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Pete the Peddler or A Boy's Start in Life



CHAPTER III.

Next morning Mr. Mims accompanied Pete for a mile on his route and then shook hands and went his own way and the boy peddler was fairly alone.

He was not a forward boy, and he had felt all along that it would be almost too much for him to face people and answer their many questions. As he approached his first farmhouse he found himself afraid to go in, and he had passed it by twenty rods when he came upon the owner, who was repairing a fence by the road side. There was no passing him, because he called out:

"Hello, boy, which way you travel?"

"To Janesville," was the reply.

"What you got in your trunk?"

"Yankee notions,"



"WELL, HANNAH, WHAT DO YOU THINK?"

"Then you are a peddler, eh?"

"I have just started out."

"Is that so? You are the youngest peddler I ever saw. Did you stop at the house?"

"No, sir."

"I see how it was," said the farmer with a laugh. "You are a bit afraid yet. Come along in with me. Mother was saying this morning that she needed some pin and needles. No body here is going to bite you."

Pete not only made a sale of fifty cents worth on notions, but the farmer and his wife were so kind and jolly that he made up his mind not to be afraid at the next house.

He had been told to begin at once to ask about the lost trunk, and he inquired in a careless way if any stranger had ever left a hair trunk there with a brass star on the cover. He was answered in the negative.

At the next house his sales amounted to thirty cents; at the next to twenty-five cents; at the next fifteen cents. Every one had spoken kindly to him and he was feeling very brave when he came to a farmhouse where the owner came down to the gate before the boy could open it and shouted:

"What do you want around here, you young rascal?"

"I am a peddler of Yankee notions," was the answer.

"Well, you peddle right along and don't stop here. You may be a spy for a gang of tramps or robbers for all I know. Hurry along with you or I'll whistle to my dog!"

Mrs. Mims had warned Pete that he would meet with all sorts of people, and that he was not to talk back to those who were cranky and crusty. The boy therefore pursued his journey without a word in reply, and at the next house, after making quite a sale, he was invited to dinner. He was asked many questions,



"Yes, my dear, you can pick me a cup of raisins," said grandma.

Ruth went to work with a will and picked the raisins very fast, but somehow the cup didn't seem to get full.

Grandma looked up just as Ruth was putting a great juicy raisin into her mouth, and then she discovered the reason.

"When you pick raisins, Ruth, you must always whistle," said grandma, solemnly.

"Why, grandma!" exclaimed Ruth, mamma says it's not well bred for girls to whistle."

"If you whistle you can't eat, my dear, and the cup will get full quicker, but singing is every bit as good, and I would like to hear you sing about Little Jack Horner."

A DOG'S STORY OF THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE

VICTOR FAUNTLEROY SMITH

I thought I knew all about earthquakes, for I'm a native son-born a puppy of an illustrious San Francisco kennel—and every California dog has had his day of little shakes, when it seemed that the earth involuntarily shivered in its sleep as if dreaming of a flea tickling its spinal cord.

But the April 18th quake was different. The earth suddenly awoke. It sprang up, leaped on its hind legs, pawed air, lashed its tail and rolled over and over.

The fit ended, I crawled out from a heap of broken glass, brushes and combs that had drifted into a corner where I had been hung from Miss Alice's bed.

At first everything blurred before my blinking eyes, but little by little details took shape. Miss Alice's book shelves, having tossed off bric-a-brac as your ear does a fly, were leaning upon the shoulder of a mahogany davenport; the bureau had run into the middle of the room for safety.

A longing for the back yard staved my trembling nerves to action and I made for the door. It had banged to. Where was Miss Alice, who always anticipated her little Skye's every need?

Suddenly I remembered: the quake had stupefied even the brains of a thoroughbred. Miss Alice had not slept with me, having gone to spend the night with the Stafford pug's mistress. In their fright Billy and the rest of the family had forgotten me. I was helpless, deserted, trapped—I, Victor Fauntleroy Smith, whose slightest wish used to be law!

I tried to scratch down the door, but I was as weak as a cat. I attempted to call for help, but my yelp wouldn't work. Hours dragged by before I heard steps and voices in the hall.

"Oh, Billy!" wailed Miss Alice, "I don't hear any howls! Je's been Vic!"

Crushed to death, my dear little Vic!

Not even fright could keep down a bark at that! As for the bang I made dashing against the door—well, it would have given pointers to a mastiff.

But the earthquake had jammed the door so that neither Miss Alice nor Billy could open it. Would they leave me alone again—a little dog shut in with a big fear?

