

What will the doctor say if you get up a fever? I think I'd better read now."

"What made you think it was I?"

"Oh, I don't know. I just kind of felt maybe it was; somebody had to do it, you see; and I knew I didn't."

"But how did I get in?"

"That's more than I know or can guess; and it is what made the whole thing seem foolish; only, you see, somebody got in, and it might as well have been you as anybody. Now shall I read?"

"No; I'm going to tell you all about it. I didn't mean any harm to you, Reuben, not a bit. I began to like you a little before this. I guess I kind of liked you all the time. I didn't mean to do any harm to anybody. I thought he was dreadful afraid of his old horse, and I knew I could ride horseback, and I thought he considered himself so smart about that key, that I just longed to try my hand with it; I most knew it was like the locks uncle James makes; he's my uncle up in Eastport; he makes all kinds of locks, and he had one real queer that I learned how to manage. I thought this was like it, and it was—oh, enough like it for me to catch the trick when I saw Rupert locking the barn one day! Well, I didn't mean to steal a key, you know, but he left his right on the desk that afternoon."

"Who did it?"

"Mr. Barrows himself. He wears it on that chain, you know; and while I was waiting for him to read the note I brought, he looked at his watch, and the chain got caught somehow, and he worked at it a minute, then he unscrewed the chain and slipped off the keys and laid them down on the desk; then that fellow tumbled through the elevator hole, you know, and yelled, and Mr. Barrows thought he was hurt and ran, and I just picked up the key and ran too."

"But how did it get back on the chain?" said Reuben in utter bewilderment.

"That was easy enough. I didn't know how to do it. I thought I should have to lose the key. I wish now I had done it, and then he would have thought some fellow found it and broke in, and wouldn't have blamed you. I never thought of his being such a moolly as to think you did it. I didn't, honest, Reuben."

"Never mind. What did you do?"

"Why, I went there after milk, and Mr. Barrows was dressing. He had been up in Rupert's room taking care of him; and there lay his watch on the table, and his cuff buttons, and all his fixings. I just slipped the key on the chain in a twinkling, and went away happy. I thought there wouldn't be any trouble to anybody."

"Then you didn't know Samson was hurt?"

"Not a bit of it. I know he stumbled, and got his foot in that mean hole in the cross-walk, and limped a little, but that was when we were just home; and I hustled him into the barn, and thought he would be all right in the morning; but it turned out just awful."

"Oh," said Reuben, "I'm so glad!"

"Glad of what?"

"Why, that you didn't know poor Samson was hurt. It did seem too awful in anybody to leave him to suffer."

"Well, I didn't think about his being hurt much if any. I was cut up awfully when I heard the news next day; then, next thing I heard he thought it was you. He might have known better than that, seems to me. I'd have known it with my eyes shut; as many times as he has held you up to me for a putter, too!"

Andrew's voice was full of contempt.

"I'll tell you what I did," he went on after a moment. "I watched to see if he would discharge you, then I meant to own up, whatever it cost; but when things went on just as usual, I felt a little better."

"Oh!" said Reuben.

"It was every word he said. It all flashed over him, the folly of trying to make a boy like Andrew Porter understand what he had suffered, and what his mother and Beth had suffered in bearing false blame."

There was more talk, a great deal of it; for now that Andrew's lips were open, he seemed to find comfort in telling all the particulars of those weeks. He told how "beat" he was to think that Reuben should have been the first boy to call on him, and the only one to come to him day after day; and how he had learned to watch for his coming, and how at last, when he made up

his mind that he must tell the whole story or he should die, the worst was to think of not seeing him there any more.

"I shall come all the same," said Reuben quietly. "But now I want to ask you one question more: When do you intend to tell Mr. Barrows?"

"I?" said Andrew; and the dark-red blood rolled into his face. "Why, you can tell him all about it! I'll take the consequences; they can't be very dreadful here on my back. Father would pay for the horse fast enough if he had anything to pay with; but he hasn't and Mr. Barrows knows it."

"No," said Reuben firmly. "You're the one to tell."

And to that he held, spite of Andrew's half fearful arguments. It would be better, a great deal better, both for himself and for Andrew, that the confession should come from him.

"And until you tell it," he said, "I will keep still. I have done it so long, and I can keep on."

At last Andrew owned that it would be the best, but that he was sure he never could; but that if Reuben would wait, some day he would try; he could not tell when.

