

The Family.

MY CHOICE.

My choice is made. My choice is made. My choice is made.

TWO BROTHERS.

There was a family likeness between them, though no one was ever heard to say they had a single feature in common.

I do not mean to charge our "brothers" with being busybodies; and yet it must be admitted that they are continually mixing themselves up with other people's business.

Sometimes our friends are mischief-makers, pure and simple, and part loving hearts, never to be re-united here.

He "Then I tell you plainly that if you will not do as I wish, we must part."

"Please yourself! Once I promised to be your wife, but now I withdraw that promise. Good-bye!"

"I think not. The boys are a harum-scarum set, and too many of you off together with guns at night is dangerous business."

"But why can't we go alone then?" persisted Bert.

"Because you might get into trouble."

"Why, we aren't babies!" Fred indignantly put in.

"Age will bring some of it, and the rest you can gain under proper guidance."

"Till Jack comes!" exclaimed Fred in disgust, as their father left the room.

"The coons will all be gone by that time. I can't see why we can never do anything by ourselves."

"If we had only been once, then it would all be over. He could not say we had no experience, and I am sure no harm could come, for we can use judgment."

"This was a favourite expression of the Marsh boys, made at all times and with the closest consideration, and, as no very severe ones had followed under former declarations, they thought still

thought that if it had not been for this circumstance or that, he had not found the word allure written across his life.

Then, again, our brothers play an important part in those ready-made excuses under cover of which we evade our duties or palliate our faults.

Even poor little Jeremiah Jinks, the poet, takes comfort in the thought that if he had been placed in the same circumstances as Tennyson, he would have been as great, if not greater, than Tennyson himself!

Nay, what would become of us all if we could not find some palliating reason for our numerous slips and failings!

Sometimes, I regret to say, our little brothers are made to play a very base and ignominious part.

And in a few minutes the boys stood among the cornstalks listening eagerly, while the moon struggled with the clouds to give a little light to them.

The baying came nearer. Then something scrambled along but a few rows away, panting as it ran, with Bosc in close pursuit.

And the two guns were hurriedly discharged. They saw the animal fall in a corner of the stump fence, Bosc pouncing upon the indistinct heap, and they made a dash for it.

"Hooray! Our very first coon!" cried Bert. "It can't be said now that we don't know to hunt coons."

"Careful, Fred; coons play possum sometimes," Bert warned, as Fred gave it a slight kick.

"Oh, my Bert Marsh! If we haven't gone and done it!" gasped Fred, suddenly.

"Done what?"

"Why, see! It's—it's a—sheep!"

"A sheep!"

The two boys looked each other full in the face as the moon peeped out and showed them a big ewe stretched out before them.

"What is to be done? Mr. Bandy must have turned his sheep into the stump lot to-day," Bert added indignantly.

"I should have thought it would have made a noise when Bosc was after it," Fred feebly replied.

"Sheep always keep just so still with a dog after them," returned Bert.

"See here, Fred, where's Bosc?" he suddenly asked, missing the dog.

As if to answer for himself, there came to their ears almost instantly a deep baying, over among the stumps.

"We must get that dog in!" cried the two half-frantic boys; and they dropped their guns and went dashing off in the direction of the sound.

They whistled and shouted, but it was some little time before they found the frightened flock huddled up in a far corner, and not until they had found two which had been cruelly torn by the excited dog, which they took in charge.

"Well, between us and Bosc we have done a pretty night's work!" Bert exclaimed, as they got the dog under control.

"What will father say? There won't be much laugh about it, that's certain," ventured Fred.

"I should say not. We might have known, too, that no coon would come panting along through the corn as that old sheep did."

"If we only had known!"

"Enough to know," interrupted Bert, sharply.

"Yes, that is just it; we didn't know one thing, but we know too much. And we may as well go home and make a clean breast of it—own up we couldn't tell a coon from a sheep, and take the consequences."

"Well, we didn't do right, and I feel awfully down in the mouth about it," Fred replied dejectedly.

"Well, come on. I led into it, and I'll lead out. We won't sneak about any of it. We'll take what comes."

The boys turned and tramped silently back home with hearts feeling far from light. They locked up the dog and crept to their rooms—as Bert asserted there was no use of "spoiling father's sleep, too," that night.

As Bert finished, Fred eagerly put in: "We know all about how wrong the disobedience was, and we want you to know that we are right up and down sorry for it and hope you'll forgive us."

"Yes," Bert hastened to add, "and we've learned a lesson, too, besides—that we did not know as much as we thought we did. But we are ready and willing to take all consequences, for we deserve the punishment."

