

Meanwhile, he was passing away for want of what the doctor mentioned carelessly enough as nourishing diet.

But about all this his little girl knew nothing. She thought of the Vulture as a person—probably a very big and fierce man; but she would not allow herself to feel frightened. Whenever she began to tremble she whispered low: "For father's sake!" and smiled brightly as she struggled along.

The pavement scorched her feet, and her shoes were very thin and worn. She had washed her face particularly clean and brushed her hair, making it as tidy as possible; but she wore no hat, and looked odd enough as she hurried through the crowded streets.

The policemen smiled their astonishment as she asked the way to Threadneedle Street, but they were good-natured and ready to answer her questions. She wished there were fewer horses and carriages; but that could not be helped, and she managed to get across. Her head ached, and so did her little feet; but Polly had no time to think of these things. She only remembered her father lying so sick and helpless; and when she was not thinking of him—which was seldom enough—she was trying to plan what she should say to the Vulture.

On, on, through busy streets, with her head held bravely up; on, on, past handsome shop-windows, filled with beautiful things; and, at last, Threadneedle Street.

Polly's heart beat fast, but she felt there was no need to ask further questions; she was eight years old and knew how to read. But this word was a very long one. It would perhaps be better to ask. She stopped in front of a tall policeman, and put her question.

"There you are," he answered, pointing across the street.

"The Vulture."

She read each letter slowly and aloud. Then she darted across swift as an arrow, and entered what seemed to her a building as grand as the palace of a king. It was dreadful to find so many eyes fixed upon her, but she did not flinch.

"If you please," she asked, in a clear voice, "does the Vulture live here?"

A number of men were present, and they all laughed aloud. Then one, with a pleasant face, stepped forward and answered her.

"Run upstairs, my dear; go down the little passage to the right. You will find an old gentleman sitting alone in his office. Ask him if he is the Vulture. If he says yes, you can tell him your business."

The men all laughed again, though Polly considered it no laughing matter. She had, for her part, never been more serious or in earnest. Up she ran, her loose hair flying.

There was a little passage on the right, and at the farther end the door which had been indicated. Tap, tap, tap! she rapped, and then entered.

An old gentleman, who sat by a table strewn with papers, glanced up at her, evidently a little puzzled and somewhat astonished. He had a kind, ruddy face, grey hair, and pleasant eyes. Polly, very white and trembling, advanced, and said hesitatingly:

"If you please, sir, are you the Vulture?"

He seemed to be a little bewildered for a moment; then his face cleared, and he answered slowly:

"Yes, my dear, I suppose so. What is your business? Sit down and let me hear all about it."

She hesitated, but he lifted her gently to the table, and, looking up into his face, with her small hands folded in her lap, she told him simple story. Her father was very ill, she said, and she had heard him say, only last night, that when he died things would be better. Mother could go to the Vulture then and get her money.

"But, oh, if you please, dear Mr. Vulture," the child added, "it will be no good then—no good when father is dead! It

is to keep him here that we want the money. He would get better if we could buy him nice things to eat—beef-tea—and nourishing food, I heard the doctor telling mother so."

The gravity upon the listener's face deepened. He questioned her, closely, perhaps, but not unkindly; and having fathomed the purport of the sick man's words, he endeavoured patiently to explain them to the little girl. He saw that he was understood, but the next moment the child burst into tears, and sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Oh, dear, dear," she cried. "Then it is all of no use, and poor father will die."

"No, no, my dear. I'll go with you and see him, and we will take him all sorts of nice things."

"Nourishing food?"

"Oh, yes!"

"And beef-tea?"

"Certainly. Grapes, too, if you think he will like them."

Polly had no doubt on this point, and nodded her head so violently, to emphasise the conviction, that the curls fell over her forehead in picturesque confusion.

Meanwhile, messages were sent to and fro, and before long a large basket was filled with delicacies, and Polly herself regaled on cake and grapes.

"Well, my little maid," asked one of the clerks, who had been conversing in a low tone with her new friends, and had even condescended to fetch a cab for them, "where are you going?"

"Home with the Vulture," replied Polly promptly and as distinctly as the last mountain of cake would permit.

And they both laughed as it it were an excellent joke.

The cab rolled along gaily, and the child entertained her companion with artless talk. She did not know when her father said the "Vulture" he meant the Vulture Life Insurance Company.

