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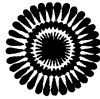


FOR
THE OTHER BOY'S SAKE

And Other Stories

BY
MARSHALL SAUNDERS

Author of "Beautiful Joe"



PHILADELPHIA
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1896

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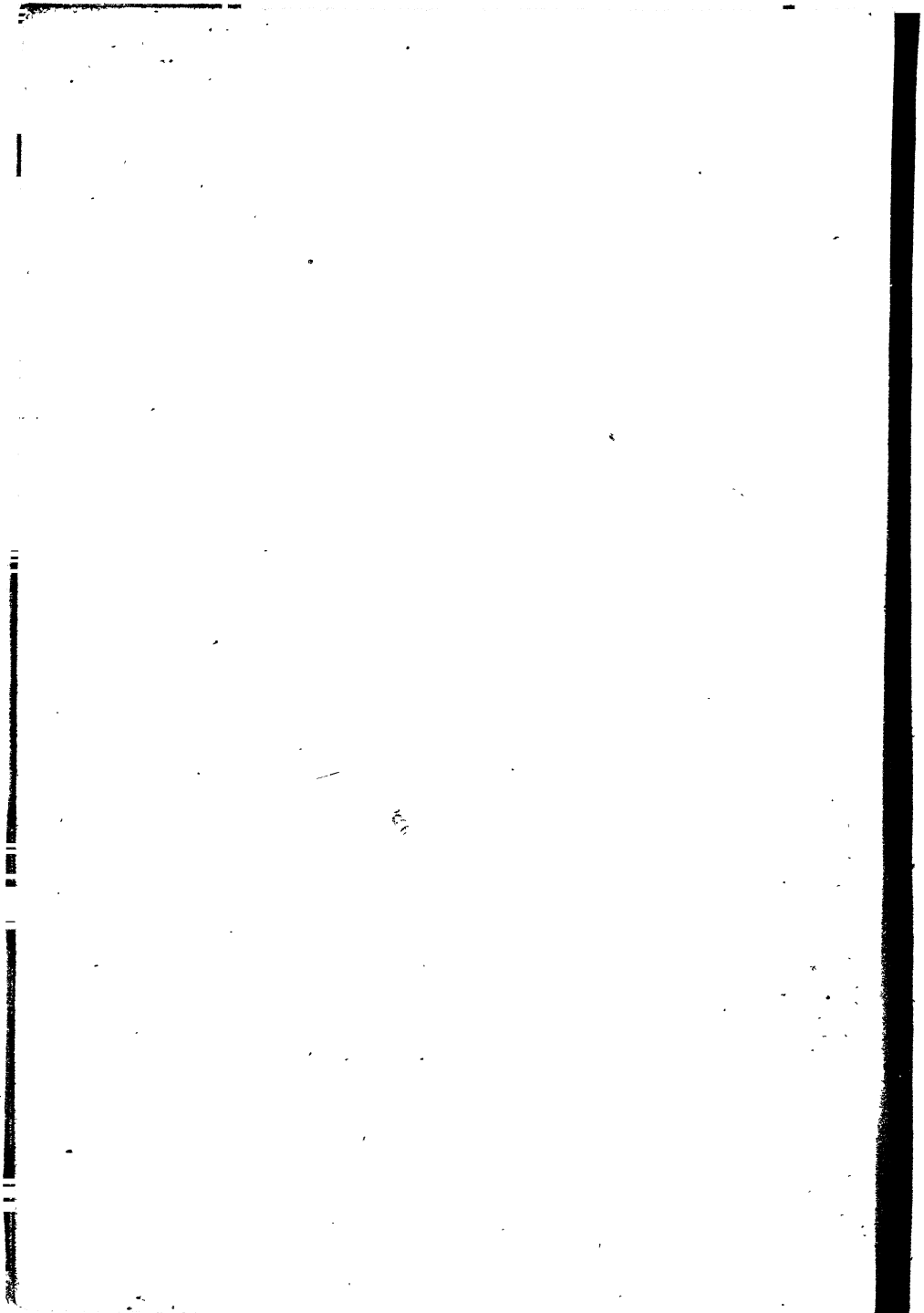
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AT WHOSE SUGGESTION AND BY WHOSE

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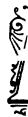
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FOR THE OTHER BOY'S SAKE



DOCTOR stood looking down at a patient with rather a concerned face. She was quite an old woman and he was quite a young man. She was stern and hard, and he certainly was one of the kindest-hearted young men that ever lived.

"And you think you are no better this morning, Miss Rivers?" he said gently.

"I'm never better," she said shortly; "I'm always worse."

"I think if you got about a little more," he returned in a persuasive voice, "it would be better for you."

"Why?" she asked obstinately. "No one wishes to see me, not even the horde of relatives who are longing to get my money."

"You are suffering from that disease called 'riches,'" thought the doctor to himself. "I wish you were a poor woman, and I would send you to the wash-tub or the scrubbing-brush."

Miss Rivers laid her hands on the wheels of her invalid's chair and moved herself a little nearer to the doctor, who was standing up.

"Young man," she said harshly, "you know that I am lame, and why do you talk about my getting out of doors and exerting myself. That is another reason for staying at home."

"You could walk a little if you tried," he said, "and you could drive."

"I am a proud woman," she said abruptly, "and you know I am. Perhaps some day when I get used to this lameness I will go, but not yet. I am not going to be carried to places where I formerly went on my own two feet. What does it matter anyway whether I go out or not? There is nothing in this world to live for."

The young man put up both hands to his head. "Dear me, Miss Rivers, what a sentiment in this world of sin and sorrow. One can do so much for other people; I wish I could take you on my rounds for one day."

Miss Rivers smiled grimly at his earnestness. "Of course there is trouble, young man, awful trouble; but what can one person do to help it? You had better let things alone."

"I don't believe that," he said; "let each one do a little to help his neighbor, then the world will get better."

"Good-morning," said Miss Rivers; "go where you can do some good and don't waste any more time on me. We never agree about anything."

The young man smiled at her, and shaking his head went slowly down a carved staircase muttering to himself: "The curse of the world is selfishness. I wish I could do something to

rouse that woman from her unhappy condition. She is getting worse and worse."

Dr. Jeffrey's next visit was to a small and miserable house on the outskirts of the town. He drew up his sleigh in front of a broken gate, lifted out a weight which he attached to his horse's head, then strode up a narrow path leading to the door.

It was a chilly, disagreeable day and the children of the house were playing indoors. They were all ragged and dirty, and they hung over a still more ragged and dirty baby whose fingers were red and chilled and half buried in a frozen squash that he was pulling to pieces and throwing about him.

The air was full of laughing exclamations, for the children were a happy, jolly set in spite of their rags and squalor. An untidy-looking mother stepped in a leisurely fashion about the room, lifting pots and pans and occasionally stirring the fire in a rusty stove.

"Well," said the doctor, standing on the threshold, "why have you sent for me, Mrs. Jackson? You all seem pretty well this morning."

The woman turned her sooty face toward him. "It's Sammy, doctor; he has brown kittis in his throat," and she pulled aside a woolen shawl from a child who lay on a low bed in the corner.

The doctor stepped up to him. "What have you been doing to him? This does not look like bronchitis."

"Yes, sir; 'tis brown kittis," said the woman convincingly. "I tried to make cough medicine from a receipt in the paper and sent to the drug-store for potash, and the druggist he sent me something that I put in, but Sammy was that sick I thought he was pisened and the druggist came running up and snatched the bottle and threw all the stuff out on the snow and gave Sammy some flaxseed tea."

"Where did he throw it?" asked Dr. Jeffrey.

Mrs. Jackson pointed to a snowbank near the door and the doctor stepped out to examine it.

When he came back he had some red crystals on a bit of paper.

"Is it pisen?" asked the woman eagerly.

"We won't say what it is, as the grains did not all dissolve," said the doctor; "now let me see my patient again."

While the gentleman sat with the child's dirty wrist in his hand, his eyes wandered around the roughly plastered room where hung various torn garments, a clock that was six hours too fast, and a number of tools and household utensils.

"Are you happy, Mrs. Jackson?" he said, turning suddenly to her.

The woman laughed good-naturedly. "Yes, sir; 'specially if my man doesn't get out of work."

"Strange," said the doctor to himself; then he said aloud, "Can't you keep your house a little more tidy?"

"Bless you, sir, I'll try when the children are riz. What could you make of this muddle with

six of them underfoot and a frozen gutter and two banks of snow to cross to fetch every drop of water you use. Do you think that you could do any better?"

"I don't know that I could," and the doctor smiled at her; "yet it is a terrible thing to be so dirty, and most unwholesome for these children."

"If you rich people would build decent houses for us poor ones we'd live better," said Mrs. Jackson. "Think of renting a shanty like this," and she looked disdainfully around the wretchedly built abode.

"Who is your landlord?" asked Dr. Jeffrey.

"Miss Rivers, the rich old miser. She owns every house on this road, and I guess she'd fall down in a fit if she stepped into one of them."

"I guess she would," muttered the doctor, then he turned his attention to the sick child.

He was in the midst of giving directions to the mother as to the nursing and medicine, when there was an outcry from the children, who had moved in a body from the stove to the small window which they were daubing with their squash-streaked hands.

"Mammy," exclaimed the eldest boy, "here's a coach afore the door and the doctor's horse is nipping at the coach horses."

Mrs. Jackson ran to the door and opened it.

"Mercy on us," the doctor heard her say, then she stood stock-still in the doorway.

Presently she held out her hand, took hold of a small boy who was walking up the path

toward her, and silently ushered him into the room.

The doctor looked curiously at him. Such a strange little figure stood before him. He could not guess the lad's age, for he was deformed. There was a lump on his back, and his pale, thoughtful face was set deeply between his shoulders. His expression was composed, critical, and curiously unchildish as he looked about the comfortless abode.

"Now, who are you?" asked the woman in quiet desperation.

"I'm Jeremiah Gay, your nephew," said the boy, rolling his grave black eyes up at her.

"And your mother's dead and you've been sent to live with me, haven't you?" pursued Mrs. Jackson in a still more desperate tone of voice.

"Yes," said the boy, "if I don't crowd you," and he surveyed the somewhat limited space about him with a smile.

"This is a boy that has some sense of humor," murmured the doctor.

"Now, doctor, just look here," said Mrs. Jackson in a tearful voice; "look at that boy's good clothes and the little bag of him," pointing to the portmanteau on the floor, "and look at the children of me," pointing to the ragged, gaping group at the window, "and ask yourself if it's fair. Where am I to put him? What'll I feed him on? I suppose you're used to silver spoons and all that sort of thing, aren't you, sonny?"

"Oh, yes, Aunt Martha, there are six in my

bag and a silver mug—I always drink out of it.”

“Oho, oho, he’s the very double of my sister that’s dead and gone,” said Mrs. Jackson, suddenly throwing her apron over her head, and I’ll never see her again,” and dropping on a stool she rocked to and fro.

“My mother is in heaven, living with God,” said the little boy; “don’t cry, she wouldn’t be happy if she were here.”

Mrs. Jackson snatched her apron from her head. “Oh, it’s scorning me you are, is it? I guess I’m as good as anybody.”

“Shall I tell you how my mother died?” asked the boy, fixing his solemn eyes on her.

“Yes, yes,” said Mrs. Jackson. “Tell me the whole of it; I’ve not heard a word.”

“She lay on her bed and cried, ‘Lord Jesus, come and take me quickly,’” said the boy. “Her body was full of pain. I put ice on her forehead and she begged me not to cry. I think it would be wrong to wish her back. I cry to go to her sometimes, not for her to come to me.”

There was a hush for a few minutes in the tiny house. Even the children were awed by the boy’s sweet voice and the sudden spiritual beauty that lit up his face.

“Who was your mother, and from what place do you come?” asked the doctor.

“My mother was a widow, and she lived in Riverfield,” said the boy, mentioning a country place a hundred miles distant from the town they were near. “We had a little house by the

river. My father, who is dead, was a carpenter, and my mother took in sewing for a living."

"And now you have come to live with your aunt," pursued Dr. Jeffrey.

The child's lip quivered, then he said bravely, "I suppose so—the neighbors sent me here."

He was plainly but neatly dressed. His cuffs and collar were beautifully white, and the little handkerchief peeping from his pocket was like a bit of snowdrift.

"He can't stay in this wretched place," thought the doctor, "and never having seen the people before he hasn't any attachment for them. I wonder if I can help him. Mrs. Jackson," he said, rising, "suppose I take this small boy away for a few days till you get things straightened out here or else move into a better house. I will see Miss Rivers' agent."

"May God bless you, sir, for a gentleman and a man of heart, as well as a good doctor," said the woman enthusiastically.

"Never mind thanking me," said the doctor, drawing the skirts of his coat away from the eager, grasping hands, "unless you wish to do so by keeping your house a little more tidy. Come along, little boy—what is your name—Jeremiah what?"

"Jeremiah Gay," said the boy, looking at him with grateful eyes.

"Rather a contradiction of terms; however, Jeremiah Gay give me your bag. Good-morning, Mrs. Jackson," and the doctor with a last look at his patient left the house.

"Now that I have got you, my young white elephant," said the doctor looking at the boy seated beside him in the sleigh, "what am I to do with you?"

Jeremiah said nothing, but continued to gaze straight ahead of him with clasped hands and a radiant face.

"Why do you look so pleased?" asked the doctor.

"Is it wrong for me to be happy because I have left my aunt?" asked the child.

"No, under the circumstances I don't think it is," said the doctor.

"We were always poor, my mother and I," said the boy, "but we were always clean."

"You have been well brought up; your mother must have been a superior woman."

"She was the best mother a little boy ever had," said Jeremiah. "Sometimes when I think of her it seems as if everything was gone."

"Poor child," muttered the young man; then he said aloud: "Well, what am I to do with you? I'm exceedingly busy this morning. I think I will drop you at my hotel and later in the day I will look up a place for you."

"Very well, sir," said Jeremiah; then he continued to watch with interest the numbers of people passing along the streets. Presently the doctor heard him murmur, "Is it a picnic?"

"No," said his friend, "that is a horse car, a public conveyance to take people about the city. Have you never seen one before?"

"Never," said the boy turning his head to look

after it. "I made sure it was a picnic wagon. It looks so merry to see the horses trotting along and to hear the bells ringing."

"Some day you shall go in one," said the doctor. "Here we are at the hotel. Can you jump out alone?"

Jeremiah stepped carefully to the sidewalk and very quietly but with great curiosity followed his guide.

There were no hotels in Riverfield; he had never seen anything like this before and he gazed in intense admiration at the mirrors, the potted plants, the comfortable seats, the well-dressed people, and above all the smart bell boys about him.

Without saying a word and with admirable control of himself he kept close to his friend and with only an occasional glance at the trim lad behind who was carrying his bag he entered the elevator which he imagined was a small and stationary waiting room.

The shock to his nervous system when it started was considerable. With a startled "Oh," of dismay, he grasped Dr. Jeffrey's hand.

The young man looked kindly down at him. "I beg your pardon, small boy, I should have warned you, but I forgot that you were probably unused to these things."

"What makes it go?" gasped Jeremiah in the midst of his fright.

While the doctor was explaining the motive power to him they halted and stepped out of it to traverse more halls.

Jeremiah's pale face flushed with sudden delight when the door of a handsome suite of rooms was thrown open. He had never in his life seen anything so beautiful as this. The sunlight was pouring in through silk curtains and shining on fine pictures, soft carpets, and best of all, on a bank of real flowers blooming between the two windows.

He went down on his knees before the flowers. "They sing a hymn in the Riverfield church," he said with enthusiasm, "about how fair the lily grows, and how sweet the bloom beneath the hill of Sharon's dewy rose——"

He stopped suddenly, for Dr. Jeffrey was smiling and the bell boy was making a face at him. The picture of the old country church with the sounding board over the pulpit and the high-backed seats faded away. He felt that he had gotten into a new world. These people did not understand him.

"I must leave you now," said the doctor. "You can amuse yourself with the books and the pictures till I come back; but first, will you have something to eat?"

"I am not very hungry," said Jeremiah quietly.

"What did you have for breakfast?" asked Dr. Jeffrey.

"I had none, sir; my lunch gave out and I thought I would save my money."

"That won't do—you must have something at once; what would you like?"

"Well," said Jeremiah slowly, "I am very fond of bread and molasses."

"Anything else?" asked Dr. Jeffrey.

"And pitcher tea to drink."

"I don't know that kind of tea," said the doctor gravely, "do you?" and he turned to the bell boy.

"No, sir, I don't," was the reply.

"Pitcher tea," said Jeremiah, "is a jug full of milk and hot water with a little molasses in it, or sugar if you have any."

"Very good," said Dr. Jeffrey, "see that he has some. Now is there anything further? What you have mentioned is not very substantial."

"Perhaps a little cold meat, if you have some to spare," said Jeremiah addressing the bell boy, "not much, I am not a hearty eater."

"Bring him a good lunch," said the doctor to the boy, "and have it here in five minutes. I want to see him started before I go out."

The boy hurried away and the doctor turned his attention to his small guest.

"I believe I'll have lunch with you," he said when a tray of good things arrived. "It is a trifle early, but it will save time," and he sat down at a small table with Jeremiah.

Half an hour he remained, alternately eating and questioning the quaint little lad opposite him.

Jeremiah's solemn black eyes, his old-fashioned, droll, and often pathetic manner, and his pitiable deformity made him the oddest specimen of boyhood, that he had ever seen.

"You are a queer lad," said the doctor finally,

throwing his napkin on the table and getting up; "you make me forget the lapse of time about as well as anybody I know. Good-bye for the present. You will see me later in the day."

Then he went away and straightway forgot all about the little lad in his rush of work.

Jeremiah left alone made a tour of the rooms. While crossing the doctor's dressing room he stopped short with a cry of pain. Did he look like that?

He had never before obtained a full view of himself. There was the cruel folding glass before him revealing so plainly his stunted figure and the hump on his back. He threw himself on a sofa and buried his face in his hands.

He was aroused by a long low whistle of surprise. The bell boy had come to take away the lunch dishes and looking for Jeremiah and finding him in such a position had naturally concluded that he was ill.

Jeremiah sprang up and stared at him.

"What's up with you, kid?" asked the boy not unkindly.

Jeremiah hesitated—then he thought of a big word that his school teacher used in speaking of her pupils when there was a falling short in any way of a desired standard, "I am thinking of my deficiencies," he said bravely.

"Oh, are you, though," said the other boy, not quite sure of himself.

Jeremiah did not wish to pursue the subject. He glanced about the dressing room then out

into the bedroom beyond, where there was a big double bed.

"Who is the other party that shares these rooms?" he asked with a businesslike air.

"What other party?" asked the boy.

"The man that lives with Dr. Jeffrey?"

"You're the only man that I know of," was the reply; "what a game question. Did you think the doctor had some one in with him?"

"Yes," said Jeremiah slowly.

"Why some of the people in the hotel have more rooms than this," said the boy. "This is a little suite compared to them."

Jeremiah said nothing; he was beginning to learn many things.

"Say, who is your tailor?" asked the boy confidentially.

Jeremiah glanced at the neat black suit that his mother had made and that had been considered ultra-fashionable in cut and fit in Riverfield, but which somehow or other did not compare favorably with the bell boy's snug livery.

He was about to give to his new friend in a confiding manner the history not only of his garments but of all his personal affairs, when a distant bell rang. It made the bell boy jump and set to work at his delayed task of clearing away the dishes with a strange exclamation that Jeremiah had never heard before.

"I am becoming the most forgetful person in the world—that boy has quite slipped my mind," exclaimed Dr. Jeffrey, at ten o'clock that night.

He was standing in the library of an older physician where they had withdrawn for a little private conversation. Dr. Jeffrey had suddenly started up and struck himself a smart slap on the chest.

"A patient?" asked his friend.

"No—a waif I picked up. Good-night, I must get home and see to him. I left him in my rooms. He may have wandered away," and he shook hands with his friend and hastened from the house.

With quick steps he walked along the street, entered the hotel, and hurried upstairs to his rooms.

Where was Jeremiah? Ah! there curled up in a little bed that the doctor had ordered to be put in his dressing room, his head a dark silky spot on the pillow.

He lifted his head when he heard the doctor coming. "Ah, it is you, sir," he said quietly.

"Yes, did you think that I had forgotten you?"

"No, sir; but I was listening for your step."

There was something very pitiful about the little face upraised to him and Dr. Jeffrey without knowing why he did so felt his heart touched with a sudden and quicker sympathy. He seemed to feel himself a small deformed child alone in a big hotel, alone in the world, no one to cling to but a comparative stranger, and for that stranger's returning footsteps he lay listening alone.

"You have been crying," he said.

"Yes, sir," said Jeremiah quietly, "and I was very sorry for I could not see to read my verses. Both my eyes felt as if they had gone swimming in the river. Perhaps if you are not in much of a hurry to go to bed you will read to me."

With a queer smile Dr. Jeffrey took the little Bible that Jeremiah drew from under his pillow and turned it over and over in his hands. Elizabeth Gay was written on the fly leaf. He had seen his own mother handling just such a Bible, and the worn black covers and the marked places took him suddenly back to his boyhood when he had stood by that mother's knee and listened to her calm voice that he would never hear again in this world.

"It was a wedding present to my mother," said Jeremiah; "she said it was the best one she got, and the one she loved the most."

"Where shall I read?" asked the young man abruptly.

"Anywhere—it is all good."

Dr. Jeffrey began the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." When he reached the fourth verse, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away," Jeremiah said, "Thank you, sir. I shall sleep happy with those words in my mind."

"Good-night," said the doctor. "You are quite comfortable, are you?"

"I am the most comfortable little boy in the

world," said Jeremiah sedately. "This is a very good bed and I can go to sleep now that you have come home."

Even as he spoke the white lids drooped over the big black eyes, and in a few moments the young man standing over him saw that he was far away in the land of dreams.

"How would you like to live in an orphan asylum?" asked Dr. Jeffrey of Jeremiah the next morning over the breakfast table.

Jeremiah laid down the piece of buttered muffin that he was just about to put in his mouth. "Is that a place where crowds of little boys and girls live that have lost their mothers and fathers?"

"Yes, that is it."

"I wouldn't like it at all, thank you," said Jeremiah. "I would rather live with you."

Dr. Jeffrey had had breakfast served in his own room, and they were quite alone. At this last remark of Jeremiah's, which was uttered with mingled boldness and longing, Dr. Jeffrey pushed back his chair from the table and laughed heartily. "You are an odd child; what could I do with you?"

"I would be your little boy," said Jeremiah, "and drive about with you. I could hold the reins while you make calls, and I could run errands for you."

"You have a mind of your own, haven't you?" said Dr. Jeffrey. "You are not all 'sweetness and light.'"

"My mother used to say that I was rather obstinate," said Jeremiah; "but of course I don't think I am."

Dr. Jeffrey laughed again, then he said, "This hotel would not be a suitable place for you. You ought to have plenty of fresh air, and to attend a school every day so that you will be fitted to support yourself when you grow up."

"I could go to school from here," said Jeremiah.

"Well, we will not decide upon anything just now," said Dr. Jeffrey. "To live one day at a time is a very good plan. Finish your breakfast, then put on your overcoat and see how you like driving about with me."

Jeremiah gravely drank his coffee and rose from the table. He was very quiet as they left the hotel and drove out from the crowded streets of the town to a broad avenue in the suburbs.

"This is our destination," said Dr. Jeffrey, stopping before a fine stone house standing back from the street among snow-covered evergreens. "I have only to take some medicine to this patient and ask a few questions, then I shall come back to you."

Jeremiah did not reply to him. His eyes were shut, his face pale, and just as the doctor turned to him he went toppling over into the arms held out to receive him. "Poor little chap," said the young man, taking him into the house. "This early morning drive is too much for him. He is even more delicate than he looks."

He laid him down on a long monks' bench in

the hall, and the servant who had opened the door hurried away for cold water.

Miss Rivers' maid put her head over the stair railing, then came running downstairs. Her mistress wished to know what was the matter.

"It is nothing serious," said Dr. Jeffrey. "Tell Miss Rivers I shall come up presently."

In ten minutes he was standing beside the old lady's chair.

"What do you mean by turning my house into a hospital?" she asked with a curious smile.

"It was quite unforeseen," said Dr. Jeffrey. "I haven't much acquaintance with that frail little lad. He had a long coach journey yesterday, and I should have kept him quiet this morning."

"Who is he?" asked Miss Rivers.

"A very curious child," said Dr. Jeffrey. And he rapidly sketched Jeremiah's history as far as he knew it.

"What are you going to do with him," she said.

"I don't know yet. I shall have to find a place for him somewhere. I daresay the best plan will be to send him back to his country home."

"Why didn't they keep him?"

"Oh, I fancy they are all poor people with large families of their own. I could arrange to board him among them."

"Don't leave him here," said Miss Rivers ungraciously.

"I have no thought of such a thing," said

Dr. Jeffrey, looking at his watch ; " but it will not disturb you, will it, to have him below on the bench for an hour ? Then I will come or send some one to take him away."

" Very well," said Miss Rivers, " but don't let it be longer."

Dr. Jeffrey had a pair of very beautiful and expressive eyes. These eyes were suddenly turned on the selfish woman ; not in anger, but in such profound pity for her heartlessness that her own cold gray eyes averted themselves from his gaze, and went staring out of the window.

She did not look at him when he left the room. Quite silently she sat and listened to his footsteps down the staircase and through the hall. He stopped beside the boy and she could hear a few murmured words. Then he went out and the front door closed behind him.

She sat a little longer, wondering what this boy was like. Some vulgar, red-faced little creature probably. Her maid could have described him to her but she had not thought to ask her. There was no one stirring in the halls, the servants were all downstairs. She would wheel her chair outside the door and look for herself.

She put out her hands and guided herself carefully over the threshold of the door and up to the oaken staircase railing. Then stretching out her long gaunt neck she stared down at the little lad lying on the bench below.

" O God, be merciful to me," she ejaculated, dropping her head on the hard wood. " Must I live that day over again ?"

She felt as if something sharp and cruel had pierced her heart—the callous heart that now so seldom felt a flutter of joy or tremor of fear.

Dr. Jeffrey did not know, the servants did not know, no one in the town knew, the entire history of a day in her life some thirty years before when her little nephew, her beloved adopted child, had been drowned. She could see him now lying on his side on the beach, his face white and still, his black hair drenched, the wet garments clinging to his misshapen back, for he too was deformed.

She groaned as she thought of that sad time when the light of her life had gone out and of the terrible suffering it had caused her. No one had pitied her—she would not allow it. Every one had thought her proud and unloving toward the child for whom she would gladly have laid down her life.

After a time she raised her head. She would not have her servants find her here, and she must look again into the hall, for she was interested in this child for the other child's sake.

He was still lying on his side and his handkerchief was still pressed to his eyes. She knew by his figure that his face must be pale and delicate. He was probably weeping because he had fainted. Poor friendless one. Just what the other boy would have done in his place.

Miss Rivers bit her lips and pressing her hands nervously against the wheels of her chair she moved herself back into her parlor—not carefully as she had come out, but heedlessly and

bruising one hand against the door post as she entered.

She could not sit still in the room. She kept moving herself about and at last almost despite herself her hand urged her chair in the direction of the hall.

The boy must have heard the sound of her comings and her goings but he made no sign and lay there alone, his head on his arm, his face covered.

After some time there was a ring at the door bell almost simultaneously with a ringing of Miss Rivers' bell that brought the housemaid rushing upstairs.

"Who is below?" asked the lady.

"Two men with a carriage, ma'am; they have come for the sick boy."

"Tell them to bring him up here," said Miss Rivers.

The girl withdrew and went tripping down the staircase.

Miss Rivers had need of all her self-possession when a few minutes later a strange man stepped into the room with the little figure—alas, so strangely familiar—in his arms. Her expression became sterner than usual; she carefully avoided looking at the boy's face and said sharply to the man carrying him: "Put him down and tell Dr. Jeffrey that he isn't fit to be moved all over the town to-day. I will keep him here."

"The doctor told us to keep him quiet, ma'am," said the man hesitatingly.

"Well, can I not do it—does this look like a wild house?" asked the lady. "Who are you that you speak of quietness?"

"I come from the St. Barnabas Hospital, ma'am; I am a nurse there."

"Put the boy down on that sofa," said Miss Rivers, "and go away."

The man did as he was told.

The maid hesitated, not knowing whether her mistress wished her to go or stay.

"Finish your sewing," said Miss Rivers with a wave of her hand; "I will ring when I want you."

She was now alone with the boy and she suddenly became seized with a fit of trembling that made her turn her back squarely on him and wheel herself toward a window where she sat looking fixedly out at the snow-covered trees and the deep blue sky through eyes that were dimmed with tears.

The other boy—the other boy, how many times he had lain on that sofa to rest his weary little back; how plainly she could see him there starting up as she came in with the bright expectant look that she thought she should never see on any child's face again.

She must look at this boy. She set her teeth hard and slowly began to turn her head.

Just as she made this resolution Jeremiah got tired of lying on the sofa and putting his feet noiselessly on the floor he walked toward the window where was the very peculiar old lady who was Dr. Jeffrey's patient.

She sat so strangely quiet that he was afraid that she too was ill and putting-out a hand he touched her gently.

Miss Rivers nearly jumped from her seat. Just so used the other boy to come and lay his hand on hers.

"Good gracious, child," she exclaimed breathing violently and resting her head against the back of her chair, "you nearly frightened me to death."

"I am sorry," said Jeremiah meekly. "I thought perhaps the faintness was catching."

Miss Rivers half smiled, then she closed her eyes. Oh, the little patient face of long ago—how it was haunting her this morning. The pathetic, appealing expression that so often goes with deformity had been his. This boy had it too, but not so plainly she was thankful to see. She examined his features carefully, then she motioned him to go and sit down at a little distance from her.

No one had seen her wipe a tear from her eyes for years and she was determined that she should not be observed doing so now.

