

* * The Story Page. * *

Daddy Warren's Poppies.

"I wish I had a few of those poppies, Daddy Warren," sounded Bert's frank little voice from the region of the gate.

Daddy Warren responded crossly. Perhaps it was the broiling hot August afternoon that made him feel cross. Perhaps he realized what a forlorn, lonely old man he was, living by himself in his little gray cottage, surrounded by beds and beds of scarlet poppies. At any rate, he raised himself from his chair till he could see the blue band on Bert's white sailor hat, and then he shook his cane and cried: "Get out, you bad little boy! You can't have nary a poppy nor a seed."

There was a sudden silence, but Daddy Warren detected no stir of retreat at the front gate.

"Hey!" he called, "ain't you gone?"

"No," replied Bert's cheerful little voice. "I'm waiting for you to change your mind. Aunt Jane sometimes changes hers when her head aches and she speaks quick. Does your head ache?" Bert's tone had a confidence in it that was irresistible.

"Come in," said Daddy shortly, and as he stepped promptly within the gate, he looked him over with a softening of his gnarled old face.

"You're a city boy, ain't you? Now, what do you want o' my poppies? Don't you know I sell my poppies? No, no. Can't give away flowers in this village. Lor, they'd lug off the roots and the seed pods."

Bert's face fell. "Sell them, do you?" he said. "I haven't any pennies left in my bank. Not a one. Oh, dear!"

"Always sell 'em," returned Daddy Warren, firmly. "But what be you so crazy about poppies for?"

"There's a fellow I know who worked in the livery, and a horse stepped on his foot and hurt it, and he lives way back where it's so hot and dusty. Yesterday I took him a big bunch of water-lilies, and to-day I thought I'd give him—"

"My poppies, hey?" interrupted Daddy Warren, dryly. "Givin' other folks' property for charity?"

Bert felt himself rebuked, and his gaze fell. Suddenly he lifted his little flushed face.

"Daddy Warren," he said, "this little fellow I know has been so good to me, and he loves flowers so. I have a little puppy, all my own, though Aunt Jane says he's a nuisance. Could I—could I pay him for poppies? He's a nice puppy, and I love him."

Daddy pulled at his pipe two or three times and said slowly, looking hard at Bert.

"Yes, you bring me your puppy and you kin have a whoppin' bunch of poppies. A trade's a trade, though. Poppies'll die, but the puppy is mine."

Bert never hesitated, but ran off to Aunt Jane's stables. In twenty minutes he was back, and laid the little black and tan Dachshund in Daddy's lap.

"Aunt Jane said: 'Thank goodness, sell him,' when I asked her," he declared, breathlessly.

Daddy's old hands were fondling the dog. His face looked eager. His dim eyes brightened.

"See here, little chap, I was only a-tryin' you," he said. "You can go an' pick every poppy a-blowin', if you want to, and, oh, I should like this little dog! He'd be sech company for a lonely old man! Can't I buy him of you? He's a good breed, and worth more'n my poppies." Daddy's changed tone reached Bert's heart instantly.

"I'll tell you!" he cried, clapping his hands. "You give me some poppies, and I'll give you my dog. I'd love to give him to you, and I can come to see him, and all three of us can be friends! Won't that be nice?"

"You're an odd chap, sonny," said Daddy, with a feeble attempt to be gruff. "I can't see you here too often, and I've got lots of curiosities I can show you. I've been a seafarin' man, you know. Now, lad, let's see you pick poppies," he ended, briskly.

Poor sick Jimmie had his heart and eyes gladdened with a glorious bunch of flowers an hour later. And at bedtime Bert said: "Aunt Jane, I've made a beautiful new friend."

"Who?" asked his aunt, curiously.

"Daddy Warren."

She stooped and kissed her nephew to hide a smile.

"It took you to find a beautiful friend in cross old Daddy Warren," she said.—Sel.

Home Fairies.

BY MARY F. BUTTS.

"Instead of telling fairy-stories, let us be fairies ourselves," said Aunt Delia, when the children begged her for a fairy-tale.

"How can we be fairies, auntie?"

"What are fairies?" asked the lady.

