

"I do declare!" cried the old woman. "You don't mean to say you're home, Letty! It ain't twelve o'clock, is it?"

"Course it is; quarter past."

"Why, you got one mite of dinner ready, then. I've been so long with the sun I hadn't no idea how the time was goin'."

"Oh, I'll get some bread and milk, grandma; just as soon have it as anything else. Got the problem done?"

"Yes, I did. I feel real bad about your dinner. I'll think up a few new an' fry you an' egg—there be time enough."

"I'd rather have bread and milk."

After Letty had gone to school for the afternoon, and Mrs. Torrey had been working fruitlessly for an hour longer, she dropped her pencil.

"I declare," said she, "I'm afraid I am losin' my faculty!"

Tears stood in her eyes. "I won't give up that I am, anyhow," said she, and took the pencil again.

When Letty returned, in the latter part of the afternoon, she scarcely knew it, with the full meaning of the word. She saw her true consciousness was so full of figures that Letty's hair face could only look in at the door.

Letty ran in heavily; a young girl was waiting for her outside. "O grandma," cried Letty, "Lizzie's going to Ellsworth to do an errand for her mother; she's coming back on the last train. Can't I go with her?"

Her grandmother stared at her for a minute and made no answer.

"She's got tickets for both of us. Can't I go, grandma?"

"Yes."

Letty mouthed her hair a little and put on her best hat; then she went.

"Good-bye," said she, looking back at the intent old figure; but she got no answer.

"Grandma's so taken up with an example she's got that she doesn't know anything," she told her friend when she was outside. "She didn't answer when I said good-bye; she forgot to get dinner to-day too."

Mrs. Torrey backed on and on. She never looked up nor thought of anything else until it grew so dark that she could not see her figure. "I'll have to light the lamp," said she, with a sigh.

After it was lighted she went to work again. She never thought of wanting any supper, though she had eaten nothing since morning.

The kitchen clock struck seven—Letty should have been home then—eight, and nine, but she never noticed it. A few minutes afterwards some one knocked on the door. She

opened it. Then the knock was repeated, louder and quicker.

"Somebody's knockin' again," she muttered, and opened the door.

Mr. Plainfield stood there. He was a handsome young man with rosy cheeks; he was always smiling. He looked past her into the room inquiringly.

"Is Letty at home?"

"Yes, Letty."

"Is she at home?"

"Why, yes, she's here, Letty."

"Has she gone to bed?"

"Why, yes, I know she has."

Mrs. Torrey opened the door at the foot of the stairs.

"Letty! Letty!"

"I guess she must be asleep," said she, turning to the young man, who had stopped into the kitchen.

"Want me to go up an' see? Did you want anything particular?"

"He hesitated."

"If you had—just an even—I—had something special—"

The old lady climbed the steep, uncarpeted stairs, feebly, with a long pat on every step. She came down faster, reckless of her stumbling uncertainty. "She ain't there! Letty's gone! Where is she?"

"You know she went to Ellsworth with Lizzie!"

"No I didn't."

"Why, she said something to you about it, didn't she?"

"I don't know whether she did or not."

"Lizzie just told me that she missed her in the depot. She left her there for a minute while she went back for something she had forgotten."

The train was all ready, and Lizzie thought she must be on it, so she got on herself. She did not see her in the depot here, and has been crying about it, and afraid to tell till just now. I came right over as soon as I knew about it."

"O Letty! Letty! Where's Letty? O Mr. Plainfield, you go an' find her! Go right off! You will, won't you? Letty allers liked you."

"I always liked Letty," said the young man brokenly.

"I'll find her—don't you worry."

"You'll go right off now?"

"Of course I will; I won't wait a minute."

"O Letty, Letty! Where is she? What shall I do? That little bit of a thing—and she was always one of the frightened kind—out all alone; an' it's night! She never went to Ellsworth alone in her hull life. She didn't know nothin' about the town, an' she didn't have a cent of money in her pocket."

"I'll send Mrs. Bascom over to stay with you," Mr. Plainfield called back as he hurried off.

Soon Mrs. Bascom came, poking her white, nervous face in the door inquiringly. "She ain't come?"

"No. O Mrs. Bascom, what shall I do?"

"O Mrs. Torrey, I do feel so bad about it I don't know what to do. If Lizzie had only told before! but there she was upstairs crying, and afraid to tell. I've been scolding her, but she felt so bad I had to stop. She called me, an' told me finally; an' I guess twasn't long before Mr. Plainfield started off to find out if she was home. It was lucky he was boarding with us. He'll find her if anybody can; he's as quick as lightning. He turned white's a sheet when I told him."

"O Mrs. Bascom!"