Jeremiah picked up a magazine lying on the table and was quietly turning over the leaves when he caught sight of a sober gray cat entering the room. He was half hidden by the curtain and the cat did not see him. She walked purringly up to her mistress and sprang on her lap.

Jeremiah was very fond of animals and starting up he moved to a seat nearer Miss Rivers.

The cat caught sight of him and terribly alarmed at the appearance of a stranger, and a boy at that, in a room where no stranger had come for years she sprang wildly on Miss Rivers' shoulder, sticking her claws in her dress and so frantically pulling at a kind of head dress the old lady wore that it was torn from its place and fell bodily to the floor.

Miss Rivers made a half-angry exclamation. The cat mewed while Jeremiah ran to the back of the chair and politely picked up the bunch of lace and ribbons with the fringe of hair hanging to it.

"There now, boy," said Miss Rivers, "you have done a smart thing. I suppose you will go and tell every one that I wear a wig."

Jeremiah stared at the combination of hair and millinery in admiring surprise. "Is that a wig?" he said. "I thought wigs were ugly."

"Give it to me," said Miss Rivers. "It doesn't add to my appearance to show my bald head. What did you think wigs were like?"

"I have only seen one," said Jeremiah. "An old fellow in Riverfield lost his hair and he made himself something out of sheep skin and horse hair. It did not look like yours."

"Why didn't he send away for one?" asked Miss Rivers.

"He was very poor. He kept geese for a living and they used to run away. I don't suppose you have any people here as poor as he was."

"Haven't we," said Miss Rivers. "Just wait till you see our back streets."

"Oh, I forgot," and Jeremiah's face flushed in a pained, ashamed way, "I saw a place yesterday that was very bad. We have nothing in Riverfield like it."

"Where was it?" asked Miss Rivers.

"It was my aunt's house," said Jeremiah in a low voice.

"Oh, indeed; tell me about it," said Miss Rivers.

Jeremiah described to her the miserable home that he had seen, and Miss Rivers said nothing, though she eyed him keenly while he was speaking.

"Now go and lie down again," she said when his story was finished.

"I don't feel weak now," said Jeremiah.

"Never mind; get on the sofa. When a person faints it shows weakness. I shall have an egg beaten up in a glass of milk for you presently. Have you ever fainted before?"

"Oh, yes; often," said Jeremiah. "I don't mind it; it is just like going to sleep, only—only," and his face clouded, "boys don't faint, it is a girl's trick."

"You will outgrow it, probably," said Miss Rivers, "if you will do as you are told," and she stretched out one of her long lean fingers in the direction of the sofa.

"Tell me about your home," she said, "while you are resting. Was it a town or a village?"

"They call it a settlement," said Jeremiah. "There are only a few houses there, and we all know each other, and no one is in a hurry, and

the river is beautiful. It makes me think of the beautiful river of Zion. The houses are built beside it; and there are two mills and a dam with a ladder for the salmon to go up, and we used to fish with rods and dip-nets; a fairy is a good fly for a dull day."

"Is it?" said Miss Rivers; "I shall remember that if we go fishing. I daresay Riverfield would be a good summer place."

"It is good for the whole year," said Jeremiah enthusiastically. "It is the finest place in the world. I should like to go there to-day, or rather to-morrow," he added politely.

Miss Rivers said nothing, and Jeremiah occupied himself by glancing about the handsome, though somewhat somberly furnished room.

"Is this your house?" he said at last.

"Yes," said Miss Rivers, "it is."

"We have no house as large as this in Riverfield," said Jeremiah. "How many head of cattle have you?"

"I have neither cattle nor sheep," said Miss Rivers dryly. "We don't measure our wealth in that way in the city. I own houses mostly."

"Do you?" said Jeremiah. "Then will you not give my aunt a good one?"

Miss Rivers looked keenly at the boy. What a little confiding face it was—there was no cunning there.

"We shall see," she said shortly. "Your aunt may be a fraud."

"What is a fraud?" asked Jeremiah.

"I am one," said Miss Rivers unexpectedly.

Jeremiah looked puzzled.

"A fraud is a cheat, a deception," said Miss Rivers. "If I am a fraud I am pretending to be something that I am not."

Jeremiah laughed in a merry, guileless fashion that stirred Miss Rivers' curiosity. "What is amusing you?" she said.

Jeremiah did not want to tell her, but being pressed to do so he said shyly, "I guess you like to make people think you are cross when you really are not. You were not mad with me about the cat. I saw through you."

Oh, the sharp, quick insight of childhood! Miss Rivers turned her head aside. Just so had the other boy understood her. No matter how peevish and forbidding she might be with other people, to her he had always come confidently—on her sympathies he had flung himself and his boyish troubles. Strange that there should exist another lad like him.

"Don't talk to me for a while; I am tired," she said. "I think I will take a nap," and wheeling herself away from the sofa, she dropped her head on the cushions of her chair-back.

Jeremiah threw her a smile, and crossing his legs lay on his back staring up at the gilt stars on the ceiling.

At seven o'clock that evening Miss Rivers sat alone enjoying, with a remarkably good appetite, a grand dinner that was set before her.

"Beware of dyspepsia," said Dr. Jeffrey, suddenly appearing in the doorway.

"I shall have something worse than dyspepsia if you upset my house every day as you did to-day," said Miss Rivers agreeably. "Won't you have some coffee?"

"Thank you—where is the boy," and Dr. Jeffrey seated himself opposite his patient.

"In bed—you need not take him away to-night. I suppose you never thought to ask him last night if his feet were warm."

"No, I did not."

"Men don't know how to take care of children—even if they are doctors," said Miss Rivers disdainfully. "They need a woman's care. This is a delicate lad."

"Yes," said Dr. Jeffrey. "I am afraid he won't live to grow up."

Miss Rivers did not raise her eyes, but her fingers that were picking walnuts began to tremble. "Is it cold to-night?" she asked shortly.

"Yes, bitterly so. I fear the poor will suffer."

"By the way," said Miss Rivers, "this boy is worrying about a poor family called Jackson. Do you know who their landlord is?"

"You are," said Dr. Jeffrey.

Miss Rivers did not look surprised. "My agent is a hard man," she said. "I shall write to him to house these people decently."

Dr. Jeffrey sat for some time talking to her of happenings in the town, then he arose to go. "Shall I send for the boy in the morning?" he asked.

"If you like," said Miss Rivers indifferently.

"I will let you have that new book I spoke of

at the same time," said the young man cheerfully. "Good-night," and he held out his hand.

"Did the boy speak to you about his back?" asked Miss Rivers.

"You mean about his deformity?"

"Yes."

"No, he did not; I felt some delicacy about alluding to it so early in our acquaintance. Did he mention it to you?"

"Yes; it worries him, young as he is. I think he cries about it at night. Could anything be done?"

Dr. Jeffrey shook his head. "I fear not. However I will examine him. Does he suffer constant pain?"

"No, only at times."

"You seem to be on very good terms with him," said Dr. Jeffrey, with a smile. "What a misfortune that you cannot have him with you."

Miss Rivers, at this bold remark, gave the young man such an overpowering look from her cold eyes that he laughed outright at her and ran away.

Usually the lonely old woman spent the evening in reading and went to bed punctually at eleven o'clock. This evening she did not open one of the books or papers lying on the table and at ten, a whole hour earlier than usual, she called her maid to wheel her to her room.

"First take me in to see if that boy is sleeping," she said, and her maid guided her chair into a large and lofty chamber where little Jeremiah was almost lost in a huge canopied bed.

Miss Rivers slipped from the chair to the bed and drew a comfortable over the boy. Then she laid her hand on his forehead.

Jeremiah seemed to be sleeping soundly, but at her touch he half opened his eyes, and nestling his face against her hand murmured, "Mother."

Miss Rivers' first impulse was to snatch her hand away as quickly as if the boy's cool cheek had burned her, but she conquered herself. The hand remained and she sat looking down at him with the smothered affection of years rising and softening and overcoming her.

What was it this lad had said to her to-day when he showed her his mother's photograph, "You favor her."

She, old, plain-featured, disagreeable, had been glorified by his liking for her into a resemblance to the sweet-faced woman whose picture he kept always next to his heart. Well, he should not suffer for it. For the other boy's sake she would be good to him, and turning to her maid she said less harshly than usual, "Take me to my room."

When she was undressed and left alone for the night, she locked her door and limped painfully to a closet. There on the top shelf were some of the other boy's playthings. She reached up, and taking down several laid them on a chair.

"He is a careful child; he will not hurt them," she murmured; then with a curious smile on her face and a still more curious lightness of heart, she laid herself down to sleep.

Dr. Jeffrey was a very much-amused and relieved young man. "It is better than a joke," he said, "because there is a lot of good at the bottom of it; but the old lady is not going to play any more of her tricks on me. I shall not send for him again."

It had gotten to be a standing arrangement that Dr. Jeffrey should send every day to get little Jeremiah and that Miss Rivers should put off the messenger with an excuse that the boy was either dressing, or playing, or sleeping, or walking, or engaged in some important occupation that could not be left.

If he did not send for him Miss Rivers reproached him with trying to foist an orphan on her.

"I know what I will do," said the doctor. "I shall send her a bill for the man's loss of time in running to and from her house. That will settle her, for she is fond of her money."

A bill accordingly Miss Rivers received and paid without a murmur, but never afterward did she open her mouth to the doctor on the subject of taking Jeremiah away.

"I have seen a good many queer people," said Dr. Jeffrey one morning when he was on his way to her house, "but of all people she is the queerest."

Though it was still early in the morning Miss Rivers and Jeremiah were just coming back from a drive. Their carriage drove up to the door in front of the doctor's modest buggy and

the footman assisted the lady and the boy into the house where Dr. Jeffrey joined them.

"Now go to the library and look over your lessons," said Miss Rivers; "your tutor will soon be here."

The boy hung up his cap and the cloak that partly concealed his crooked back and skipped down the hall.

He was handsomely dressed now and the bell boy, if he had seen him, would have had no reason to mischievously inquire the name of his tailor.

"How do you think he looks?" asked Miss Rivers.

"Finely; I am glad to see some color in his cheeks. Your incessant care is working wonders in him. He may be a reasonably strong man yet."

Miss Rivers looked pleased. Her own appearance was very much changed, though her physician did not dare tell her so. Ever since the day she had resolved to act a mother's part toward the homeless lad, the joy of self-sacrifice had begun to enter her heart and had so improved her that she seemed like another person.

She would always be odd. She could not help that, but she was no longer disagreeable. For one thing she kept strictly to herself her resolve to protect Jeremiah as long as she lived and to provide for him after her death, and only Dr. Jeffrey suspected her of more than a passing fancy for the child.

She stood looking after him this morning with

a smile on her face. Then she said thoughtfully to Dr. Jeffrey, "I wanted to be rid. of him. I took him out early this morning so that he would not know of the trouble in the house."

"What trouble?" asked Dr. Jeffrey.

"Did you not see in last evening's paper that I had had fifty dollars stolen from me?" asked Miss Rivers.

"No, indeed; I am surprised to hear it. How did it happen?"

"Let us go into the drawing room, Jeremiah might hear us here."

Dr. Jeffrey gave her his arm and she limped across the hall to a spacious and luxuriously furnished room.

"A young Irish girl," said Miss Rivers seating herself in a plush chair, "who was acting as assistant to my cook saw some money on a table in my bedroom as she happened to be passing the door and stole it. I discovered the theft almost immediately and suspecting that she had taken the money had her taxed with it. She made no attempt at denial and I had her arrested. She was taken to the police station while we were out."

"How very sad," said Dr. Jeffrey. "It would give the little boy a shock if he heard it."

"Yes," said Miss Rivers, "he is so very sympathetic. I never knew but one other child like him," and she sighed.

"Would you like me to take him away for a day or two?" asked Dr. Jeffrey.

"No, thank you. I have given strict orders

not to have the affair mentioned in the house, and the papers have been destroyed. The girl will be tried this morning while he is at his lessons, so he won't know that I have gone to the courthouse."

Miss Rivers had hardly finished speaking when Jeremiah came hurrying into the room. "Aunt Sarah," he said curiously, "where is Katie this morning? My rabbits were not fed last night; you know she always does it."

"Katie has gone away," said Miss Rivers.

"Why, she liked it here," said Jeremiah with wide-opened eyes. "What made her go away?"

"I had rather not tell you," said Miss Rivers.

Jeremiah drew close to his guardian. "She is not dead, is she?" he asked, every vestige of color leaving his face.

"No, no," said Miss Rivers, "she is alive and well, but she is a bad girl. You will never see her again. Do go to your studies; Mr. Smith will be here in five minutes."

"Now, Aunt Sarah," said the boy decidedly, "I don't believe that. Katie is not a bad girl. Please tell me what has become of her;" and Jeremiah who was a very determined little lad, and not above teasing when he wanted his own way, laid a coaxing hand on Miss Rivers' arm.

Miss Rivers gazed helplessly at her physician. Why don't you tell him? the young man's glance said plainly.

"I will," said Miss Rivers aloud, then she turned to the lad. "Katie stole some money from me and I sent her to jail."

"Katie stole money?" said the boy slowly. "It is impossible."

"It is quite possible," said Miss Rivers dryly. "She says she did it."

Jeremiah looked dazed. "Was she—was she crazy?"

"No, she was homesick. She had just got a letter from Ireland saying that her mother was ill, and she took the money to pay her passage home."

"Oh, I am so sorry," said Jeremiah. "She has a good mother, and she has often told me about the little house and the peat fire and the children and the pigs—Katie loves animals. Will her mother die, do you think?"

"I don't know," said Miss Rivers indifferently, "I have not thought about it."

"And Katie took the money to get home to her," said Jeremiah thoughtfully; "was that the only thing you sent her to jail for, Aunt Sarah?"

"The only thing—isn't that enough?"

"Of course it is wicked to steal," and Jeremiah shuddered; "but only think, Aunt Sarah—suppose you were ill in Ireland, and I was here; I am afraid—I am afraid," and the little boy looked lovingly in her face, "that if I saw a lot of money lying about and did not pray hard to God to keep me from taking it that I should snatch it," and Jeremiah quite overcome by the harrowing thought of his good friend on a sick bed across the water and himself in a prison cell, laid his head on Miss Rivers' shoulder to hide the sudden emotion that overpowered him.

Miss Rivers' face softened. To imagine Jeremiah in Katie's place gave the affair a different aspect. "I am sorry too," she said; "but it is wicked to steal.

"And it is wicked to do lots of other things," said Jeremiah. "My mother used to say, Aunt Sarah, that some things we want to do and some we don't want to do, and—and—and—" and Jeremiah, too much upset by the communication just made to him to reason, broke down, and clasping his hands behind his back walked away from Miss Rivers to the hearth rug.

"He has a vivid imagination," said Miss Rivers to the doctor in a low voice. "He fancies that girl with her face against prison bars, whereas, I dare say, she does not feel so badly as he does."

"Take me to see her, Aunt Sarah, won't you?" said Jeremiah suddenly turning around. "She would tell me the truth, and if she is really sorry won't you let her go? It must be dreadful to be locked up—dreadful."

Miss Rivers looked at him for some minutes in silence, then she said, "No, I cannot take you to that court-room. I do not believe in sensational spectacles for children. You would not sleep for a week; but I will go and see what I can do for Katie. I wish now that I had not had her arrested. Good-bye, it is time to leave," and she stooped down to kiss him.

She had risen from her chair, but Jeremiah threw his arms so enthusiastically about her neck that she sank back again.

"Dear Aunt Sarah," he said, smothering her with kisses.

Miss Rivers pushed him away, and glanced half apologetically at the doctor. He affected to take no notice of Jeremiah's demonstrative caresses, and said briefly, "May I accompany you?"

"Certainly," said Miss Rivers, and they drove from the house together.

It was certainly a touching scene. There was a crowded court-room, a grave judge, and a young girl, not yet seventeen, sitting alone in the dock—a stranger in a strange land, and a prisoner.

Her head hung on her breast. Her frank face, down which the tears were dropping slowly, was half hidden. One could hardly believe in seeing how modest and neat she was, that she could have committed the theft charged against her.

Miss Rivers' face was worried and perplexed. She was obliged to appear as the prosecutrix, and she was heartily sorry now that she had had the girl arrested.

"I am glad that you came with me," she whispered to Dr. Jeffrey. "This is a trying ordeal for a woman. I am glad that I am not in the poor girl's place," and she shuddered.

"You do not feel ill, do you?" asked Dr. Jeffrey anxiously.

"No, no," said the old lady, then she rose and proceeded to give her testimony in a firm voice.

Katie stole a grateful glance at her from under wet eyelashes when Miss Rivers said: "I have

had this girl in my employ for ten weeks. Until the theft of the fifty dollars she conducted herself in a thoroughly honest manner."

When it came to the account of the taking of the money Katie lost her composure, and rocking herself to and fro on her chair wept bitterly. She could hardly recover herself when she was called to the stand, and in almost unintelligible accents gave a sketch of a happy far-away home where unfortunately such poverty existed that she had been forced to come to another country to earn her living.

When she came to the part of her story where her mother was concerned she stretched out both hands toward the judge who was listening gravely to her.

"The merciful God above knows that I never took a penny before, but when I heard that my dear old mother at home was like to die——" she could not proceed and fell back on her seat with a stifled cry.

So genuine was her grief that every one present was affected. Some of the old frequenters of the court—men with hardened faces—were seen stealthily wiping tears from their eyes, and Dr. Jeffrey thought he heard a sob from his companion, though he was careful not to look at her.

The judge was evidently convinced of the sincerity of the girl's repentance. "I know that you must be sorry for what you have done," he said, turning toward her; "sentence will be suspended in your case. You may go."

There was a rustle of relief all through the

court-room. "If there are any humanitarians present," went on the judge looking about him, "here is a case for them. I hope that some one may be found to take charge of this young girl, and see that she does not wander again from the paths of honesty."

"For Jeremiah's sake I will do it," whispered Miss Rivers to herself, and when she saw that there was a little stir about her where an enthusiastic young man had started a subscription list among the lawyers to pay the girl's passage to Ireland, she whispered a few words to Dr. Jeffrey.

He wrote two lines on a piece of paper and handed it to the young lawyer, who looked up at him and smiled and nodded.

A few minutes later Miss Rivers, Dr. Jeffrey, and Katie left the courthouse together.

Jeremiah had been excused from his lessons and stood with his face pressed against the window pane. When he saw the carriage returning with Katie in it he laughed aloud in his delight and ran down the front steps to greet her.

"Oh, Katie, I am so glad that you have come back! Good, kind Katie, I have missed you."

"May all the saints be good to your little honor," said the girl, who looked weak and exhausted. "My heart has just been breaking to see you."

"Let Katie go to her room," said Miss Rivers, "she is tired."

"She will stay now, and not go away, won't she, auntie?" asked Jeremiah excitedly.

"No," said Miss Rivers; "I think she had

better go to Ireland at once, and see this mother to whom she is so much attached. Then if she wishes to come back she may—and possibly her family may want to come with her. Will you see about engaging a passage for her?” and Miss Rivers turned to Dr. Jeffrey.

“With the greatest pleasure,” said the young man. “I will go at once,” and he hurried from the room.

“Jeremiah,” said Miss Rivers, drawing the little boy to her, “I have done this for you.”

He pressed her hand affectionately and looked up into her face.

“I have been a hard old woman, I fear I am one now,” said Miss Rivers; “but, as you sing in your old-fashioned hymn,

While the lamp holds out to burn
The vilest sinner may return.

And another thing I want to tell you,” she went on, laying her hand on the lad’s head, “when you first came here I loved you for another boy’s sake, now I love you for your own.”

“And I love you,” said Jeremiah enthusiastically. “I don’t know why, but I just love you—and I feel as if I couldn’t keep still,” he went on, fidgeting about on his toes. “I wish I had the strength to dance as David did. Auntie, let’s do something, let’s do the best thing we can. Suppose we say the Lord’s Prayer together.”

“Very well,” said Miss Rivers gravely, and drawing the little boy to her knee, they repeated

reverently together, "Our Father which art in heaven."

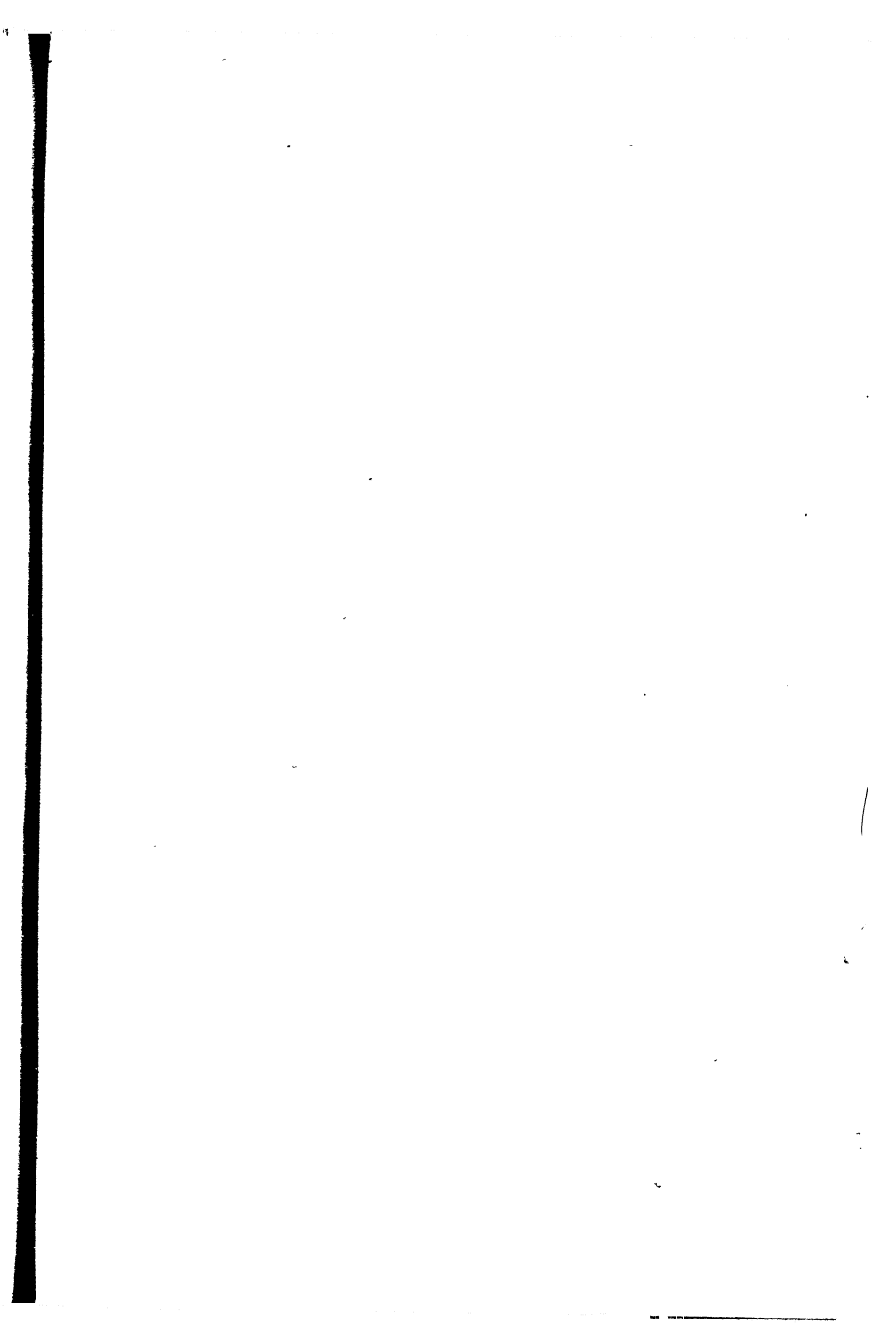
Katie went to Ireland, and after a time returned to America, bringing, as Miss Rivers had prophesied, her whole family along with her—among them her beloved mother, who had become quite well and strong again.

Katie did not go back to Miss Rivers, but went with her family to live on one of the Riverfield farms that her kind patron bought for them.

"I never thought I should again be led by a little child," said Miss Rivers one day; "but I am. Jeremiah, I hope that the Lord will spare me for some years yet to you."

Jeremiah was reading the Bible to her at the time, and looking up brightly he said: "I hope so too, auntie."







"The circus dog, as sure as I live."

II

POOR JERSEY CITY

NEAR the city of Halifax, Nova Scotia, is a beautiful place called Prince's Lodge; so named because the father of Queen Victoria of England once had a country house there. The house is in ruins now and the garden has grown wild, but the old road still winds up from the city past the quiet spot and leads on to the town of Bedford, situated at the head of the Basin—the sheet of water on the shores of which the house was built.

Walking along this road one hot day a few summers ago was a waggish-looking dog of the breed known as bull terrier. He was going slowly and he acted as if he was very tired. Presently with a heavy sigh he dropped down on a patch of grass under some spreading trees.

A red cow, munching clover on the opposite side of the road, lifted her head and looked fixedly at him.

“How do you do, madame?” he said.

The cow said nothing but continued to stare at him.

“In my country we speak when we are spoken to,” said the dog wearily yet mischievously.

The cow switched her tail and lowered her head still more.

"A cow that shakes her tail when there aren't any flies on her and a horse that shakes his when you touch him with the whip, are two things that I haven't much use for," said the dog with a curl of his lip. "But don't distress yourself, madame, I have no intention of running at you. Lie down and have a talk with me; I am dying to hear the sound of my own voice."

The red cow scanned him all over for the space of a few minutes, then she doubled her legs under her and began to chew her cud.

"You have beautiful eyes, madame," said the dog politely. "I wish I had such eyes, they would have made my fortune."

"Who are you?" asked the cow.

The dog threw back his head and laughed. "You Nova Scotian animals beat everything—so English, you know—you never enter into conversation with strangers till you learn their whole pedigree. What would you suppose had been my business, madame, to look at me?"

"You are not a tramp dog," said the cow, "because you have on a silver collar."

"Well put, madame; but I may cheat you yet in spite of that silver collar. Don't put too much faith in a bit of metal."

"Have you run away from home?" inquired the cow with some curiosity.

"I have never had a home, madame."

The cow forgot to chew her cud and let her lower jaw hang down as she stared at him.

"Shut your mouth, madame, you don't look pretty with it open," said the dog slyly.

"You have not told me what your business is," replied the cow in some vexation.

Without speaking the weary dog rose from the grass and proceeded to stand on his head, dance on his hind legs, turn somersaults, and perform a number of other curious tricks.

Half in fear and half in astonishment the cow stumbled to her legs and watched him from behind the tree.

"Frightened, madame?" said the dog throwing himself again on the grass and bursting into laughter. "Why you could kill me with one of those horns of yours. I suppose you have never seen an exhibition of this kind before. I'll give you lots of them, for love too—no tickets required—if you'll do me the trifling favor of telling me of a quiet place where I can spend a few days."

The cow would not come out from behind the tree. "Who are you?" she said shortly.

"Oh, I'm a clown dog in a show," said the terrier impatiently. "Bankston & Sons' Great Traveling Exhibition of Trained Animals—have you never heard of them? They're in Halifax now and I've cut them."

"Cut them," repeated the cow slowly.

"Yes; got tired of them, bored to death—run away, skedaddled."

"And are you not going back?"

"No, madame, I am not."

"What is to become of you?"

"I don't know and don't care as long as I never see that old show again."

"I have never met any animals like you," said the cow nervously; "I think I will go home."

The dog got up and made her a low bow. "Thank you, madame; my originality has always been my drawing card, and your suspicions do you credit. You are exactly like all the other cows that I have met. Permit me to say that the slightest taint of Bohemianism would spoil you."

"What is Bohemianism?" asked the cow with some curiosity.

The dog smiled. "Bohemianism—what is it? I don't know. Taking no thought for the morrow will perhaps best express it to you."

"I don't like the sound of it," said the cow.

"I dare say not, madame. You probably like to look ahead and think of your comfortable stall and good food and pleasant home, don't you?"

"Yes," said the cow.

"You would not like to live on the road as I am doing, not knowing what minute you may be pounced upon and run back to town and——"

"Well," said the cow, "what were you going to say?"

"I was about to tell you what would happen to me if I am caught."

"What would happen?"

"Did you ever go to a circus, madame?"

"No."

"Or to any kind of a performance where animals were made to do tricks?"

"I have seen animals in cages going by on the trains."

"And they looked happy, didn't they?"

The cow shuddered. "Oh no, no; there was a dreadful look in their eyes."

"But you should see them on the stage," said the dog ironically. "A goat rolling a barrel is a charming sight, and a pig wheeling a barrow is another. The people scream with delight at dancing monkeys and leaping dogs. I guess if they knew——"

"Knew what?"

"Knew everything," exclaimed the dog bitterly, as he paced back and forth on a narrow strip of grass. "The public see the sugar—an animal gets through a pretty trick and he runs to his trainer for a lump. They don't notice the long whip in the background. I tell you I have felt that whip many a time, and I am accounted a smart dog."

"I hate to be run along the road, or have boys throw stones at me," said the cow mildly. "It makes me feel bad and poisons my milk."

"I never heard of a cow doing tricks," said the dog, stopping in his walk—"by-the-way, what's your name?"

"Mooley."

"Mooley, is it? And mine is "Jersey City." Jersey City, the clown dog in Bankston & Sons' Big Show, and in just about one hour you'll see Bankston's trainer on his bicycle spinning around the curve in this road looking for me."

"How do you know that?" asked the cow.

"Well, you see I ran away this morning. There aren't many ways to leave the city down yonder. Old Jimson will know that I have too much sense to jump into the Atlantic Ocean. I wouldn't be likely to cross the harbor in a ferry boat. He'll guess that I've taken this road along which we came in the train, so that I can make for Boston."

"Do you belong to Boston?"

"No, I don't belong anywhere. I wasn't stolen from a lovely home like the dogs in the story books. I was born and brought up in the show; but I'm tired and sick of it now, and my bones ache, and I'd rather die than go back. Good-bye, I'll just crawl off here in the woods till I feel like looking for something to eat. You'll not say anything about having seen me?"