Mr. Marsh heard it in silence; then he answered: "I believe you are sincere in your repentance, and I shall expect you to work and pay Mr. Bandy his price for the sheep. Yes," he continued, after a grave pause, "yes, the consequences will be punishment; but

less of the possible weight residing in the words. They had worked themselves into a fever of excitement since the advent of the coons, and this proposition seemed too fascinating to resist.

"Father might scold, but I believe, if we should bring back a coon, he would own right up that he was wrong in his reasons, and in his opinions of us, and that would end it," Bert continued.

"Of course he would," Fred eagerly assented to the statement he knew held some truth.

"We could take Bosc. Jack always took the dog, and it would be a jolly surprise to lay a fat coon at the door for father," Bert answered.

So they argued, and late that night the two boys stole out in the darkness, with Bosc snuggling closely at their heels.

"Let's go up on the hill to Bandy's stump-lot next his cornfield and wait for the moon," Bert suggested.

So they turned to the hillside where they kindled a fire for company and waited. Bosc almost immediately left them, and waiting soon began to grow tiresome. Suddenly a deep baying was heard.

"That's Bosc. He has stirred up one. Let's go."

And in a few minutes the boys stood among the cornstalks listening eagerly, while the moon struggled with the clouds to give a little light to them.

The baying came nearer. Then something scrambled along but a few rows away, panting as it ran, with Bosc in close pursuit.

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you have another lesson to learn—be sure, repentance and even restitution do not constitute all the consequences."

He got up, took down the gun, and went out slowly.

"What does he mean?" asked Fred, curiously.

Bert did not answer, but listened uneasily. In a short time there came a sharp report, a short howl, and silence.

"Bosc!" both boys exclaimed, looking at each other in remorse.

"O father! I never thought of Bosc having to be killed for what was done last night!" Bert cried out, as Mr. Marsh returned.

"Yes," said he, soberly, "it had to be done, and I preferred being sure it was done with dispatch, so that the poor fellow might by no carelessness be made to suffer long. And this, my boys," turning to them, "is the other lesson—in all our wrong-doing others than ourselves are involved to their hurt in some measure. In this case it was only poor Bosc who was to suffer most; but you will see from this that there are consequences of misdeeds which may far exceed your expectations."—*Congregationalist.*

"SAY NOT I have a soul, I am a soul," And have a body bulged for my need.

That I, a soul, may in this great world school Study the Master's works: My earthly house Has wondrous windows; mimic galleries lead Divinent sounds to me—deep lessons spelled By loving lips, and vast world-melodies. I am a soul, set in a sphere compact Of transient elements.

Of these, a little handful serves for home, For medium of touch 'twixt me and earth, The while I stay—gives fire and food and rest. Shall the base stuff strike into me a stain, Leave pungent earthly odor? Soul of all, Attract me, lest the body should Transcend a dwelling's use.

—S. S. Timm.

OUR LITTLE GRIEFS.

The train stopped suddenly between two stations. Several of the passengers rushed out of the car excitedly, and came back with the tidings that there was an obstruction on the track that would cause the delay of an hour.

The countenances of most of the passengers instantly fell into the depths of gloom and despair.

"This is simply intolerable!" muttered one middle-aged man to his companion. "I shall not reach the city before the market closes. It will cost me two or three thousand dollars."

A physician dropped his newspaper and paced impatiently up and down the car. "An hour late with all my patients!" he exclaimed.

"Are any of them in immediate danger?"

"No. But an hour late! It is unbearable!"

A young girl looked at her companion with the tears in her eyes. "I am going into town for the trimmings for my dress. Now it will not be done in time. I shall have to wear my old blue to the party."

A short, pompous old man talked loudly and incessantly, scolding conductors and brakemen, as if they were personally responsible for the delay.

"I am to lecture this afternoon before the lyceum," he exclaimed in hot indignation. "The audience will have to wait twenty minutes!"

FAITHFUL IN LITTLE THINGS.

"THIS," said Deacon Hays, "is probably the last ship I shall ever build, and I intend to have her as perfect as possible."

So he selected a beautiful model, and, knowing that the owner wanted something very superior, he spared no time nor money in procuring the best timber to be had and the best workmen to be found; and then he watched over every stick as it was hewn and fitted in its place, every plank that was spiked on the timbers, every spar that was prepared.

When they came to put the copper sheathing over the bottom of the ship, the deacon watched it very closely. At one spot he found the head of a copper nail, which fastened the sheathing, split.