And truly it seemed to Reuben as the days passed, that Andrew was very long in keeping his promise. He did not desert him. The readings went on, and the tender care and kindness, and because of the fever and delirium that followed this first talk, he did not hurry him, or indeed say a word more than his wistful eyes said every day. But all the time he could not help wishing and wishing that Andrew would get courage to do right. He could not bring himself to be willing to tell the story, for he feared Mr. Barrows and others might think that his only object in going to see Andrew in his trouble was to threaten the facts out of him.

One night he knew as soon as he turned the corner that led to the little house, and saw Beth standing at the gate, that something had happened. Sure enough, she rushed toward him.

"O Reuben, such news! You can't think! Do you believe that Andrew Porter did it all? And he has had Mr. Barrows there and told all about it, and how good you were, and all. And Mr. Barrows has been here, and he cried, and said he should never forgive himself for thinking hard of you, and I'm sure I don't believe I can ever forgive him; but he was so nice, Reuben, you can't think. And he wants you to go to school all the time, and he is willing to send you to college, and—oh dear! it is such a splendid long story; Reuben, aren't you awfully astonished?"

"No," said Reuben, his eyes shining. "Not much. You see I knew most of it before."

Then was it Beth's turn to open her eyes, and she stormed him with questions, and overwhelmed him with exclamations for the next half hour. How could he possibly have kept still all those weeks, thinking that Andrew Porter was the boy? Why didn't he run right home and tell her the minute Andrew confessed it? What was the use of being thought so meanly of a minute longer than was necessary?

After much careful explaining, Reuben succeeded in making his eager sister understand something about the feelings that had kept him patient and quiet all these weeks.

"You see," he said, as a finish to the story, "I could afford to wait, because I knew it would all come out right. I didn't see how, but then I was sure of it, because I'm a soldier, and my Captain is bound to take care of me and see me safe through everything, because he has promised, and it is likely I shouldn't trust him when I've enlisted to fight under his flag forever! Oh, Beth, if you only were a soldier too!"

This silenced Beth.

I did mean to stop right here, and not try to tell you anything more about Reuben Watson Stone, though as you may imagine, there is plenty to tell. But I do feel as though I must tell you about one thing, because it seems to fit in so far back in the story.

Not a week after all these strange things had happened to Reuben, just as he was starting for the shop one morning, a little red and white cow came trotting up the street, a boy guiding her, and a smiling faced

old lady on the side walk moved towards Reuben.

"How do you do?" she said heartily, as she caught a glimpse of him. "I was in hopes I'd find you in. You remember me, don't you? You found my ticket on the cars, you know, and helped me to the stage afterwards. Oh, I never forgot it, nor your nice, honest face. I've kept an eye on you ever since, though what with sickness in my son's family, and then being sick myself, I haven't got around before. I heard of your trouble, and I heard of your getting out of it. I knew you would, my boy, the Lord takes care of his own, and I knew you were one of his own. I know a good many things about you. Look here!" and she stepped closer to him, and sank her voice to a whisper: "you didn't know Spunk's master had anything to do with me, now did you? It is queer, but I'm his grandmother, and I've heard about midnight rides and saloons and all that. You did better work that time than you know of. My grandson hasn't forgot it—can't forget it. He is the 'man of the house' himself, you see—all the son his mother has, and he didn't like the thought of the contrast there would be between you one of these days if he kept on, and you kept on, and he has turned square around."

"Well, I oughtn't to keep you away from your work, my man, so if you will just look after Dorcas here, and tell the boy where you would like to have her put, I'll trot on. Why, yes, of course, she is yours; a man with a family to support needs a cow and she is the nicest critter ever was, and gives cream most instead of milk."

Now I am sure there is no use in trying to describe to you Reuben's astonishment. Isn't it a good place to stop?

And yet there came to him before that day closed what he called the best news he ever had in his life.

It was Beth, curling in a little heap on the sofa beside him, who brought it.

What do you think it was? Why, that at last she had really decided to wear the colors of his Captain, and fight under his flag. Among the pleasant words that she spoke to him that night were the ones that told him she had been led to think carefully about it all from seeing how well he bore the trouble that had come to him. Before that she was getting to have a feeling that it was easy enough for Reuben to be good; everybody praised him and trusted him, and he did almost exactly as he liked, and there wasn't anything for him to be cross about. But afterwards, when she found herself so cross with Mr. Barrows, and so angry at that wicked somebody who brought all this trouble on him, and found Reuben so patient, and so unwilling to have Mr. Barrows blamed, and so cheerful all the time, she began to see that something had made him very different.

