

'A real plucky little fellow, that!' said the squire as he wished Mr. Draper 'good-day.' 'I saw it all,' he said. 'I was in my home paddock myself, looking over the hedge, when I saw the thing dash by; and, thinks I, a pretty close shave you'll have, my boy, if you get through my gate all safe — for luckily it happened to stand open. But there, he did it, and a master stroke it was.'

But here further talk was stopped by the noise of the shouting crowd, and there was Brown, the hero of the hour, pleased and happy, as well he might be, and smiling to himself at the unwonted honors he was receiving, not a bit puffed up, quite unconscious, indeed, that he had done anything at all out of the way.

Now the squire, as it happened, was a bit of a cynic, which means he distrusted people — thought they were all cheats and humbugs!

So, thought he, I daresay this young chap is just the same; I'll just walk on and hear what he has to say for himself, and if he don't happen to speak to anyone I can pretty soon take his measure.'

Consequently he was not a little surprised, on reaching the place where Brown, having been let down from the boys' shoulders, was again on terra firma, to see the boy looking fairly bewildered at all the fuss being made with him, and was doing all he could to get away from them and hide his head among Mr. Draper's goods; but they had blocked up the way and would not let him pass. Seeing, however, that he was fairly in for it, he determined to try what poking fun at them would do.

'I say, boys, I hate all this row, for I'm only a poor milk-and-water silly, don't you know, and can't stand much of anything, particularly making me out so clever, when I've done nothing at all, except sitting still in the chaise and holding in the pony's head tight. Didn't I pull him, though? My wrist's quite stiff.' Then, watching his opportunity, he made a dart into the shop door behind him and was safe with Mrs. Brewster again, who fairly hugged him with delight.

'Only—only—holding in the pony's head!' cried the squire. 'Why, that was all the battle. And all on the blue ribbon. It strikes me that we should all be the better for more of that and less of—of—' The squire paused, for he was not a man noted for his eloquence, whatever other merits he might have had. 'Well, what makes the nose blue?—alcohol!'

'So you see, the milk-and-water' silly may be said to have won the 'colors,' and, indeed, no one ever again was heard laughing at little Brown for being a blue-ribboner. On the contrary, from that day a reformation began in the school, and master and boys, if not pledged teetotalers, are trying to do without beer and wine, and acknowledge that they are quite as well without it; in fact, better, and all through 'the milk-and-water silly,' Brown.

Faithful Unto Death.

During the China and Japan war, a marine on board the 'Itsukushina' was ordered to stand as sentry at the entrance of the powder magazine. During the hottest part of the engagement, the ship was so steered that the shots of the enemy's small guns went in that direction. Seeing this, the sentry endeavored to cover the whole doorway of the magazine with his body, and by so doing not a bullet reached the interior of the magazine. When the relief guard was sent to him he was dead, for not less than thirty-six bullets had struck him.—'Japan Weekly Mail.'

A Race in the Chute.

(By James Buckham, in the 'Congregation-alist'.)

Baptiste Laplant, returning on snowshoes to the lumbering camp late one January night, was startled and terrified, on coming under a leafless ash tree, to see the shadow of a doubled-up human figure thrown by the moonlight on the snow amid the tracery of bare branches. Baptiste was big and brave, but he had all the superstition and dread of the supernatural peculiar to his race and class; and when he saw that human shadow falling from above him on the snow he dropped the sack of camp supplies he was carrying on his shoulder and uttered a sharp cry of alarm. But a trembling, boyish voice above him put an end to his terror and caused him to look up in amaze.

'O, Baptiste, it is only I! As I came out to look at my rabbit-snares I thought I heard the wolves howling, and it frightened me so I climbed this tree, and in coming down I slipped and caught on this sharp stub.'

Baptiste Laplant put his hands on his great hips and laughed long and loud, but not unkindly. There was nothing but pure amusement in his voice as he looked up and saw that odd child, the cook's assistant, pierced through the seat of his trousers by a relentless stub and hung up by the middle, with feet and shoulders dangling.

'Baptiste, please help me down!' pleaded the boy. 'I have tried a long time to pull loose and am getting faint and dizzy.'

'Poor child! I will laugh no more,' cried Baptiste. He sprang to the tree, grasped its trunk in his bear-like hug, and soon, panting and grunting, got astride of the limb from which the unfortunate boy was suspended, lifted him by main strength from the stub and set him upon his own broad lap for a minute to recover his swimming senses. Almost unconsciously the lad's arms went around the big woodsman's neck and Baptiste made no effort to remove them.