There was a whispering discussion, then a scornful exclamation from Billy.

"Afraid of nothing! Only give a fellow a boost."

At that the transom over the door had an earthquake of its own, and the next moment Billy's long little legs wriggled through the opening into my room.

"Do hurry!" called Miss Alice. "You know the door is condemned, and may fall in at any moment."

Billy pushed a table under the transom, and with me tucked under one arm jumped upon it. Two hands outstretched through the opening grabbed me by the nape of my neck; a tug, a choking sensation, and I was on the other side of the door in Miss Alice's dear arms.

We groped our way down stairs to look for the wall and plunging toward the front door. Out in the street the earthquake had come through a deep crack and twisted the side of the house, the curb and the corner lamp post.

We walked several blocks to a vacant lot, where, huddled about a couple of mattresses and a heap of blankets, we found the rest of the family. They all hugged me, as on the day I came home from the dog show.

I had recovered my nerve sufficiently to look upon my situation with a smug air. My imagination sniffed the savor of liver, a chicken wing, mashed potatoes in gravy. Miss Alice offered me a bit of salt leather called bacon.

Soon they said it was night, but it wasn't, for the sky was a blaze of light. Miss Alice explained that it was a great fire—not a library fire to stretch out in front of on the bear rug, but a conflagration building, burning up the city like kindling wood.

The rest of the family slept on one mattress; Miss Alice, Billy and I lay down on the other. For a long time I watched the sky. Would the fire reach the Burton's Angora? Would the Stafford pug make his escape? I dozed at last to have awful dreams of leg catchers in red coats chasing me across the red hot sky.

In the morning, muffled clouds, a smoke curtain the horizon, and through them were flashes of light called sparks. We decided to move on to the Fort Mason military reservation where some of the soldiers live, at whose heels I used to bark



TWO HANDS OUTSTRETCHED THROUGH THE OPENING GRABBED THE NAPE OF MY NECK.

so gaily when troops marched on Van Ness avenue.

The rest of the family had a trunk. They strapped bedding on its top. A strange boy pushed. I walked with us, and carrying things. Once I barked at any one with a bundle, but I knew I hadn't enough bark to chum.

A crowd swept down the street with us, and carrying things. Once I barked at any one with a bundle, but I knew I hadn't enough bark to chum.

Then a dreadful thing happened. When I had screwed up my courage to pause, I could not see Miss Alice anywhere, nor Billy, nor the rest of the family.

I called at the top of my bark. I pattered to the right, to the left. My feet were four blisters—my body an empty salmon can. Then we snuggled up close together and slept.

But the dog catcher in the red automobile again chased after me across the sky, and I sprang up with a yelp.

Panic stricken I ran to the outskirts of the camping ground. Suddenly a dark figure snatched my attention. It was that of a boy with very long little legs standing guard over a pot of coffee cooking in an emergency oven.

I bounded to him, snuffed his heels, pawed at his upturned bark. He turned with a start and a shout.

"Aunt Alice, it's Vic—little Victor Fauntleroy Smith!"



THE BLACK HEN'S NEST.

Leon and Lida were spending a week at Uncle John's in the country. They thought it great fun to bring in the eggs and hunt for new nests.

"I believe the black hen has made a nest in the barn floor," said Aunt Hannah, one day. "She never did like to lay in the henhouse, but is always hiding her nest in some queer place. If you'll find where she lays I'll give you each five cents."

"Oh, good!" cried Leon. "And may we go to the store and buy candy?"

"Yes, if you find the nest," replied Aunt Hannah.

The children ran eagerly to the barn, for if there was any place in the world where they enjoyed going it was to the country store. Mr. Walcott was so kind, and he sold almost everything that people needed to buy.

"Oh, here is a hole big enough for a hen to go into, behind the hay mow," said Leon.

He put in his hand, but sprang back with a low cry.

"There is something soft and warm and alive in there!" he cried.

Just then Tabby, the cat, looked out from the hole.

"She's got some kittens," said Lida. "Do take them out, Leon!"

Leon brought out four black and white kittens.

"Oh, you little darlings!" cried

THE HAPPY TRAMPS.



"We're lucky birds," the sparrow tramped Said to his ragged neighbor;

"Just think, if we were weather-cocks, How we would have to labor!"

HOW BOB AND BILLY KEPT HOUSE.

BY SARAH NOBLE IVES.

