

### How the Children Saved the House.

(By Mary B. Sleight.)

This is another story about Horace and his little brother and sister. One day their father and mother went to a neighboring town to attend a funeral, and the children were left to take care of the house during their absence. Mamma had spread a nice luncheon for them, and little Fay, seated at the head of the table, felt herself quite grown up as she poured the "cambric tea." But suddenly a whiff of smoke came down the stairs.

"Do not be frightened," cried Horace, making a dash for the attic.

Fay and Will started to follow him, but he was on the way back before they reached the landing.

"It's just a place in the roof, not bigger than your hand," he said breathlessly, "and with a few pails of water we can put it out in a jiffy."

So, snatching down the fire-buckets the little brigade set bravely to work. They were on their second trip from the kitchen to the roof when some one outside, discovering the smoke, gave the alarm, and presently men, women and children were clamoring for admittance. But Horace, who had taken care to lock the doors and windows, called down, with a cheerful, "Thank you," that they needed no help.

"They'll only make a muss of everything if we let them in—they always do at fires," he said to his helpers, as he emptied another supply of water on the smoking shingles. Some of those below did not take this refusal very pleasantly and declared that if the house had burned to the ground they would have no one but themselves to blame. But, deaf to their grumbling, up the stairs with the heavy buckets, again and again climbed the tireless trio, till not so much as a smell of fire was left.

By that time papa and mamma were at the door, and the three grimy little figures rushed into their arms with a shout that came very near being a sob.

"Twas drefful hard tuggin'." lisped Fay, blinking off a tear, "but we dot it out."

### Affection For the Aged.

There is a pathetic charm about old age. We are sure that nothing is so lovely as the saintly old grandmother occupying her accustomed place in the chimney-corner. There is something that entrances while we watch the silver-haired patriarch as he fondles his darling grandchild on his knee.

They are the salt of the earth, the treasure in the home, the familiar figures in community life. And more than this love of others, there is coming a time in our own individual history when we shall crave the caresses and love of friends. Old age is more keenly sensible to neglect than at any other time. It is not intentional—no, we may commit this

neglect amid our devotion to and attendance upon other matters.

We forget, however, that the inward craving of old age conceives of no apologies and knows no reason why the old-time cares and fondling should be things of the past. It transmutes everything into neglect. Age softens the heart and the soul pines for the touch of the hand that would stroke the golden locks of a prattling child. Let's love them more than by mere sentiment! What would we do without these saints? Amid these reveries, we recall the lines of Elizabeth Gould:

"Put your arms around me—  
There, like that:  
I want a little petting  
At life's setting,  
For 'tis harder to be brave  
When feeble age comes creeping  
And finds me weeping  
Dear ones gone.  
Just a little petting  
At life's setting:  
For I'm old, alone, and tired  
And my long life's work is done."

Willie (very seriously): "Papa I had a strange dream this morning."

Papa: "Indeed! What was it?"

"Willie: 'I dreamed, papa, that I died and went to Heaven; and when St. Peter met me at the gate, instead of showing me the way to the golden street, as I expected, he took me out into a large field, and in the middle of the field there was a ladder reaching away up into the sky and out of sight. Then St. Peter told me that Heaven was at the top, and that in order to get there I must take the big piece of chalk he gave me and slowly climb the ladder, writing on each rung some sin I had committed.'

Papa (laying down his newspaper): "And did you finally reach heaven, my son?"

"Willie: 'No, papa, for just as I was trying to think of something to write on the second rung I looked up and saw you coming down.'

Papa "And what was I coming down for?"

Willie: "That's what I asked you, and you told me you were coming down for more chalk."

### Four Rats.

An exchange tells the story of a poor workingman who told his wife, on awakening one morning, a curious dream which he had during the night. He dreamed that he saw coming toward him, in order, four rats. The first one was very fat, and was followed by two lean rats, the rear rat being blind. The dreamer was greatly perplexed as to what evil might follow, as it had been understood that to dream of rats denoted calamity. He appealed to his wife concerning this, but she, poor woman, could not help him. His son, who heard his father tell the story, volunteered to be the interpreter. "That fat rat," he said, "is the man who keeps the saloon you go to so often; the two lean rats are my mother and me; and the blind rat, father, is yourself."

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