'I am glad it was you who found me, Baptiste,' whispered the boy. 'You are so kind—the kindest of them all. The others would never have stopped laughing at me, and perhaps would have left me hanging here all night for a joke.'

'Poor child!' said Baptiste again. His big heart was touched by the boy's words and his clinging gratitude. 'I no tell de odds,' he added, magnanimously and unselfishly, for Baptiste loved a laugh and a joke was dear to his heart. 'My ol' hooman sew up you' pant an' nobody know any-ting about it—hein?'

'O, thank you, thank you, Baptiste!' cried the boy, greatly relieved, for he dreaded the rude, continuous hectoring of the men should they hear of his mishap and what led to it. 'If I can ever do anything for you, Baptiste, I will do it if it kills me!'

Baptiste laughed good-humoredly. The idea of this boy doing anything for him amused him exceedingly—this boy who would climb a tree in a tremble of fear if he imagined he heard a wolf howl miles away in the forest. But the lad's gentleness and affectionate manner were something new and grateful to the big, rough Canadian. In his secret heart he hoped that his baby boy would grow up with this same tender, loving, clinging disposition, although he would wish him to be braver and less like a girl.

From the hour when Madame Laplant—less graciously known in the lumbering camp by Baptiste's own pet name of 'the old woman'—sewed up the rent in his trousers and added a motherly kiss into the bargain.

Benny Brown, the cook's chore-boy, was a frequent and welcome visitor at the little log 'shack' where Baptiste and his family lived, apart from the rest of the lumbering gang. Benny and the toddling baby boy became the greatest of friends, and the red-capped little Canadian might be seen riding pick-a-back on the shoulders of his larger playmate at all hours of the day when the latter was off duty. It was a great relief to Madame Laplant to have some one whom she could trust with the care of her child at odd times, and she felt, too, that Benny's sweet, kindly, truthful character exercised a good influence over the boy. Privately she assured her husband that Benny must have come of some high-bred family, he was so different from the rough boys one usually meets in the woods, but how he ever drifted to that lumbering camp in the heart of the Maine wilderness she could not imagine.

It was in February that the great snow-storm fell, piling drifts ten feet high even in the narrow clearings in the woods. For three, or four days the lumbermen were almost housebound. Finally they managed to clear a path to 'the chopping,' and the work of cutting and hauling logs to the big chute was resumed. The 'chute' was a big trough of planks laid on heavy scaffolding from the lumber camp down the mountain side to the valley below. Instead of hauling logs to the river on sleds they were hoisted into this chute and sent spinning and roaring down the mountain side like great arrows down in a groove. By constant friction the inside of the chute had become worn as smooth as glass, and whenever any part of it needed repairing the men who crawled into it had to exercise the utmost care not to lose their grip and begin to slip, lest they should be hurled helplessly down the steep slope.

At the lumber camp a double flight of broad steps led up to the discharging platform of the chute. How it happened nobody could exactly tell, but one day, soon after the great snowstorm, the little red-capped Canadian boy, while his mother was busily engaged about some household duty, managed to slip away, climb the stairs to the chute and crawl astride of a log resting in the neck of the big trough, all ready to be discharged. The horrified Benny, coming out of the cook's quarters on some errand, saw his little playmate hitching along the log and vainly endeavoring to start it on its trip down the mountain. The child had evidently been imagining what a magnificent coast it would be if he could only ride down hill on one of those fast-flying logs! While Benny, struck dumb and helpless with horror, stood watching him, the little fellow reached the end of the log, turned, hung his feet over into the chute and began to pull at the log! With a wild cry of warning and distress Benny flew to the stairs and sprang, two steps at a time, to the platform above. But alas! too late. Just as he reached the platform the boy slipped in the polished trough, lost his hold on the log and began to slide, screaming, down the incline.

In the space of a second every possible method of rescue flashed across Benny's mind. He saw that only one thing offered a possibility of saving his little friend—to overtake the child in the chute and throw him over into the deep-lying snow outside. And to accomplish this almost miraculous feat he must have the assistance of some body heavier than his own, whose greater momentum would enable him to overtake the flying little figure in the chute. The log—there was no other way. Instantly the boy struck off the hooks that held the great stick of timber, sprang astride of it