"Why, little, wee folks that go about doing wonderful things. Sometimes they make butter after the dairy-maid has gone to bed. Sometimes they put a gold piece

under the plate of the poor man who can't pay his rent; and, when he sits down at the breakfast table he finds it."

"Well," said Aunt Delia, "here are Tom, Ned, Mary and Sue. Let us organize a fairy-band. Bridget has gone to the dentist's with a bad tooth. The baby is cross, there are blackberries to pick for tea, mamma has a headache, the sitting-room is in disorder; and pap will be at home by and by, all tired out with the work and the heat. A fairy band is badly needed, I think."

"I will be Mustard Seed," said Tom, mindful of his last Shakespeare reading. "I'll take baby to the croquet ground, and roll the balls for her; that always amuses her."

"I will be Apple Blossom," said Sue, naming herself from her favorite flower. "I will set the tea-table so very quietly that mamma will not hear me. When she finds it all ready, it will seem like fairies' work to her."

"I'll be Blackberry," said Ned. "Here goes the berry-patch."

"I will be Aschenputtel, and do the dusting," said Mary, beginning, with great zeal, to put the sitting-room in order.

The next moment the click of the balls and the music of baby's ringing laugh came from the lawn. Mary, duster in hand, looked out of the window, and smiled to see them so happy.

"It is a great deal better to help," she said, polishing a table with all her might, "than to sit down and make auntie amuse us."

Sue sang softly to herself, as she put the cups and plates in order:

"Little child, the long day through,
Find some helpful thing to do.
Then you'll know, in work or play,
Why good fairies are so gay."

"Blackberry," in the berry-patch whistled as she picked the plump, shining fruit. The largest, ripest berries he put into a separate dish for mamma. "She will smile when she sees them," he thought. "Perhaps they will cure her headache. She always tells us that kindness is a cure-all."

After a short and restless sleep, mamma awoke, feeling a little discouraged.

"I believe I must go away somewhere for a change," she thought. "Housekeeping is very wearing, especially when baby is cross; and poor Bridget is always having a toothache in these days."

But the first thing she heard when she went downstairs were baby's shouts of delight. Then the clean, orderly sitting-room with a bowl of sweet-peas on the polished table made her glow all over with pleasure. Next she caught sight of the tea-table, all ready for tea; that, too, was sweet with flowers. As she went into the kitchen she met Ned. His face was bright with the real good-fairy smile, as he offered her the delicious fruit.

Aschenputtel ran to get some cream for mamma's berries.

"Fairies can do without cream," she said. "They are supposed to sip honey from the flowers all day long."

"Why, what is the matter with everybody?" said papa, coming in. "Is there good news? Has the family inherited a fortune?"

"We have had a visit from the fairies," said mamma, as they sat down at the table.—Sel.

The Kindest Way.

BY MARIANNA WOOD ROBINSON.

"Here's our car, and we shall not have to wait at all." The speaker was one of a half dozen ladies who had formed a part of the crowd that had just poured out of the Moody meeting one day last winter. It was very cold and past noon. The ladies all lived out on the West Side. Most of them kept no servants, and must get the dinner after they reached home; so, glad to catch the car at once, they hastened aboard.

All but one, the slightest, frailest-looking of them all. She walked along the sidewalk, instead of following the group to the car.

"Aren't you coming, Mrs. Gray?"

"No, I think I'll walk," she said, quietly.

"Oh, yes, come on! You might as well ride. Come!" they called after her, and her neighbor, Mrs. Cutler, said,

"I can pay your fare, Mrs. Gray, just as well as not." Mrs. Gray's face flushed faintly, but she only answered with a quiet smile:

"Thank you, no; I'll walk."

"I suppose she couldn't afford the fare," said one, after the car started. "I could have paid it for her, too, if I had thought quick enough," said another, rather irrelevantly. "I couldn't," added a third, "for I only had one nickel in my pocket;" and then they began talking about the wonderful meeting; and one lady, looking back, exclaimed:

"Why, there's Mrs. Townsend with Mrs. Gray! I was sure I saw her get on."

