

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

DR. BURBANK'S ASSISTANT.

By F. E. Burnham.

Dr. Burbank stood in the front hall drawing on his gloves preparatory to going out into the storm. His face was very grave, and as he patted Danny Small's brown head he said, "We can't be too careful, Mr. Small; do what we will, it means a hard pull for this lad's mother. She needs absolute quiet and a mind free from worry. The children must be so many nice; and Danny, here, is going to do his part—be my assistant."

Two minutes later the jingle of the doctor's sleigh bells was dying away in the distance, and Danny Small and his father were seated in the library, talking over the doctor's last words.

"He means just this, my boy," said Mr. Small, holding Danny's hands in his own, "you must do your part to keep your brothers and sisters quiet and happy while your mother is sick; and that will do as much to help as his medicine. In that way you will become an assistant of whom any doctor would be glad."

"I'll do it; begin at once," said Danny, his eyes sparkling.

"Hurrah! I'm!"—said John, rushing into the house like a small tornado.

"Sh!" said Danny, clapping his hand over his brother's mouth, "don't you know mother is sick?"

"Oh, sure enough; I forgot about mother!" and John retreated toward the door.

"Well, you don't want to forget," replied Danny. "I'm Dr. Burbank's assistant, and"

"Dr. Burbank's what?" interrupted John, pausing on the threshold.

"Dr. Burbank's assistant," said Danny, flushing; "and you must obey orders—no shouting and no quarrelling within a hundred feet of this house."

That night the children were impatient and cross, and Danny found his services as the doctor's assistant again required.

"Be as quiet as mice, and I'll show you something new," said Danny, taking an apple from the pantry and hanging it by a string from the top casing of the door. "The first one that bites a piece out has the whole apple." Thus for an hour Danny managed to keep the youngsters out of mischief.

"How has my assistant been getting along?" said Dr. Burbank, when he came the next morning.

"My wife has had the best night's rest she has known for a fortnight," replied Mr. Small, his eyes glistening. "I am obliged to be away at the office most of the day, and the nurse finds it impossible to keep the little ones all quiet, but Danny—well, Danny has managed it somehow, and wife says that she has not heard a sound from the children since you were here yesterday."

"Capital! capital!" said the physician; "between us we shall have Mrs. Small on her feet again within six weeks."

The following day when Danny returned from school, a great coal wagon backed up before the house on the opposite side of the street, and the teamster was arranging the iron chute, intending to shoot the entire load into the cellar.

"See here, mister," said Danny, looking up in the begrimed face of the teamster, "my mother is awful sick over there in that house, and would you mind dumping the coal in with your basket; maybe you've got a sick mother, or had one once."

For an instant the man stood looking at Danny in amazement. To grant the request meant an hour's extra work, and at first he was inclined to be surly. Then he scratched his head and reached for his basket, muttering something about having a sick boy at home.

Dr. Burbank was coming up the street, and he took it all in—not the coal, but the situation—and as he mounted the steps at Mr. Small's home, he said, "God bless the boy!"

So the weeks passed, each hour and each day finding something for Danny to do as Dr. Burbank's assistant, and they were not irksome hours, either; on the contrary, they were among the happiest of Danny's life. Gradually health returned to Mrs. Small, and one morning early in the spring she came down to dinner for the first time in two months. Dr. Burbank came in while they were yet seated at the table.

"I am down once more, thanks to you, Dr. Burbank," said Mrs. Small.

"Thanks to my assistant, Master Danny," corrected the physician; "he has done more than I."

That was the proudest minute in Danny's life—the proudest of Dr. Daniel Small's life, for years passed and Danny became a physician himself, and a very successful one.

THE LIGHT PLANT.

By Jessie Annie Anderson.

Once upon a time, in a parched little patch of ground beside a dusty road, grew a plant which strove to reach the light. Other plants beside it would also have liked to have been nearer to the sun, but they did not care to grow quite straight. Some wandered here and there, trailing upon the earth; some grew dwarfed and twisted, and some turned altogether into weeds. Only this little light plant grew taller and straighter, until its head was above the fence.