"No, I will not," said the cow slowly. "I'm sorry for you, and I'll do what I can to help you. If you will follow me, I'll show you an old fox hole where you can hide till dark. Then if you will come up to my stable I'll put you in the way of getting something to eat."

"Thank you," said the dog gruffly. Then he muttered under his breath, "I wasn't such a fool after all to trust the old softie. She'll not give me away," and he walked painfully after her up a green and shady path leading to a thick wood.

"I never felt such a good bed in my life," murmured Jersey City rapturously.

It was one week later and in the middle of a hot July day. He lay stretched out on a patch

of thick fern moss. Above him on a bank grew lovely purple violets and the trailing green linnaea studded with pink bells. The air was full of the delicate perfume of the flowers, and the sunlight filtering through the treetops lay in wavering patches on the moss, the flowers, and Jersey City's dark body.

"You look like a happy dog," said the cow, who had just come walking up a path and stood knee deep in ferns.

"I am happy, thanks to you, Mooley," said Jersey City. "I never had such a good time in my life. Oh, this is delicious," and he buried his muzzle in the moss.

The cow surveyed him in placid satisfaction. "Why do you not stay here instead of going to Boston, as you plan to do?"

"Well, you see, Mooley, I am a marked character here. As soon as I show myself I'll be spotted. You've lots of English bull terriers about here, but not any like me. I'm what is called a Boston terrier, and I'd better get back to the place where I can mingle with a number of other dogs resembling myself."

"The search is over now," said Mooley kindly. "A milkman's cow who was driven out from the city yesterday, told me that Bankston & Sons' Big Show had gone away. I don't think that you are in any danger."

"Perhaps not," said Jersey City thoughtfully, "and I don't know how to leave this lovely place. Oh, Mooley, what a change for a weary dog from the heat and noise and dust of theatres

and halls and railway trains. I should like to stay here forever."

"Do you not get lonely?" asked Mooley.

Jersey hesitated an instant. "You have been very good to me, Mooley, and I hope you won't think me ungrateful if I say I could stay in this wood forever if I only had one thing."

"What is that?" inquired the cow.

"Some human being to be with me."

"I understand that," said Mooley.

"You see," went on the dog, "we four-legged animals were made to serve the two-legged ones, and we can't be happy without them. I am ashamed to say that tears come in my eyes when I think of cross old Jimson, and the Bankstons, who weren't much better. It is such a bitter feeling not to be with the people who have had me since I was a little puppy, that sometimes I feel as if I must run back to them."

"Don't you do it," said the cow hastily.

"No, I won't; I just think what a whipping I should get, and that stops my paws when I want to run."

"You have never told me what your life was like," said Mooley, lying down near him and drawing some of the ferns into her mouth.

"In season time—that is when we were traveling—it was the train nearly all day, and performances nearly every night. You see it is an enormous expense to take car loads of animals from one city to another, and it must be done as quickly as possible. How my legs used to pain me from standing all day, for the dog car was

usually so crowded that we could not lie down. Then as soon as we arrived in a town we were herded together like sheep, and the trainer drove us to the place where we were to give our performance. We waited our turns to go on the stage. I always wore a Toby collar made of deep lace, and my rôle was to make people laugh."

"To make them laugh," said the cow. "I don't understand."

"I was like the clown in a circus. Whenever an animal did a smart trick I had to follow him and turn a somersault, or fail in some way in trying to do it, though I knew well how it should be done. Then I faced the audience and laughed like this," and Jersey City, turning back his lips, grinned dismally at the cow.

"I don't see anything funny in that," said Mooley.

"The people used to," said Jersey City dryly. "They would go off in roars of laughter; and often I would listen to them with a sore heart. I'm very fond of human beings, but I don't altogether understand them. They cry about things that you'd think they'd laugh about, and they laugh about things that you'd think they would cry about. Now I never used to see anything in our cage trick but a cruel trap."

"What is a cage trick?" asked Mooley.

"There's a big revolving thing in the middle of the stage, and dogs climb up on it and hang by their paws—then it is whirled round. I have seen little dogs clinging to the top with a look of mortal terror on their faces, for they knew if

they were to fall they would break their legs—and yet the people laughed. Only occasionally a little child would cry.”

“I wonder how the men and women would feel if they were hanging there?” said Mooley half angrily.

“Yes, I wonder; if any one asked me to go to see men and women and children running about on their hands and feet, I’d say ‘What a silly performance; they weren’t made to go in that way,’ and yet they flock to see us going on two legs, which is just as unnatural.”

“Perhaps they don’t think,” said Mooley.

“Perhaps so,” said Jersey City. “There is one thing that they do think of, and that is having a good time and making money. That’s what most human beings live for, Mooley.”

“My mistress doesn’t,” said Mooley.

“By the way, who is your mistress?” asked the dog.

“A poor old widow who lives here. She is such a good woman and she takes fine care of me. I wish you would come and live with her.”

“I wish I could,” said Jersey City wistfully.

“Do you think she would take me in?”

“She is kind to everything that is in trouble,” said Mooley. “I know that she would let you lie by the fire when the cold weather comes.”

“This is a very retired place,” said Jersey City; “that is, there aren’t many people about.”

“There are only two houses near here besides the Widow May’s,” said the cow; “then three miles away is the village.”

"That will just suit me for a while," said Jersey City. "I can't bear to leave this lovely place; and I don't believe that these families have heard that there is a reward offered for me."

Mooley chuckled quietly.

"What are you laughing at?" the dog asked.

"Let me ask you a question in my turn," said the cow; "why did you trust me with your story that day on the road?"

Jersey City hesitated for a short time.

"Come, now, tell the truth," said the cow.

"Well, Mooley, I thought you looked honest."

"And stupid," added the cow. "I know you did; but you clever traveled animals must remember that the stay-at-home ones aren't always so stupid as they seem. I did you a good turn that day; for as soon as I brought you to this wood I returned to the village. I knew that the man looking for you would stop there."

"And did he?" asked Jersey City breathlessly.

"Yes, he asked at the post office about you. Nobody paid much attention to him; then he tacked a piece of paper on a tree and jumped on his bicycle and rode away."

"That was Jimson," said Jersey City bitterly.

"What do you think I did to the paper?" asked Mooley.

"I don't know—what did you?"

"Ate it," said the cow, her great brown eyes full of merriment; "tore it in strips from the tree and chewed it finer than my finest cud."

"Mooley," exclaimed Jersey City in delight, "you ought to have been a dog."

“Thank you, my friend, I prefer to remain an animal that cannot be taught tricks. But you must hear the rest of my tale. After I tore down the paper I had to go home, lest the widow should think I had wandered away; but I met my brother, who is an ox and lives farther up the Basin road, and I told him that if he saw any of those bits of paper on trees he was to tear them off. He will pass the word to the other oxen who are in the woods, and I think you need have no fear of remaining here.”

Jersey City sprang up and affectionately touched his nose to the cow's head. “You good old Mooley, I shall keep an eye on you as you go to and from your pasture, and if any boys chase you, I will bite their heels.”

Jersey City took the advice of his friend the cow, and one day went to lie under the apple trees in the Widow May's orchard. She saw him there and spoke kindly to him, and the next day he took up a position under the window.

She noticed that he was very thin—for not being used to provide for himself, he had considerable difficulty in finding enough to eat—and preparing a plate of bread and milk she put it on the doorstep.

This he ate with so much gratitude and with such a pleading look in his dark eyes, that the widow invited him into her house, and there by the time autumn came he was snugly and contentedly domiciled.

One day when the first snowflakes of the sea-

son were flying through the air, Jersey City sprang up on a chair by the window and looked out.

"I wonder whether Mooley is snug and warm," he said to himself. Then he ran out to the Widow May's small stable.

Yes, Mooley was comfortable for the night, and lay on her bed of straw with a sleepy look in her eyes.

"Where is our mistress, Jersey City?" she asked.

"Gone to the village to buy meal and molasses. She has very little money left," said Jersey City soberly, "and human beings are helpless without that."

Mooley looked uneasily at him. "I hope that she will not have to sell me. If she does, I shall be terribly unhappy and my milk will be spoiled. I wish that her son would send her some more money."

"Her son is a sailor, you told me, didn't you?" said Jersey City.

"Yes; a fine young man. He goes to the West Indies. I hope that his ship is not lost."

"I try to eat as little as I can," said Jersey City, "but this is such a wholesome place that I am hungry all the time."

"You have got quite fat and sleek since you came here," said Mooley, looking at him with satisfaction. "You are the handsomest dog that I ever saw."

"Thank you for the compliment," said Jersey City laughing; "you remember I told you the

first time we ever met that you had beautiful eyes."

"You were rather saucy to me that day," said Mooley smiling, "but you were tired and unhappy. You never feel in that way now, do you?"

"Never, except when I am thinking of other dogs."

"What dogs?"

"Why, Bankston's dogs, the ones that were brought up with me. When I am lying by the fire so warm and comfortable they come into my mind, but I try to put them right out, for it seems as if I would go crazy thinking of their doing those dreadful tricks over and over again and being cold at night and half fed."

"Run away to meet the widow," said Mooley, "it is time for her to come and it is getting dark."

Jersey hurried from the stable and down the frozen road. Soon he espied a little bent figure in a black dress, and jumping and springing with delight about her and carrying a fold of her dress in his mouth, he escorted her to the house door.

Half an hour later the Widow May sat down to her scanty tea of bread and molasses. Jersey City lay on a small mat before a wood fire in the kitchen stove and gazed lovingly at her.

Presently there was a knock at the door. Jersey City got up and stood before the widow till he saw one of the neighbors entering, then he slunk behind the chairs in the small bedroom.

"Good evening, Mrs. May," said a young man in a cheery voice, "I've just stepped in to see how you are—what's that, a cat?"

"No, a dog," said Mrs. May, "a poor stray thing that came to me in the summer. I think he must have been stolen from some nice family, for he had on an expensive collar."

"You call him Rover, do you," said the young man absently.

"Yes—come here, good dog," and she rose and went to the door. "I should like you to see him. He is such a handsome dog, but he is shy. He always hides when any one comes, and I can never get him to go to the village with me."

"Does he do any tricks?" asked the young man, with a far-a-way look in his eyes, for he was not thinking of the dog at all, but of a certain newspaper in his pocket.

"No, he is the most stupid dog I ever saw, but he is very loving and I shall never turn him away."

"How long is it since you have heard from your son?" asked the young man suddenly.

"Three months," said the widow, turning her quiet gray eyes toward him.

"Does he usually go so long without writing," asked the young man.

"Yes, sometimes—not often. Why, have you heard anything about him?"

"It is a dangerous calling to follow the sea," stammered her visitor, "and there are a good many gales in the fall."

"You know something," said the widow, "tell me——"

The young man looked hesitatingly round the kitchen. "It mayn't be true, Mrs. May, but father said I'd best prepare you——" and he pulled the newspaper from his pocket.

"Read it to me," said the widow, "I can't see," and she covered her face with one hand, while the young man hurriedly read a paragraph which reported a vessel called the "Swallow" to have been lost with all her crew.

"But it may be only a rumor," he said comfortingly. "Don't give up hope, Mrs. May."

"No, I won't," she said; "the Lord knows what is best. If he has taken my son from me, I know that I shall soon go to join him."

The young man was misled by her calmness. With an air of great relief he rose. "I am glad to see that you don't take it too hard, Mrs. May. I am going to town, and I'll make inquiries. Mother and Lucy will be over to see you to-morrow. Good-night," and after warmly shaking her hand he left her.

As soon as the door closed behind him, Jersey City left his hiding-place and ran to look anxiously in his mistress' face. He was frightened by what he saw. Better than the young man he could read her expression, and he knew that her heart was breaking. Slowly she went into her little room and lay down on the bed. Hour after hour passed and she did not move. Jersey City sat uneasily watching her.

She had not cleared away the tea dishes and

she had forgotten to put out the lamp. It was not like her to waste anything.

After a time he sprang up on the bed. Her face and hands were quite cold, and when he licked them to make them warm she moaned feebly. Jersey City lay down close beside her, so that she would get some warmth from his sleek body.

He did not close his eyes that night, and by the time the morning came he was nearly frantic. The gray streaks of dawn stealing in at the window showed him that his dear mistress was insensible. In vain he tried to rouse her.

"She will die if I do not bring some one to her," he said. "I will go and speak to Mooley."

He could easily unfasten the latch of the back door by pressing his paw upon it, and he hurried out to the stable.

"Mooley," he cried, "the widow is very ill, what shall we do?"

Mooley stumbled to her feet and looked at him uncertainly.

"One of us must go to the neighbors," went on Jersey City.

"What can a cow do?" asked Mooley feebly. "Oh, my poor mistress," and she leaned against the side of her stall.

"You can go to Jones' and stand by their gate and low," said Jersey City. "Then they will know that there is something the matter and will follow you home."

Mooley's legs bent under her, and with a moan she lay down.

"What is the matter, are you ill too?" asked Jersey City.

"Oh, yes I am," said the cow, "what a fool I have been."

"What have you done?"

"I drank some fish oil last evening. I didn't know what it was," said Mooley dismally; "it was standing by the grocer's and I was thirsty."

"You old simpleton," said Jersey City sharply. Then he added more kindly, "That was not like you, Mooley."

"I am just like old Mr. May, the widow's husband, who is now dead," said the cow with a sigh. "He had a great thirst and was always drinking something he shouldn't."

"Well, it can't be helped," said Jersey City; "put your head down and go to sleep; I see you can't walk. I'll go to Jones'."

"But some one may recognize you," said Mooley; "be careful what you do. Oh, I shall never forgive myself if it is found out that you are a runaway dog."

"Don't worry," said Jersey City; but as he trotted down the lane he muttered to himself: "I am afraid they will. This is a most unfortunate affair. I wish I had been born a cur and not such a remarkable looking dog."

Ten minutes later he was looking desperately up at the Jones' window. "Oh, what stupid people. I have barked and scratched and clawed at the door, but they won't come out. I'll have to go to the village. What sleepy heads they must be; they ought to have been up long ago;

however I must lose no time. What should I do if my kind mistress were to die?"

At this thought he raced off at full speed to the village.

The grocer, who was an early riser, was just taking down his shutters. Jersey City, who had scarcely any breath left, rushed up to the shop and dropped panting on the doorstep.

The grocer looked at him. "Get out of this, you impudent dog. Get out, I say," and he kicked him aside as he went into the shop.

Jersey City came back and stood behind him as he bent over to kindle a fire in his stove. "Not gone yet," said the grocer, looking over his shoulder and throwing a piece of wood at him. "Ugh, I hate dogs."

Jersey City rushed out, his heart beating almost to suffocation. There pinned against a row of canned vegetables he had seen a placard bearing a large picture of himself and offering a reward of one hundred dollars for his recovery.

Jimson was a clever man—he had not given him up. What an unobserving man the grocer was not to have recognized him. He had better hurry away before he did so. He ran several paces then he stopped.

"I love the widow," he thought, "and she has been very good to me. Can I let her die alone?"

"No, no," something seemed to say inside him. "But if I make myself known to this cross grocer he will give me up to Jimson. How can I go back to that life?" reflected poor Jersey City in deep misery.

He lifted his eyes to the blue sky. "It is so pleasant here in this open country. If I go back to the show I shall die. Never mind, I must do my duty or I shall despise myself," and without hesitating an instant longer, he hurried back to the grocer.

A few tumbles on the floor and a sad little waltz on his hind legs around some empty boxes brought the attention of the amazed man upon him.

With his mouth wide open and holding up his sooty hands, the grocer looked from the performing dog to the placard on the wall.

"The circus dog, as sure as I live," he muttered. "That's one hundred dollars in somebody's pocket; I wonder if I can catch him."

He snatched up a piece of rope and went cautiously after Jersey City, who had danced out through the door and into the road. Jersey City was careful not to let him catch up with him, and the grocer, half laughing, half angry, followed what he supposed was a crazy dog till he got near the widow's cottage.

Then Jersey City gave up his antics and ran to the house as fast as he could go. The grocer ran after him, exclaiming, "Soho, this is where you have found a hiding-place, is it?" Then he stopped short and threw up his hands, for on the bed lay a poor old woman, who looked as if she was dead.

It was a beautiful winter day. The sun was shining gloriously on white fields of snow and

on the blue waters of the Basin. Everything in the landscape was calm and cheerful except two distressed figures of animals that stood on a high bank overlooking the water.

One could tell that they were unhappy just to look at them. The cow stood with a drooping head, and there was a sad expression in her beautiful eyes. The dog's tail hung limp, his ears were not pricked; there was a desperate, hunted expression on his face.

"I wish you would give me a toss with your horns and send me over that bank, Mooley," he said mournfully.

The cow turned slowly toward him, "What, down on those rocks? It would hurt you, Jersey City."

"If you were to break a leg for me, Jimson would not take me away," said her companion. "I would be spoiled for a trick dog if I only had something the matter with me."

"I don't think it would be right," said the cow soberly; "the widow says that we mustn't do a bad thing in order to bring about a good one."

"I daresay that is so; but oh, Mooley, I am so unhappy," and Jersey City turned away his head to hide the tears in his eyes.

"It seems very hard," observed the cow, "that just as the widow has recovered and her son has come home with some money, and we are all so happy, that that miserable Jimson should come for you."

"He will be here in an hour," said Jersey

City with a shudder, "and I shall have to go back to that old show with him. A week hence, Mooley, you may think of me jumping and rolling on a stage covered with sawdust; my poor tricks drawing shrieks of laughter from a crowded house, and my heart like to break when I think of this peaceful home. I shall not live long, that is one consolation."

"Jersey City, don't," said Mooley, and with a quick, ungainly trot she started for her stable.

Jersey City ran beside her. "I will say good-bye to you now, Mooley, for Jimson will allow no time for leave-taking, and I must spend my last minutes with my mistress."

Mooley stopped short and Jersey City went on, "Good-bye, good-bye, dear old Mooley. You have been a kind friend to me. Some people say that animals do not love each other, but we know that that is not true."

The cow bent her head till it almost touched the ground. It seemed to her that she could never lift it up again, and Jersey City, who hated to see her suffer, hurried away.

The widow sat by the fire talking to her son, who was a fine, strapping young man with red cheeks and curly hair.

Jersey City sprang into his lap, for the sailor had petted him even more than the widow.

"Good dog," said the sailor, playing with the dog's velvety ears.

"Here is the man now," exclaimed old Mrs. May, as a sleigh containing the grocer and Jimson drove up to the door. "Oh, dear, dear."

A terrible feeling came over Jersey City. He crept under the stove and tried to make himself as small as possible.

He was a brave dog and had planned to put a bold face on the matter, but the ordeal was too trying for him, and he felt like a timid young pup.

"Come in," said the sailor, when Jimson had knocked at the door.

"Ah, good afternoon," said a little, thin, wiry man who entered. "You have property of mine here, I think."

"Yes, sir," returned the sailor, "and not stolen property either. This dog came here of his own free will."

"I daresay, I daresay," replied Jimson politely. "Ah, there you are, Jersey City; come out from under the stove."

It seemed to Jersey City that the bitterness of death was upon him. With a hunted look in his eyes he rushed across the room and crouched tremblingly at the sailor's feet.

The young man laughed sarcastically. "Your dog does not seem to be very glad to see you, sir," he said, addressing Jimson.

"Do you call him Jersey City?" asked the widow; "what a strange name."

"Yes, it is peculiar," said Jimson; "he was born in Jersey City, that's why we named him so. Come, my little clown," and drawing a handsome steel chain from his pocket, he walked toward the dog.

"Stop," exclaimed the sailor, "you don't

touch that dog, sir, till you prove to us that he is willing to go with you."

"Willing to go ——" repeated Jimson, with a black look, "why, he's our own dog; and I can tell you, a dog that costs us a trip from New York to Canada in the dead of winter isn't one we're going to have anybody dictate to us about."

"Come, now, that's an old-fashioned doctrine," said the sailor. "Formerly a man's horse or cow or dog or any other animal was his to do with as he liked. Now the law says if a man owns a dumb beast he's got to be merciful to it or he'll be punished."

"I'd like to have any one prove that we have been cruel to this dog, or to any other animal we own," said Jimson sneeringly.

"Prove—ah, yes, that's where you have the advantage," said the sailor. "I've voyaged a bit, and I know as well as you that the cruelty that goes on in dark and hidden places is the worst to get at. Look at that dog licking my feet and begging as plainly as a human being could that we will save him from you. I can't prove that you've ever beaten him, but I know by his actions that you've done it, and I know that you're going to do it again if you get a chance."

"Oh, shut up," said Jimson disdainfully, "and get out of my way. I've got to take the train in thirty minutes."

Mrs. May opened her arms and took in the trembling form of her pet. "My son is right," she said firmly to Jimson. "Poor Rover is unhappy; you shall not have him."

Jimson fell into a terrible rage. "I never saw such fools in my life," he said in a low, furious voice. "That dog is worth five hundred dollars to us. Do you suppose we are going to give him up for such trumpery notions as these?"

"Sit down, sit down, sir," said the sailor, "and take things coolly. You don't understand us yet. I'll just explain to you. Here's a dog that ran away from you; probably you treated him so well that he felt embarrassed. He came to my mother. She petted him, and when she fell ill he brought some one to her and saved her life. The man that helped her does the dog a bad turn by letting you know that he is here. You come, and if the dog had jumped on you and licked your hands as he licks mine, I'd have let you take him. But what does he do ——"

"Do," repeated Jimson sullenly, "it's none of your business what he does. He hasn't seen me for six months, and I'm going to have him, so you just hold up."

"Does a dog ever forget a good master?" asked the sailor warmly. "Never—not so long as he has breath. That dog fears you with all the power he has, and I tell you you're not going to have him to-day, so the sooner you make up your mind to that the better. I'm only a poor man, and you can get the law on me if you choose. I'll go to court and the judge can see for himself how the dog acts. Then if the law gives him to you, I'll follow you wherever you're going, and if there's any kind of society that'll watch you, I'll set them to work, and if I'm

spared, I'll be with you wherever you are, and I'll take the liberty of telling the kind ladies and gentlemen, who are probably your patrons, this little story about your clown dog."

Jimson looked speechlessly at the young man.

"I'm not down on shows in general," pursued the sailor; "I daresay there may be some where dumb animals are well treated, but I claim that there's many a cruel one, and I believe yours is one of them. Perhaps if you take your own clown dog and have me trailing around after you explaining why he doesn't put much heart in his tricks, you'll wish that you had listened to me."

The sailor was a very resolute looking young man and Jimson stared at him, wondering if he would do what he said.

"I brought home a little money to my mother," said the sailor. "I'll give you fifty dollars of it if you like."

Fifty dollars—Jimson glared wrathfully at him. Fifty dollars, and he had said that the dog was worth five hundred dollars. However it was better than nothing. "Put your money aside," he said in a choking voice, "and you'll hear from me." Then he rushed from the room. He saw plainly that he couldn't get the dog that afternoon and he would have to consult his employers before doing anything further.

"Don't you ever come sneaking around here to steal him," called the sailor as he stood in the doorway and watched Jimson get into the sleigh. "I'm going to stay home now and work the

farm, and I'm fond of the dog and he is fond of me, so he'll never be more than two feet away from me. Try to be a little kinder to your other animals or they'll be running away too."

Jimson sprang into the sleigh and drove away as fast as he could.

"I wonder what he'll do," said Mrs. May thoughtfully as she and her son re-entered the house.

"I don't know," said the young sailor; "but I have made up my mind, mother, that he's got to have a struggle if he wants to get our little brother here away from us," and he laughingly surrendered one ear to Jersey City, who in a transport of gratitude had sprung on his knees and was trying to lick his face.

"So, so, good dog—that will do—we're going to have a long life together I hope," said the young man.

Jersey City leaped on the floor, ran round and round the room a dozen times as if he were crazy, then dashed out to the stable to tell the joyful news to Mooley.

The cow was almost beside herself with joy. She could not speak for a long time and looked as if she had been struck dumb. At last she said solemnly: "Jersey City, do you think that bad man will ever come back?"

"No, no," said the dog wildly; "I understand Jimson better than the sailor does. It would never do for him to get into the papers. It would ruin his business. The Bankstons will be very angry, but they won't dare to molest the

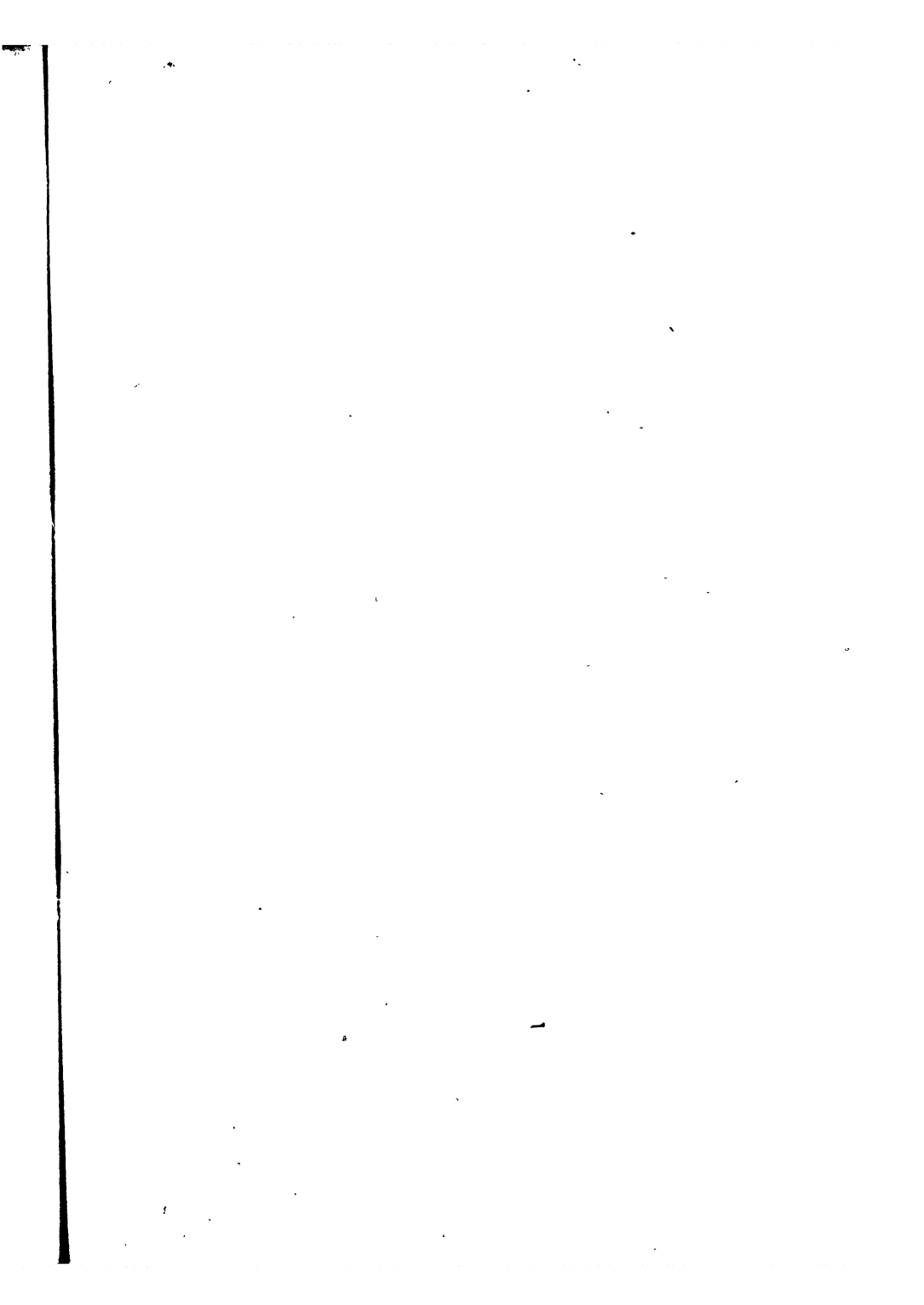
sailor, for the people who go to their show are good people and if they thought the animals were cruelly treated they would make a fuss and the Bankstons would be ruined. They will send for the fifty dollars and let me stay. Oh, oh, I am so happy. I cannot keep my paws still—I must go for a run in the orchard.”

“Can’t you do some tricks here?” said the cow; “that standing on the head is a beautiful one.”

“I will do it to please you, Mooley, but after that I shall never do any more tricks,” said Jersey City. “They make my muscles ache and the blood rush to my head. Here goes for the last trick of Bankston and Sons’ clown dog.” And he walked all around the stable on his fore legs, then rushed out into the open air where for an hour and more the cow saw him careering over the snowy ground.

Jersey City was right. Jimson never returned, but he sent for the fifty dollars; and at this day the famous five hundred dollar clown dog of Bankston and Sons’ Great Show is living contentedly and happily with the widow and her son on the shores of the beautiful Bedford Basin of Halifax harbor, Nova Scotia.







It's a fine day,' he said, looking over his shoulder.

III

WHEN HE WAS A BOY

WHEN he was a boy he was neither one of the best nor one of the worst of boys, as he himself realized when he said to his mother, "I guess I am a pretty middling sort of a chap, am I not, mother?"

He had his good times and his bad times. I think he really tried to be good—except occasionally.

One thing that helped him to overcome his faults was the very careful teaching that he got from his aunt and his mother. They were both busy women, for they lived in a big farmhouse, but they knew quite well that there is no more important work in the world for a woman to do than to train up a child in the way he should go; so merry, mischievous Master Fritz received many a lesson from them in laws of kindness toward his fellow-beings and in his duty toward the lower creation and toward his Maker.

At times his mind seemed to be running over with Bible truths. At such times he put on a little leather apron and went into a tiny workshop that his father had fitted up for him.

"I wish to be a carpenter," he said, "because Jesus was a carpenter."

For days his mother and aunt would not have to complain of him. Then like many older people he would come out of his workshop, in which he seemed to leave all his good resolutions, and taking off his apron he would become just as troublesome as he could be.