Mrs. Townsend's lovely home was farther out than any of the others, and she always rode to town in car or

carriage. Her foot had been on the car step this time, but suddenly she had turned and gone back to the sidewalk.

"If you are going to walk, Mrs. Gray, I will, too," she said.

The smile was fading from Mrs. Gray's face and a patient, tired look was taking its place; but as she turned and saw the other, the smile came back, and she said:

"I shall be very glad, I'm sure."

"I don't enjoy walking alone," Mrs. Townsend went on brightly, "but if I can have good company, it doesn't seem so very far."

"I didn't know you ever walked home. I feel obliged to sometimes. Car fares do count up so. I don't mind walking either, unless I am extra tired. But," after a little pause, "it does hurt my feelings to have anybody offer to pay my fare. It seems as though the ladies might know I wouldn't ride that way. I always have the money in my pocket, but if I want to keep it for other uses, it seems to me that is my own affair. But then," she went on slowly, "I suppose they mean well, and they can't understand, maybe, how it comes to me."

Mrs. Townsend did not tell Mrs. Gray that she knew the unfortunate remark made in the hearing of the whole party had hurt her feelings and wounded her pride, nor that it was the reason she herself was walking home that cold day. She only said:

"Indeed, such things are our own affairs always. And, as you say, car fares do count up so fast. We have to practice all sorts of economies at our house to get the wherewithal for the things we really must have."

Then they chatted on about household matters, and Mrs. Townsend told the different ways in which she had lengthened Susie's dresses so they would last another winter, and how Freddie's suits were made out of his Uncle Tom's, and how afraid she was that Will's eyes were going to fail and put an end to his hopes of studying to be an artist. Little by little Mrs. Gray forgot her usual reserve enough to tell how Charlie stayed at home from school a week waiting for new shoes, and cried about it every day; and how Jim, who, the teacher said, was the brightest scholar in his class, had to leave school altogether to look for work; and how cold their house was, and how hard the times were in every way, her heart getting lighter all the while in spite of her troubles, with that dear sense of fellowship which is a blessed comfort to us all.

"Well!" she said at last, "here is my street already. It has done me good to talk with you. I'm afraid I was beginning to forget that other people have their troubles, too."

Mrs. Cutler was standing in the doorway as she passed. "You ought to have rode up with us," she called out. "We talked about the meeting all the way home, and I think it does you so much more good if you can talk it over afterwards, don't you? But I suppose you and Mrs. Townsend did."

"No, I don't remember that we said a single word about it. But it was a good meeting." Then, as she passed in at her own gate, she whispered to herself,

"The talk with Mrs. Townsend was better still."

Mrs. Townsend was tired all through the afternoon, but the thought of the cheery, hopeful look that, as they talked, had chased away the proud and worried one from Mrs. Gray's face, was better than any rest. And when I happened to hear from Mrs. Gray the little story, and could understand it even better than she, knowing Mrs. Townsend so well, I was reminded of the little verse the children learn at school:

"Politeness is to do or say
The kindest thing in the kindest way."

—Advance.

Manhood Greater than Wealth.

A very interesting story is told of a young clerk in a dry goods store, who has recently come into possession of a large fortune by inheritance from a distant relative. The young man was one day called to his employer's private office, and listened with amazement to the news as it was imparted to him by a lawyer.

"I suppose I must not expect your services as clerk any longer," said the merchant with a smile. "I shall be sorry to lose you."

"Oh, I shall stay my mouth out, of course, sir," said the boy, promptly. "I shouldn't want to break my word just because I've had some money left me."

The two elder men exchanged glances. The money referred to was nearly \$300,000.

"Well," said the lawyer, stroking his mouth to conceal his expression, "I should like an hour of your time between 10 and 4 tomorrow, my young friend, as it will be necessary for you to read and sign some papers."

"Yes, sir," said the clerk; "I always take my luncheon at 11:45. I'll take that hour for you, instead, tomorrow. If I eat a good breakfast I can get along until 6 o'clock."

That was a sensible boy. He had got hold of the right end of life. It is not what we have, but what we are which counts most. That is what Christ meant when he said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."—Ex.

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left. Presently Mrs.
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