Neither did she know that the pleasant-faced gentleman at her side was the manager of the company; but when they reached Garden Court she lay fast asleep, her head pillowed on the old man's shoulder.

"Oh, dear! What is the matter? Is it an accident?" Polly's mother asked, rushing to the door.

"An accident? Nothing of the sort! Far from it. It is only that you have a brave little daughter, who has brought you a friend."

Polly awoke, with a smile on her lips. "Oh, yes, mother dear," she exclaimed, "this is the Vulture; and he has all sorts of lovely things here in his basket. Father will get better now."

So he did—very slowly, but none the less surely; and Polly, as she knelt at her bedside night and morning, prays, with her young heart warmed by an unshaken faith:

"Please, God, bless father and mother and the dear, good Vulture!"

SAFEGUARD THE CHILDREN.

There is no telling when a medicine may be needed in homes where there are little ones. Therefore, the prudent mother will always keep a box of Baby's Own Tablets on hand. These Tablets promptly cure indigestion, colic, sour stomach, constipation, diarrhoea and teething troubles. They break up colds, prevent croup, expel worms, and give the child sound natural sleep. Mothers have the guarantee of a Government analyst that these Tablets contain no opiate or poisonous soothing stuff. Mrs. J. C. Gildart, Prosser Brook, N.B., says: "Baby's Own Tablets act like magic when a little one is ill, and I would not feel safe without a box in the house." You can get Baby's Own Tablets from your medicine dealer or by mail at 25 cents a box from the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Brockville, Ont.

It should be the aim of every one to contribute something to the common good. Self may be the center of one's life, but it should not be the circumference.

EASTER FOLK LORE.

In all ages and in all countries eggs have been the subject of legend and romance. At the Easter season, when the egg is a most palatable, as well as staple, article of food, it is particularly interesting to trace the various superstitions and legends that have been connected with it.

The ancient Firms, says the Philadelpia Record, believed that a mystic bird laid an egg in the lap of Vaimamon, who hatched it in his bosom. He let it fall in the water and it broke. The lower portion of the shell formed the earth, the upper the sky, the liquid white became the sun, the yolk the moon; while the broken bits of egg-shell were turned into stars.

In Germany the egg is as much of a feature of the gay Eastertide as in our own land, yet the hen, goose or duck is not held responsible for its existence, but to the pretty hare is accredited oviparous qualities, and a nest of sugar eggs presided over by a toy hare is the most favored gift among the younger generation. It is the custom in German families on Easter eve to conceal a nest of real and sugar eggs among dried leaves in the garden, allowing happy children to enjoy an egg hunt on Easter morning.

One legendary reason given for the Easter egg is that in the fourth century the church forbade the use of eggs in Lent, but as this did not prevent the hens from laying them they accumulated so rapidly that it was found necessary to boil them and give them to the children for playthings. The little folks delighted to dye them in gay colors; hence the practice has been descended to the child of the present day.

A certain historian gives a very charming account of the marriage of Marguerite, of Austria, with Philibert, the Duke of Savoy. It is called marriage aux œufs, because it seems it was Easter morning when the future wedded pair first met. The princess was keeping open house at one of her castles on the western slope of the Alps, and Philibert, out on a hunting expedition in the neighborhood, came to pay his court to her. All the tenantry were dancing on the green; finally a hundred eggs were scattered on a level place and covered with sand. Lads and lassies, who longed to be lovers, came forward, hand in hand, to tread the measure of the fragile obstruction on every side. If they managed to dance through without cracking one they were regarded as affianced, and not even the parents' "nay" could then break up the match. Several had already tried and been unsuccessful, when the noble duke besought the beautiful princess to try the dance with him. Full of love, grace and the exhilaration of the moment, they fulfilled the difficult task and were greeted by the most enthusiastic cheers from the beholders. They were married, and on every succeeding Easter this custom of the district of Brese became a feature in the Easter rejoicings in the duke's realms.

Although we do not have this "Easter egg dancing" into matrimony in this country, it is not improbable that a latent Easter superstition, in regard to times and seasons extends even to the marriage ceremony of the present day, if we are to judge from the many weddings that take place during Easter week each year.

MURMURING.

Some murmur when their sky is clear,
And wholly bright to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue;
And some with thankful love are filled
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.

—R. C. French.

The real anarchist is he who would sacrifice the good of his country for the success of his party.