

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## The Collector of Waste.

It was very warm, and Jamie was tired. He had been riding on his bicycle all the afternoon, and now he was sitting on the lawn, waiting for the clock to strike half-past eight, which was his bed-time.

But presently, as he leaned back, with his eyes half shut, he heard steps coming nearer, and when he opened his eyes he saw a queer little old man standing before him.

The little old man had a large bag on his back, and wore a funny pair of spectacles. He nodded to Jamie and said, 'Good-evening,' and then he sat down, took off his hat, and fanned himself with it, as if he felt quite at home.

'Are you a pedler?' asked Jamie, after waiting some moments for the old man to speak.

But the old fellow smiled at this question and shook his head.

'I will tell you my business,' he said, briskly. 'I'm a collector.'

'And what do you collect?' inquired Jamie. 'Postage-stamps, or coins, or autographs? I've tried collecting all those things myself, and I would like to see your collections ever so much.'

The old man smiled again. Then he said: 'No, I don't collect things of that sort. I am a Collector of Waste.'

'A Collector of Waste!' said Jamie, much puzzled. 'Why, I never heard of such a collection before. I don't understand what you mean by waste. Where do you find it? and what is it like?'

'That is just what I am going to tell you,' said the old man as he took his heavy bag off his shoulders and laid it down.

'The world is full of waste-collectors, like myself, only you have never been favored with the sight of one before. We go about collecting everything that human beings waste—time, opportunities, money, happiness. All these we gather up from day to day, and sometimes our loads are frightfully heavy, I can tell you. Look at this bagful collected to-day!'

'Dear me!' said Jamie. 'I wish you would show me some of the things you have there. Couldn't you do it?'

'If I show you anything, I will show you your own waste, for you've given me lots of work to-day collecting it,' replied the old man, severely.

'I'd like to know what I've wasted to-day!' exclaimed Jamie, indignantly. 'Now, that's nonsense.'

'It is, hey?' said the old man, with a cross look. 'Well, then, I'll prove that it's true, and I'll make you own it, too, before I go. I have not time to open my bag now, but I will read from my memorandum-book the list of all you've wasted to-day,' and he took out a small book and turned over the leaves, saying—

'Jamie—J—yes, here is your account—now listen. In the first place, you wasted thirteen minutes this morning lying in bed after you were called and told to get up. Then when you were only half dressed you wasted eight minutes more looking out of the window at two dogs who were fighting. So much before breakfast. In the school you lost ten minutes of the study hour drawing pictures in your copy-book, and you wasted eleven minutes over that newspaper you carried to school.

'When you came home, instead of going directly to your room to wash your face and hands and brush your hair, as your mother requested, you spent nine minutes grum-

bling on the stairs, before you obeyed her. You stopped in the street to talk to Tommy Rose, and wasted twelve minutes of your music-lesson time, besides—'

'Oh, stop! do stop!' cried Jamie, interrupting the old man. 'Don't tell me any more about the time I've wasted, please.'

'Well, I'll tell you about the other things, then—your wasted opportunities, for example. You saw a bird's nest robbed to-day, and never said a word, when you might have saved it. When you saw that little boy drop his marbles you only laughed at him, when you might have helped to pick them up. You let your sister take that long, hot walk to the post-office this afternoon, when you could have gone there so easily on your bicycle—'

'But I promised the boys to run races at four o'clock, and I had no time,' Jamie protested.



HE SAW A QUEER LITTLE MAN.

'That is no excuse. They could have waited for you,' said the old man. 'Those opportunities to be kind all wasted in one day!'

'Well, I hope this is the end of your list,' Jamie said, in a shame-faced way.

'By no means! There was another wasted opportunity when you were so inattentive to your history lesson in school. You flew into a passion, too, because your shoestring was in a knot. Wasted opportunity for self-control! You forgot to rise and offer your mother a chair when she entered the room. Wasted opportunity to be polite! You bought liquorice after resolving never to buy it again. Wasted money and wasted good resolution! But I have read enough to prove what I said, and I have no wish to be disagreeable.'

The old man closed his book and looked at Jamie with a serious yet kindly gaze.

'Take pains, my dear boy,' he said, as he picked up his bag. 'It is in your power to lighten my daily load very much. Whenever you are tempted to throw away anything as valuable as your time or your opportunities, remember the Collector of

Waste! But, hark! Your mother is calling you—don't waste a moment, I beg. Good-night.'

Jamie sprang from his seat and ran toward the house. As he went out of the garden he turned and looked back. The old man had vanished.

## His Uncle's Namesake.

(Kate W. Hamilton, in 'Forward'.)

'Leander's as good as gold, but he's humbly as a rail fence,' was his grandmother's declaration. The boy was at an ungainly age, his long limbs seemed to fit him but awkwardly, his good-natured mouth was too large, his nose far from 'classical,' and freckles showed plentifully on his sunburned, healthy face. His gray eyes were clear and honest, but his big hands seemed only fit for work, and he delighted in work.

'Secretly his mother thought him lacking in ambition. She had named him after his rich great-uncle in New York, with many fond dreams of what the relationship and the name might bring in the future; but so far the two owners of the cognomen had been equally obtuse to its suggestions. Uncle Leander on being pointedly informed that he had a namesake, had sent the baby a silver cup, and with that token had apparently dropped all remembrance of him, while young Leander grew up without sharing in the least the maternal visions and aspirations. In fact he was but dimly aware of them, for beyond vaguely expressed wishes and hopes Mrs. Bent had not found it easy to explain her views in a way that would not sound chimerical or arouse antagonism.

But now Leander was eighteen and she was fully determined that he should go to New York for a visit. More than that, when he gasped in astonishment at such a proposal, she triumphantly produced money for the journey.

'A hundred dollars!' Leander's tall frame leaned against the door for support. 'Why, Mom Bent, where'd you ever get that much money?'

'You earned every cent of it yourself hauling wood last winter and fall. It's what you've been givin' me week in and week out.'

'But—but, Mom, I thought I was helpin' pay for things round the house,' he said, not quite knowing whether to be pleased or disappointed.

'Yes, and I knew well enough that was the only way for you to get anything saved up. You'd give it to paint the barn or mend the fence, or anything that anybody wanted; and so I just kept it and said nothin'. I've saved it a purpose for you to go to New York and see your Uncle Leander. You've got your new suit, and there's nothin' to hinder.'

Leander junior hesitated but a moment. The visit was a minor matter, but he was only eighteen, and New York was a wonderful place to see.

'I'll do it!' he said.

'You can start to-morrow,' explained his mother, delighted with her success. 'You can drive into town, leave the rig there for Joe Glegg to bring home, and take the afternoon train. You'll get in at night, and then you can hunt up your uncle the first thing in the morning.'

Leander was so busily thinking of the many things he wanted to hunt up first that he scarcely noticed the conclusion of her sentence. Presently he improved upon her plan.