The deacon's eyes were becoming rather poor, but he saw the broken head. "Jim Spiker, I see a nail broken; isn't there a little hole by its side?"

"Not a bit of it, I'm sartin. There couldn't a drop of water get in there in a century."

So the word of Jim was accepted; the ship was finished and launched, and made two or three prosperous voyages.

During one of these she lay at a wharf in Calcutta. Now, these waters swarm with that little pest, the ship-worm.

They crawled all over the ship, but could not get through the copper sheathing. At length Mrs. Teredo lit upon the broken nail, found the little hole, and squeezed herself in. Then she began to eat the timber and lay her eggs in it.

Soon they hatched and increased, till that timber was full of little teredos, and then the next and the next, till every stick in the whole ship was very badly worm eaten.

Still, the ship looked sound, sailed well, and made her long voyage. At length, when in the middle of the ocean, a terrible storm met her. The wind howled through the rigging, as if singing a funeral dirge.

The waves rolled up, and whirled as if in agony. Every spar was bent, and every timber and spike strained to the utmost. The cargo which filled the ship was of immense value. The crew was large and the passengers were many. Worse and

worse grew the storm, till at last a huge wave struck her with all its power. The poor ship staggered, groaned once, and crumpled up like a piece of paper. She foundered at sea, in the dark night, in that awful storm.

The rich cargo all went to the bottom of the ocean. The drowned men and women sank down, down, miles before they rested on the bottom.

All done through the neglect of Jim Spiker, who was too unfaithful to mend the hole made by the broken nail.—*From "Leaves of Light."*

FACTS FOR BOYS.

The chief official in a railway office in one of our largest seaboard cities recently advertised for a copying clerk at a salary of thirty dollars a month.

He received over five hundred answers to his application, the large majority of which were from married men, the graduates of colleges, sons, in many cases, of working men, but young men whose dress, habits and tastes were those of the wealthy and leisurely class.

At the same time, in the same city, the "boss" builders were advertising in vain for carpenters, masons, and painters, to finish work for which they had contracted.

These workmen, when found, were paid from three to four dollars a day. Even the skilled cooks, chefs in the hotels and wealthy private families of the same town were paid one hundred dollars a month.

These are significant facts, worthy the attention of such boys among the readers of the *Companion* as have not yet chosen their profession or trade in life.

What do they prove? That the work of a man with an educated brain is less valuable and more poorly paid in this country than that of one with skilled fingers, but that the market is overstocked with the first class of labourers and not supplied with the last.

The chief reason for this is, as we all know, the action of the Trades Unions in barring out apprentices from their shops. The great industrial schools which have been, or are about to be, established in most of our large cities, will soon, it is hoped, remove this difficulty.

But the second difficulty will not be so easily disposed of. It is the silly prejudice among boys against labour with their hands as being "ungentle."

The clerk who copies letters for a dollar a day, with no possibility of ever rising to higher work, is nearer their ideas of "a gentleman" than the mechanic who designs and originates work, who controls other men, and for whom a wide path to usefulness and success is always open, or the farmer or ranchman whose work demands all the forces of his mind and body, and brings him into contact with nature and his fellow-men.

Among more thoughtful people this silly prejudice against manual labour is fast disappearing. Hundreds of thoroughly educated men are now herding sheep or growing wheat in Texas and Dakota.

The sons of ex-presidents, bishops and the foremost professional men in the country, having finished their college course, are now working at forges or in mines side by side with day labourers, fitting themselves to be practical electricians and mining and mechanical engineers.

It will be long we fear, however, before all the boys of republican America recognize the fact that it is not his occupation which gives a man his true place in life, but something for which the occupation is but an outer garment.

The real nobleman is never denied his rank, no matter how coarse his coat may be.—*Youth's Companion.*

The Children's Corner.

THE BEE AND THE WASP.

A WASP met a bee that was just buzzing by, and he said, "Little cousin, can you tell me why you are loved so much better by people than I?"

"My back shines as bright and as yellow as gold, and my shape is most elegant, too, to behold. Yet nobody likes me for that, I am told."

"Ah! Cousin!" the bee said, "it's all very true; but if I were but half so much mischief to do, indeed they would love me no better than you."

You have a fine shape and a delicate wing. They own you are handsome, but then there's one thing they cannot put up with, and that is your sting.

"My coat is quite homely and plain, as you see. Yet nobody ever is angry with me. Because I'm a harmless and diligent bee."

From this little story let people beware: Because, like the wasp, if ill-natured they are, They will never be loved by they ever so fair.—*Something New.*

WHAT MADE THE BABY CROSS.