"I think I shall have to whip you, Fritz," his father said one evening when he came in from a long, cold drive from the town near them and found that Fritz had eaten a mince pie and ten plum tarts that he had been told not to touch.

"What do you want to whip me for?" asked Fritz.

He had climbed on his father's lap and they sat as cosily as possible before a leaping blaze in the open fireplace of the sitting room.

"Because you are so disobedient," said his father, holding his head up very straight so that he might not be tempted to kiss the little brown pate resting so confidently on his bosom.

"Oh, don't bother," said Fritz reassuringly; "I'll grow out of it."

"But you are getting worse."

"Didn't you get worse before you got better when you were a boy, father?"

Mr. Herman bit his moustache. He had been a pretty lively boy himself and had had many a whipping.

"Fritz, I have got to whip you. Your mother and Aunt Lotta will be in presently, and they asked me to do so. Go, get me the stick."

"Honor bright, father?" asked Fritz, starting up and looking into the dark bearded face, usually good-natured and now anxious and worried.

"Yes, honor bright, son; you have been as bad as you could be the last few days."

Fritz slipped off his father's knee. "I don't much approve of beatings," he said slowly, "and I guess you don't either; suppose we com—com—what is it you say?"

"Compromise," suggested Mr. Herman.

"Yes, that is it. Beating does not do me any good, father," and the child lowered his voice to a confidential tone. "It just makes me mad with you and wish I could hit back; but I tell you what would make me feel real, truly sorry."

"What is it?"

"To make me take off all my clothes and jump into bed in the daytime—in the middle of the day, mind," said Fritz glancing uneasily about the pleasant room.

"Indeed," said his father; "well, we shall remember that to-morrow and try it if you are bad again. And in the meantime you may go to bed now."

"Oh, come, father," said the child, "you would not send me off now when you have just come home and have not had your tea, and I know you have a present in your pocket for me."

"Go, child," said Mr. Herman, standing up so that Fritz could not get on his knee again. "You know that I do not like to punish you, so make haste."

"Oh, oh, my heart is broken, but I will mind you, father," and Fritz clung miserably to the legs of the tall man. "You will kiss me, father, won't you?"

"Yes, my son."

"And let me say my prayers here by the fire?"

"Certainly."

"I suppose it would be asking too much of you to come and see me into bed."

"Where would the punishment come in, son? You would get me upstairs telling stories to you and then Aunt Lotta and mamma would be vexed. Dinah will see to you."

"When the Lord gives people little children, doesn't he want them to be kind to them?"

"Yes, Fritz; but you don't understand. God would be angry with me if I let you have your own way all the time. You know one of his servants, called Solomon, says that if you spare the rod you spoil the child."

"Is that in the Bible, father?"

"Yes."

"In the new Bible?"

"The Revised version? yes, it is. I wish I could make you understand that we are all punished when we do wrong. God is my father as well as yours, and if I do not obey him and keep his commandments he punishes me just as I punish you."

"Do you do wrong, father?"

"Yes, often."

"I did not think you did," said Fritz thought-

fully; "and anyway, if you do, what business have you to punish little children?"

"That is something I do not understand, Fritz," said Mr. Herman humbly. "I only know that we are all sinners, men, women, and children, and we have to obey God and keep his commandments or we shall have no happiness in this world or the world to come."

"Perhaps God does not think it is a sin for little boys to eat pies and tarts when they are hungry."

"He does if they are forbidden to touch them."

"What, even if they starve to death?"

"You were not starving, and you may always have bread and butter."

"It is slow work, father, eating bread and butter all the time."

"Do you want to be a tall, handsome man?"

"Yes, just like you, father."

"Then you must eat bread and butter, and porridge and milk, and very little cake and candy and pies. Now I think you had better stop trying to spin out this conversation."

"I will say my prayers," said Fritz, and kneeling down he prayed a long time that God would bless his dear father and grandmother and cousins and all the neighbors and the poor little children who had no comfortable homes and all the heathen in foreign lands."

"You have forgotten your mother and aunt," said his father quietly when the boy got off his knees.

Fritz turned his flushed face angrily toward him, "I don't pray for such folks."

"What do you mean?"

"Aren't they getting me punished?" and the little lad stamped his foot and glanced toward the kitchen door. "I wish a great black bear would come out of the woods and eat them both up."

"Now go right to bed and think that over," said Mr. Herman. "Just fancy what your feelings would be if you really saw a big bear trotting off to the woods with your dear mother in his mouth and your aunt Lotta on his back and you and I crying and waving our hands to them from the doorway. No—I don't care to kiss you again after that speech about your mother. Good-night, and if you feel ashamed of it run downstairs for a minute and call through the keyhole, 'I will drive that bear away if he comes.' Then I shall know that you are sorry."

Fritz slowly left the room and wandered up the wide oaken stairway to his little white room, where he found Dinah, the maid, waiting for him.

She knew that he was being sent to bed earlier than usual and forbore to make any remarks as she helped him to undress.

"Here is your medicine," she said when he stood before her in his long white gown all ready to jump into bed.

Fritz wrathfully pushed aside the tumbler, "I have taken thousands and thousands of trashes, and I am not going to take any more."

"Then I must call your mamma," said Dinah.

Fritz did not wish to see his mother just then. "Here, give it to me," he exclaimed, and he swallowed the brown draught at a mouthful and sprang between the sheets of his snowy bed.

Dinah put out the light and went away and Fritz lay with eyes wide open staring at the windows where the blinds were drawn up and the shutters thrown back so that he could look out toward the stable and the barn where the animals that he so dearly loved were sleeping.

Suppose Satan should have heard his wish and really send a bear to carry off his dear mother. Bears often took sheep away in the night. His mother slept on the first floor and her window was always wide open. He had often seen her there in the daytime when she had a headache, her flaxen hair streaming over the pillow, her blue eyes closed. A bear might jump right in beside her if he crept softly to the window. "Well," he muttered, "I do not care, she is a bad mother. Let the bears have her." And he turned over and went to sleep.

In a few minutes he had a dream that seemed hours long.

He fancied that a bear had taken his mother and his aunt and when he waked up in the morning there was no one to stand over him and say merrily, "Wake up little son and run a race with mother. Let us see which will be first dressed."

There was no one to pour out the coffee at breakfast time for his father; no one to laugh

and chatter and make jokes ; no one to unfasten the troublesome knots that came in his strings ; so many times through the day ; no one to wash and dress him and take him to the town.

The house was lonely and still and finally he began to cry and waked himself up.

"Oh, mother, mother," he groaned, "come back to Fritz. Have you gone, or where are you?" and he stumbled out of bed.

"That wicked old Satan that puts bad thoughts in my head, I wish the bears would get him. Oh, oh," and moaning and sobbing he felt his way into the hall where a light was burning, and throwing his little bare leg over the baluster to expedite matters he slid downstairs.

"Where is she?" he gasped, opening the sitting-room door and putting up his arm to shield his eyes, for the bright light had dazzled him. "Oh, father, you did not let the bear come, did you? Where is my mother?" and he stamped his foot and looked desperately at the surprised occupants of the room.

Aunt Lotta was there and several young people of the neighborhood who had come in to call, and they had been laughing and talking and having a good time till Fritz appeared.

"Where is she?" he screamed, for by this time he had seen that his mother was not in the room.

"Oh!" and he gave a joyful shriek and rushed toward the kitchen door that opened at that instant, and showed his mother entering with a tray full of dishes of ice cream in her hands.

Away went the ice cream, and away went Mrs. Herman's composure as she found her excited son clinging wildly to her and shouting threats as if he was crazy against all the bears that ever were born.

"Child of my heart," she ejaculated, "hast thou lost thy senses?"

"Alas, the ice-cream dishes," exclaimed Aunt Lotta, they are all broken—every one, and the cream is on the carpet."

"Never mind," said Mr. Herman. "Give the boy to me; I will explain."

Fritz, however, would not leave his mother. "You must not go out to-night, little mother," he said in German, which he spoke as well as English; "neither to the stable to see the dogs, nor to the poultry yard, nor to the well, nor the gate. Tell me you will not go out—and mother, beware of the bears that steal the sheep. They will never take you, little house-mother, because you are good and fair, but beware of them," and shuddering violently the child clasped her close to him.

"What is wrong with thee?" murmured his mother stroking his head. "Thou art trembling like a little frightened lamb. Carl," and she turned to her husband, "thinkest thou it is the pie he has eaten? Five minutes ago, when I went to his room, he was sleeping like a baby."

"You will sleep with me to-night, mother," said Fritz earnestly, "in my little bed; for bears do not climb except in the trees. Promise me, promise, mother," and his voice rose to a shriek.

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Herman soothingly, "I will draw another bed close to thine and thou shalt rest with thy hand in thy mother's. Poor little lad," and holding his fingers tightly in hers she excused herself from her guests and went upstairs with him.

Fritz was a very subdued little boy the next morning and all through the day, and Aunt Lotta watching him murmured roguishly, "If it were not unkind I should wish that the scare of the bears might continue—so good is our little man."

When the evening came—the best time of the day for Fritz, because his father had then leisure enough to take him on his knee and talk to him—he sat by the fire singing softly to himself, "I want to be an angel."

"Sing it once again," said his father coming quietly into the room.

Fritz sang the hymn through once more in a pretty childish voice, then relapsed into silence.

"Why do you shudder?" asked his father, passing his hand over the little frame pressed close against him.

Fritz murmured something about the bears.

"Come, come," said his father, "where is my brave boy?" and with a merry twinkle in his eye, "You are too hard on my friends the bears, that I loved so much when I was a little lad. Why, my mother used to tell me many and many tales of kind bears that played with children."

"Do bears really play with children, father?" asked Fritz.

"No, I cannot say that they do; but a bear would not hurt you, my small man, if you let him alone. He would run from you. My mother's stories used to begin something like this: Once upon a time there were some little children going berrying. They did not know where they would find a good place till they met a kind old bear with her young ones, who said, 'Come along, children, I always know where the best berries are and I will show you a fine spot.'"

"And would the children go, my father?"

"Always—in my mother's stories. They would fill their baskets with strawberries, or raspberries, or blackberries, or whatever the fruit was that they were after, then the old bear would escort them to her den and entertain them with stories of life in the woods until they had to go home. There was never any talk of wild bad bears from my mother."

"But those tales were made up, my father."

"Yes, son; but I can tell you true ones of animals, ever so many of them, where there is no killing either on the side of man or beast. I lived, you know, as a boy, in a little house in the woods and my father used to go out again and again without a gun simply for the pleasure of observing the habits of wild animals. He used to play tricks on them too; many a time have I seen him sitting laughing by our fireside, as he related funny things to my mother and me. Shall I tell you the story of a fox that he outwitted?"

"Yes, my father."

"Well, he was a great mimic, this father of mine, and could deceive almost any animal that roamed through the woods. One day after a light snow he found the recent tracks of a fox on the ground. He crept behind an uprooted tree lying near by and began to chirp and squeak like a mouse. By-and-by he saw a fox come trotting along, now stopping to listen, now holding up one foot then another, for, as you know, foxes are very wise creatures. Presently the fox got on the tree trunk and began to creep up toward the roots, where he hoped to find a fat mouse. My father stopped chirping, the fox looked over the roots, my father sprang up and said 'Hello,' and the fox in his great surprise fell over and over to the ground, then ran away like the wind. The face of the fox as he stared at a man instead of the mouse he expected to find, was, my father said, the most ludicrous thing he had ever seen."

"Was it right to deceive the fox, my father?"

Mr. Herman smiled down at his son. "Well, Fritz, strictly speaking I suppose it was not; yet it was better than shooting him. I think we might look upon it in the light of a practical joke."

"Please tell me about 'Woxie, Woxie, come out from under the barn,'" said Fritz.

Mr. Herman laughed outright. "You never get tired of that tale, do you? Here it is again: Years ago, when I was little more than a baby, my father had a tame young fox that I played with a great deal of the time. One day my

father wished to sell him to a man who came for him ; but the fox, as if he knew he was to be separated from me, ran under the barn and no person could induce him to come out. At last my father told me to call him, and I went down on my hands and knees and called, ' Woxie, Woxie, come out from under the barn.' ”

“ And the little red fox ran out,” interrupted Fritz eagerly, “ and crouched down beside you, and your father would not sell him, because you loved him so much.”

“ No, he did not sell him,” said Mr. Herman thoughtfully ; “ poor little fox, I wish he had.”

“ Did you cry when he was shot ? ” asked Fritz.

“ Yes, I did ; and for many a night I waked up in my sleep calling for Woxie.”

“ It was naughty for the young man to shoot him,” said Fritz.

“ Yes, it was ; he might have known he was a tame fox when he saw him running about our barn ; but he aimed and fired at him before my father could interfere. Men are so ready to take life unnecessarily. Now, child, it is your bedtime.”

“ Good night, my father,” said Fritz quietly ; “ to-morrow will you tell me more stories about the woods ? ”

“ As many as you like,” said Mr. Herman kissing the little boy. “ Pleasant dreams, and may God watch over you, my little son.”

For a whole week Fritz had been a good boy

and had not once disobeyed his parents or Aunt Lotta.

Then a morning came when he got up feeling rather cross. He frowned at himself in the glass, pulled at his shoe strings till he broke them both, and finally went to the breakfast table with so discontented a face that Aunt Lotta shook her head and murmured, "A change comes."

However, every one was careful to say something pleasant to him, and he got through breakfast without an outbreak of temper. After that he did not go for a scamper with his dogs as he usually did, but hung about the kitchen watching his Aunt Lotta and Dinah wash the breakfast dishes.

His mother had shut herself up in the dairy and his father had gone to oversee some plowing.

At ten o'clock Mrs. Herman came out of the dairy and looked at him. "It is time for lessons, Fritz," she said.

The little boy followed her to the sitting room. "Don't you think I am a pretty big boy to be doing lessons at home?" he said fretfully.

His mother sat down at the table and drew some books from the drawer. "No," she said, "I do not think so; thou shalt soon go to school, little man. I wish it were not so far away. And thou knowest so little. I should be ashamed to have thee compared with the lads at the Four Corners schoolhouse. Dost thou remember how to spell horse, Fritz?"

"No, I do not," said the little boy; "and what does it matter? I can say it."

"Suppose thou hadst a letter to write," said his mother softly, in German.

"I would picture the animal," said Fritz calmly. "See, here is one," and with a few strokes of a pencil he drew a really creditable horse on a piece of paper.

His mother sighed. "But, Fritz, thou couldst not send a series of drawings to thy friends, though thou art really clever with thy pencil. Come now, be reasonable; try to remember how the word is spelt."

"H-o-r-s," said Fritz boldly.

"No, my son, h-o-r-s-e."

"Well, but mother, why not h-o-r-s? If the 'e' is there I see no use for it."

"And I do not," she said frankly; "yet it exists, and thou must remember it."

"Mother," he said firmly, "I feel that I hate study this morning."

Mrs. Herman closed the books. "I see that," she said sadly. "Fritz, didst thou say thy prayers this morning?"

"No, mother, I did not."

"And thou wilt kneel down now and ask the Lord Jesus to take the bad spirit from out thy heart."

"No, mother, I will not."

"Then, Fritz, what wilt thou do?"

"I will run and play, little mother; then if I come not back in an hour thou canst punish me."

"Oh, the odd boy," said Aunt Lotta to herself, as she came into the room to go to the cupboard.

"Go, then," said Mrs. Herman to her son; "but first let thy mother kiss thee," and drawing the little sturdy figure to her she kissed the dark stubborn face again and again, then she added softly, "I shall pray that thou mayst come back with thy evil temper gone."

Fritz did not kiss her. "Let me go, mother," he said, pulling away from her. "I feel like Saul, the king of Israel, who threw the javelin at David."

"Then linger," said his mother, "and let me sing to thee until better thoughts shall come."

"No, no," said Fritz, "I am choking," and he hurried out to the front hall where he stood a long time on the doorstep kicking his feet.

What should he do with himself? Away before him stretched a wonderful view of mountain, valley, and lake, but he was in no mood to be charmed by the beauty of natural scenery. He seized a cap from the rack behind him, and plunging his hands into his pockets, hurried down the walk to the front gate.

The dogs shut up in the stable yard at a short distance from him heard his steps and barked with impatience; but he did not go to let them out, though he knew that to keep them confined on so charming a morning was one of the most unkind things he could do to them.

With their howls sounding in his ears, he went doggedly down the walk and struck into the road leading away from the town, and for

three hours instead of one his mother did not see him.

At noon when Mr. Herman came back his wife told him of Fritz' disappearance.

"I will go to find him," he said.

"Without thy dinner?" asked his wife.

"Yes," he replied; "a boy is of more importance than a meal." He was just starting from the house when he caught sight of Fritz coming up the road.

They stood in the doorway and watched him. He was dragging himself along in a rather weary fashion; but when he caught sight of them he straightened himself and marched up the gravel walk, slashing the top of his high russet boots in a manly fashion with a smart whip that he carried in his hand.

"Well, father and mother," he said politely, lifting his cap as he approached them and looking boldly into their faces; "I have both good and bad news for you."

"Indeed," said his father.

"Yes, father; Frank Bray gave me this fine whip; that is the good news."

"And the bad?" asked his father.

"I broke their parlor window."

"Alas, that colored window that they are so proud of," exclaimed his mother.

"The very one, little mother."

"How did you break it?" asked his father.

"I was throwing stones at the swallows with Frank and——"

"Thou," cried Mrs. Herman, in a dolorous voice, "throwing stones at the dear birds that thou lovest so much."

"Even so, mother. I was in a bad temper. I felt that I could kill something."

"And how do you feel now?" asked Mr. Herman.

"I feel that I am still a bad boy, but not so bad as Frank Bray."

"It is strange," said Mr. Herman, "that if you are so conscious of the badness of Frank Bray that you will still play with him; and did you forget that I have forbidden you to go to the Brays' farm?"

"I forgot nothing, my father; but I was bad. Now I repent, and I shall go there no more."

"Unless you disobey again," said his father.

"I shall not disobey," said the child proudly, and his face flushed as he looked up at them.

"Thou art weary," said his mother, noticing the sudden droop of the child's shoulders; "come into the house."

Fritz followed his parents to the sitting room and sat down at the table confronting them. They looked at each other; what should they do to their disobedient son?

"He must be punished," said his mother decidedly; for though she loved her son intensely, she was yet more firm about matters of discipline than was her husband.

"He must be punished," echoed Mr. Herman, "yet not now; we are all hungry and dinner is waiting. Let us have that first."

Almost in silence they took their midday meal, then the parents returned to the sitting room with their little son.

"It must be a whipping this time and not bed, is it not so?" said Mrs. Herman to her husband.

"Yes, I suppose so," he replied.

"Must a boy have two whippings in one day, father?" asked Fritz, drawing himself up haughtily.

"I do not know; it depends upon the boy," said Mr. Herman cautiously.

"I am already quite stiff," said Fritz calmly, "and my back is sore."

"Who has dared to whip thee?" cried Mrs. Herman.

"Frank Bray's father."

"His father?" replied Mr. Herman. "Why, I saw him but a short time ago upon the road and he staggered so terribly that I knew he had been to the saloon in the town."

"Yes, he was not himself," said Fritz calmly. "He spoke crossly of you. He said that you had cheated him about the calves."

"I did not," said Mr. Herman hastily; "he does not speak the truth."

"I told him that," said Fritz. "I said my father is honest and you are a liar."

"And then," said Mrs. Herman breathlessly.

"He picked up a stick," said the lad, "and he tore my coat from my back and beat me till Mrs. Bray made him stop; and oh, mother, I am so tired," and the small boy finding that he could

no longer keep up his courage, threw himself down beside her and sobbed, "Don't whip me again, but put me to bed and sing to me and I will say my prayers, for I have been a wicked boy and I will never disobey you again."

"He is sufficiently punished—he will not visit those unprincipled people again," said Mr. Herman as he left the room. "I leave him in your hands, Gretchen."

On the first of the next June Fritz was to have a birthday.

"You are going to have a number of presents this year as usual," said his father to him on the evening of the thirty-first of May; "but among them is an extraordinary one—I never heard of a little boy getting one like it. I hope that you will be pleased with it. Remember, if you are not, you will make your father and mother very unhappy."

"I think I shall be glad to get it," said Fritz; "I am always pleased with my presents," and he went to bed wondering what this mysterious thing could be.

Beside his plate the next morning on the breakfast table were a number of packages, round, square, and three-cornered, and they contained the usual things—books, games, and confectionery.

Fritz opened them with delight, turned them over and over and thanked his parents, then said, "Where is the queer thing you were going to give me?"

"It is not there," said Aunt Lotta who, in common with his parents, seemed to be full of excitement. "Come to the parlor, come quietly and see it."

Fritz ran ahead of the grown people and threw open the door of the best room in the house.

It was rather dark in there, but away in a corner farthest from the windows stood what seemed to him to be a huge wax doll.

"Am I a girl?" he asked in his first disappointment, and turning rather indignantly to his mother.

"Go to it, my child," she said earnestly. "Do not despise it."

Fritz walked a little nearer. It was certainly a very beautiful doll. Its complexion was pearly white, its curls were long and flaxen, and it was handsomely dressed in some white material.

"Kiss it," said his father.

The doll at this smiled, but Fritz, staring intently at it, was not surprised. He had seen smiling and even talking dolls before now.

His Aunt Lotta, as if guessing his thoughts, cried out, "This lovely doll can say your name. Just hear it."

Fritz saw the pretty lips part and heard the word "Friss."

The boy began to be enlightened. Was it possible instead of being a very big doll this was a very small girl.

He put out his hands to grasp the dainty creature, but at his touch it eluded him, and to his

amazement he saw a little girl running across the room and being caught in his mother's arms.

"Don't you know her, Fritz?" said Aunt Lotta; "I thought you would recognize her from the photograph. It is your Cousin Elsa, who has come to live with us."

Fritz retraced his steps, and putting his hands behind his back, stared at the small girl with such a ludicrous expression on his face that the older people and Dinah, who stood in the doorway, all burst out laughing at him.

The child had lifted her head and was peeping at him through her curls.

"Ren he dot near I runned aray and hid messef," she said merrily.

Fritz was more astonished than ever. What kind of language was this?

"You will soon understand her," said Mr. Herman, with amusement. "I have been puzzling over her funny talk, and I find that if you remember that she usually says d for g; s or z for t and th; r for w, with a few more fancy changes, you will get a clue to what she says. She is very like you, Gretchen," he went on, touching with gentle fingers the flaxen curls that were just the shade of his wife's hair. "Her eyes are blue and her cheeks are pink and white as yours."

"She is more like Gretchen than Fritz is, much more," said Aunt Lotta.

"Fritz is his father's boy," said Mr. Herman, "he is dark and swarthy."

Mrs. Herman lifted her face. "Why should

not the child resemble me? She belongs to my own sister, who was as like me as if we were twins."

"Father," said Fritz, "is this the child from the city? and what is she doing here?"

"Well, son," said Mr. Herman, "you know the city is a very bad place for little girls in summer, and Elsa's parents, who live in a crowded street, have sent her here to play with you. Come out in the hall and I will explain further," and he drew the boy with him and went on in a lower tone. "Her father and mother are poor and cannot afford to live in a large house as we do, and I should like to keep this dear child for some years, for I fear that she will grow pale and thin in the city, but everything depends on you. If you are unkind to her we shall send her away. She is very sensitive and cannot bear a harsh word; so you will have to be careful."

"I am never rough with girls," said Fritz, drawing himself up; "but I wish she had been a boy."

"So do I for some reasons," said Mr. Herman; "but perhaps in a few weeks we shall not say that. She only arrived last evening and already I am quite fond of her. Don't you want to take her out to see your dogs?"

"Yes," said Fritz shyly; but he did not ask the little girl to go with him, and Aunt Lotta said "It is just as well. Children are like grown people—they do not jump into an acquaintance with each other."

Fritz had always lived on the farm at some distance from other children, and it seemed a very singular thing to him that one should come to live in the house with him.

All day long he kept watching the little maiden—he would not go out of doors to play at all—and Elsa, for her part, peeped at him from behind her aunt's skirts, shook her curls and made funny speeches about him that kept them all laughing.

Late in the afternoon, when Mrs. Herman and Aunt Lotta were entertaining a visitor in the parlor, Elsa went out to the hall where Fritz was loitering about. Without saying anything he sauntered out to the lawn in front of the house, and she followed him.

"It's a fine day," he said, looking over his shoulder and endeavoring to begin a conversation in an easy way.

"Have you got a dolly?" asked Elsa earnestly.

"No," replied Fritz gently; "boys don't play with dolls."

"Do you want to see my dolly," said Elsa.

Fritz hesitated a moment to find out what she meant, then he said, "Yes, I do."

Elsa flew into the house shaking her yellow curls, and soon returned with a brown-eyed doll in her arms.

"Isn't her golden hair sweet?" she said, as she caressed the head of her pet.

Fritz took the doll in his arms and held it awkwardly for a few minutes, then returned it to its owner.

"Would your doll like to take a walk about the place?" he asked politely.

"Speak, dolly, rill you?" said Elsa, putting her ear to the doll's mouth.

"Res, she rill," said the little girl gleefully, "dolly loves to talk about."

The two children strolled down to the gate, and Fritz pointed out the beauties of the crystal lake, the woods, the mountain, and the green fields as he had heard his father do with strangers.

Elsa listened attentively without making any remark, and Fritz thought that she was not much interested till he turned to go away. Then he found that she was surveying the mountain with rapt attention. She had never before seen so high a place, and her little face was a study.

"Does Dod sleep up sere?" she asked in an awed voice.

"No," replied Fritz, "God sleeps in heaven."

"Oh, I sought he sleeps sere," returned Elsa, with a disappointed face, "cause I see big blankets floatin' down," and she pointed to the fleecy clouds gliding over the mountain tops.

"We will ask mother when we go in the house," said Fritz. "Perhaps heaven is up there. Come, let us go to the stable yard now."

Some cows were just coming in to be milked, and to Fritz' surprise he found Elsa's little hand slipped timidly in his, while she stood staring in open-eyed amazement at the big-horned animals.

"Are sey lions?" she whispered fearfully.

"Did you never see a cow?" exclaimed Fritz.

"I never saw sose sings before," said Elsa convincingly.

"Why, you must have," said Fritz, for he could not imagine a properly constituted household to which a cow was not attached. "Where did you get your milk?"

"Ze milkman brought it in little cans; sere rere nosings like sose in my home."

"How did the milk get into the cans?" asked Fritz.

"I don't know. I dess ze milkman made it."

This dense ignorance Fritz did not attempt to enlighten. He was not yet well enough acquainted with Elsa to reason much with her, so he stood silently by her while she watched with intense excitement the process of milking.

One of the stablemen put some straw on the top of a box for her to sit on, and while she remained there, her big blue eyes taking in every detail of the scene which, so familiar to Fritz, was like a fairy scene to her, Mr. Herman and the dogs came home.

With the latter she was delighted. "I love ze dogs," she exclaimed, as they came romping up to her box; "dood dogs, come up and see me," and putting her doll behind her, she fearlessly held out her hands to the big, strong creatures who were leaping upon their young master.

First came a greyhound called Reno; then Fifer, a box-headed Newfoundland; Jock, a cocker spaniel; and a dear little terrier.

Mr. Herman pointed to this last. "Here is

a gentle little dog that you may have for your own, Elsa. I only bought him yesterday; now what will you name him?"

The dog sat looking up at Elsa as if he knew what they were saying.

"Dive him to me, please," she exclaimed, and Mr. Herman lifted him to the top of the box.

She threw her arms around the dog's neck, then said, "Doggie, I love you, and I rill call you Lammie."

"That is a funny name for a dog," said Fritz.

"Zen I will call him Pussy."

"Why, he isn't a cat," said Fritz.

"Zen I rill call him Puppy."

"That is better, because that is what he is, but I don't think it is a very pretty——"

His father looked at him and he stopped, for he did not want to be impolite to his cousin.

"What a pretty sight," said Mrs. Herman, who had come out to the stable yard to call her husband and the children to tea.

Elsa sat perched on the box hugging her new pet, who seemed delighted with his mistress. Fritz stood protectingly beside her with his dogs about him, while Mr. Herman was bending over a sick sheep that he had brought out into the yard to examine. The cows stood leisurely chewing their cud and looking about them, while the horses gazed happily out through the doorway of the stable at the master who was so kind to them. Even piggy at a little distance was grunting contentedly, and Mrs. Herman murmured to herself the words:

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small.

"My mother," said Fritz one hot afternoon when the summer was half over, "there is a thing I long to do."

"Will you name it?" asked his mother.

"I wish to play Lohengrin."

"Very good, my son; I have no objections to you doing so."

"And may I have all the gowns and the fixings that I wish?"

"Yes, child, if you will spare my very best ones."

"I will do so; and now where are Elsa and the dogs?" and he ran away.

"Play in a cool place, my child," Mrs. Herman called after him; "do not go in the sun—it is too hot."

"I will come just where you are, mother," said Fritz.

Mrs. Herman and her sister were out on the lawn in front of the house busy with some sewing spread on a table before them.

Mr. Herman lay stretched out on the grass at their feet. He had just had his dinner and was resting for a short time before going back to his work.

"What an agreeable thing it is that the two children have never quarreled," he said; "they play so amiably. I was afraid that before this time Fritz would have wounded Elsa's tender feelings."

"He has not," said Mrs. Herman; "he is a gallant little lad is our Fritz; not once has he made Elsa cry."

"And she too has failings," said Aunt Lotta; "Elsa is not perfection."

"Indeed, no," said Mr. Herman; "but it is an excellent thing for Fritz to have her here, for he undoubtedly is learning self-restraint and gentleness—two qualities that he needed sorely. Ah, here they come."

"Do not laugh," said Mrs. Herman warningly.

Mr. Herman put one hand up to his face and leaned his head on the other.

Fritz appeared first leading the solemn-faced greyhound who was attired in an old red dressing gown of Mr. Herman's which caught in his feet and made him stumble as he walked.