"Now, don't give up so, Mrs. Torrey. He'll find her. She can't be very far off. You'll see her walking in here first thing you know. He's got a real fast team, an' he's started for Ellsworth now. He won't past me like a streak when I was coming up the road. He'll have her back safe and sound before morning."

"O Letty! Letty! Oh, what shall I do? It's my own fault, every mite of it's my own fault. 'Tis; you don't know nothin' about it. The minister brought me a sum, he an' Mr. Plainfield had been workin' on, to do, yesterday afternoon, an' I jest sat and ciphered half the night, an' all day. I didn't know no more what Letty asked me, when she came in from

school, than nothin' at all. I didn't more'n half know when she come. I didn't know nothin' but them fingers, an' now Letty's lost, an' it's my fault."

"Why, you might have let her go if you'd known."

"I guess I shouldn't let her go all alone with your Lizzie, to come home after dark in the last train, little delicate thing as she was. I guess I shouldn't; an' I guess I should have started up at some something, if I'd known, when she wasn't here at train time. I didn't get the sum done, an' I'm glad of it; it seems to me jest as if I was losin' my faculty as I'm growin' older, an' I hope I am."

"Now, don't talk so, Mrs. Torrey. Sit down and try to be calm. You'll be sick."

"I guess there ain't much bein' calm. I tell you what 'tis, Mrs. Bascom, I've been a wicked woman. I've been thinkin' so much of this faculty I've had for cipherin' that I've set it afore everything—I hev. Only yesterday that poor child didn't hev any dinner but crackers an' milk, 'cause I was so took up with the sum that I forgot it. An' she was jest as patient as a lamb about it; said she'd rather hev crackers an' milk than anything else. Oh, dear! dear!"

"Don't cry, Mrs. Torrey."

"I can't help it. It don't make no difference what folks are born with a faculty for—whether it's cipherin', or singin', or writin' poetry—the love that's betwixt human beings an' the help that's betwixt 'em ought to come first. I've known it all the time, but I've gone agin' it, an' now I've got my pay. What shall I do?"

Mrs. Bascom remained with her all night, but she could not pacify her in the least. She was nearly distracted herself. She was fearful that her Lizzie might be blamed.

There were a few people flocked to the house to inquire if there were any news from Letty, and to comfort her grandmother. Sympathy seemed fairly dripping like fragrant oil from these simple, honest hearts; but the poor old woman got no refreshing influence from it. She kept on her old strain in their ears. She had lost Letty, and it was all her fault, and what should she do? Mr. Plainfield did not come home. The minister took his place in school. Nothing was heard until noon; then a telegram from the teacher came. He thought he was on Letty's track, he said; they should hear again.

Next day there was a second message: Letty was safe; coming home as soon as possible. The following day past, and not another word came. The old grandmother's faith and hope seemed to have deserted her. She knew Letty was not found; she never would be found. She and Mr.

It was all passing swiftly; the door-latch rattled, slipped the slate under her gingham apron, and sat still.

"O poor grandma!" cried Letty, running in; "I've been frightened most to death about me, haven't you? I bent over her grandmother and laid her soft, pretty head against hers."

"O Letty! I didn't think you'd ever come back."

"I have; but I did have the dreadfulest time. I carried way out West on an express train. Just then I got on the wrong train while I was waiting for Lizzie. I was frightened almost to death. But Mr. Plainfield graphed ahead. He found out where I was going, and took me to an hotel; and then he came for me. You know, said anything to Mr. Plainfield, grandma."

The young man was standing smiling behind Letty. He looked astonished when her grandmother did not rise to greet him, but sat perfectly still as she uttered some broken thanks.

"Why, grandma, you ain't tok, are you?" said she.

"No—I ain't sick," said her grandmother, with a weak tone.

When Mr. Plainfield left, in a few moments, Letty gave a half-defiant, half-ashamed glance at her grandmother, and followed him out, closing the door.

When she returned Mrs. Torrey was standing by the table pouring out a cup of tea for her. The slate was in its usual place on the bureau.

"Grandma," said Letty, blushing innocently, "I thought I ought to say something to Mr. Plainfield. You know, I hadn't, and I knew he heard what I said to Lizzie that day. I thought I ought to ask his pardon, when he had done so much for me. I've made up my mind that I do like him. There's other things besides doing arithmetic examples."

"I guess there is, child. Them things is all second. I think I'd rather have a man who hadn't got any special faculty, if I was goin' to git married."

"Nobody said anything about getting married, grandma."

Pretty soon Letty went to bed. She was worn out with her adventures.

"Ain't you going too, grandma?" asked she, turning around, lamp in hand, at the foot of the stairs.

"Pretty soon, child; pretty soon. I've—got a little something I want to do first."

