

BOYS AND GIRLS

Reliance.

(By Henry van Dyke, D.D.)

Not to the swift, the race;
Not to the strong, the fight;
Not to the righteous, perfect grace;
Not to the wise, the light.

But often faltering feet
Come surest to the goal;
And they who walk in darkness meet
The sunrise of the soul.

A thousand times by night
The Syrian hosts have died;
A thousand times the vanquished right
Hath risen, glorified.

The truth the wise men sought
Was spoken by a Child;
The alabaster box was brought
In trembling hands defiled.

Not from my torch the gleam,
But from the stars above;
Not from my heart life's crystal stream,
But from the depths of Love.

Rasmus, or the Making of a Man.

(By Julia McNair Wright.)

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CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

The next morning it rained, and Mr. Llewellyn gave his time to drawing and coloring some sketches of what Rasmus called 'weeds,' but which he called very 'curious and highly developed plants.' Rasmus applied himself to the old lady's wood-pile, and cut and piled wood. Rodney aided him, brought in a quantity of kindling, and mended the door of the chicken-house, and the latch of the front gate. The old ladies enlarged upon the great convenience of having men around; but at eleven o'clock the rain had ceased, the sun came out hot, and the men went their way. They were in the north-eastern portion of Westmoreland County at the foot of Chestnut Ridge, a woody and mountainous district. The forest was full of the new stir of spring-life—the brooks rippled full to overflowing; the ferns were unrolling their fronds; birds were building, singing, hammering away at the decayed bark; the squirrels ran round and along the branches; rabbits darted by. Mr. Llewellyn's nets were busy catching beetles and flies for his collection or examination. About five o'clock he began to wind in devious ways from the straight path; finally he stopped. 'Now, Rasmus, I want the use of your lungs; shout "Bob" three times, as loud as you can, with O between each.'

Rasmus obediently shouted, and a cry came back. It was repeated several times, and finally a man looked down from a cliff above them. He stood on the extreme verge, holding on by a tree.

'Hello, Mr. Llewellyn.'

'All right, Bob. Can we come up? There's three of us.'

'Come along; your kind's a safe kind,' said Bob.

Mr. Llewellyn led the way, climbing up a steep, winding path, something like a corkscrew. Then he turned, and they saw a kind of barricade of stone wall; behind it a platform of rock, and opening upon it a cave. A curtain of skins was looped back from the door or entrance, and within were shelves hewn in the cave wall; and two long beds or couches of pine needles and hemlock boughs, with a skin cover for each. On the rock platform a fire was burning, and a very good smell rose up from it, for a 'possum and a rabbit were roasting, and a big corn-cake was catching the dripping, and browning before the coals.

'Pile up your goods, and make yourselves to home,' said Bob—a big man, very rudely clad,

who seemed chary of his words, and very devoted to his cooking. 'There's things for you on the long shelf, Mr. Llewellyn, and in the tin box is a note-book, where I wrote out all the observations you wanted me to make.'

Mr. Llewellyn secured the indicated treasures, and Rodney saw that he laid a folded bank-note in the box, in exchange for the note-book. About this curious abode walked a collection of pets, fearless and in amity. An old dog lay by the fire, and a crow sat comfortably on his head. Three cats were taking their ease in their inn; a lame woodpecker fluttered where he chose; a tame rabbit nibbled at some leaves whereof Bob was making a salad; and a big turtle just come out of his winter quarters, clattered around the rock. With these pets Rasmus at once made great friends, and all received his advances cordially. Every animal seemed on friendly terms with Rasmus. The squirrel ran up his shoulder, the woodpecker sat on his head, the cat came to his knee. Bob eyed this with satisfaction. Rodney was particularly interested in the cooking. He had never in his life been so hungry as in these last two days, and perhaps never so happy.

'Do you live up here, all alone?' he asked Bob.

'Yes; I'm a hermit. I never go over ten miles from this rock. Sometimes folks come up here to buy skins or buckets of me. They call down below, and if I say come up, they come. I live here year round with my animals.'

'Don't you get lonesome?'

'I'm used to it.'

'I don't believe I could ever make up my mind to it.'

'I hope you'll never have my reason to. I lived among men, till whiskey got so the better of me that I broke the hearts of all that ever cared for me; and when my wife died, I took a vow never to touch a drop. I couldn't keep it, and live where whiskey was; so, as the whiskey wouldn't go, I did. I came here, and here I've been ten years.'

CHAPTER IX.

A Sabbath in Camp.

'Thou Linnet! In thy green array,
Pervading Spirit, here to-day—
Dost lead the revels of the May,
And this is thy dominion.'