"Now, old fellow," said Fritz addressing him, "this is the meadow of Antwerp and you are King Henry—sit up here on your throne," and he assisted Reno to a chair placed against a tree, "and don't move till I tell you."

The greyhound propped himself against the back of the chair and Fritz carefully placed a gilt crown on his brows.

"Now, where is Telramund?" said Fritz. "Fifer, Fifer, Fifer," and he called the Newfoundland dog; "you will make a good bad knight," and seizing a bright blue sash from a heap of clothing that he had flung on the grass he tied it around the dog's waist and stuck a piece of wood in it for a dagger.

Fifer ran about barking and occasionally looking over his shoulder at the huge bow of silk on his back.

"That is right," said Fritz, "make all the noise you can. Telramund was bad and boisterous. Now who will be the herald? I will be, because there is no other person," and he called loudly, "Elsa, Princess of Brabant, Telramund says that you killed your brother. Where are you, naughty one?" continued the boy looking all about him. "Elsa will appear now and everybody will say, 'Sie kommt.' Speak, dogs." The hound, the Newfoundland dog, and Puppy and Jock who were in the background, all barked loudly, and at that moment little Elsa appeared trailing over the grass a long white towel which Fritz had pinned as a train to the back of her frock.

She had played Lohengrin before and knew just what to do, so without a word from Fritz she prostrated herself at the feet of the greyhound.

"I'm a dood dirl, Mr. King—zat old dog, no, zat old knight is ze rurst sing I ever saw. A dood man rill fight for me."

"Isn't she a picture?" murmured Aunt Lotta. "I wish her mother could see that bowed golden head and those hands so meekly clasped."

"And that expanse of bath towel," said Mr. Herman, who was laughing quietly. "The dear children—how amusing they are; but hark, what is the herald saying?" For Fritz had again sprung to his feet on the grass and was

loudly vociferating through a tin trumpet held at his mouth, "I call for a knight to prove the innocence of Elsa, Princess of Brabant."

For some time no knight came and little Elsa stepping aside pretended to cry bitterly.

"Why does not Fritz disappear?" asked Mr. Herman. "He is the knight himself."

"He is keeping one eye on Elsa to see that she gets to the proper pitch of emotion," said Mrs. Herman. "Ah, there he goes."

Fritz threw down his trumpet and ran around the corner of the house. After a long time they heard him coming back. Unable to fully represent the beautiful knight in his coat of mail standing in a boat drawn by a milk white swan he had got a duck from the barnyard and had fastened it to a small clothes basket. The duck, a pet one, waddled nimbly toward Elsa, while Fritz, unable to get into the basket, walked beside it, carrying a tray for a shield and a cane for a sword.

Elsa manifested great excitement at his appearance and throwing her white towel over her arm flew between him and the duck alternately embracing them.

The duck quacked with pleasure and Lohengrin kissed her hand.

"Now I am going to fight the bad Telramund," said Fritz. "Stand forth, O knight," and he shook his cane at Fifer.

The dog seemed to understand the play and jumped playfully from side to side while Fritz thrust at him with his cane.

Fritz was intensely interested; of all the German stories that his mother was in the habit of relating to him Lohengrin was his favorite and the one he played most often; but little Elsa being younger did not take so much interest in it, and on this day she was hot and tired, so to his dismay the boy suddenly heard from her the exclamation, "I don't rant to play any more."

"Hush, princess," he said barely turning his head. "The bad Telramund will kill me if I stop fighting him."

"I don't rant to play any more," said Elsa more decidedly; "unfasten sis nassy old sing," and she pulled at the towel on her dress.

Fritz turned around at this and forgot for a time the fierce Telramund who was leaping at him. "Won't you play a little longer?" he said pleadingly. "Just a little while?"

"No," said Elsa willfully, "I'd raser play rith my dolly."

At her words the noble Lohengrin did a shocking thing. Instead of taking the safety pins from his dear princess' train he walked up to her and deliberately slapped her.

Elsa for a moment was too astonished to cry. She stared at him as if she thought he had taken leave of his senses. He had been so gentle with her up to this time. He had never pinched her nor pushed her nor teased her in any way and now he had given her a good smart slap on her little fat neck.

She gave a stifled shriek of dismay and ran to throw herself in Mrs. Herman's arms.

Fritz flushed painfully—he had struck a girl—and that girl was dear little Elsa, his own cousin, who played so lovingly with him when she was not tired. Would she ever forgive him?

Quite the opposite of most other times when he did wrong, his repentance was immediate. He threw down his shield and spear and walked toward the stable.

After a time his father followed him and found him sitting on a bundle of hay and looking thoughtfully into a dark corner.

“Poor Lohengrin,” said Mr. Herman gently, as he placed his hand caressingly upon him.

Fritz looked at him in an ashamed way. “Did I hurt her much, father?”

“No, my son, you frightened her more than you hurt her.”

“I forgot that I was Lohengrin,” said Fritz humbly.

“Yes,” returned his father. “It would not do for the knights who go about the world assisting innocent mortals in distress to lose their tempers every time they are provoked and strike some one. What else did you forget, Fritz?”

“I don’t know, father.”

“Can you remember what your text was yesterday morning?”

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”

“Do you think that you can be meek and also bold?”

“Yes, I do.”

“In what way?”

"I cannot explain it, but the Lord Jesus was both, was he not?"

"He was. That is the best example you could give. If you can be like him you will be a better man even than Lohengrin."

"Shall I go and tell Elsa that I am sorry?" asked Fritz, getting up and walking toward the open door.

"Yes; my son, she is very much disturbed over your behavior. An apology will console her."

"My father," said Fritz suddenly stopping short, "little girls often anger boys; suppose I should slap her again?"

"Do you wish to do it?"

"No, no; but you know my quick temper."

"Look at that then," said Mr. Herman, suppressing a smile and pointing to a little clump of oats growing outside the stable yard.

Fritz's pet hen Jenny was jumping up and down in a fashion most unusual for hens, and her young master stared at her for a few seconds without understanding what she was doing. Then he exclaimed, "She is springing up to get the oats."

"Yes," said Mr. Herman, "she is picking them one by one, and going through a course of gymnastics to attain her object. She will not give up until she gets them all. Can you not learn a lesson from her?"

"Never to give up, my father?"

"Yes, Fritz."

The little boy walked slowly toward the house. Elsa was sitting on the grass close beside his

mother holding her dolly. When she heard him coming she lifted her head and Fritz blushed when he saw her red eyelids and tear-stained face and noticed that she shrank timidly from him.

"I shall try never to slap you again, Elsa," he said; "I am always impatient when I play Lohengrin. Will you forgive me? I am really very, very sorry."

Elsa looked at him without understanding that she was to say "yes."

"Elsa," said Mrs. Herman, "Fritz will play with you now kindly and not roughly. Will you kiss him?"

"Yes," said the child with the ghost of a former sob and throwing down her doll as she offered her cheek to her cousin. "I rill play Lo'grin."

Fritz looked eagerly at his mother, but she shook her head. "Not to-day, some other time. It is hot and that is a long play for a little girl."

"Rell," said Elsa, "rut shall re play?"

"Sit down in the grass, both of you," said Mrs. Herman, "and I will tell you a story about the Lord Jesus when he was a little boy."

Long before the story was over Elsa had dropped asleep.

"Look at her mother," said Fritz, "is she not like a doll?"

"Dolls do not sigh in their sleep," said Mrs. Herman.

Fritz dropped his eyes. "Ah, little mother, she perhaps dreams of my unkindness—but con-

tinue the story. When I hear of noble deeds I too long to be noble. I should like to go to Jerusalem and talk to the doctors in the temple. How can I be a perfect boy?"

"Thou canst not be perfect," said the mother softly in German, "but thou canst be one of the best of boys and be master of thy temper as thou well knowest if thou wilt do—what is it, Fritz? thou knowest."

"I must love God and keep his commandments," said the child; "but, little mother, it is so hard."

"All that is worth having in this world is difficult to attain," said Mrs. Herman. "Remember that, my child, in thy journey through life."

Fritz sat thoughtfully leaning his head against his mother's shoulder for a long time, then looking at him she saw that he too had fallen asleep.

"May God bless and keep my high-spirited darling," she murmured, lightly brushing the thick hair from his forehead, "and make him a true and humble knight in the service of Jesus Christ."

These events happened some years ago when Fritz was a boy. Now he is a tall and sturdy lad and it is hardly saying too much to state that he is all that his parents could wish him to be. He is manly and loving and a true Christian lad, willing to fight the battles of life prayerfully and soberly and to say with humility when he has done wrong, "I repent, Lord Jesus; give me strength to keep from falling another time."

Little Elsa, now tall Elsa, still lives with the Hermans, for her parents both died and she has become Fritz' adopted sister and a joy to the whole household.

A happy Christian family let us leave them. May all boys be as happy as Fritz and all girls contented like Elsa.



IV

THE LITTLE PAGE

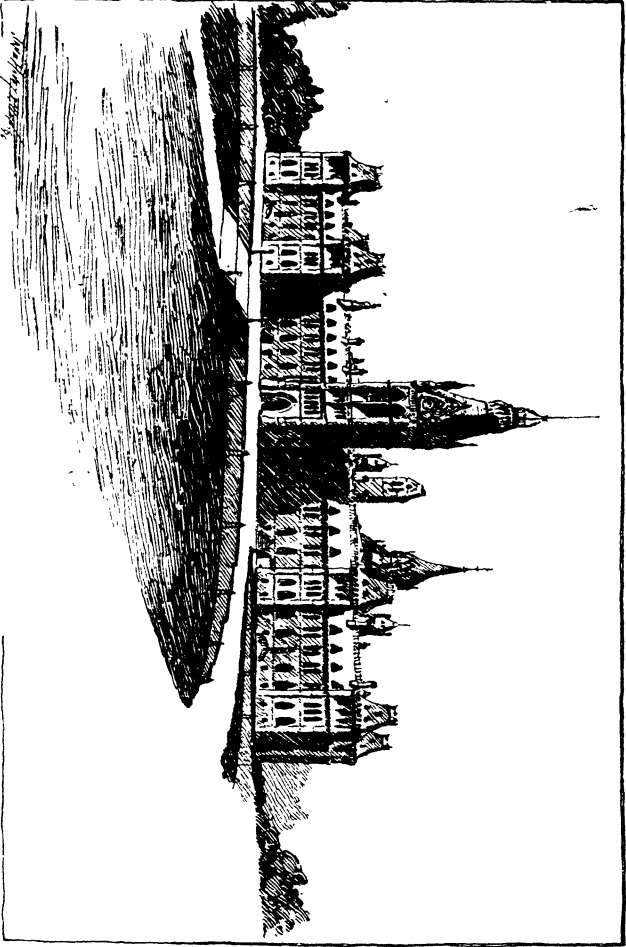
IN all the city of Ottawa there was not a happier boy than Stephen Harland.

He was one of the little pages in the House of Commons and every morning he hurried from his home up to the handsome stone parliament buildings on the hill where he waited on the gentlemen who assembled there.

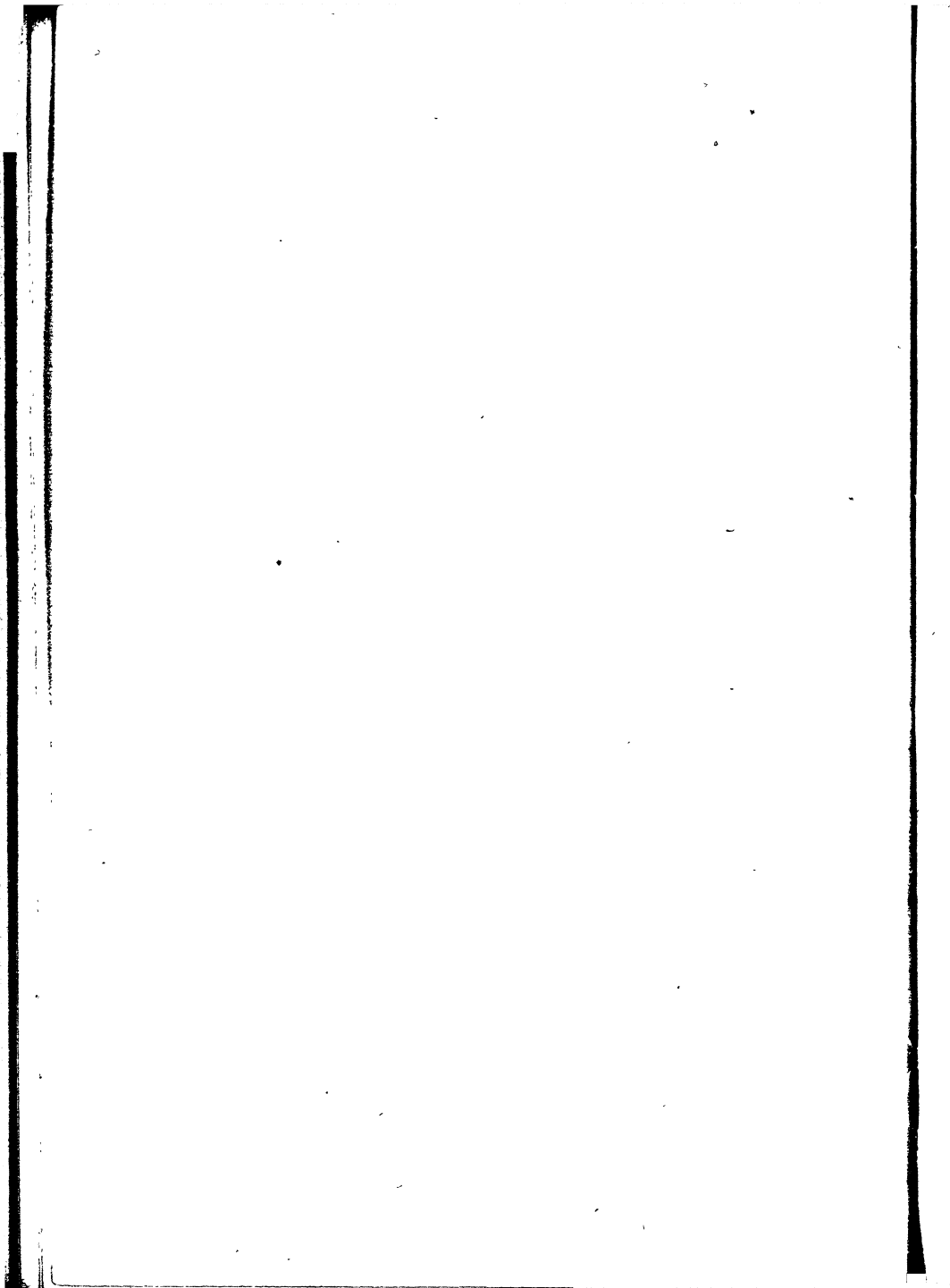
Stephen thought that it was very kind in these gentlemen to leave their homes and come from all parts of Canada to make laws for their fellow-countrymen.

"Politics," he said one day when he was talking to a group of pages assembled around the news-stand out on the street, "that's when you look after the men that can't take care of themselves. Business is when you're selfish and look out for number one."

The other pages raised a shout of laughter. They had been pages longer than Stephen had, and they did not have a very good opinion of some of the politicians. Stephen paid no attention to their laughter. He liked all the gentlemen whom he served and found no fault in them.



The House of Parliament at Ottawa.



"You're a green one," they called after him; but he only smiled and ran home to his grandmother, for he never loitered about the street as the other boys did.

He had a dear old grandmother who had brought him up ever since he had been a baby and she seemed like a mother to him.

Every evening she sat knitting by the window while she watched for him to come home, and when she saw his dark head passing underneath she said softly, "Praise God."

Sometimes the little page was kept very late when there was a long session of the House, but the grandmother never went to bed till he arrived.

Whenever he entered the room his first exclamation was, "How are you, grandmother?"

"Well and hearty, Stephen," her reply always was; "and how are you."

"Same as yourself, grandmother," he would say; then the old lady never failed to ask, "How is Sir James?"

"Sound as a nut, grandmother; he's good for twenty years yet. Ah, what a good man he is!" And then the little page would sink on a stool by the fire and while his grandmother was getting his tea ready for him he would dreamily look at the coals and think over the different things he had heard his beloved Sir James say that day.

Sir James was the leader of the government and it was he who had gotten Stephen his position as page. There had been some other boys

applying for the vacancy and one of them had scornfully told Stephen that he would never be accepted because he was a stranger in Ottawa.

Stephen only smiled at him. The other boy did not know that his grandfather had been a gardener to Sir James' father and that Sir James had promised to give Stephen a pageship.

Sir James was a tall man with gray wavy hair, a large nose, a large mouth, and smiling eyes.

He was always cheerful. Stephen had never seen him get angry. Sometimes he was very serious, sometimes very rebuking when he talked to the gentlemen who were on the other side of politics and who sat opposite him in the House, but Stephen had never seen him lose his temper.

When the pages were not running errands about the chamber in which the House of Commons met, they sat in a row at the foot of the Speaker, a tall gentleman in a gown and gloves who occupied the throne seat.

One day Stephen sat there his eyes fixed indignantly on a member of the opposition who was standing up shaking his forefinger in the air and uttering very harsh sentences as he gazed toward the place where Sir James sat.

This gentleman was accusing Sir James of running the country in debt.

Stephen's blood boiled as he listened to him. It was well that no member signaled to him to get a glass of water or to bring or take away papers, for he would not have seen him. No one did for every one was staring hard at the ex-

cited man in the opposition benches as he shook his finger at Sir James, who merely glanced past him up at the galleries.

Stephen looked admiringly at his patron, whose eyes coming slowly down from the galleries met his.

Sir James nodded and in an instant Stephen was at his side.

"My boy," said the great man laying his hand on the shoulder of the pale and trembling child who stooped to receive his order, "run out in the fresh air for a few minutes, but first"—and he took a pink rose from his buttonhole—"carry this up to Lady Delorme in the Speaker's gallery. Do you see her?"

"Yes, Sir James," replied Stephen and hurried away.

The member of the opposition was still roaring sentences in a tremendous voice at Sir James, but the other members were not listening to him as attentively as before. They were watching the little page.

Two minutes later they saw him going through the galleries with the rose in his hand. When he presented it to Lady Delorme she looked down at her husband and with a smile bowed and fastened it on her breast.

The member of the opposition had been watching the flower instead of attending to what he was saying, and he soon began to get confused and finally sat down muttering, "Of what use are thunder and lightning against such a man?"

Everybody was laughing at him.

"It serves him right for saying bad things," said Stephen to himself as he re-entered the chamber. "Sir James loves his country and would do nothing to injure it. Ah, he is going to speak," and he sat down on the steps.

Sir James rose slowly. When every eye in the chamber was fastened on him, he began to talk about Canada—the child among nations—and the duty of her sons toward her.

Stephen's face flushed as he listened to him. Oh, what grand words! He must remember every one of them to tell to grandmother.

"I am proud that I am a Canadian boy," he murmured to himself; "when I grow up I will be a politician and will work for Sir James and my country."

Sir James spoke for a long time and when at last he sat down, there was a great roar of applause—hands were clapped and feet stamped; he had shown that he had given up ease and wealth for his country; he was not robbing her, and the member of the opposition, as he listened to him, hung his head.

Stephen was sleeping soundly one night when he heard some one call him.

"Grandmother, is that you?" he asked.

"Yes, Stephen," she said in a firm voice; "will you come here?"

He ran hastily from his room to hers. "Don't you feel well, dear grandmother?"

"No, Stephen," she replied. He hurriedly lighted a candle.

"Oh, how pale you are!" he cried. "Shall I go for a doctor?"

She shook her head. "No, thank you. Give me that bottle of medicine and go put on some clothes. I want to talk to you."

In a very few minutes Stephen came running back. "Shall I light a fire, grandmother?"

"No, my dear child; sit down here," and she pointed to the edge of the bed. "Now will you be brave and listen to what I am going to say?"

"Yes, grandmother," he answered wonderingly.

"I have often talked to you of heaven," she said calmly, "that happy place where we shall go if—if what, Stephen?"

"If we love God," said Stephen reverently.

"That is right; and do you remember that I have always said that probably I would go first, for I am old and you are young?"

"I do, grandmother," he said, his lip trembling; "but you are not going yet."

"Yes, Stephen, my hour has come."

The little page sat staring at her, his face as pale as death.

"Would you wish to keep me back from that beautiful place?" she asked.

"No, grandmother."

"I will be waiting for you—never forget that, Stephen—and when you come we will wander together through green fields and by the still waters and we shall see our Saviour face to face. O Lord, how long?" and the old woman fell back on her pillows and clasped her hands.

Stephen had a wild desire to throw himself down by her side and burst into tears, but he overcame it.

"You will not be alone in the world," said his grandmother gently; "we have not made many friends here yet, but I have asked Mrs. Jones to let you live with her. Sir James has promised to get you a situation when you are older, where you will earn enough money to support yourself."

"Very well, grandmother," said the little page, choking back a lump in his throat.

"Here is a letter that I have written to Sir James," said his grandmother, drawing an envelope from under her pillow; "when the time comes that you are too old to be a page take this to him. He will remember; and now, Stephen, you must call Mrs. Jones."

"Grandmother, are you going to die now?"

"Yes, my dear boy."

"But you speak quietly, you are only pale. Grandmother, are you not mistaken?"

"No, Stephen."

"Grandmother," he said, "grandmother," and he stood up very straight beside the bed and clenched his hands to keep from crying, "what am I going to do without you?"

"I do not know, my dear lamb," she said softly, "unless you choose this time to give your heart to the Lord."

"Grandmother, I cannot do that. I love God, but I do not love him so much as I do you."

"Earthly friends fail us; I warned you of this,

Stephen ; now is the time the Lord Jesus would put his arms around you, Stephen, if you would let him."

"I have Sir James left," Stephen said.

"Suppose he should die."

"Then I would die too," and the little page threw himself on his knees by the bed.

"Poor lamb, poor lamb," and the old woman fondled his head, "if I could only take you with me; but you will come. The Lord is preparing a path. You will read in your Bible every day?"

"Yes, grandmother," he sobbed.

"And say your prayers?"

"Oh, yes, yes," and he flung his arms around her neck. "Grandmother, don't send for Mrs. Jones. Let me have you to myself till the last."

"Will you not be afraid?"

"Afraid of you?" and the little page drew back to look in her face. "Death is only like going to sleep, is it not?"

"Yes," she whispered; "for me it will be, in God's great goodness. He knows that I have had a troubled life. I shall sink quietly to rest."

In a few minutes she breathed in his ear, "Good-bye, do not forget; I shall wait for you."

"Oh, grandmother, come back! come back!" he cried, "I cannot let you go!"

His grandmother had gone, and when he found that she did not smile when he eagerly kissed her and that her cheeks were growing cold as he smoothed them with his hands, he dropped his head on his breast and went for Mrs. Jones.

Mrs. Jones did not quite know what to make of Stephen.

"He's the quietest boy I ever saw," she said one day when she was talking him over with a neighbor; "just like a mouse about the house. I'm afraid he's grieving for his grandmother."

Stephen was grieving for his grandmother. Every hour in the day he thought of her, and if it had not been for Sir James, he fancied that his grief would have killed him.

When he was up in the House, trotting about or sitting gazing at the fine face of the man who had been an idol to him, he felt comforted.

Sir James had no idea that his favorite page adored him to the extent that he did, until one day when some mention was made of proroguing the House.

The little page turned his eyes on him with a kind of terror and his face became desperately pale. Almost without knowing what he was doing he found himself beside Sir James.

"What is it, my lad?" asked the premier, as courteously as if Stephen were a grand gentleman like himself.

"Grandmother is dead," murmured the little page, "and I have no one but you, Sir James. If you leave Ottawa I—I—" then he stopped and something clicked in his throat.

"You are Harland's grandson," said Sir James thoughtfully; "would you like to go with me down the St. Lawrence to spend the summer?"

The little page could not speak, but his eyes gave an answer.

Sir James smiled at him, then he went on, for he loved children, "Is there anything else I can do for you, my boy?"

The little page flushed crimson, "Please, sir, I have everything that I can wish for now."

Sir James gazed thoughtfully after him as he hurried away."

"Queer boy—very intense," he said gravely.

Stephen felt as if he were walking on air. "Oh, if dear grandmother in heaven only knew!" he said eagerly to himself. "I will black his boots, I will wait on him, I will sleep with one ear open so that I can hear him if he calls me."

One, two, three days went by, and the little page was still in a state of bliss. The month of June had come and the weather was delightfully warm and sunny. Birds were singing, gardens were full of flowers, and it was beginning to get very hot and close in the carpeted, cushioned chamber where the House of Commons met.

On the fourth afternoon he was remarking with some anxiety that Sir James was late in taking his seat when the minister of public works sent him to the library for a book.

The little page hurried back with it and found a sudden and strange hush instead of the usual whispering, rustling atmosphere of the chamber.

Some one had moved an adjournment, and from floor and galleries the people were going out as silently as from a funeral.

The little page looked at the vacant seat and paused aghast. Then he approached one of his fellow-pages, "Is—is it Sir James?"

"Yes, he's dangerously ill," said the boy under his breath; "hurrah, we've got a holiday!"

Stephen dropped the book that he had brought and steadied himself against a desk. Everything grew black before his eyes and he fainted.

During the next few days there were no sessions of Parliament. The city and the whole country hung breathlessly on the reports that came from the sick-bed of the great statesman.

Nobody but Mrs. Jones thought or cared anything about the unhappy little page who spent his time trudging from the city down to Sir James' country house so that he could read the latest bulletins posted on the gates, and Mrs. Jones was too much excited by the anticipation of an approaching State funeral to take much notice of him.

Stephen was very quiet—he did not try to attract attention. No one knew that of all the sad hearts in the city none were so hopelessly sad as his; that of all the relatives assembled in the Delorme mansion no one, except the wife of the dying man, was as despairing, as utterly broken and helpless as he was.

Still he neither moaned nor cried, not even when he sprang up in bed one night awakened by the sound that he had dreaded to hear—the tolling of the city bells.

Sir James was dead.

Stephen did not lie down again in bed, but sat almost motionless till daybreak. Then he

got up and put on his page's livery for he knew that there would be work for him to do. The next two days were busy ones for him and like a boy in a dream he obeyed the orders he received. At the close of that time an impressive scene took place.

Stephen sat with the other pages in the strangely changed and darkened chamber. He would never see such a sight again. The galleries were thronged with men and women dressed in black. Every member of Parliament was in his place on the floor of the House. Along the front row where the members sat was the vacant chair covered with crape and having on the desk before it a wreath of white flowers and the words, "Our Chief."

Stephen's face was as pale as the flowers and he could not take his eyes from the mournful seat.

Next it sat a gentleman who was the leader of the French party in the House.

He had been a great friend of Sir James and when he rose to say something every one looked at him. He held a paper in his hand and he wished to ask Parliament to give the dead premier a State funeral.

There was a deep silence in the chamber, but the people could not hear his voice. He tried to raise it higher, but he could not. He hesitated, stopped, then stretched out his hand toward the pages, who sat in a row of little dark forms below the Speaker.

Stephen took the paper from him and carried it to the Speaker, who read in a solemn voice

what it contained, then sent it to the assistant-clerk to repeat in French.

Some of the people in the gallery were crying, and they cried still more when a tall gentleman who was the leader of the opposition got up and in a polished manner and with a clear, distinct voice spoke warmly in praise of the dead man with whom he had not agreed and yet whom he had admired.

Stephen could not shed a tear. He looked about him in a dull way and wished that he could, for his eyes were burning as if they were on fire.

That day and night he could neither eat nor sleep. He haunted the buildings on the hill till Sir James' body was carried there and laid in the Senate Chamber.

"I want a boy to look after these flowers," said a policeman coming into the room where he was waiting for the other pages.

Several of the lads stepped forward, but Stephen pushed them aside.

"Oh, let me," he said.

The policeman stared at him for he was the smallest of them all.

"Why you, rather than a bigger boy?" he said.

"Because I loved him," replied the little page.

"Come in, then," said the policeman gruffly, and he led the way through long corridors, avoiding the ones where people stood crowded together waiting their turn to get into the Senate chamber.

The little page started back when they got to the threshold, for he did not recognize the room. All the red furniture was covered with white, there were white coverings on the floor, and the walls were festooned in black.

At one side of the room was a bank of beautiful flowers, many of them gifts from England and far-away parts of Canada, and below these flowers and partly surrounded by a guard of soldiers and members of Parliament was the central object in the room.

The little page gave a great sob when he saw the long steel casket.

"Let me look at him once," he said to the policeman, "then I will come back to you."

The policeman nodded and the boy took his place in the line of people passing slowly through the room.

There lay Sir James, dressed in a handsome uniform, his face white and still on the satin pillow.

One glimpse only the little page had of him, then the endless line of spectators behind pushed him on.

All night long and all the next morning the constant procession of people through the Senate chamber was kept up. The little page moved quietly about, sprinkling the bank of flowers with water and watching for a chance to do something that he thought it was his duty to do.

In his breast pocket lay the letter addressed to Sir James that his grandmother had given to him. He felt that it was something sacred and

that no other person must ever touch it. That letter must be put into the coffin and buried with Sir James.

Just before he was sent away his chance came. It was quite late at night—there were not so many people going through the chamber—and the soldiers and the gentlemen dressed in mourning noticed that Stephen stepped up to the casket, but they did not hear him give one heart-broken sigh nor did they see him slip a letter in close to the cold hand.

The little page felt that his work was done. He went home across the big square that during the day had been thronged with people who had come to the city to take a last look at the face of the man of whom Canada was so proud. The square was quiet now, but in the morning the people would come back.

The next day was the worst day for him. Sometimes he pinched himself to feel if he were really alive, and when the boy at the news-stand offered him a tiny black flag for his cap, he looked at him in a dazed way without understanding a word of what he said.

Surely this was not the quiet city of Ottawa. Everything seemed to be moving to the stately pile of the grand parliament buildings. He stopped and wearily put his hand to his head. What a confusion!