This Summer, when it came time for Father's vacation, he was pretty tired, and he said he wanted to get off somewhere with just Mother, and not be bothered with my boys. I suppose we do make a little racket sometimes.

Well, there wasn't a handy place to send us, so I said to Mother: "You and Father just go along up country, and Billy and I'll keep house for ourselves. I can make coffee, and Gram Carpenter will get us lunches and dinners, and we'll get on fine."

"I don't know as I dare trust you," Mother said.

"Pooh! We're trustable, all right. You'll see!"

Well, she gave us about one square mile of instructions—how to lock the doors at night and wind the clock and fasten the windows and sweep and dust in the three rooms we would use while they were gone, and order cream and eggs and butter from the bakery and bread from the creamery. It was just the other way, and to cook only on the gas stove and not to carry matches in our pockets, and wash there a million more things. I'd have remembered them better if there hadn't been so many.

Father and Mother got off all right, and were to stay up country for two weeks. We were to write

free without any egg. It came out as black as your hat and muddy to ward that may be we ought to have emptied out the old grounds, but I don't know. Anyway, we decided to give up coffee.

The third day we got a letter from Mother, and then we remembered about those old postal cards. So we sent them—three of them—all at once. Billy wrote one and I wrote two, and we put the same thing, on all of them: "Everything O. K.," so the folks wouldn't worry.

That night we found that the beds slept just as well when they hadn't been made up, so we gave up making beds. We'd a great deal to attend to anyway, with all the other house-work. We found out, too, that things got dusty right off again, so we gave up dusting. The same with the sweeping up—it's all foolishness. Women don't need to spend half the time they do pottering round and cleaning up. It takes a man to find out what is really necessary.

Well, we had the housework simplified, but the eating was getting the better of us. There was a lot of butter turned bad, and the milk and cream we let in the bottles turned sour, and there was a bunch of them, too. I can tell you. So we decided to give up butter and milk and cream. The two weeks were most gone when we decided to give up bread. You see the bread-box was piled full of loaf-ends, and they were all getting moldy.

We gave up winding the clock long before this, because it reminded us how late it was when we got up. We found it was easiest to just sleep till morning for lunch, and by getting Gram Carpenter to give us a beefsteak we went to bed we could give up breakfasts altogether and not feel



WE DECIDED TO GET UP EARLY AND CLEAN LIKE FURY.

them a postal card every day, and Mother left fourteen all addressed. She looked sad when she said good-bye, but Billy and I—we didn't feel any. We were in for a good time. There wasn't anything to do the first day but sweep and dust and eat things over to Gram Carpenter's. She cooks bully, and she's a good fellow. We went fishing soon's the work was done, and the day wore off, all right.

We forgot to lock up that night, but we slept all right and it didn't make any difference. Something pounding and yelling at our door woke us up. It was the bakery-man with the bread. The milk-man had left us some things and they were pretty hot standing in the sun. It turned out to be 10 o'clock, and we had to tumble into our clothes in a hurry.

Billy set the table and I made the coffee. I put in an egg to settle it like Mother does, and then poured in some hot water and let her boil. It settled all nice enough, but there wasn't a ground came out of the spout when I poured it—but it didn't come out coffee. It was nothing but yellowish water, and the coffee was all cooked up in a bunch inside the egg. It wasn't very good, but the bread and butter was.

We boiled some eggs, but they all boiled out of the shell, and we decided to give up eggs and eat more of Gram Carpenter's lunches and dinners to make up. After breakfast we washed the dishes. They're awfully slippery when you take them out of the hot water. I dropped a cup, and Billy broke two plates. So we decided to give up washing dishes. There were heaps of clean ones, and we could have one big job of it before the folks got home.

Next morning I tried to make coffee

COMPOSER PLAYS A STREET ORGAN.

The inhabitants of Lowestoft had the privilege of seeing Walter Slaughter, the well-known composer, play one of his own tunes on a street organ. Mr. Slaughter heard the organ grinding out one of his songs from "Bluebell." The music was so devoid of expression that Mr. Slaughter immediately jumped off his bicycle and showed the "grinder" how the work should be played.

THE TWO-RING PUZZLE.



Here are two connecting rings cut out of one ring.

Solution—Take a long, narrow strip of paper and twist it twice, then paste ends together and cut down the center of the ring all around, and you will have two separate but connecting links, as in the picture.

WOMEN IN THE HAYFIELDS.

Owing to the scarcity of male labor, women and boys are being employed in some parts of Norfolk in the work in the hayfields.