"MAMMA, I wish you'd call the baby in; he's so cross we can't play," cried Robert to his mamma one day, as he was playing in the yard with his sister and the baby.

"I don't think he would be cross if you were not cross to him," said mamma, coming out. "He does just as he sees you do. Just try him and see. Put you hat on one side of your head."

Robbie did so, and presently the baby pushed his straw hat over on one side of his head.

"Whistle," said mamma. Robbie did, and baby began to whistle too.

"Stop mocking me," said Robbie, angrily, giving baby a push. Baby screamed and pushed Robbie back.

"There you see," said his mother, "the baby does just as you do. Kiss him now, and you will see how quickly he will follow your example."

Robbie did not feel exactly like doing this, but he did; and the baby hugged and kissed him back very warmly.

"Now, you see," said his mother, "you can have a baby or a good baby of your little brother, just which you choose. But you must teach him yourself."—*Selected.*

THE PATIENCE-GARDEN.

CHILDREN, did you ever visit a child's hospital? You see a large room with a great many little beds and a great many little children, lame or sick, some on the beds, some walking about with crutches, and here and there a poor little lamb with an iron frame on the neck and shoulders. All of them are little sufferers.

Biddy McGowan is not able to be out of bed, but she can sit up, and Bertha Crouse is standing beside her on crutches. Bertha fell down stairs one day, and was brought to the hospital with a broken leg. The doctor put her leg in a tight plaster case, and she had to lie very still a whole month.

She said "Oh dear!" a great many times, you may be sure. But it is well now, and she is allowed to go about on crutches.

What are they both looking at? Biddy clasps her hands with delight and cries "Isn't it illigant?" and Bertha stands still and gazes. A lady has just come into the room with a basket of lovely flowers.

"How sweet!" said Bertha; "I can smell 'em here; and" yet the lady was just down by the door and the room was very, very long.

"Oh, I wish she'd hurry up?" cries Biddy. "She's giving a bunch to every one, and there's so many; she never will get up here."

"We've got to wait," says Bertha. "Wait! Wait!" exclaims impatient little Biddy. "That's a great word here."

"Yes; this is waiting-house, Miss Roe says. We have to wait for dinner, and wait till we get well, and wait to see mother, and wait till warm weather comes, and now we must wait for the flowers."

"I don't like to wait," pouted Biddy. "Nor I," said quiet Bertha; "but we have to. Miss Roe says we must have patience."

"What's the use of patience, I'd like to know?" snapped Biddy.

"One thing, it keeps us good-natured, Miss Roe says, and she says folks are just almost perfect when they have patience. Anyway, what's the use of being impatient? It only frets us and doesn't bring things a minute sooner. The lady has got to speak to every single one in the room 'fore she gets to us, for here we are 'way off in the very last row. Let's sing; that will keep us patient."

The little girls began to sing. The lady smiled and waved her hand, and seemed to hurry on.

"I'm glad to hear you singing," she said, as she came up.

"We was 'most tired waiting, so we thought we'd sing," answered Biddy.

"Waiting for the flowers?"

"Yes'm; you was so long coming."

"Did the singing help you?"

"Maybe it did," said Bertha; Miss Roe says it's a good way."

"A good way to get patience," added Biddy, laughing a little, as if she did not believe it, after all.

"Patience is a hard lesson to learn, dear children," said the lady.

"We have to learn it here; this is waiting-house, Miss Roe says."

"I'll give you another name for it, little girls—'Patience garden.' It is told somewhere that the Lord comes down into His garden to gather His flowers, and Patience is one of the sweetest of them all."

"What color is it?" asked Biddy. It was rather pert, but she thought it was such a funny idea to call patience a flower. If she had been asked what colour it was, she would very likely have said, "Gray."

"It's pure white, like this lily-of-the-valley," said the lady, "and just as sweet. I think the Lord must love it more than almost any other. I dare say," she added, "you are tired of being sick and staying in the hospital?"

"Yes'm, we are; we want to get well and be off home."

"Well, now, call the hospital your patience-garden and let the sweet flower grow while you are here, and when you go out you can carry it with you, and you can keep it as long as you live."

"You said the Lord would come and gather it, ma'am," said quiet little Bertha.

"He'll gather enough of it to please Himself dear, and will leave some of it in your hearts to make you happy too. There are no people in all the world, dear children, more happy than the patient." And then she gave the children the two sweetest bunches of flowers she could find in her basket.—*H. E. B. in Morning Star.*

If God made the world you need not fear that He can't take care of so small a part of it as yourself.—*Rev. Edward Taylor.*