It seemed impossible that out of the chaotic struggling array of men, women, children, infantry and cavalry officers, different societies and associations and vehicles of all descriptions

an orderly procession could come, and yet it did.

At one o'clock bells were tolled, minute guns fired, the bands began a mournful dead march, the dragoon guards filed slowly by; judges, lawyers, civil servants, city councils, and many private citizens, all marched solemnly in the direction of one of the city churches.

All the pages were in the procession, and Stephen trudged along with them the sun pouring down on his drooping head.

He did not notice where they were going till the puffing of a steam engine caught his attention.

They had left the church and were approaching a railway station.

"What is this?" he said rousing himself and addressing one of the other pages; "are we not going to the cemetery?"

"No; you're in the clouds," said the boy sharply. "Don't you know they are going to bury him in the country? Thank fortune they don't want us."

"In the country?" gasped Stephen.

"Yes, his family burying-place. Whew, I'll be glad to get out of this; it's stifling hot! I guess we're going to have a thunder storm."

A few minutes later Stephen was hurrying wearily homeward, not listening to the thunder rolling in the heavens, nor heeding the rain that was drenching him to the skin.

They had taken Sir James away; what was he to do?

Upon reaching Mrs. Jones' house he went to his room and counted the small stock of money that he had. He did not know whether it would take him to the country or not, but he had made up his mind that he must get there in some way or other.

Some hundreds of miles from the city of Ottawa is a green and well-kept cemetery.

There the dead premier was laid to rest and for days and weeks afterward the whole country flocked to the cemetery to look upon his grave.

The people did not come at night nor very early in the morning, so those were the times chosen by Lady Delorme to visit her husband's grave.

Just after daylight one July morning she left her carriage at the cemetery gates and followed by the pitying glance of her coachman walked slowly along the path to the new-made grave.

She quickened her steps on drawing near.

There, lying on the white lilies with his arms thrown lovingly over the grassy mound, was a very pale and weary-looking boy who was fast asleep.

Lady Delorme gazed at the worn shoes and the dusty clothes, and to her surprise recognized the livery of one of the Ottawa pages. How had he come there?

She knelt down by the grave without speaking. For a long time she remained there her lips moving in prayer, her eyes fixed on the motionless boy.

Suddenly there was a loud cry, "Sir James, Sir James!" and the little page started up wildly.

He seemed confused when he saw Lady Delorme, but he soon recovered himself and standing up made her a bow and waited for her to speak to him.

"Who are you?" she said gently.

"I am Stephen Harland, my lady," he replied.

"Harland," she returned, "I remember that name."

The little page explained to her that he was the grandson of a man who had been in the service of Sir James' father.

"And what are you doing here?" she went on.

"I came to give my heart to God, my lady," said the little page.

"I do not understand," she said with a puzzled face.

"Grandmother died," said the little page wearily, "and I could not love God; then Sir James died and I thought I should die too, but I did not. I took my money to pay my way here so that I could see his grave, but I had not enough. I had to walk some of the way, then I got ill."

"Poor child," said the lady compassionately.

"But I found friends, my lady," said the little page, "and they nursed me and gave me money to come here, and I am glad I can go back to them if I wish. I think though that I will return to Ottawa where grandmother is buried. Perhaps if I say over her grave that I love God now and am willing to be his little servant she will know it."

"There is no one on the earth that can help us," said the lady with a burst of tears; "only God can heal our broken hearts."

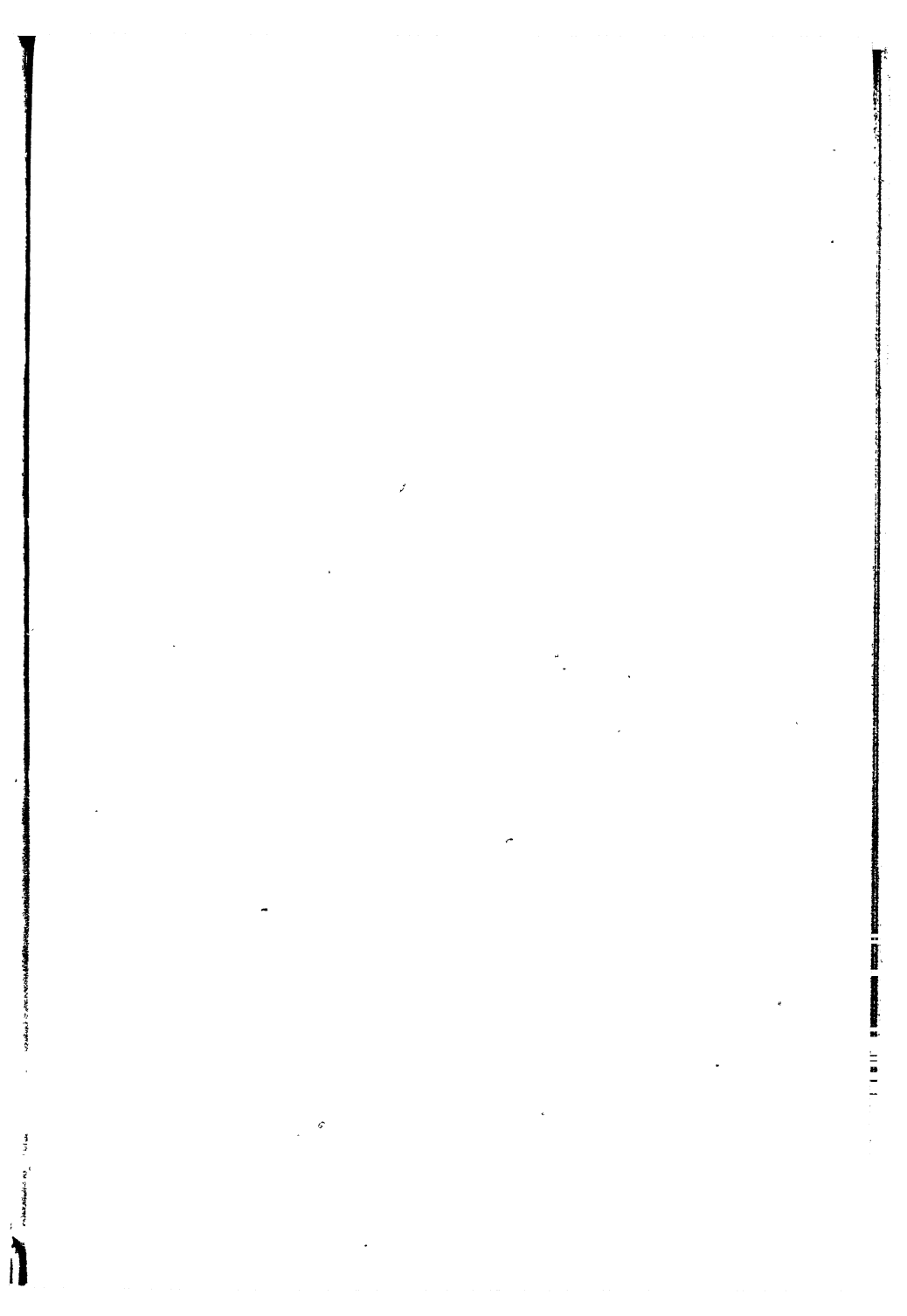
"Yes, my lady," said the little page respectfully.

Lady Delorme composed herself. "You look tired; go to my coachman—no, stay, I will go with you. If Sir James were here he would say that you must be taken care of. Oh, his generous heart," and she began sobbing again, "he loved every one—every one loved him."

The little page never left Lady Delorme.

If you go now to a beautiful country house near the green cemetery, you will find waiting on her and loving her for her own as well as her husband's sake the little page who will soon become a man.







"She took up the sparkling things."

V

HER EXCELLENCY'S JEWELS

HIS excellency the Earl of Linscombe, the Governor-general of Canada, was making what the newspapers called a vice-regal progress through the Dominion, which he ruled as representative of her majesty the Queen of England. That is, he was going from town to town accompanied by his wife—a noble lady who was also much beloved by the people of Canada—and a small suite, and he was being welcomed and fêted, and public meetings and receptions in his honor were being held till it was really a wonder that his strength and powers of endurance did not give out.

In the course of their progress the vice-regal party came to a town situated on the banks of a river that winds through vividly green meadows in the province of New Brunswick.

On the evening of their arrival there had been a band of music at the station to greet them. A torchlight procession and a number of people in carriages escorted them to the villa set apart for their residence while they were in the town.

The next day there were addresses of welcome, a State dinner, and an exhibition of fire-

works, and on the following day their two indefatigable excellencies were supposed to visit the various public institutions of the town, which were all thrown open for their inspection.

It was the middle of the afternoon, and Lady Linscombe was just about to go to her room for a short period of well-earned rest, when her maid brought her a message from one of her husband's aides-de-camp.

The insane asylum had not been visited—a note had just come from the superintendent—their excellencies had been expected early in the morning; was he not to have the pleasure of conducting them through the institution over which he had the honor to preside?

Lady Linscombe wrinkled her eyebrows slightly and smiled to herself. Then she said gently: "We must not neglect any one. Tow-ers," turning to her maid, "tell Captain Dysart that I will go. It will be too late if we wait until his excellency returns."

An hour later Lady Linscombe was leaning back against the cushions of her carriage. The asylum had been visited and approved of; all its appointments were orderly and worthy of praise, and with a comfortable sense of having performed her duty, her excellency listened to an entertaining story that Captain Dysart, who sat opposite her, was relating.

Suddenly the coachman pulled up the horses. They had come to a street crossing, and there stood a tiny maid holding up an apron full of flowers and imperiously calling, "Stop!"

Captain Dysart turned quickly. "What a beautiful child!" he exclaimed.

She was indeed a little beauty. She had black eyes, black curly hair, rounded, soft dark cheeks, and exquisitely shaped hands and feet.

"A veritable gipsy," said Lady Linscombe. "What do you wish, my child?" she added softly.

"To give you dese, ex'el'cy," said the little girl, opening her apron and displaying a number of crimson roses. "I picked 'em mesef; will you let me into your booful carriage?"

She put her head on one side; nothing could exceed the roguishness and entreaty of her glances till the sound of a cough made her turn her head and espy a tall policeman sauntering across the street toward her.

"Oh, go 'way, go 'way!" she cried wildly, yet laughing at the same time. "Bad man, you are everywhere. I shall not go home," and holding her flowers tightly to her bosom, she clung to the carriage step.

The newcomer suppressed a laugh, and raising his hand to his helmet, waited to be addressed.

"Who is this child?" asked Captain Dysart, looking at the little girl.

"She's the worst little girl in the town, sir. We call her the 'runaway,' because she never stays at home."

"Are her parents living?" asked the gentleman.

"Her mother is dead, sir, and her father is an officer in the army out in India. He sent this

little girl home awhile ago on account of the climate. She's got an aunt here, a nice lady who keeps a school; but do her best, she can't keep the child indoors. She's crazy about the water, as they say Indian children often are; she's down by the river and into the ponds all day long, and always with that dabble of wet down the front of her little 'pinny.'"

"And she does not like you because you take her home?"

"That's it, sir."

"Is it safe to have her wander about alone?" asked Lady Linscombe.

"Your excellency," said the policeman, touching his helmet again, "nothing could happen to her in this quiet place; everybody knows her. Then after she gets over the novelty of the thing, I expect she'll settle down."

"Let me in, ex'el'cy," pleaded the child, still clinging to the carriage; "I hate that bad man."

The policeman shook his head at her. "You don't hate any one, Miss Runaway, it isn't in you; you've learned to tell stories out there among those Hindus. Come, now, go home to your aunt. You wouldn't think, your excellency," he said, turning to the carriage, "to look at this nice little girl that she's been tied up similar to a little dog; but she'll bite and scratch and gnaw ropes, and even burrow underground to run away."

"Let me in, dear ex'e'cy," begged the little one, her curly head on one side, her eloquent

dark eyes fixed coaxingly on the bright blue ones so earnestly surveying her.

Lady Linscombe glanced at Captain Dysart, and turning the handle of the carriage door he assisted the child in, who nestled on the seat close to her excellency's graceful figure.

"I saw you in the march last night," murmured the little girl, caressing the tailor-made gown with soft fingers. "There was red fire all round you, and you looked boofuller than angels."

Lady Linscombe took the child on her lap. She was exquisitely neat and clean except a few flower stains on her tiny brown hands and, as the policeman had said, a dabble of wet down the front of her embroidered muslin frock.

"I beg your excellency's pardon," said the policeman, coming a little nearer, "but I must ask her if she stole those roses. There's been complaints lodged against her. Did you, miss? I saw some just like them in the mayor's garden."

"I was goin' to be a naughty thief," said the child, biting her red lips which hid two rows of pearly teeth, "then Mr. Mayor he said he would not put me in prison, and he picked 'em hisself," and she burst into a triumphant laugh.

"And that was pretty good of Mr. Mayor," growled the policeman, "considerin' it was only a week ago that you got into his house and set all his faucets running, which would have drenched his furniture and carpets if it hadn't been discovered."

The child turned her back on him and said :

"Away over the water in my papa's country I knew an ex'el'cy and she took me home in her booful carriage."

Lady Linscombe smiled and requested Captain Dysart to get the child's address.

"Six Cypress Street, sir," said the policeman. "Mrs. Leigh is her aunt's name."

The little girl threw a rose at him as the carriage rolled away, while Lady Linscombe bowed graciously.

"She's a real lady and no make-believe," he muttered, looking admiringly after her excellency. "It's only the high-up ones that know how to treat folks that have not much money. These upstarts, I hate 'em," and he curled his lip as he strode away.

Lady Linscombe and Captain Dysart were looking with much interest at the dark-haired, vivacious child who was prattling to them of India, which something in their appearance and surroundings had recalled to her.

"What is your name, little one?" asked Lady Linscombe.

"Beatrice Maude," said the child; "but most gen'ly I'm called Gipsy—naughty Gipsy Leigh. I runned away this morning and I fink Aunt Dora will be in a stew about me."

"Where have you been all day?" asked the gentleman.

"Up to the cem'tery pouring water on the lubly violets on my dear ayah's grave. She did not like these cold skies and cried and shivered and went up to live with God; then I played by

the river with some little black chillen and then was getting my dinner at the hotel."

"How do you, ah—go about it—that is, dining at the hotel at your tender age?" asked Captain Dysart, smiling broadly at her.

"Don't you know," said Gipsy benevolently, "a big man like you? You walks in and takes a seat, then you bows your head and says grace and the waiter pushes your chair in and says, 'What is your order, miss?' and then you say bread and milk and potato and gravy and some fruit. Then he tucks a napkin under your chin and you eats all you can."

"But you have forgotten the most important part," said Captain Dysart gravely.

Gipsy opened her eyes very wide and asked him what he meant.

"How do you pay your bill?"

Gipsy laughed long and merrily. "Put out your hand, Mr. Gen'leman; take off your glove."

He obeyed her and pulling a long-stemmed but-tercup from her dress she held it over her palm. "See that yellow mark, that's gold. Daisies is silver; when I don't have no flowers I runs away."

Lady Linscombe sighed gently as she glanced across at her escort. "What a strange life for a child! She should not be allowed to lead it."

"Then I was looking for you, ex'el'cy," remarked Gipsy, carrying one of the gloved hands caressingly to her lips.

They had arrived before a small ivy-covered cottage where a slender woman with a laughing

face like Gipsy's and a widow's gown on came hurrying to the gate and somewhat nervously surveyed the grand carriage.

"We have brought your niece home," said Lady Linscombe in response to her embarrassed apologies; "it has been a pleasure, I assure you. Now my little one we must part."

Gipsy sat back and shook her head seriously, "Some little girls scream," she said, "when you makes 'em do things they doesn't want to; they scream louder than the siren whistles on the river boats."

The footman standing with his hand on the carriage door turned his head aside and glanced up enviously at the coachman who, having his back to his mistress, was enabled to smile and even indulge in a faint chuckle unobserved.

"I know they can," said Lady Linscombe kindly; "but you will be a good child Gipsy and not do so."

"I like to be a bad child, ex'el'cy," said the little girl settling herself back in a corner, "you has more fun and"—knitting her pretty brows at Captain Dysart and the footman—"if any man lifts me out of this booful carriage I know I shall scream."

"Do come, Gipsy," said her aunt extending her hands. "I have some delicious cakes for your tea."

"Aunt Dora," said the child leaning forward for an instant, "go way; I haven't much 'pinion of you. Her ex'el'cy is like India and my dear papa and I'm going to live with her."

The hands were promptly withdrawn. Here was a very naughty child, and Lady Linscombe looked helplessly at her.

At last a plan suggested itself. "If you go into the house without screaming you may come and see me to-morrow," she said.

"All yite, ex'el'cy," and with unexpected haste the child tumbled out of the carriage and rushed into the cottage as if fearful that her good resolve might leave her.

"A case of love at first sight," murmured Captain Dysart as they turned homeward. "I hope that the little girl may not take advantage of your excellency's well-known love for children and victimize you.

During the remainder of Lady Linscombe's stay in the picturesque city by the beautiful Canadian river, Captain Dysart had reason to fear many times that little Gipsy Leigh was taking advantage of the devotion to children that was one of the striking characteristics of the noble lady with whom she was so greatly taken.

The child gave up her wanderings about the town, and morning, noon, and night was to be found at the villa gates begging the lodge-keeper to let her in to see her dear ex'el'cy. One day when she was refused admittance she did as the policeman said she would do, she burrowed under the picket fence to emerge triumphantly and prosecute a successful search for Lady Linscombe, which brought her into a drawing room full of dignified people, where she looked like a

little dirty white rabbit as she dropped on a footstool beside her astonished excellency.

It was a complete case of infatuation, the townspeople said, and they sincerely hoped that the good influence that her excellency was graciously exerting would have a reforming effect upon one of the most troublesome children that ever lived.

The endeavor was greatly helped by an accident that befell Lord Linscombe which detained the vice-regal party a much longer time than had been expected. He sprained his ankle one day in getting from his carriage and for some weeks he was forbidden to move about, so that traveling was out of the question. When Gipsy understood the significance of the affair she wickedly said that she was glad.

Day after day she visited the villa, and Lady Linscombe, who could not help being touched by the child's devotion and who really took a warm interest in her, instructed her servants, with whom the child necessarily spent a great deal of her time, to talk wisely to her and to try to implant useful lessons in her lawless little breast.

One afternoon while Lady Linscombe was occupied with a visiting delegation of ladies from some society, her maid Towers was alternately giving Gipsy a reading lesson and listening to her babble about India.

Towers was a good-natured looking woman who had been with Lady Linscombe but a short time, having taken the place of a valued maid who had suddenly fallen ill. In some respects

she was rather an unsatisfactory servant, but Lady Linscombe had kindly and patiently pointed out some of her faults to her and Towers was apparently trying to do better.

Gipsy was very fond of Towers, and on this day after closing her book she said, "Tell me a story about the time when you were a little girl."

Towers told her a long tale about a pleasant childhood spent in a cottage by the sea.

"Have you any little brothers and sisters now?" asked Gipsy.

"No," said Towers sadly, "they are all dead."

"And no little girls and no little boys?" asked Gipsy.

"No; only a husband."

"Where is your husband?" said Gipsy.

"Oh, he is somewhere," said Towers evasively.

"Why don't you live with him?" urged the little girl.

Towers caught her breath. "Oh, I hope to some day when we have money enough."

"Are you very poor?"

Towers laughed bitterly. "Yes, Miss Gipsy. Poor folks can't live on air, and it takes money to keep men going, it takes money. Women can manage——" and she fell into a reverie.

"Show me his picture, please," said Gipsy.

Towers started. "Oh, I cannot, I cannot."

Something in her manner struck the little girl. "I know it already," she said; "it is the picture of that black, black man you kiss."

Towers shrugged her shoulders and laughed resignedly. "Well, if you know it already, there's no harm in showing you," she said, and she drew it from the bosom of her dress; "but, Miss Gipsy, he isn't black—he's not so dark as you are. It's the photographer that has made him look so."

"I don't like him, he is cross," said Gipsy, pushing the picture aside. "Put him away."

"He is not cross," said Towers; "he is the kindest man in the world."

"I'm tired," ejaculated Gipsy, throwing down her book, "and I forgot to feed my pussy-cat, and I'm going home. Tell her dear ex'el'cy good-bye for me."

Slowly, and yawning sleepily, for it was a very warm day, the child went down the front staircase, peeping curiously between the railings into a white and gold room where the French windows stood open and there was a glitter of pretty draperies and handsome dresses. She wished very much to go in, but she did not dare do so, for she had been plainly told that if she did not observe the rules of this house she would not be allowed to visit it.

"Dear ex'el'cy," she murmured, "Gipsy likes you better than the flowers; oh, oh, I am hotter than I ever was in my life." She paused before a glass in the hall. Her curly, black hair was lying in wet rings on her forehead, and the neck of her little gown was damp.

Dragging her tiny feet along, she entered a small park near the house. The avenue wound

through it to the gateway, but Gipsy did not go so far as that. She strayed aside from the gravel road to pick a lily and sat down to arrange it in the ribbon of her broad-rimmed hat, then rolling over on the grass under the spreading branches of a thorn, she fell fast asleep.

That evening there was to be a reception held in a country house some miles up the river. Lord and Lady Linscombe owing to their official position did not attend any form of entertainment given by a private individual, but in this case an exception was made as the people giving the reception were members of a noble English family closely connected with that of the Earls of Linscombe.

So their excellencies were going, and as the long summer twilight closed in the men up at the stable were busy preparing the carriages, the cook in the kitchen and the tablemaids were occupied in serving dinner to a vice-regal household assembled in the dining room, and the halls, the drawing room, and the library in the front of the house were as quiet and apparently as deserted as the park outside.

Up in Lady Linscombe's dressing room, over the front hall, her maid, Towers, was moving about with a curious expression on her face. She was very pale, till noticing the appearance of her cheeks in a glass, she rubbed something on them to make them red. But she could do nothing to change the expression of her eyes, and not liking to look at herself, she turned away from her

reflection and busied herself with laying out an evening gown for her mistress and selecting a pair of gloves to go with it. Then she took a key from her pocket and went to a large box that stood in a corner of the room. It had a very intricate lock, and Towers was some time in opening it. Finally the fastenings yielded, and lifting the lid, she drew out several small cases. These she laid on the table, and pressing the springs drew out magnificent glittering diamonds in bracelets, rings, earrings, and a necklace. Her hand shook while she arranged them—she bit her lip nervously, made a few steps toward the window, turned back again, but finally decided what she would do. She placed a signal in the window by throwing out the ends of two long lace curtains; then she stepped into the hall, listened carefully, and finding everything still, went rapidly toward the kitchen, where she engaged in an interrupted, but seemingly cheerful gossip with the cook.

In the meantime Gipsy woke up. Just about the same time that Towers left the dressing room she scrambled to her feet, looked sleepily about her, then recognizing where she was, for she was used to waking up in all kinds of unexpected places, said: "I'm hungry; p'rhaps ex'el'cy will give me something to eat before I go home."

She started to run toward the house at full speed. A little, dark, slight man who had been standing behind an elm, drew back when he saw her and frowned savagely. He was the man to whom Towers had been signaling, and he was

in a hurry to get into the house and out again before their excellencies had finished dining.

Gipsy trotted in through the hall and paused as she heard the sound of voices and the tinkling of china and silver in the dining room. She was gradually learning the proprieties of life and knew that she must not interrupt a dinner party. Yet she was hungry. It suddenly came to her mind that she had dropped some cherries behind a sofa in Lady Linscombe's dressing room. There were not very many, but still they would be better than nothing, and perhaps she would find Towers, who would get her something to eat.

She hurried upstairs, but on entering the dressing room stopped short with a cry of delight. What dazzling things were those! They were far brighter than the most beautiful glass beads that she had ever seen. She ran up to the dressing table and clasped the diamonds eagerly, then murmuring and laughing to herself, she took up the sparkling things, handled them caressingly, and finally clasped the necklace around her little dark throat, hung the bracelets over her arms, slipped her fingers through the rings, and even hooked the earrings in her black curls.

However, attractive as they were, the diamonds did not satisfy her hunger, and she turned from the glass where she had been surveying herself in deep admiration, and dropping on her hands and knees, crept behind the sofa.

The cherries were there, two dozen and more, scattered over the floor, and one by one she

picked them up, polished them on her white dress, and ate them, nibbling every particle of the luscious fruit from the stones with her little sharp teeth, occasionally stopping to push up the bracelets that kept dropping down over her wrists and got in her way.

While she sat there as quiet as a mouse and quite invisible to any one entering the room, the dark, slight man glided in from the park, slipped up the front stairs and came in where she was. The first thing that his eyes fell on was the array of empty jewel cases.

He stared incredulously, then looked at the preconcerted signal—the lace curtains hanging from the window—looked back at the boxes again, and with a stealthy step, went all around the room, opening drawers, lifting the lids of boxes, till at last approaching the big one in the corner he raised its cover and took out the small one.

While he was engaged in examining this, a faint noise made him start. He glanced toward the sofa in the corner of the room, then went to it and looked over the back. He could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyesight. There sat a little girl arrayed in the jewels that he had come to steal. She had them all on, every one.

He made an astonished gesture, leaned over toward her, and the next instant Gipsy would have been rapidly stripped of her excellency's jewels if she had not caught sight of him and looked up with a cheerful "How d'ye do, Towers' husband?"

The man was a very composed person; he

had only been taken aback once or twice in his life, and this was one of the occasions.

"Towers' husband," he muttered, "you little —," and he called Gipsy a very bad name. "How do you know who I am?"

Gipsy was not at all afraid of him. She had met many strangers in the course of her life and unfortunately she was accustomed to being scolded, for she had been at times a very naughty girl, so she replied quite calmly: "You looks like your picture, only worse. I am glad I am not your little girl. Go get me something to eat, won't you? I'm 'most starving," and going down on her hands and knees again, she crept under the sofa and emerged beside him.

"Where did you get these?" he asked, touching with trembling finger the jewels that hung around the child's neck.

"I fink they're exel'cy's," said Gipsy. "Go 'way bad man. I hate you to touch me," and shrugging her shoulders she turned her back on him. "Send Towers to me."

The man did not go away, but stood over her. Luckily for the child she did not know his desperate condition of mind. He was thinking over a number of plans. For weeks he had been waiting for a chance to steal Lady Linscombe's valuable jewels.

For many a weary mile he had followed the vice-regal party. Here in this favorable place a plot had been arranged between him and his too yielding wife. She was to lay out the diamonds, then disregarding her mistress' order,

which was that she was never to leave them unguarded, she was to go down to the kitchen while her husband was to steal in from the park, seize the jewels, and run away with them to a hiding-place in a forest beyond the city.

There he could remain till all danger of discovery was over, then he would make his way to some large city where he could sell the diamonds and be joined by his wife.

This was his wicked plan. He had not thought of the sin of robbing Lady Linscombe, who had been so kind to his wife, he had thought only of getting some money for himself.

Now he was thwarted by a child. Owing to her extraordinary recognition of him, if he took the jewels from her his wife would be ruined, for the child would say, "Towers' husband stole the diamonds," and he would probably be traced and arrested; and he had fancied that not a soul in the place would recognize him.

It was maddening, and he ground his teeth at Gipsy, who was frowning impatiently at him.

"Towers," called the child suddenly, lifting up her shrill little voice, "Towers, Towers."

In the still evening air her voice carried all over the house. Towers in the kitchen down below ran up a back stairway like a deer, while Lady Linscombe sent a tablemaid in great haste to know what was the matter with the child.

Towers' husband immediately took his part. He knew that it would not do for him to run away—that would be sure to draw suspicion on him; he would stay and greet his wife as natu-

rally as he could and as if he had come only for the purpose of seeing her. Yet he ought not to be found in Lady Linscombe's dressing room, so he stepped out into the hall.

Towers, breathless and confused, stopped short when she saw him, but soon threw herself on his neck. In a few hurried syllables he told her what had happened, then he melted away like a shadow in the direction of the park.

Gipsy stood staring at them and peevishly submitted to be stripped of the jewels which Towers dropped hastily into their cases as if they burnt her.

"You darling child," said the woman kissing her pretty hands. "You darling, darling child."

"I was cross to your husband," said Gipsy in mild surprise. "I don't like him."

"Never mind, pet," said Towers, "he means well, but it's hard for some people to be good. Go to the pantry, sweetheart, and Mary will give you some bread and milk."

"God bless the little child," she sobbed, throwing herself on her knees as Gipsy left the room. "I thank heaven that she was sent here." And Towers throwing her arm around the diamonds fainted dead away.

"Ex'el'cy," asked Gipsy as she was about to be sent home that evening, "do men ever wear pretty stones like yours?"

"No, they do not," said Lady Linscombe, "but they buy them for their wives and daughters."

"I fink Towers' husband wants some like yours for Towers," said the child innocently, "cause he looked as if he loved them."

Lady Linscombe said nothing, but her face, as she got into her carriage and drove away, was a very thoughtful one.

She was thinking over her maid's agitation as she dressed her—her flushed cheeks, her red eyes, and the trembling of her hands.

She was still thinking of her when she entered the reception room, and her sweet seriousness of manner made her seem more charming than ever. Everybody said how very beautiful her excellency was that evening. There was no one present who could vie with her for distinction and elegance; but her face still wore the same thoughtful expression and Lord Linscombe kept anxiously watching her.

At last he seized a moment when they were standing near each other to say, "You are not feeling well this evening, Adelaide."

"It is these diamonds," she said, holding up her head as if to avoid the sight of them. "They oppress me."

Lord Linscombe glanced at the stones sparkling on her neck and arms, and asked, "Why do you make so disturbing a remark?"

"There were tears on my necklace this evening, Gerald," she said, "a woman's tears; I cannot wear them again. You know that I have little love for precious stones. Will you not send them to the banker's? Suppose some poor weak man or woman should steal them and be

sent to prison. It would cause me intense unhappiness."

