

STORIES
POETRY

The Inglenook

SKETCHES
TRAVEL

WHO LEFT THE DOOR OPEN.

By Mary E. Wilkins.

"Who left the pantry door open?" said Mistress Hapgood sternly.

She stood before them straight and tall in her indigo blue petticoat and short gown, with her black hair rolled back under a tidy cap, and her black eyes flashing. Her cheeks were as red as roses.

Mistress Hapgood was a handsome woman. The children, five of them—Priscilla being the eldest—looked up at her with apprehension. Somebody had left the pantry door open, and the cat had got in and helped herself to a large piece of spare rib; it had happened several times before this, and now a severe penalty was to be the consequence.

"Who left the pantry door open?" repeated Mistress Hapgood. "The one that did must go without supper to-night."

The children looked at each other. Uncle Silas and Aunt Prudence Beals and two cousins were to sup with them that night, and there would be Johnny-cake toast made with cream, plum sauce, and pound cake for supper. It was a good deal to forego. Mistress Hapgood stood waiting, and the great white cat that had made all this trouble sat on the hearth washing her face. She had been shoved out with the broom, but had soon walked in again.

At last Nancy, the youngest girl, broke the silence.

"I saw Thomas coming out of the pantry," said she.

Thomas, who was the very youngest of all, broke into a loud wail, and the tears rolled down his fat baby cheeks. "I didn't leave 'ee door open," he sobbed. "I didn't!"

"What did you go into the pantry at all for?" queried his mother with severity.

But Thomas only dipped his double chin into his pinafore and sobbed harder than ever.

"Answer me!" repeated his mother in a commanding tone.

Thomas choked out a word which Nancy interpreted.

"He says he went into the pantry after a pancake," said she.

"Thomas, go and stand in the corner," said Mistress Hapgood.

And little Thomas, still lifting up his voice, trudged across to the corner, and settled himself therein, with a tearful face, to the wall.

"Now," said Mistress Hapgood, "when did you see Thomas go into the pantry?"

"This forenoon," answered Nancy, with a dubious look.

"This forenoon," repeated her mother. "Haven't you more sense than that, child? The whole family has been in since then. Now, stand in a row!"

The Hapgood children obediently formed themselves into a line in front of the hearth.

"Now, Priscilla," said Mistress Hapgood, "did you leave the pantry door open?"

"No, ma'am," answered Priscilla, after a little hesitation. Her fair, sober face had a troubled look.

"Polly, did you leave the pantry door open?"

"No, ma'am."

"Isaac, did you?"

"No, ma'am."

"Nancy?"

"No, ma'am."

"Thomas, did you leave the pantry door open?"

"No-o, m-a-a-m!" wailed Thomas from his corner.

And all the Hapgood children had denied leaving the pantry door open.

The frown on Mistress Hapgood's face deepened.

"One of you left the pantry door open," said she. "There is no one else who could have done it. I have been away, and you children were alone in the house. One of you is telling a wicked fib."

There was a dead silence. The children stole inquiring glances at each other, and rolled fearful eyes in their mother's direction.

"Very well," continued Mistress Hapgood, "if one cannot confess, all must suffer. You must all go without your supper."

Then Thomas' wail deepened, and some of the others joined in. Priscilla stood quite still looking at them. Mistress Hapgood, with her lips compressed and stepping very firmly, brought out the pound cake, and cut it into squares, and portioned out the plum sauce. The thin Johnny-cakes were baking before the fire.

Presently Priscilla went up to her mother, and pulled her indigo gown softly.

"Mother!" said she.

"What is it?" asked her mother, shortly.

"I went into the pantry this afternoon. I might have left the door open."

"Don't you know whether you did or not?"

"I shouldn't wonder if I did," answered Priscilla, trembling.

Just then there was a noise out in the yard; the company had come.

"Well, you can go without your supper then," said her mother, hurriedly. "And you deserve a greater punishment for not telling me before."