It was quite dusk when they had their happy talk. Reuben had been to pay a visit to the new Samson who lived in the barn, and who already knew him and liked him well. He had fed Dorcas her evening meal, and drank a glass full of her rich creamy milk, and had tucked her away for the night. All the day's duties were done. Just then the parlor door opened, and mother came, bringing a lamp, behind her Miss Hunter looking twice glad, for Beth had given her the good news.

"Come Reuben," said his mother, "let us have prayers now, it is after eight o'clock. The evenings are growing very short."

So they all knelt down, and the "man of the house" with a full heart thanked God for all his benefits.

THE ENJ.

FOREST FIRES.

Very few, even among those who make a special study of forestry, have any idea how great is the area burned over every year by fires in the woods, and how great is the damage done. Pipes and cigars, sparks from locomotives, hunters, and anglers, and thoughtless boys all come in for a share of the blame of starting them. The total of damage done, as exhibited by the returns and the map about to be published by the Census Bureau, is amazing. The direct value destroyed cannot be less than two or three hundred millions of dollars annually, and is probably more. The indirect damage is great and many-sided, including the destruction of young trees, and saplings and sprouts, seeds in the ground, and in many cases the vegetable substance in the soil

itself. Then we must take into the account the harm done because of uncertainty caused in the minds of those owning woodland or land which might be profitably planted or left to grow into timber.

"What is the use," men are apt to say, "to prune and trim and go without the interest on my money, when, do all I can, I can never be sure that the carelessness of others will not sweep it all away?"

We need much more stringent laws to punish the setting of forest fires, to fix the pecuniary responsibility, and especially to enforce preventive measures, such as keeping woodland clear of the tops, limbs, etc., left by loggers, and maintaining broad and frequent fireroads, and an efficient patrol in all large timber tract. Prevention is cheaper than cure, especially when, as in this case, cure may require a century of time, and not be always practicable even then.—*Watchman.*

FOR WANT OF A LATCH.

An old step-ladder lesson, setting forth the sad import of little neglects, is worth a thousand repetitions:

"For want of a nail the shoe was lost;
For want of a shoe the rider was lost—
And all for the want of a horse-shoe nail."

This is said to be originally taken from actual history—of a certain side-de-camp whose horse fell lame on a retreat and delayed him until the enemy overtook and killed him.

Another actual case, embodying the same lesson against the lazy and shiftless habit of "letting things go," is related by the French political economist, M. Say.

Once, at a farm in the country, there was a gate, enclosing the cattle and poultry, which was constantly swinging open for want of a proper latch. The expenditure of a penny or two, and a few minutes' time would have made all right. It was on the swing every time a person went out, and not being in a state to shut readily, many of the poultry were from time to time lost.

One day, a fine young porker made his escape, and the whole family, with the gardener, cook and milk-maid, turned out in quest of the fugitive. The gardener was the first to discover the pig, and in leaping a ditch to cut off his escape, he got a sprain that laid him up for a fortnight.

The cook, on returning to the farm-house, found the linen burned that she had hung up before the fire to dry; and the milk-maid, having forgotten, in her haste, to tie up the cattle in the cow-house, found that one of the loose cows had broken the leg of a colt, that happened to be kept in the same shed.

The linen burned and the gardener's work lost were worth fully a hundred francs, and the colt was worth nearly double that money; so that there was a loss in a few minutes of a large sum, purely for want of a little latch which might have been supplied for a few half-pence.

DRINKS FOR THE SICK.

ORANGE WHEY.—The juice of one orange to one pint of sweet milk. Heat slowly until curds form, strain and cool.

EGG LEMONADE.—White of one egg, one tablespoon pulverized sugar, juice of one lemon, one goblet water. Beat together.

SAGO MILK.—Three tablespoons sago soaked in a cup of cold water one hour; add three cups boiling milk; sweeten and flavor to taste. Simmer slowly a half hour; eat warm.

BAKED MILK.—Put a half gallon of milk in a jar and tie it down with writing paper. Let it stand in a moderate oven eight or ten hours. It will be like cream and is very nutritious.

SNOW FLAKE.—Dissolve in one quart of boiling water a small box of gelatine, and add four teaspoons of white sugar, and the juice of two lemons. When almost cold strain. Beat the whites of six eggs to a stiff froth, mix them with the water containing the dissolved sugar and gelatine, pour into moulds and place them upon ice or in a cool place. Snow flake served with boiled custard makes a pretty dish.

QUICK MUFFINS.—Put into two quarts of sifted flour a piece of butter as large as an egg, add two even teaspoonfuls of soda and four of cream of tartar, one quart of milk, and, lastly, four eggs, thoroughly beaten. Bake in rings twenty minutes.