'I think I'd rather stay and fight it out,' said Rodney to this communication. 'I knew a man once, who wanted to stop smoking, and he bought a box of cigars, and set them on his table, where they could stare at him all the time, and then he fought the taste until he conquered it. So, I read of a man who meant to stop drinking, and he filled a bottle with gin, and set it on the window-sill, and there it stood all his life, to remind him he wouldn't touch it.'

'That's all very well when a body is made so they can do it; but when you know and have proved you can't keep up that style of fight, it's better run than perjure yourself.'

'That's so,' said Rasmus. 'It takes a great deal of sand in a man to fight like that; and it's no disgrace to live as you do up here, giving up all you are used to, just to keep straight.'

'But how do you get things to live on?' asked Rodney.

'It takes a great deal less to live on than you think. I need salt and corn-meal, and sugar or molasses, and people bring me them, who come to get skins of me, or nuts. I get quantities of berries to dry, or to eat fresh. I have nuts in plenty. There are streams here, where I get very good fish: I catch rabbits and birds, and other things for food. The boys who come up here bring me powder and shot and fish-hooks, and I trade young birds or squirrels to them. There are some gentlemen near here in the summer, for two or three weeks' vacation, and they leave me clothes, flour, pork, and crackers, for what I do making and keeping their camp. I have some fowls up here; I brought two when I came. That's a true hymn I used to hear my mother sing: "Man wants but little here below."

It's true, I'm shut out from doing much good here, but I was one of those poor creatures, that so long as I lived among men was only doing harm, and it came to "run or ruin," and I ran. It was as the good Book says: "If they persecute you in one city flee into another." Whiskey persecuted me, and I fled into the desert. I think of Moses and Elijah, and John Baptist in the desert when I'm up here. It might be worse. I'm better off than if I'd got myself into States's-prison.'

'I should think you'd freeze here in the winter.'

'There's fuel plenty, and I dress warm, and I build a shed and barricade, that I take away when April comes.'

The supper was now cooked. The hermit had made a tea of sassafras leaves, and he got four pieces of birch-bark for plates. A couple of yellow basins and three mugs made up his assortment of crockery; but each person got on very well, with the bark and a slice of corn-pone for dishes. Rodney thought he had never tasted so good a supper. The hermit told him that a great many things called 'weeds' made good food. Chickweed, or groundsel, was nearly as nice as spinach; cress and wild leeks were green all the year round. Nettles, when young, were as good as asparagus, and if one were feverish or had a headache, nettle-tea was better than a whole apothecary-shop. Dandelions and wild mustard and young milkweed made good greens, so the hermit did not need other vegetables, while sorrel made him a salad, and chicory, and a medicine; and various roots of wild plants were almost as good as potatoes. As for chestnuts roasted, or boiled, or dried and pounded into flour, the hermit thought he could live on them. In fact, Rodney perceived that the world was wider and fuller than he had dreamed, and Nature is no niggard in providing for her children. Sleep on the pine-needle bed was very sweet. The moon was full, and from where he lay, Rodney watched the flood of silver light poured into the dark cup of the valleys. He saw the shoulders of the mountains, black with pine and hemlock, thrust boldly into the white radiance. He heard owls and whip-poor-wills calling, and streams rushing down into the glens.

They breakfasted on the remnants of the supper. Mr. Llewellyn packed his new specimens collected by the hermit, and they pursued their way, moving toward the outlying spurs of the Laurel Hill Ridge, and so into the southern portion of Cambria County.

'We must stop as early as four to-night to make our camp,' said Mr. Llewellyn to Rasmus.

'I'm always ready to stop and ready to camp. I'd rather by half have a camp than stop in a house. But what are you making one to-night for?'

'To lie by in to-morrow. We don't travel Sunday.'

'I'm blessed!' cried Rasmus; 'you are going to lie by every Sunday, rain or shine? What for?'

'Because God said, "Withdraw thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day."'

'When did He tell you that?' asked Rasmus.

'He tells everybody that in his book, the Bible.'

'You've got me there,' said Rasmus. 'I never knowed nothin' of such a book; couldn't read it if I had. But I had as lief stop over. If we spend every Sunday campin' in the woods, I'd as soon have two in a week.'

'I hope sometimes we can spend them near a church and go to service.'

'If there's good singin' and some square hittin' out at thieves and drunkards and other rascals, I don't mind the church,' replied Rasmus, like other people, very willing to hear his neighbor reprehended, and with no notion that he needed reproof or instruction for himself.

As it was Saturday, the country children, ordinarily in school, were out in full force in the woods and by the roads, and Rasmus had his wrath excited by the robbing of birds' nests. He rescued several for the time being, carried off one little boy, holding him over his shoulder by the leg, to 'pay him out' for breaking up a wren's nest, and gave one rascal who had ruthlessly murdered a nestful of