The grandmother sat up till nearly morning working on the problem. Once in a while she would lay down her slate and climb upstairs and peep into Letty's little peaceful chamber to see if she were safe.

"I'll have that dear child safe, an' ain't no my faculty, it's more'n I declare," muttered she, as she took her slate the last time.

The next morning the minister came over. "Is Letty's case?" he said, when Mrs. Torrey opened the door. "Yes, Letty's come, an' she's got that sum she gave me done."

"The Stag at Bay."

Of the many beautiful pictures by the celebrated artist, Sir Edwin Landseer, there is none more striking than this one, "The Stag at Bay."

The heart is stirred to admiration and pity as we view the noble animal, evidently exhausted, yet determined to sell its life dearly. One

foe is already down and the other, although ready to spring, seems to hesitate, and no wonder, for it is a brave victim they attack. The expression of mingled determination and fear in the hunted animal's eyes, indeed in the whole attitude, appeals strongly to one's imagination. We know, too, that many foes are on his track and that he must die. It is such stirring pictures that make Art shine with undiminished luster through generations, for who could tire of a grand picture like this?

UNCLE TOM'S DEPARTMENT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS AND NIECES,—

The oft-heard saying "What can a boy do?" reminds me of a true story that may be of interest to my readers, so I shall repeat it for their benefit.

In one of the large American cities—New York, I think—there is, in a grammar school, the Peck Memorial Library, which owes its existence to the influence, and is sacred to the memory, of a boy only thirteen years old. You have all heard of "Peck's Bad Boy."

Many of you have made his acquaintance in the book that bears his name, but the true story of Frederick Wright Peck is, if less amusing, more worthy of admiration and emulation.

Following is the description given of him: "He was bright, alert, sunny-hearted, ambitious, plucky, and most generous. He loved to do things for other fellows. If there was anything going to be done, he knew about it, for he had that characteristic that men value above everything but honesty—popularity. He was universally liked."

His clergyman, speaking at his memorial service, said: "Fred was not an impossible boy—not the kind they put in Sunday-school books."

Once he had to write a composition on "What a boy can do," and after writing many things in his boy style, he concluded his essay with the words which now serve as a motto on the wall of



"THE STAG AT BAY."

Plainfield were both lost now. Something dreadful had happened to both of them.

The worst of it is, she told Mrs. Bascom one afternoon, with a fierce indignation at herself, "I can't help thinkin' about that awful sum now after all that's happened. Them fingers keep troopin' into my head right in the midst of my thinkin' about Letty. It's all I can do to let that slate alone, an' not take it off the bureau. But I won't—I won't if it kills me not to. An' all the time I jest deapise myself for it: a-lettin' my faculty for cipherin' get ahead of things that's higher and sadder. I do think I've lost my faculty now, an' I most hope I hev. But it won't make no difference 'bout Letty now. Oh dear! dear! What shall I do?"

On the fourth day after Letty's disappearance, between six and seven o'clock in the evening, Mrs. Torrey was sitting alone in her kitchen. The last sympathiser had gone home to eat her supper.

The distressed old woman had drunk a cup of tea; that was all she would touch. The pot was still on the stove. There was a soft yellow light from the lamp over the room. The warm air was full of the fragrance of boiling tea.

Mrs. Torrey sat looking over at the bureau. She would have looked the same way if she had been starving and seen food there.

"Oh," she whispered, "if—I could—only work on that sum a little while, it does seem as if 'twould comfort me more'n anything. O Lord! I wonder if I was to blame! 'Twas the way I was made, an' I couldn't help that. Perhaps I should hev let Letty go, an' she'd been lost, anyway. I wonder if I hev lost my faculty?"

She sat there looking over at the slate. At last she rose and started to cross the room. Midway she stopped.

"Oh, what am I doin'! Letty's lost, an' I'm going to cipherin'! S'pose she should come in an' ketch me! She'd be so hurt she'd never get over it. She wouldn't think I cared anything about her."

She stood looking at the slate and thinking for a moment. Then her face settled into a hard calm.

"Letty won't come back—she never never come back. I might as well cipher as anything else."

She went across the room, got the slate and pencil, and returned to her seat. She had been ciphering for a minute or so when a sound outside caused her to start and stop. She sat with mouth open and chin trembling, listening. The sound came nearer; it was at the door. Of all the sweet sounds which had smote that old woman's ears since her birth—songs of birds, choral hymns, Sabbath bells—there had been none so sweet as this. It was Letty's thin, girlish voice just outside the door which she heard.

For a second as she sat listening, her face was rapt, angelic; in spite of its sallowness and wrinkles it might have figured in an altar-piece. Then it changed. The slate was in her lap. What would Letty think?