"I know it would," said his excellency hastily. "I shall send them away; they are not worth a sigh from you. Now will you become yourself again?"

Lady Linscombe smiled lovingly at him and they separated.

When they were on their way home that night driving under the wide-spreading branches of the forest trees extended over the quiet road, Lady Linscombe said to her husband: "Do you think that you could have some employment found for the husband of my maid, who has come to visit her and who has nothing to do?"

"Certainly, if you wish it," was the reply. "What can he do?"

"He has been a valet; but Towers says he will do anything. She wishes him to give up the roving life he has been leading."

"I will have him looked after at once," said his excellency; "but are you not discouraged? You know a good many of your *protégés* do not turn out well."

"I know it; but some of them do, and nothing excuses us from our duty. We must extend a helping hand to every feeble brother or sister, or we shall not have the approval of our own consciences or the blessing of God—but you understand this better than I do and act upon it more faithfully."

"No, no; not more faithfully," said his excellency; "but I am thankful every day of my life

that we both understand that there is no happiness in this world except as one acknowledges the privilege of rendering loving service to all. By the way, what arrangement have you made about your other *protégée*, the little girl you call Gipsy?"

"I am going to have a farewell talk with her to-morrow" said Lady Linscombe. "She does not know that we are to leave here in two days. However, she has already promised me that she will tell no more falsehoods, that she will keep away from the river, and that she will attend her aunt's school with other little girls."

"Do you think she will keep her promise?"

"I think so, for she has a great desire to visit me some day, and I told her that unless she fulfills these conditions she cannot come."

"She will probably do as you wish," said Lord Linscombe; "you have a marvelous influence over children."

Lady Linscombe did not reply to him and they drove silently home.

Two days later the whole town assembled on the bank of the river to see their excellencies leave. It seemed to the citizens that they were losing dear friends—Lord and Lady Linscombe had been so kind, so interested in the people of the town, in their industries and charities, and, best of all, they had been so attentive to the poor and suffering ones.

Gipsy stood beside her aunt, tightly holding her hand. She had made up her mind not to

cry, and she bravely waved her handkerchief as the carriage containing their excellencies and their suite drove down to the wharf, but when the band struck up "God Save the Queen," she broke down.

"I can't let you go, ex'el'cy," she cried, and breaking away from her aunt she dashed under horses' heads and between groups of people who surveyed her with astonished faces till presently she arrived on the steamer's deck where Lady Linscombe stood holding a bouquet while she bowed and smiled to the crowds on shore.

Lord Linscombe looked pityingly on the child, but Lady Linscombe knew it would be unwise to sympathize too deeply with her, so she said quietly: "Ah, good-bye again, dear little Gipsy; you have come to tell me once more that you will keep your promises."

"Yes—yes," said Gipsy confusedly.

"Will you have some of my flowers?" said her excellency, putting a few lovely lilies in the child's hand, "and write me a little letter tomorrow. Don't forget that we are to see each other very soon."

"I want to go with you now," said Gipsy brokenly; "don't send me back, ex'el'cy, don't send me back!" yet all the time she was slowly retreating toward the gangway.

Captain Dysart took her hand, for he was afraid that she would fall overboard.

"Oh, dear," gasped Gipsy, "this is tellible sad; don't let my dear ex'el'cy forget this little girl, Cap'en."

"You need not fear," said Captain Dysart; "her excellency never forgets. I heard her instructing Miss Gillespie to write you to-morrow."

"Oh, thank you," said Gipsy breathlessly. "Let go my arm, please, I am going to run away and hide;" and partly covering her face with her hand she turned her back on the crowd and hurried from the wharf to her aunt's cottage where she hid herself in a closet.

Gipsy did keep her promises, though with some failures at first.

It was hard work for her to give up telling stories; many times a day she had to run to her room and look at the little illuminated text on the wall that Lady Linscombe had given to her, "Thou God Seest Me." And she had to fall in the river and nearly drown before she could learn to keep away from it. However, she attended school regularly and listened to her aunt's teaching, and before many months had gone by Gipsy Leigh was a much better child than she had been.

Then she had her visit to Lady Linscombe; not only one, but successive ones; and in looking forward to them Gipsy was the happiest little girl in New Brunswick.

She says that she wishes to live with her beloved patron when she grows up, but Gipsy's father will probably wish her to go to India to be his little housekeeper.

Whether Lady Linscombe really knew the

truth or not about the attempted robbery of her diamonds, no one found out for a long time. She was a very clever woman, but better than that she was very charitable, one who tried to love her neighbor as herself, and she probably did not think it right to communicate her suspicions of Towers' husband to any one.

However she watched him carefully, and to her great joy saw that he took pleasure in leading an honest life, and was not contented till he had earned enough money to rent a small house where he could have his faithful wife with him.

When they were at last settled in their little home Towers could keep her secret no longer. She went to Lady Linscombe and confessed how wicked they had both been in attempting to rob her, and how wrong in not asking pardon before.

"I suspected you," said Lady Linscombe quietly, "but I forgive you, for I see that you have repented. You have sinned against yourselves and against our Father in heaven more deeply than you have sinned against me. Have you asked God to forgive you?"

"No," said Towers, "we have not."

"Will you do so?" asked Lady Linscombe.

"We will, we will," said Towers, breaking down and sobbing. "I remember the words in the Bible, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight.' I will beg my dear husband to say them with me."

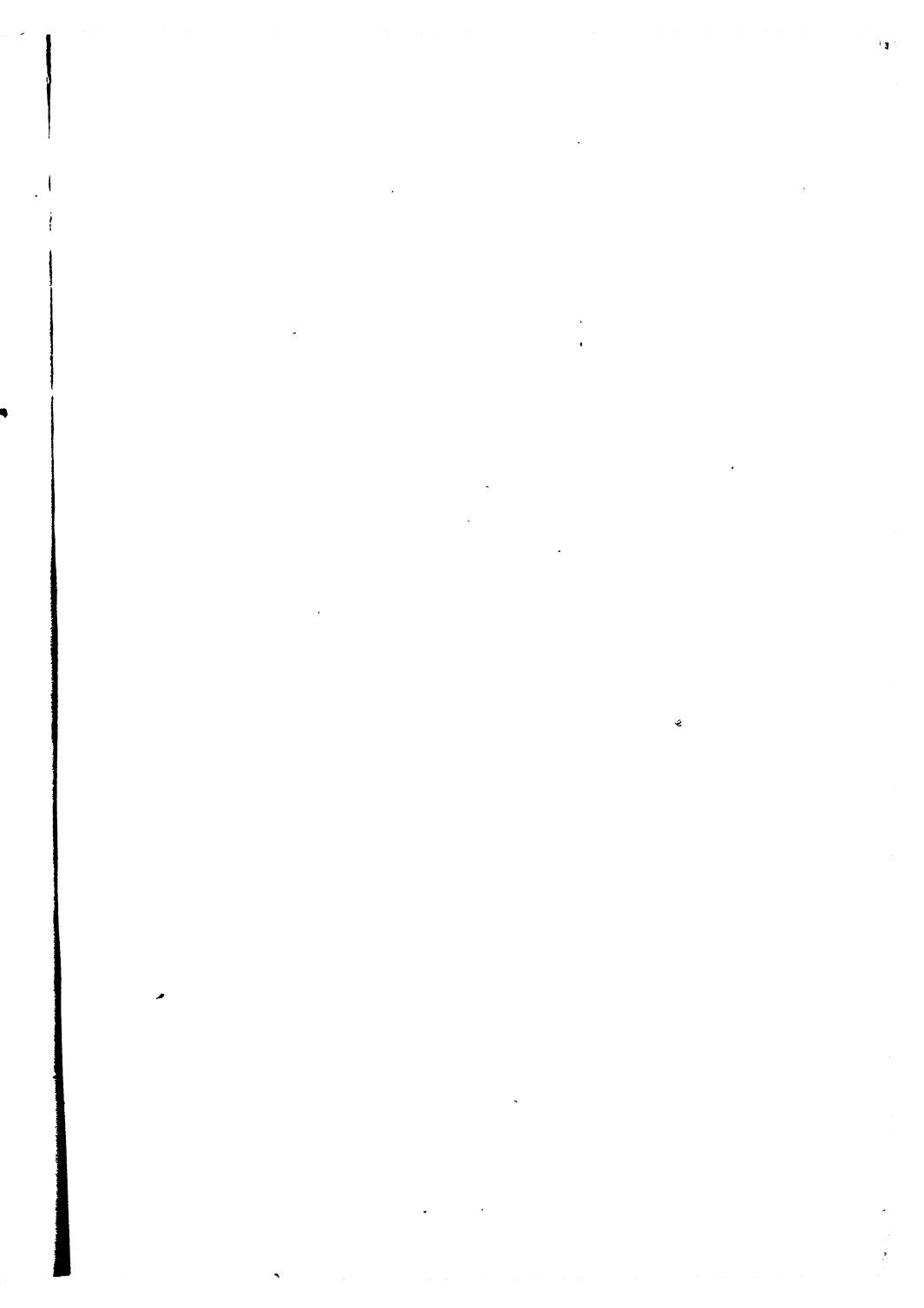
"For this thy brother was dead," said her excellency in a low voice, "and is alive again, and was lost and is found."

Towers went away and Lady Linscombe picked up a letter that she had been reading.

"I ask God to let you live a long, long, long time, dear ex'el'cy," wrote Gipsy, "till your hair is quite, quite gray, and you sit in a chair and have to let little girls wait on you, 'cause I love you, and 'cause you are good."

Her excellency put the letter in her desk and went away smiling and murmuring to herself, "Diamonds are a snare and a temptation to many—men will sell themselves for gold; faithful hearts are the best jewels in the world."







"They were shocked to see him lying there so still."

VI

JACK, THE MINISTER'S DOG

JACK, the minister's dog, was ill, and there was mourning in the village of White-waters.

"I never thought I'd feel so bad about a dog," said old Mrs. Gravy, as she held her apron to her eyes; "and such a bad dog too."

There was no doubt about it, Jack was a bad dog; that is, he was a mischievous dog; but he was so bright and so sweet-tempered, and often so sorry for naughty things that he had done, that no one really held a grudge against him.

Well, he was ill, and every one was sorry.

"I'll never forget how kind he was to Joe," went on poor Mrs. Gravy, whose son had lately died. "When Joe was sick, it seemed as if that dog knew he couldn't get well, for he'd come so softly to the door every day and scratch for me to let him in to lie on Joe's bed."

"And he didn't run off with your dishcloths, nor chew up your cap strings till after the funeral, did he?" said another old lady, called Mrs. Smith, who lived in the cottage next to Mrs. Gravy's.

"No; but in a few days he was as bad as ever, the young plague," said Mrs. Gravy drying her eyes. "He teased me that bad that I went to the minister, and what do you think he found in his bed?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Smith.

"Two pairs of spectacles," said Mrs. Gravy, counting on her fingers, "four rubber balls, two sunbonnets, a pair of braces, a ball of twine, a lot of bones and rubbish, Mamie Lou Morrison's Sunday gloves, three of my towels, and my lace cap."

"Oh, the bad dog!" exclaimed Mrs. Smith. "What did the minister say?"

"He picked out his best pair of tortoise-shell specs and put them in his pocket, then he called the dog."

"Did he come?"

"Oh, yes, bold as you please, tossing his head as much as to say, 'What's wanted?'"

"What did the minister do?"

"He pointed to the box and said, 'Jack, go and get a switch.'"

"He never did, surely?"

"Yes; the dog's no sneak, Mrs. Smith, you know that. When he came back, walking so slow and dropping the switch to jump up on a chair and hide his eyes, I said, 'Minister, don't you whip that dog.'"

"But he deserved it," said Mrs. Smith warmly.

"Yes; but my—my, if you could have seen his eyes and heard him cry so soft and touching. I

scolded him, and the minister scolded him, and it hurt him as much as a whipping would have done. He's only a baby, you know. You can't expect a dog a year old to act like an old grandfather."

"What did you do with the things?" asked Mrs. Smith.

"I took mine, and Jack carried the rest home. He knew just as well as we did where they belonged. You should have seen him trotting in and out taking the articles to the different houses as the minister handed them to him. When he got through, he jumped up and down and licked our hands and came home to tea with me, and all the evening he lay by my fire just as good as gold."

"I wish he wouldn't chase my hens," said Mrs. Smith.

"A young dog must have a bit of fun," said Mrs. Gravy. "Never you fear, he'll not hurt them. He likes to see them run."

"School is out," said Mrs. Smith. "How quiet the children are."

The two old ladies were leaning on their garden gates talking to each other in the pleasant summer sunlight. Just beyond them was the village green, and beyond it again the school-house with its yard.

The children were quiet, there was no mistake about it.

"They're grieving over the dog," said Mrs. Gravy suddenly.

Yes they were; the girls especially. The vil-

lage was a small one. Everybody knew every other body, and not a boy or girl in the village but loved the minister and Jack, his dog.

No little white form came bounding to meet them to-day, and slowly and quietly the boys and girls walked toward the parsonage and tapped at the front door.

The minister himself opened it. Strangers sometimes when they heard of Jack's mischievous pranks asked why so good a man should live with so bad a dog. However, they asked no more when some one would say in a low voice that Jack had belonged to the minister's lovely young boy, who was now with his mother an angel in heaven, and no matter how bad Jack was his master could not give him up.

"Yes, Jack is very ill," the minister said to the boys and girls. "Will you come in and see him?"

They went into the house after him with as little noise as they could possibly make.

Jack was in the kitchen lying in his sleeping-box. He feebly wagged his tail when he saw his little friends and tried to raise himself, but his head fell down and he closed his dull eyes. "I would scarcely know him," said Dorothy Grey with a sob; "he—he looks so pale."

Now Jack's head was jet black with the exception of a little white about his nose and a snowy arrow on his forehead; but none of the children smiled when Dorothy said he looked pale. They were shocked to see him lying there so still and so unlike his usual lively self.

"Do you think that he will get well?" asked George Thomas in an anxious voice.

"I do not know," said the minister gravely. "The doctor has been here three times to-day. Perhaps you would like to see his medicines?" and he handed two bottles and a box of pills to the children.

They examined the bottles and the box with great interest and noticed that they had on their labels pictures of dogs, not lying ill like Jack, but running fast as if they were in perfect health.

"Poor Jack!" said Mamie Lou Morrison in a choked voice, "if he does not get well, I—I shall cry," and stooping over the box, she laid her head on Jack's little hot body and burst into tears.

"What is the matter with him?" asked one of the boys hastily, for he saw that all of the girls looked as if they were going to do as Mamie Lou was doing.

"It is disobedience that has made him ill," said the minister gently stroking Mamie Lou's head. "I told Jack not to go to that heap of rubbish on the common when he wanted food, but to content himself with the good bread and milk that he gets at home. He would not mind me, and he has stuffed himself with bad meat until he now has a fever. I think I must send you away. You cannot take Jack's disease, and yet it is better for you not to be with him."

Looking sadly behind them the children filed from the room, while Jack starting up in his

box tried to follow them but soon fell back moaning with pain.

The next day Jack was worse—in fact he was so ill that the children could not see him.

“Oh, minister, what shall we do?” said Dorothy Grey clasping her hands imploringly.

She had called at the parsonage on her way to school, and when she found that the little dog that was so dear a playmate of every child in the village was probably dying, it seemed as if her heart would break.

“Won't he ever put his little cunning head on my lap again?” she cried wildly; “won't he ever coax me to play with him?—oh, minister, I can't have Jack die.”

“Perhaps we have thought too much of Jack,” said the minister sadly.

“No, no, we haven't; at least I don't think we have,” said Dorothy, “for we often get cross with him. He is not a perfect dog. I think that is why I love him so,” she wailed miserably, “'cause he is just like me and often forgets to be good.”

The minister stood holding the door handle and biting his lips as he gazed up into the far blue of the sky where it looked as if heaven might be and Jack's little master.

“Minister,” said Dorothy suddenly, “you'll have to 'scuse me 'cause I'm going to cry again. G—g—good-bye,” and holding her handkerchief against her face she ran away toward the schoolhouse.

"Oh, girls!" she cried when she got among her playmates; then she could say no more.

They knew what was the matter with her, and putting their arms around her without speaking went into the school-room and took their seats.

Miss Lee, the teacher, had never had such a quiet school-room since she had come to Whitewaters. She knew what was wrong and when one class after another came up without a whisper or a bit of noise she felt sorry for the children and made up her mind to let them out of school a little earlier than usual.

The boys were not so sad as the girls and were able to say their lessons, but several of the girls had not remembered a word of what they had learned the evening before.

"Poor little things, and poor little dog," she said, and raising the lid of her desk she looked at a picture of herself and Jack taken only a month before.

A traveling photographer had come to the village and many of the children had had their pictures taken. Some of them had tried to get Jack to sit beside them but he would not do so, and they had begged Miss Lee to have him taken with her. She had talked soberly to him and had put a little chain on his neck, and then he sat up like a gentleman and turned his saucy face toward the photographer.

"Poor little dog," she said again; then she shut down her desk. "Children you are dismissed till the afternoon."

The boys and girls looked up in relief, and quickly filed out of doors.

Their faces were mostly turned toward the parsonage, but they knew it was of no use to go there, for they could not see Jack and would only trouble the minister.

Mamie Lou Morrison drew some of the little girls aside.

"Girls," she said, "I have a thought."

"What is it?" they all said.

"Didn't teacher tell us last Sunday that if we asked God to do anything for us he would?"

"Yes, if it was good for us," said Jennie Lyle; "teacher said we mustn't ask for bad things."

"When the rain didn't come this spring the grown people had a prayer meeting, didn't they?" replied Mamie Lou.

"Yes, and the rain came," said Dorothy joyfully, for she saw what Mamie Lou meant.

"Do we always know what is a right thing or what is a wrong thing to ask for?" said a red-cheeked girl called Bessie Bent.

"No; but God does," said Dorothy, and her face grew quite happy. "I remember now. Teacher said that if we love God and his dear Son we are his children and we may ask him for anything we like."

"And if the thing will be good for us we get it, and if it won't he knows and won't let us have it," said Mamie Lou, speaking very fast.

The girls clasped each other's hands. "Let us have a prayer meeting. Let us go to the minister," they said together.

"Minister," said Dorothy suddenly, when the old servant Betsey opened the door of the study for her and two others of the girls, "have you asked God to spare Jack's life?"

The minister looked up from the sermon that he was writing.

"Yes," he said firmly; "I am not ashamed to say that I have prayed that the blessing of that bit of animal life may be continued to me."

"May we help you?" inquired Dorothy with a radiant face. "Teacher says that God likes his children to pray together."

The minister looked as if he did not know what to say.

"You need not lead the meeting," said Dorothy humbly. "We are only little girls and we don't 'spect as much attention as grown people."

"We could go in the woodshed," chimed in Mamie Lou eagerly.

Tears came into the minister's eyes. "You dear children," he said, "come right in here," and he drew aside the curtain hanging over the parlor door.

"I'll go and get the other girls," said Jennie Lyle, and she stepped out on the veranda.

Sixteen children the minister counted as they passed into the inner room. After giving them a Bible and hymn books, and seeing that they had seats enough, he dropped the curtain and they thought that they were alone, though he was really listening to them.

They were all girls who had been accustomed to go to church, to Sunday-school, and to prayer

meetings with their parents, and though they had never heard of such a thing as a children's meeting they knew that if they carried it on as the grown people did theirs they could not go far astray.

Dorothy was the one chosen as leader, and she sat in a big chair by the window where her feet did not nearly touch the floor.

When the other girls had all arranged themselves before her she opened her Bible and read a chapter about heaven in the Revelation.

"Let us pray," she said when she finished it, and she scrambled out of her big chair and knelt on the floor.

"Dear God who loves little girls," she began, "I do not know whether thou lettest little dogs go to heaven or not, but we would be much happier if we thought you would. There is one bad little dog in this village that is very, very ill. We are so unhappy; dear Father in heaven let him live and we will be so thankful. Make him a better dog——" and she prayed on for a long time about poor, sick Jack.

At last she got up and they sang a hymn. One by one after that the children took part in the meeting. When there was a pause Dorothy would say, "Speak on, sisters," or, "You will feel better if you say something."

They did not ask for blessings on themselves or on the heathen—they were there to ask for the dog's life, and they did not speak of any other thing. After a time all had spoken or prayed but Tiny Tybert.

"Sister," said Dorothy kindly, "you are called upon to say a word."

Tiny was an odd girl and if she were asked suddenly to do anything she would often refuse. Dorothy knew this and had left her till the last.

"I can't," said Tiny willfully.

"Yes, you can, sister," said Dorothy.

"I don't know what to say," replied Tiny.

"You can do as well as Dolly Fuller," went on Dorothy; "she didn't say anything but 'Spare the dog, good Lord'; you may copy her if you like."

"I will not," and Tiny pouted.

"Don't you want Jack to live?" asked Dorothy in surprise.

"Yes," said Tiny, "I do."

"Then say so, sister," and Dorothy smiled at her.

A naughty spirit came over Tiny and she refused to open her mouth.

"Will two of the sisters put her out?" said Dorothy sadly. "We 'spect every one to take part."

The minister drew back from the curtain as three little girls came out of the room and only two re-entered it.

"I wish Dorothy would conduct one of my meetings," he said with a smile.

After having some more hymns and prayers Dorothy told her companions that they must close their meeting as it was nearly dinner time and their mothers would be getting anxious about them.

Placing herself by the doorway she shook hands with each girl as she left the room and said, "The Lord bless you," as she had heard the minister say.

He was waiting for them and they eagerly asked him how the dog was.

There had been no change for the better in him he said, but their bright faces did not grow anxious.

"God will hear us—I know he will. He loves little children," said Dorothy confidently. "We will be back by-and-by to inquire," and nodding hopefully to him she trotted away.

"May God bless their little faithful hearts," said the minister looking after the girls.

"Jack is better! Jack is better!" called Dorothy running into the schoolhouse yard that afternoon as the children were coming out.

"The doctor says he may get well. Oh, aren't you glad we had the prayer meeting?"

The boys and girls crowded around her. She had been having a half-holiday as her mother had decided that she was too much worried about Jack to study.

"I've just come from the parsonage," she said; "we can't see him yet, 'cause he's very weak, but by to-morrow or next day mebbe we may. Oh, I'm so happy," and she threw her arms around Mamie Lou's neck.

"Hurrah!" cried one of the boys, throwing his cap in the air, "I'm glad too. Jack's a boss dog. We'll have some fun with him yet."

Down in the parsonage the minister bent over the dog's box. Jack certainly was better and as his master held a saucer of warm milk under his nose he lapped it feebly.

When night came the minister said to his old servant, Betsey, "I don't think that I need to sit up with him to-night."

"No, sir, I don't think you do," she replied; "let us give him his medicine and then I will fix him comfortably."

The minister took a bottle in his hand and pulling out the corner of Jack's lip—for dogs do not take medicine from spoons as children do—he poured it in between his teeth.

Then they threw a little white wrap over him, left a night-light burning in the hall so that he would not feel lonely, and went to bed.

The minister left his door open so that he could hear Jack if he cried for him.

Just after he had gotten into bed he heard a slight noise in the hall. He raised himself on his elbow and there coming toward him, the white cloth over his back making him look like a ghost, was Jack, the dog who had not been able to walk for days.

He was very weak and tottered miserably, but still he kept coming near, and before the surprised minister could get out of bed, Jack was beside him, gathering his legs together and with a great effort springing up to lay his head on the breast of his dearly loved master.

He was getting better and he felt lonely. The minister spread an old coat on an arm-chair

beside him and putting Jack on it he let him lie there all night and sleep like a little weary dog.

Oh, what rejoicing there was among the children the next day! They jumped and shouted with delight, then they went in a body to call on their beloved playfellow.

In a week he was able to play with them and then the girls had what they called a praise prayer meeting.

"I wish to say 'Thank you' to God for being so good to us," said Dorothy when some of the girls asked her why she should pray when she had gotten what she wanted.

Most of the girls agreed with her, and they had their prayer meeting.

Then they went to Miss Lee and asked her if Jack might not come to the school the next day,

She looked doubtfully at them. "I don't know what to say to that. I am very fond of Jack, but I scarcely think that school is the place for him. Remember what happened when Mary's little lamb went to school."

"The teacher turned him out," said Dorothy; "but oh, Miss Lee, it is different with Jack. He is so fond of you. He will be a good dog, and stay by your desk all day and we shall feel so happy to have him there."

"Well, let him come," said Miss Lee. "If he misbehaves I can easily send him home."

Jack went to school the next day, and when Miss Lee entered the room she found him lying demurely beside her chair with his head on his paws.

All the children were in their seats, and Jack looked as if he knew he would be turned out if he ran about the room. He got up and wagged his tail when he saw her, then he lay down again.

Strange to say, he did not leave his place during the whole morning. He remained perfectly quiet, yet his roguish eye wandering from child to child in the school seemed to fill each one with the spirit of mischief, and Miss Lee resolved that she would never allow a dog in the school again.

Nobody laughed or talked aloud, but she could see that all the children were brimful of merriment.

She was rather glad when any one made a joke during the recitations that gave them an excuse to laugh and so get rid of some of their superfluous animation.

"What is the name by which the Mississippi is sometimes known?" she asked Mamie Lou Morrison, in a geography class.

"The father of waters," said the little girl.

George Thomas who was something of a wag immediately put up his hand. "If he's the father of waters, Miss Lee, why don't they call him Mr. Sippi and not Mrs. Sippi?"

A laugh ran rippling down the class and Miss Lee listening to it, laughed too and said, "I shall bring that remark of yours to the attention of the geographers, George. Now let us have the first arithmetic class. How far did we get last day? Who remembers?"

"We got as far as the dismals in fractions," piped up a little girl timidly.

"Yes, the decimals," said Miss Lee paying no heed to a groan from George, and looking kindly on the class coming together.

By twelve o'clock all were ready for their noon recess.

"My mouth just waters to whistle," whispered George to the boy next him, and my legs feel as if they belonged to a jumping jack."

"It is the dog that makes us feel so," said the lad addressed; "he is full of mischief; look at him now."

The bell had rung, and Jack with a merry bark and a dash from the platform ran into the open air where he knew he would have a romp with the children.

When the boys and girls re-assembled in the afternoon Miss Lee took good care that Jack was not among them. The school was more orderly than it had been in the morning and at three o'clock when some one knocked at the door there was scarcely a sound to be heard.

It was the minister, and he had come as he often did to give the children a walk after school. Sometimes they studied botany and sometimes they simply went for a ramble through the woods.

To-day the minister was going to see some parishioners who lived close to a butternut grove, and knowing that some of the children might like to go with him he had called for them.

"I think they may all go," said Miss Lee, "except Tom and Harry," and she looked gravely toward two little boys who were so much alike that scarcely any one but their mother could tell them apart.

They were twins and a pair of handsome lads. At their teacher's words they both dropped their heads and blushed.

"I can't think that the twins would be unkind enough to annoy you, Miss Lee," said the minister.

"They have," said Miss Lee. "Come here, boys."

The two lads sidling up against each other left their seats and stood out on the floor before the whole school.

"I was going to keep them in," said Miss Lee, "but I see that I cannot punish them better than by telling you of their misdeed."

Both boys lifted their heads and looked appealingly at her and she relented.

"No, I shall not," she added hastily; "I will forgive you both if you will give me your word of honor never to do such a thing again."

Their faces brightened. "We will," they said together; then they wheeled around and went to their seats.

Miss Lee looked after them with a relieved face and yet a puzzled one. "They are usually very good boys," she said to the minister. "It is most singular that they should have done what they did to-day."

"A singular thing," muttered George Thomas

to the boy next him ; " it is very plural. They have often done it before, but I am not going to tell on them."

One of the twins jumped up. " Miss Lee, it was the house-warning that made us do it."

" The house-warning? I do not understand," said the teacher.

" We moved in our new house yesterday, you know," continued the boy, " and we had a party in the evening, and Tom can't study as fast as I can, so I told him I would recite for him to-day."

" Oh, yes ; I see what you mean," said Miss Lee ; " you had a house-warning."

" And Harry being bright and Tom being dull, and both looking as much alike as two boys possibly could, one of them has been saying his lessons and returning to his seat and then saying them over again for the other boy," said the minister to himself ; " and bless their little hearts, they still think I do not understand."

" I am so glad that you have explained," said Miss Lee, and she looked kindly at them.

The twins had not particularly tender consciences, but something had touched them to-day ; whether it was the presence of the minister or not Miss Lee could not tell. They blushed still more, fidgeted and wriggled about on their seats, and finally, Tom, the dull one, rose and blurted out penitently, " We have sneaked before, Miss Lee, lots of times, but we will not do so again."

Miss Lee looked exceedingly surprised ; then seeing that both boys were heartily sorry and

ashamed of themselves, she said: "I will trust you now that you have given me your word. Children you are dismissed."

All the boys and girls filed out of the school-room and ran home to ask permission of their parents to accompany their beloved minister on his walk.

Jack was waiting outside, and when he saw them coming he ran about barking and tossing his head and acting as if he were crazy with delight.

A quarter of an hour later the minister moved down the street at the head of a joyful band of boys and girls.

Dorothy, who was perhaps the minister's most ardent admirer, trotted close beside him as they passed down the sidewalk under the spreading tree branches.

"Minister, what makes you so good to little children?" she asked, looking up at him. "Is it because around the throne of God ten thousand children stand?"

The minister put out his hand to take her tiny brown one. "Yes, Dorothy, perhaps it is; I have a little boy there, you know."

"Minister, what is the difference of an e-gull to a sea-gull?" chimed in a tiny child elbowing his way among the throng of girls about the tall man.

Away above them a large eagle was making his way to a distant mountain. The minister stopped, and gathering the children about him, pointed up to the majestic bird and told them of

the manner in which she builds her nest and rears her young, and then drawing a piece of paper and a pencil from his pocket he sketched a picture of some of the beautiful white-winged gulls that he said lived near the sea and rarely came as far inland as they were.