Then some of the passers-by would stop and speak about it, whereupon the plants near it would rustle their leaves in anger, and murmur, "You mean thing to take up all the room beside the fence from us!" "Oh, there is plenty of room! Just try to grow this way. The light helps you—it is so kind and lovely," said the light plant, eagerly; and it stretched its branches so that the other plants might take hold and climb up.

But that did not suit the grumblers at all. They would take no trouble to grow towards the light, which would have drawn them higher. They only wished to be admired; and so they thrust their thorns into the branches which the light plant kept turned towards them, and sneered,

"Oh, you don't care for anything, excepting to get people to admire you."

But although they did not know it, the light plant was not much admired by the passers-by. For the most part, people were merely surprised to see a plant rising above the fence. Therefore they paused to look and wonder of what use it might be. Besides this, the light plant did not wish to be admired. The others thought so just because they themselves longed for admiration, for plants are just like people in this, that what they are they think that others are also. They could not imagine that the light plant simply loved the light, and growing towards it, was drawn higher and ever higher. Sometimes the butterflies that flew over the patch, and the birds that sung beside it, told of a Great King's garden far away, where the light shone always, and where all the trees and plants grew tall and straight beside a beautiful river. Then the light plant began to dream day and night of this garden, and of the happy things which grew untroubled there. But at the same time, it did not cease from its efforts to grow more and more towards the light which it felt. The very branches

which had been torn grew at last out of the reach of the spiteful plants.

Then came a day on which the King's gardener passed that way, and, seeing the light plant above the fence, said:—

"Why, this should be in my Master's garden."

So he took it up by the roots, and carried it away to the King's garden, where its neighbours were plants which also loved the light.

But although its place beside the fence is empty now, the other plants do not find it any whit more easy than before to rise above the fence, and they will not until, for love of the light, they seek to grow towards it.

CULTIVATING TROUBLE.

Did you ever think how many of your troubles would die a natural death if you had not so much time to attend to them? Most of the worries and troubles that so darken our hours are due to unwise complaints; if we grow too busy to nurse and water them for a few days they shrivel and die.

The one member of the Russian Imperial family who deserves our respectful sympathy is the Czarian, on whom sorrow after sorrow is falling. The worldwide outburst of indignation against her husband must be startling and terrible to Queen Victoria's granddaughter. She comes of an older and prouder house than Romanoff, and numbers among her ancestors warriors and saints and great constitutional monarchs. Even Charles I., the king who came most violently into collision with his subjects, bore himself in the supreme crisis with royal dignity. It was the irony of fate which united the young girl's fortunes to those of a despotic family which has the ferocious instincts of the savage without his courage. We may be sure that the Czarian is sorrowing deeply to-day for the bereaved woman who rejoiced with her so lately over the birth of a son.—The British Weekly.

Although the population of New York is less by a good million than that of London, the number of deaths last year in the two cities was practically the same.

Here is a choice example of pigeon-English, in the form of a letter from a Venetian street singer. It runs:—"Very respectable Lady and Gentleman. Being obliged very much of many kindness you have done to me. I take the liberty to wish you and the gentleman happy new year and many to come including all your parents. I beg you, madam, of a little relief to help my children, and an (?) reward we all the family will ever pray God for your preservation here on earth and a good place in heaven. God bless you. Respectfully your servant.—Yuigi."

Asked by an interviewer whether he might ever make any further efforts to reach the North Pole, Dr. Nansen, who is now in London, is reported to have said:—"If by doing so I could be guaranteed an extra five years of life I might think of it. But, otherwise, it is not very likely that I shall again undertake an Arctic voyage. I should, however, like to hear of someone undertaking another such journey, and actually crossing the whole North Polar basin. It would be a great feat, and with the new instruments which have been brought out since my expedition returned much additional scientific knowledge should be obtained. There is still very important scientific work to be done in the Far North."

When God calls to service the servant should wake from sleep.