While the other children sat at the table with their elders, and ate the delicious Johnny-cake toast, the pound cake, and the plum sauce, Priscilla sat in the corner and knitted on a blue yarn stocking. Her uncle and aunt, and cousins, and her father, Captain Hapgood, had all been informed of the reason; and Priscilla hung her head over the stocking, and could scarcely see the stitches through her tears.

They were almost through supper when Grandmother Elliot, Mistress Hapgood's mother, came in. She lived just across the yard. She spoke to them all; then she looked sharply at Priscilla.

"What has the child done?" asked she. Mistress Hapgood related the story briefly. Grandmother Elliot looked surprised.

"Priscilla did not leave the door open," she said. "I came over this afternoon after your Balm of Gilead bottle. Adoniram cut his thumb, and I left the door open on purpose; it was snowy in there, and I was afraid it would make your new butter taste. I did not think of the cat. All the children were playing over in the field."

Everybody looked at Priscilla. Then her father spoke up, and he could not have spoken more sternly to the soldiers whom he commanded.

"What does this mean, Priscilla?" said he.

Priscilla bent her face quite down to the blue yarn stocking and wept.

"Did you know that you did not leave the pantry door open?" he continued.

"Yes, sir," gasped Priscilla.

After the company had gone her father proceeded to deal with her after the code of his day, and in accordance with his own convictions. He took down the birch rod, with which all the

children were acquainted, and he bade Priscilla stand before him.

"I want you to remember, daughter," said Captain Hapgood, "that a falsehood is a falsehood, for whatever cause it may be told."

Then he brought down the birch rod several times over Priscilla's slender shoulders.

Priscilla covered her face with her apron and cried softly. Captain Hapgood, after he had put away the birch rod, went up to her and drew the apron gently away. He was not a man given to endearments, but he kissed her solemnly on her fair childish forehead.

"The rod was for the falsehood, daughter," said Captain Hapgood; "and this is for thy kindness and self-sacrifice toward thy brothers and sisters."

Mistress Hapgood was bustling around the hearth. Presently she called Priscilla.

"Draw up to the table, and have your supper, child," said she.

Mistress Hapgood had baked a fresh sheet of Johnny-cake that was thinner and browner than the others had been; she had skimmed more cream and dealt out a liberal dish of sauce. Priscilla sat up and partook. The taste of the food was very pleasant; her shoulders still tingled from the birch rod, and the distinction between the right and wrong of a doubtful action was quite plain to her mind.—Congregationalist.

AUSTRALIAN RABBIT PLAGUE.

Many plans have been tried for exterminating, or reducing to reasonable numbers, the rabbits which have become such a plague in Australia. None, however, has so far been successful. Pasteur many years ago suggested the plan of inoculating the rabbits with the virus of some disease. Hitherto this plan does not seem to have been seriously tried. The Australian government, however, has now determined to test its efficacy. It has made arrangements with Dr. Danysz of the Pasteur Institute, Paris, to undertake the work. It is claimed that the virus which is to be used for inoculating the rabbits has already been used with more or less success against rats, voles, etc. In view of the importance of the result aimed at, the work is to be started on an experimental scale on the Island of Broughton, in Southern Australia. This island has been stocked with rabbits for the purpose of the experiment. The danger feared by many as a result of this method of extermination is that the disease might be communicated to domestic animals, or even to man. To test whether this danger is real or not, domestic animals have also been conveyed to the island. The experiment will be watched with interest.—London Globe.

King Edward's kitchen is finished completely in black oak, which was fitted by George III. at a cost of £10,000. There is also a confectionery room, pastry room, and a bakehouse, besides the kitchen proper. The chef of the Royal kitchen receives £700 a year, while under him are four master cooks, who in turn have a bevy of servants under them. The strictest economy is observed in the King's kitchen, and what food remains unconsumed is given to the poor, who apply daily at the gates.

In a single square yard of the best-made Persian carpets there are from 200,000 to 300,000 stitches, requiring to be adjusted solely by the hand of the weaver.