

The Children's Page

FIRST COMMUNION.

And so, my darling, you will kneel to-day For the first time before God's holy altar.

And I will pray, as only mothers pray, That He will never let your footsteps falter.

It seems a little while since first you lay Within my arms, and nestled oh! so tender,

And brought the joy which but a first-born brings; Still far more joyful, dear, if you'll surrender

Your heart and soul to-day, Forgetting even me. And I will throw all worldly care aside.

And think of nothing save the Guest we cherish, And He will see my heart, and know I tried,

To keep you from the love of things that perish, For those that last, for His dear sake, And He'll remember.

Oh, may He guide and bless and keep you dear, And give you strength to battle with life's sorrow;

And when your last Communion Day draws near, Your trust in Him will lead to glad to-morrow,

Where love and joy and gladness will await thee, Beyond the skies.

HOW TOM SAVED HIS FATHER.

"Yes; Tom's been here. Can't you tell he's been here? See the mud on the floor, all the way from one door to the other.

"In some way this boy—I do not know who he is, as I did not see him—discovered the damage done by the water.

"The car had started on the down grade, when the boy appeared in the middle of the track waving green branches and his hat.

"When the men started to examine the bride, he just fainted. A doctor on the train took charge of him.

"There is something about Americans which has surprised me more than anything else," said the German artist.

"There were several Americans among his auditors, and they looked rather surprised, and they looked spoke.

"What is the capital of Massachusetts?" was his first question. "Boston," was the prompt answer from the young woman.

"And of North Carolina?" For a moment she hesitated, and then said, "Charleston."

"What is the capital of Illinois?" "Chi—Springfield, I mean." "Of Montana?"

"I went there two years ago," said the young lady, lamely. "I recall that I heard it was taken from the States of Wyoming and—New Mexico, I think."

"Your answers were as good as the average," said the German, "for you did get one or two right. As I said, American geography surprises me."

Here are two little stories from Our Dumb Animals, illustrating the fidelity of which dogs are capable: Many years ago in Wisconsin, before the Indian had retired from the neighborhood of the white man, a mother and her little girl were alone in their cottage on the edge of a great forest.

wandered away a short distance, came bounding back. In an instant he had the savage by the throat and threw him to the ground, the others, having no fire-arms, beat a hasty retreat.

The little girl (now a grown woman) is a dear friend of the writer. Now, children, let us remember that other dogs are capable of just such bravery and that they will risk their lives for those they love, and so let us always treat them with the kindness they deserve. E.C.D.

The story of a dog's affection for its little mistress from whom it would not be separated even by death, was brought here by the steamer Columbia, which arrived to-day from Glasgow.

Among the passengers on the steamer was Andrew MacDonald, who was bringing his four-year-old daughter, Mary, to America for the benefit of the sea voyage might be to her health.

The little girl's two collie dogs, Daisy and Ben, accompanied them, and until she was taken ill spent all her waking hours with her pets.

When the storm became more severe the child became violently sea-sick and died. The dogs missed their little mistress and whined constantly until they were taken to the cabin, where preparations were being made to bury the child's body at sea.

As the child's body was lifted to the rail and slid overboard Daisy broke from the man who held her and leaped into the sea just as the body of her little mistress disappeared beneath the waves. The dog was drowned.—From Boston Record of March 21.

A PERSIAN HORSE.

"Persian horses," says Mrs. Bishop in "Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan," "are to be admired and liked. Their beauty is a source of constant enjoyment, and they are almost invariably gentle and docile. It is in vain to form any resolution against making a pet of one of them.

"Uncanny," said a globe trotter, "is the splendid and flourishing sensitive plant of Ceylon. This plant causes you to wonder if plants, like us, can't feel pain and think and grieve."

"What plant is that?" said I. "A mimosa, or sensitive plant," my host answered, and added, turning to his little daughter: "Go, dear, and kiss the mimosa."

"The child obeyed. Then she came back to us gleefully. The plant had not shrunk from her fresh young touch. Not a leaf had quivered."

LEARN TO SWIM.

The long and somber chapter of drowning accidents which is a part of our Summer history, has opened, says the Irish-American. Several lives have already been lost that with due precaution should have been preserved, and that might even have remained unimpeded.

stances where accident or injury are not threatened. The terrible losses in the Slocum district would have been largely, if not wholly, averted had the people on board the steamer been able to swim, even for a few yards, since most of them were drowned close to the shore.

The drowning accidents at our beaches, too, where people who cannot swim suffer themselves to be led into too deep water, or are pitched into the sea by the malign hoodlum who rocks the boat, would never, or seldom, occur if the bathers would practise a few of the swimming strokes before they ventured beyond the life lines, for swimming is quickly and easily learned, and the one who is conscious of his ability to keep afloat, even for a few minutes, is less apt to lose his head in an emergency than is one who may fall overboard, even in shallow water and close to the land.

THE WHITE MAN'S STAR.

(Anna T. Sadler in the Messenger.) When Jack Morris went off to Alaska, it was with the highest hopes. He saw before him the gleam of gold, as mariners of old saw the fabled treasure ship or the glint of the Hesperides.

That miniature ocean, after lashing itself into a fury and detaining the crowded vessels as long as possible upon its bosom, finally permitted them to land their human cargo of treasure seekers upon the beach one pleasant day in June.

Then he wandered forth again, to find the shades of evening falling over the busy and populous streets of the little mining town.

"I guess you're about right, youngster," he said. "It is like a ray of hope. It's about the first as a chap sees on comin' here, when he's apt to feel down in the mouth. I ain't got no religion myself to speak of, but the party that set up that cross and put them lights in it, he had. He was a Romanist priest, and stranger, he was just about as good as they make them."

