pulling his long, black mustabe down over his mouth.

be worth as much as the water."

Seymore had tipped back his chair and was pulling his long, black mustache down over his mouth.

"Where are they?" he asked.

"They're right down here in the wagon," she said. "You can see 'em from the window."

Seymore rose and looked down on the dusty ranch wagon, and the little figure in the brown gingham dress absorbed in study the throng before her.

Beets have fallen this month said, turning away from the wi with a deepned twinkle in his He had not noticed whether they beets or turnips.

with a deep ned twinkle in his eye.
He had not noticed whether they were bests or turnips.
"Don't you think they'll pay for it?" she sal so, anxiously.
He pulled at his mustache harder than ever. "Well, it's hardly customary, he began, "to settle such matters in this way—"
"I can take 'em right round to the sugar factory and get the money for 'em." she interrupted, eagerly, "Mrs. Hart," he said, soberly, "if you will agree not to bring suit for damages against me for the bursting of my dause, I'll agree to say no more about the bests."
"Damages i' she said wonderingly. "Exactly." he said: "and if the water has been any accommodation to you I shall be glad to let it run where it will." He was writing as he spoke. "Bat, Mr. Saymore," she protested. "I am indebted to it for this call," he interrupted, "and that more than pays for it. I shall send a man around to morrow to look over the ground, and I hope you will tell him just how you would like to have things fixed. If you give this to the foreman of the sugar factory, I think he will see that the recent fall in the price of beste does not affect your crop."

He gave her the note he had written.

He gave her the note he had written. The next day there came to Mrs. Hart's cottage two burly Swedes who built a neat little flume down the hillside, dug trim, small ditches shout and across the garden, and delivered to her a signed and seeled document securing her the right to use the water for five years. Not every man would have done this,—I say it with sorrow and shame.—and the act was therefore more of a credit to Mr. Beymore, and certainly a credit to human nature.

Annie was in great glee at seeing

Annie was in great glee at seeing the water come sheeting down over the smooth boards, and ripple into the barrel reservor. "Aren't you glad Mr. Nordeen told us, aunty," she water T'-Rourer P. UTTER, in the Youth's Compunion.

There are ac many cough medicines in the market, that is is sometimes diffi-uit to tell which to bay; but if we had-cough, a cold or any affiction of the threat or lungs, we would try Bickle's haif-Consumpive Syrup. Those who have used it think it is far absed of al Anti-Consumptive Syrup. Those who have used it think it is far ahead of all other preparations recommended for such complaints. The little folks like it, as it is se pleasant as syrup.

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