"The speaker paused to permit his words their full effect. Then he resumed: "As I was sayin', I ain't got no religion, but I'm kinder superstitious about that lighted cross. D'ye know the name it goes by?"

"No, I do not," answered Jack. "The savages, Eskimos, we call them in these parts, they christened it all right enough. They called it 'The White Man's Star!'"

The name struck the younger man's imagination at once and he never forgot that scene, nor the sudden swift flashing out of the lights upon the cross, associated as they were with his first impressions of Nome and emphasized by subsequent events.

"We were seated, in white linen clothes, under the palms of our host's garden beyond Colombo. We had just breakfasted, and the native servants were handing about coffee and liquors."

"What plant is that?" said I. "A mimosa, or sensitive plant," my host answered, and added, turning to his little daughter: "Go, dear, and kiss the mimosa."

"I advanced. I put out my hand. And my hand no sooner touched it than it the mimosa shivered, and the leaves wilted as though frost-bitten."

Though wealth eluded him and he was able scarcely to make a pittance sufficient for his support, Jack Morris kept doggedly on his way, slow length alone. The short summers of that region changed all too rapidly to winter, which inexorably shut iron-bound isolation.

Those passing years aged Jack Morris and planted furrows here and there in his countenance and

bronzed his complexion to an indescribable color. He had endured, as the seasons came and went, more of misery and privation and loneliness and homesickness than he would ever be able to express, even to his nearest and dearest. But he had not become hardened. Deep in his heart remained the craving for home and some affection, and the love for his mother, who he knew was growing old and pining for him, away off there in the outskirts of a great city.

A reaction set in about the sixth year of his Alaskan experiences, suddenly, as such reactions are apt to do. It was in the January of that year, when the mail carriers driving their superb dogs over hundreds of frozen miles, arrived with their much desired budget.

He vaguely noted, in the semi-darkness which rested over the town as a pall, the expression upon the faces about, marked as so many were by traces of greed and avarice. In all there was visible something of heart hunger, the pang of disappointment when the expected tidings failed to come, the eager joy when the long anticipation was crowned with fruition.

The revulsion of feeling was almost too great, since one swift glance told him that the letter was plain white and directed in the tremulous characters he loved so well. He registered a vow with his eyes upon the cross of the steeple that came weal or woe, he would go home with the first out-going steamer in the spring.

Under the inspiration of his new resolve, Jack Morris went to work with new ardor. A prospecting expedition set out from Nome, despite the unpropitious season and the probability of unusual hardships, and the young man accompanied the party. He was willing to brave anything for the fighting chance of bringing home even a moderate share of wealth.

Fortune, which had hitherto proved singularly neglected, actually turned upon him at last. He won gold, thousands of dollars in dust and nuggets. His wildest dreams were surpassed. He could go home now to keep his mother in comfort and luxury forever. He was half bewildered at the sudden streak of luck which made him an object of wonder, of admiration and of envy to his comrades.

He did not wait for the camp in the hills to break up, but in company with the veteran, his first Alaskan acquaintance, he set out to return to the town, which was at no very considerable distance. It was just when the dark day was turning to still darker night that the two, laden as they were with their enormous bundles of bedding and other appurtenances, found that they had wandered from the trail; in fact, were lost.

Grimly they struggled on over the frozen tundra, hoping to discover some indication which might guide their steps aright. A nameless terror was in their hearts, for many a grewsome tale was current of miners who had perished after indescribable sufferings, almost within reach of help, wandering over the plains in darkness. Snow mist was gathering thickly about them, a freshening breeze, moaning and sighing severely, brought persistently in its wake the honors of an Alaskan blizzard as they stumbled on, weary and exhausted, yet fearful of remaining still an instant and yet more afraid of succumbing to the drowsiness which they knew would herald the last sleep.

"I guess, Jack, if you've got any of that religion left about you after six years' wear and tear, you'd best put 'us a prayer."

"Yes," assented Jack, "it's about our only hope," and he did pray with a warmth and fervor which had remained aglow within his chilled and benumbed frame. He fancied he heard through the stillness his mother's voice, faint and far away, praying for him. He felt comforted and reassured, since her prayers must pierce the heavens.

"My mother's praying for me over there," he said dreamily to his companion, "she's saying her beads!" "You're dreamin', boy, wake up!" cried the veteran, shaking him by the shoulder.

"No!" objected Jack, "I'm not dreaming. She always says her Rosary in the evening. She's saying it for me!" "The veteran had no knowledge of the Rosary." The two ploughed on again in silence. Worse than the "mush" of Arctic moss in summer or the "nigger grass" laying snares for the feet of the unwary, was the stiff, hard frozen sheet of ice, being now gradually covered with deep and treacherous snow. The despairing thought was uppermost in the minds of both men, in so far as they were in a condition to think, that they might be going farther and farther from all hope of succor, on and onward to a certain and appalling fate.

"I guess your God don't hear much!" the veteran exclaimed, unconsciously, echoing what was said of old to the faithful who labored under the Covenant. Scarcely had he spoken when he was stricken into a silence of awe, almost of terror. Through the snow mist, darkening into the blackness of the Arctic night, at a comparatively short distance from where the comrades stood, there suddenly appeared upon the darkness a quick, vivid flash of light and a radiance as of many stars gemming a miniature firmament.

"Look! Look!" cried Jack, gripping his companion's arm, while the veteran, taking off his cap, bent his head, "we are saved, saved by the 'White Man's Star.'"

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The cross erected by the Rev. Father Jaquet, S.J., first resident missionary in Nome, and lighted at his suggestion.

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