While the minister was talking to the children Jack was getting himself into trouble.

Two men and a dog and a flock of sheep had come along the road on their way to the village. One man was in the lead, and the sheep guarded by the collie were following him. The other man drove a cart behind them in which was an invalid sheep. The collie had a very great care of the sick sheep and every few minutes would leave the flock to see how it was getting on.

When Jack saw the sheep coming he thought that here was a fine chance to play, and running in among them he scattered them to the right and the left.

The collie threw him a contemptuous glance and tried to drive him away. The minister seeing what trouble Jack was giving, hastily thrust his paper and pencil into his pocket and whistled to him.

Jack came to him rather reluctantly and while the girls were saying "Naughty Jack," the boys busied themselves in helping the patient collie to reassemble the frightened sheep.

When they were all in order and the cloud of dust kicked up by the many little hoofs was disappearing in the distance the collie came running back.

"He looks as if he had forgotten something," said Mamie Lou Morrison.

The minister watched the big dog with interest. He came right up to lively, rollicking Jack and fixing his teeth in the back of his neck carried him for a little distance in the road.

The girls all shrieked, "Oh, he is going to kill him, the bad dog; drive him away."

The minister laughed and seizing a stick ran after the collie who was shaking Jack and rolling him over and over in the dust. Jack was taking his punishment like a brave dog.

"Don't you see," said George Thomas excitedly, "Jack made the collie mad by disturbing the sheep—the collie had not time to punish him then, but he came back to do it."

"It takes a good while to take the puppy nature out of a dog," said the minister smiling at poor discomfited Jack, who ran to hide himself among the girls.

"And it takes a good while for some boys and girls to stop being like puppies," said Dorothy Grey in an undertone, as she stooped down to pet Jack; "I hate to see dogs whip you, Jackie."

The little animal licked her hand and walked close beside her as the straggling band of children suddenly turned from the road and went through a long green alley leading to a picturesque but tumble-down cottage situated in a grove of beautiful butternut trees.

An old man in a green coat sat on the doorstep of the cottage, his hand resting on the collar of an old black dog. At the approach of the

little party they both got up. The old dog soon smelled Jack out and wagging his tail touched his muzzle politely, while Jack, mindful of his late experience, was careful to be polite in his turn and do nothing to annoy his host.

The old man shook hands with the minister and opening his eyes wide at the sight of the boys and girls exclaimed, "Dear me, what a fine batch of children!"

"May they have some of your nuts?" shouted the minister in the old man's ear.

"Certainly, sir, certainly," and the old man turned to the boys and girls who were looking curiously at him. "I am deaf, my little dears, deaf as one of those butternuts; and my sister is deaf, and the dog is deaf, and we are just like three barbarians."

"My grandpa is deaf," said Mamie Lou Morrison, standing on tiptoe to reach the old man's ear; "but I love him just the same."

The shrill little voice made itself heard and the old man nodded approvingly at her "A good child, my dear; I wish I was your grandfather."

"How are the squirrels getting on, Mr. White?" called the minister.

"Oh, smartly, sir, smartly; they are tamer than ever. They run over my bed in the morning and wake me up."

The minister turned to the children. "These trees are full of squirrels and they are Mr. White's pets. He never allows any one to throw stones at them nor shoot them and they have confidence in him."

"There is no child here that would rob a squirrel's hoard is there?" said Mr. White in his melancholy, far-away voice that he could not hear himself.

The children wagged their heads so violently that it seemed as if they must shake them off.

"That is right," said the old man. "Now come along and I will show you the best trees," and he led the way around the corner of the house. "Do you know what this is?" he asked, stopping suddenly and scraping on the ground with his foot.

A heap of nuts lay among the earth and leaves.

"It is a squirrel's store of nuts," exclaimed the children.

"Why do they put them here?" asked the old man.

Some of the children answered him, but he did not hear them and so he went on: "The saucy fellows run up the trees, bite off the nuts, then run down again and draw earth over them to soften the outside rind. After a while they gnaw it off, for the squirrels put their nuts in heaps and this rind would mould if they left it on. When I gather nuts I leave the rind on, but I spread them out and keep turning them. Now, young people, help yourselves."

The boys went swarming up the tree trunks and the girls ran hither and thither, laughing and talking and occasionally falling down in their haste to pick up the nuts, while the minister sat on a grassy knoll and talked to the old man.

By and by some of the girls got tired and came and sat down beside them.

"I see little squirrels peeping at us from the branches" said Jennie Lyle; aren't they cunning, minister?"

"Yes, they are; and if we were not here they would be running all over Mr. White and teasing this old dog."

"Why do they tease the dog?" asked Tiny Tybert.

"Just to amuse themselves. The last time I was here I was in the house talking to Miss White, and from the window I watched two squirrels running to and from their nest, which is in that old stable behind the house. They were carrying cedar berries to it for winter use, and for a time they worked very busily, passing and re-passing each other. Then they stopped and looking mischievously at each other seemed to say, Let us have some fun. Rover was lying asleep on the doorstep, and running quickly up to him they chirped loudly. I don't think he could have heard them, as he is so deaf, but lazily opening his eyes he saw them and looked as if he wanted to say, 'It is a warm day, don't bother me.'"

"And then what did they do?" asked Tiny eagerly.

"They scampered back and forth before him and at last began to run over his tail and then he too began to scamper, and picking himself up jumped to and fro, barking wildly and trying to catch them; of course he could not do so.

One of them ran inside of that pump, where he could not get at him, and the other took refuge on this little sapling and slipped up and down the stem as Rover advanced or retreated. The poor old dog barked himself nearly hoarse and Miss White went out and drove the squirrels away."

"There is something the matter with the old man," said Dorothy Grey, suddenly running up. "Do come to him, minister."

A young man carrying an ax over his shoulder had a few minutes previous come out of the ramshackle old barn behind the house and roared a few sentences in Mr. White's ear.

"Just look at him," said Dorothy, "the poor old man; he is flinging his arms about and tearing his coat."

"What has happened?" asked the minister hurrying to the two men.

"It is the colt, the colt, sir," said Mr. White in his hollow voice; "he has been gone for hours and I have only just found it out. I should have looked after him myself."

"It is not my fault," the young man called in his ear; "it is your old broken fences that are to blame."

"Rover," said Mr. White stooping down and putting his mouth to the ear of the old dog who stood watchfully beside him, "Tiny is lost."

The dog looked up, wagged his tail and looked as if he understood him.

"Where was the colt when you last saw him, Joseph?" asked the minister of the young man.

"Up in the big pasture, sir; he has been running with the cattle the last few days."

"And what makes you think that something has happened to him?"

"Because the cattle came home long ago and when I went after him and called he did not answer me nor come. I guess he is stolen or else in trouble. I am just setting off to find out."

"Minister, can't we go and help Mr. White look for the little colt?" exclaimed Mamie Lou eagerly.

The minister smiled at her and was just about to reply when Miss White—a neat little old lady carrying a basket on her arm—came hurrying up the long alley.

She threw up her hands when she saw the minister and the children and hastened to greet them and say that she was so sorry to be away from home when they arrived. Then seeing by her brother's face that he was in trouble she asked for an explanation.

The brother spoke in her ear, then she spoke in his and in the ear of the dog, who seemed to be an important member of the family, and all the girls and the boys who had come scrambling down from the trees stood about and listened and looked on sympathetically.

"Poor little colt, poor little colt, I am just most dreadfully sorry for him, minister," murmured Dorothy.

"He is not a little colt," said the minister; "he is a big handsome animal, two or three

years old. Mr. White was planning to sell him this autumn and get enough money to carry him and his sister through the winter. They have not much of an income and if anything has happened to this animal it will be a serious loss."

"Let us go and look for him at once," said Dorothy. "See; the man is starting."

"Yes, yes, let us go," echoed all the other boys and girls.

"Now, I think," said the minister, "that while the boys may go, it will be more suitable and more restful for the little girls to stay here with Miss White than to accompany us in tramping over rough pasture land."

The girls' faces fell and Mamie Lou murmured dejectedly, "I s'pose you're right, minister, you always are; but I want to go terribly."

The minister was speaking to Miss White.

"Certainly, certainly," she replied in a voice just like her brother's. "Let them come in the house, and I will give them some cake and milk."

"We shall soon be back," said the minister, and he hurried after Mr. White and the man while the girls stood in a sober group and watched them.

"Jack," said the minister to his small dog, who was running to and fro and looking very wise, "I wonder whether you understand this? Do you know that the big brown animal you were chasing the other day is missing? See, he lived in there," and the minister pointed to the

dilapidated stable; "try to find him, and cover yourself with glory."

Jack leaped up and licked his hand, then went scurrying in wide circles around him.

"He has caught the idea that we are after something," said the minister, "but whether he knows what it is or not is another thing."

The boys liked the excitement of looking for the colt, and plied Joseph with questions until they separated into different bands at the pasture gate and began a systematic search of the wide extent of land before them.

Away at the back of the pasture were some boggy holes from which mud had been taken for fertilizing purposes.

"I am afeared he's got into one of them," muttered Joseph to himself, as with the foremost band of boys he worked slowly toward this spot.

Just then an excited howling and barking was heard from Jack, who kept always a little in advance.

"Hello, what is that? do you suppose Jack has struck a porcupine?" said one of the twins.

"I guess a porcupine has struck him, by the noise he is making," said George Thomas. "Let us hurry up and see. Those quills are hateful things to get out."

"And I guess he's found the colt," said Joseph; "he's a pretty cute dog, and I thought he mistrusted what we were after."

"Hooray for him, if he has," said George, and followed by the boys he dashed through the in-

tervening shrubbery and came in sight of a low, marshy place where Jack stood on a stump barking so violently that his fore paws were lifted from the stump every time he opened his mouth.

"Tiny, Tiny, Tiny," called Joseph letting his voice rise and fall in a peculiar way.

A pitiful whinny seemed to come from the ground beneath them, and there, half hidden by a clump of rushes, was the colt in one of the larger mud holes.

His beautiful eyes were fixed appealing on them, his hind legs were sunk in the soft black earth, his fore legs were on solid ground, and his head was laid on the bank as if he was tired.

The boys set up a shouting that soon brought the other members of the party to the spot.

Mr. White stroked his favorite's head gently. Then he put his ear close to the minister. "He is hoarse from whinnying," he said eagerly, "isn't he? He must have been here for some hours."

"Yes," said the minister sympathetically, "the poor creature's voice is quite hoarse."

Joseph had thrown down his ax and was busily engaged in putting a coil of rope that he had brought with him around the colt's body and neck. Soon he had it ready for them all to grasp and the boys, the minister, and Mr. White pulled as hard as they could in order to raise the unhappy animal from his bed of mud.

Tiny understood perfectly what they were doing, and with a grateful whinny braced his fore

legs firmly against the edge of the bank under the impression that he was helping them.

"Let go," said Joseph. "We shall never get him out this way."

The rope fell from their hands and with some assistance from the minister and the boys Joseph unwound it from the colt's body and neck and fastened it firmly around his legs.

Then they all pulled again, and this time they got him out. He had been in the hole so long and was so weak from struggling that he staggered when he found himself once more on solid ground, and a nervous tremor ran all over the velvety brown body usually so handsome but now encrusted with mud.

"Come," said Joseph leading the way, and after a preliminary shake and a glance at the chattering boys about him the colt soberly walked toward his stable.

Not the least happy member of the party was Jack. He ran from one boy to another, getting words of praise that he loved so well, and listened to the "good dog" and "clever dog" showered upon him.

Old Rover, who had wished to find the colt but who had not been able to do so, walked sulkily beside his master and cast envious glances at Jack from time to time.

Mr. White looked often and anxiously at the colt. "He will be some time getting over this," he said; "such a mishap takes the strength out of an animal, particularly a young one."

"He will be all right in a few days," said the

minister cheerily. "If he is not, I will see that you are not a loser."

"May God bless you, sir," murmured Mr. White; "you have had trouble in your own heart and you know what it is," and he watched the minister gratefully as he threw off his coat when they reached the stable and helped Joseph wash and blanket the exhausted animal, who turned his head miserably from the nice feed of oats offered to him.

Then came something very interesting to the boys—the heating of water and the administering of a big bottle of medicine to the colt. Joseph held his head and the minister pulling his lips far back poured the mixture in the side of his mouth while Mr. White rubbed his throat.

"Now let us go to the house," said the minister when the colt was finally led into his stall. "The little girls will be anxious to hear about this, and then we must get them home to their mothers."

Early the next morning Mr. White was very much flattered to find a delegation of school children at his gate inquiring about the sick colt.

"Better, better; bless your little hearts," he said. "I was up with him nearly all night; but he improved so fast there was really no need of it. What makes you little ones so fond of animals?"

"We learn about them in school," said Tiny Tybert in the old man's ear. "Miss Lee says

that if we are kind to dumb animals we shall be kind to each other."

"She is right, quite right," said Mr. White. "I am sure I never saw such a lot of tender-hearted children in my life. I noticed how you played with each other yesterday—as gentle as lambs, as gentle as lambs. How is the pretty little dog that found my colt?"

Dorothy made a gesture in the direction of the village, and said, "We have not seen him this morning, the minister keeps him shut up till after school 'cause he wants to go too."

"He is usually a very obedient dog, though," said Mamie Lou anxiously; "and I am sure he will grow to be almost a perfect dog some day. He is a great comfort to the minister."

"Yes, yes, he is a fine little dog, and he will grow finer," said Mr. White. "Bring him up again, won't you?"

"Yes, indeed," said the girls all together; "now we must go. Thank you for telling us about the colt," and like a flock of fairies they vanished down the green alley.

The old man stood looking thoughtfully after them. "In my day there was not much made of this business of kindness; but I see that it is going to make the world better."

"Brother, you look as if you were saying something," said Miss White coming out on the doorstep and putting her head close to his, so that he might communicate his thought to her. "What is it?"

"Only this, and it is pretty important too,"

said the old man in her ear ; " that if you can get religion and kindness to go hand and hand through this world we are not far from the kingdom of heaven."

" Religion and kindness," said the old lady nodding her head ; " that is a good thought, brother, a very good thought."



VII

THE TWO KALOOSAS

KALOOSA THE FIRST

KALOOSA the first was a young Indian girl with long, straight black hair, a dark skin, and liquid eyes; and she lived many years ago in the forests of Nova Scotia.

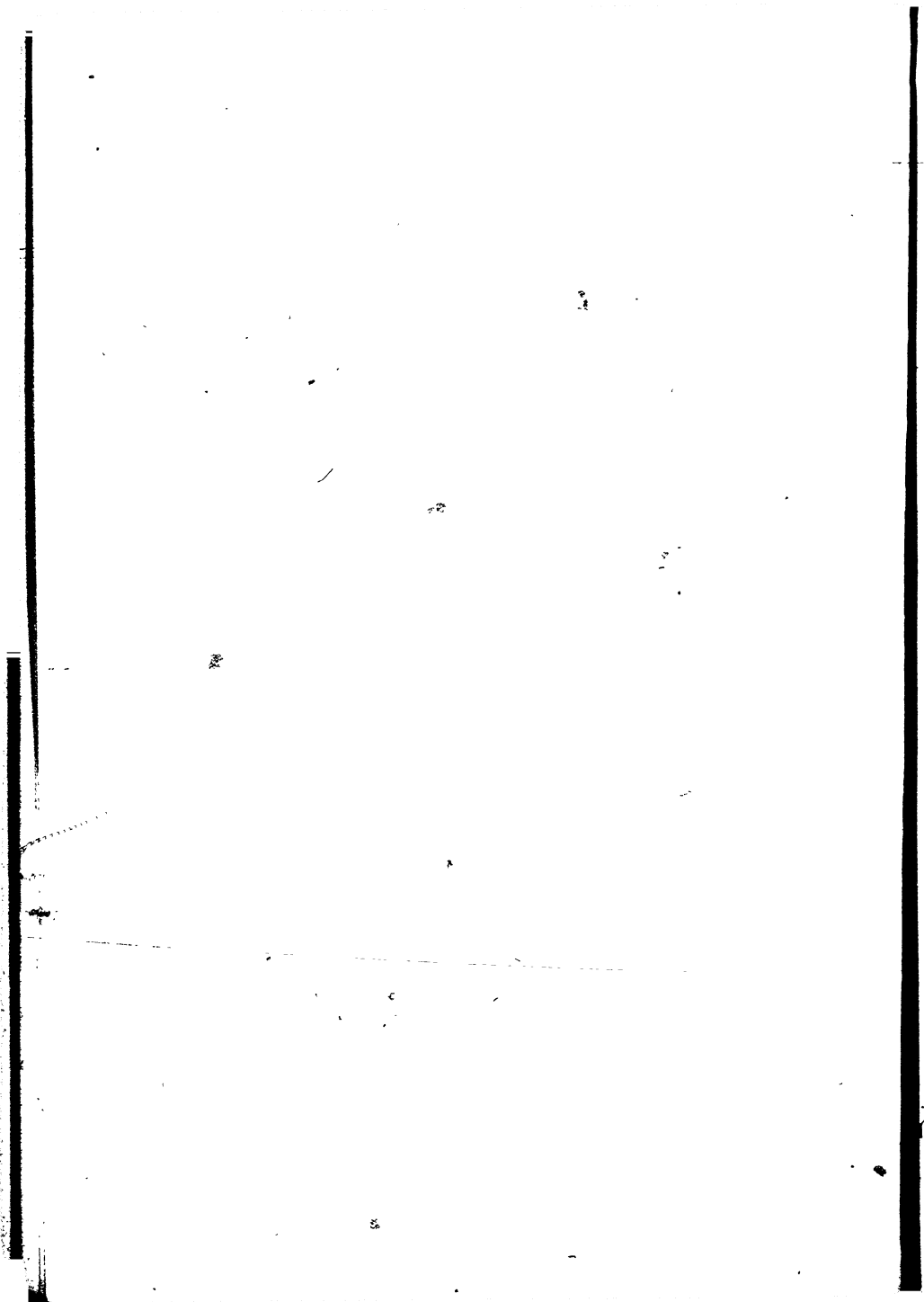
The Indians were quite happy in those days. They did not feel the cold in winter for they encamped in the dense forests where the wind could not reach them and they kept good fires and wrapped themselves in the skins of animals that they had killed. During the summer they had fine times tramping over the country and paddling about on the rivers and lakes in their bark canoes.

Kaloosa's father, Ababejit, was chief of the Micmacs, a tribe that boasted that they were the strongest and bravest of all the Indian race.

One June afternoon in this long time ago, when Ababejit had his encampment near the mouth of a river, he came home from hunting, and sticking his lance in a tree turned to enter his wigwam wondering that no young daughter



“She . . . stretched out her hand toward the . . . Chief!”



came running to meet him, pressing her dark face to his "Utkuncheeju"—dear little mouth—and asking him what luck he had had in the forest.

He saw his wife or squaw busy with a pot hung over the fire where she was preparing a meal for him; but he did not speak to her, and striding into the wigwam he sat down at the back of it in the place of honor.

The outside of the wigwam was covered with rows of bark to keep out the rain. Inside was a lining of spruce boughs, and on the ground were more boughs that took the place of carpets and beds. A bear skin, that hung over the doorway, was pulled aside and Ababejit, looking out on a green meadow and a running river, still wondered where Kaloosa was.

Presently some one stepped between him and the lovely picture framed by the wigwam doorway. A tall black-haired youth, one of his nephews, stood before him.

"Kutakumagual upchelase," said Ababejit, which meant, "Come to the back of the wigwam."

The young man stepped over the place by the doorway, which was devoted to the use of the women and children, and seated himself cross-legged by his uncle.

He had come to find out how many animals Ababejit had killed that day; but it was not Indian etiquette to ask questions and his uncle did not seem inclined to talk. An adroit compliment at last loosened the chief's tongue.

"The wise men of the tribe say," remarked the young man, "that the great Sachem, Ababejit, who lived many moons ago, once speared so many porpoises that there was not room in the land of the Micmacs to contain them."

"The wise men speak truly," returned Ababejit with gravity; then he proceeded to give an account of his day's sport.

After that they talked of many things, while the squaw outside patiently kept her lord's dinner hot, for she knew that he would not eat till he had rested.

The young man spoke of the white men who had recently arrived in the country, and asked his uncle about the manner of their coming.

Ababejit pointed to the northeast, where the island of Cape Breton lies close to the peninsula of Nova Scotia.

"Before your eyes opened upon these forests," he said to the young man, "the sun shone down one day on a curious mark on the seashore. It was not the print of a bird, nor of a beast, of a naked foot, nor of a moccasin. Our brethren followed other marks like it, till lifting up their eyes they saw riding on the waves a canoe larger than any canoes of the Micmacs. Men with white skins came from it to the shore. Our brethren wondered yet said nothing, while they received magic gifts from the strangers. The pale faces went away, but you know that they have returned and another race has followed them."

"Have you heard the words of the medicine

man?" asked the visitor, whose name was Nanavivana.

"What words?" asked Ababejit.

He knew very well what they were, yet he did not care to acknowledge it.

"Words of war," said the young man. "He says that the white races are to take away the lands of the red man, that they will have cruel wars and will entice us to join them. For many years it will be 'matundimk, matundimk'—war, war. The white man will break his word to the red man, and the red man will break his word to the white man. They will burn wigwams and murder women and children; but the French and English must bear the blame, for they will hire the Indians to do it."

Ababejit stretched out his right hand. "Away to the setting sun," he said, "this land is the land of the red men; they will not allow the stranger to penetrate it."

"The medicine man says," continued his guest, "that the pale faces will take the forests and the meadows and the rivers from our race."

Ababejit gave a contemptuous grunt. "The pale faces are few, we are many; as it has been so it will be."

At this moment the squaw approached and asked a question of their guest, in the soft flowing accents of the Micmac tongue.

Ababejit listened keenly for the young man's answer. The squaw had asked when the young daughter, Kaloosa, would return home.

"Kaloosa has not visited our wigwam for three days," said the young man.

The squaw looked at Ababejit in a dazed manner.

"When did the girl leave the wigwam?" he asked calmly

The squaw told him that she had left home early in the morning.

Ababejit rose and followed by the young man went along the river bank.

First they visited every wigwam in the encampment. The men were lolling about, dogs and children were playing; and the squaws, for the most part, were cooking. No one had seen Kaloosa. Several of the men jumped up and joined in the search. They formed a circle around the encampment and advanced farther and farther into the forest, scrutinizing every tree and shrub and stooping down to examine even the blades of grass and tiny flowers.

Presently they returned in a body. Ababejit silently held up an arrow.

At the sight of it there was a terrible outcry among the women. They tore their hair and rushed to and fro, for they all recognized the arrow as one quite different from their own. It belonged to their hated foes, the Mohawks. A band of them must have stolen Kaloosa.

The men, apparently quite unmoved by the clamor that filled the encampment, quietly made preparations for an extended march. Then stolidly turning their backs on their wigwams they plunged into the still forest. They could

not go very far that night. They soon had to encamp; but by daybreak the next morning they were up again and on the track of their foes.

Before the next night they caught up with the Mohawks; but they did not dare attack them as the strangers were in much larger numbers than they were.

The Micmacs hung about in the rear of their enemies, not showing themselves by day, and taking only stealthy observations at night. Ababegit was relieved to see that his young daughter was being well treated. Owing to her pretty ways and the fact of her being the daughter of a chief, they were keeping her for ransom or to make her the bride of one of the principal men in their own tribe.

Ababegit knew that she was traveling mournfully away from her home, and when at night he crept near enough to see her despairing attitude, as she sat a little apart from the dusky warriors who were the mortal enemies of her tribe, he felt himself burning with a slow fury because he could not rush in and attempt her rescue.

One evening, when he lay crouched in the underbrush at some distance from the Mohawk camp, he heard something whirring softly over his head, and looking up he saw a white pigeon. A flock of pigeons among the Indians meant war; but this was only a solitary one, and he joyfully recognized it as his daughter's pet pigeon. It had followed her all the way from

home, flying over her head by day and resting at night on a branch near her.

Ababejit rose cautiously, extended his wrist to his daughter's pet, and when it alighted he stroked it gently, then seized it by its red feet.

After making it fast he took a tiny piece of birch bark from a tree near him, and opening a little vein in his arm, scrawled on it with his blood in Indian characters, "Do not mourn, Kaloosa, I see, I follow."

There is no word in the Micmac language for patience, or he probably would have told her to be patient. As it was, he felt much comforted that he had been able to communicate with her, and freeing the pigeon which he knew would go straight to his darling, he lay down again noiselessly and revolved in his mind some of the many plans that he had formed for effecting Kaloosa's escape.

The next day, when the Mohawks resumed their march toward their own country, the chief saw that there was a change in Kaloosa. No longer sad and dispirited, she ran by his side through the forest smiling, laughing, and sometimes singing to herself.

"What is it, O Kaloosa, pretty one?" he said at last in the Mohawk tongue. "Thy face that has been overcast is sunny. Thou at last rejoicest to leave thy home and the Micmacs, lowest of races."

"Not so, O Petonkas," she said courageously. "The Micmacs are the loved of the Great Spirit; the Mohawks the detested."

The expression of the Mohawk chief's face changed so much that a girl less brave than Kaloosa would have been afraid of him.

"Last night I dreamed, O chief," she said. "The great Spirit sent another spirit to confer with me. I dreamed—oh, such a pleasant dream," and looking around at the party of Mohawks, she burst into excited laughter.

The Mohawks, who in common with all other Indians were full of superstition, expressed some curiosity to hear the substance of her dream, but she refused to enlighten them.

"When the camp-fire burns to-night, O Petonkas," she said quietly, "then I may relate things revealed to me; not now, lest I vex the Great Spirit."

Petonkas did not know quite what to make of Kaloosa, and marched quietly on.

The Micmacs all through the day knew nothing of what the Mohawks were doing, as they were obliged to keep far behind them, but when the darkness came, Ababejit ordering his followers to remain where they were crept over the ground like a snake to within a few yards of the Mohawks, for the members of the party who had been placed as guards had in their curiosity drawn near the circle around the fire.

There sat Kaloosa, her long black hair falling over her face, her arms resting on her knees, as she sat in a crouching posture on the ground.

The chief, Ababejit, not knowing the reason of her sudden dejection felt his heart sink within him as he noticed her despairing attitude, and

knew that her pretty face must be drawn and haggard.

The Mohawks had been unable to obtain any game that day, and it was a party of almost fasting men that surrounded Kaloosa. Strange to say, they had offered her a large portion of what food they had. Though she was their prisoner, her gentleness and beauty had made an impression on them, and surprised and disturbed by her change of demeanor they were watching her intently and uneasily.

It was not a pleasant evening. The sky was overcast and the wind murmured drearily through the tops of the tall trees. The leaves rustled as if there was going to be a storm, and suddenly Kaloosa began crying bitterly.

The Mohawks said nothing to her, and after a time she raised her head, pushed back her hair, and rising slowly stretched out her hand toward the Mohawk chief.

"You wish me to tell my dream, O chief; better for you perhaps did you not do so. This morning I rejoiced when I thought on it. This evening I sorrow, for"—looking at the rejected food which the Mohawks were too proud to touch—"Kaloosa is not insensible to kindness. But listen! the Great Spirit has revealed to me things of the future. I saw an encampment of the mighty Mohawk nation, after the Micmacs bravest among men. I saw the bosom of a quiet lake—the waters were not stirred; one, two, three, four canoes went out on it. One, two, three came back. 'Where is the fourth,' I

cried. Gone, gone, O chief," and a shrill cry of pain rang out from the girl as she threw her hands despairingly up toward heaven.

"I walked by the shores of the lake and I mourned. Ukchenut, Maloit,"—and she went on to name half the members of the party before her, pointing to each one as she did so with an expressive gesture—"were in that lost canoe."

The Indians glanced stoically at her, though their faces blanched a little. The Indians not named were equally stoical, though in their hearts was a feeling of relief, for they regarded the girl for the time being as a prophetess; but she had not finished.

"I walked by the lake and mourned," she went on sadly. "Then a great war arose. The Mohawks went out in a mighty army and they came back again with many scalps, and there was feasting and rejoicing; but my heart was heavy, for the men I had known were not there.

"Where, O warriors, are Nadgewit and Mowelo?" I exclaimed, 'Mowelo, the swift deer of the forest?'

"Chelautok! chelautok!"—he is slain, he is slain—was the reply.

"And where Petonkas, the wild bear of the mountains, the victor of victors?" and the girl fixed her burning glance on the chief of the Mohawk band.

"He was taken alive,' they answered me," and at this most terrible of fates to befall an Indian warrior the girl raised her voice to a shrill scream of horror.

“‘And, wherefore reserve him for the torture, O Spirit?’ I cried.

“‘Because he forgot his manhood and became a thief of children. He entered the camp of a man that was not at war with him,’” and half fainting Kaloosa threw herself on the ground at Petonkas’ feet.

He watched her solemnly. “The Great Spirit has spoken to the maiden,” he said at last.

Just as he uttered these words there was a flash of lightning and a terrific thunderstorm burst upon them. “The Great Spirit hath spoken; it is for us to hear,” muttered the others.

Ababejit in speechless delight made his way under cover of the storm back to his followers. As well as if he had heard Petonkas make a solemn vow he knew what he would do. To propitiate the Great Spirit Kaloosa would be returned to his wigwam. With implicit faith in his foe, for Indians do not break their word to each other, he hurried back to his encampment a day’s march ahead of his enemies.

The Mohawks went by a different route through the forest. When they arrived within half a day’s march of Ababejit’s wigwam, scouts were sent out. They came back reporting that the chief and his principal men were engaged in fishing.

The Mohawks escorted Kaloosa a little farther, parted from her without emotion but with concealed regret on account of her gentle ways.

Ababejit, as he stepped from his canoe at sun-

down, felt once more the ecstasy of clasping his brave child in his arms and finding her unhurt and uninjured in any way.

KALOOSA THE SECOND

The first Kaloosa grew to be a woman, married a Micmac brave, and after some years died leaving a number of children.

As time went on the prophecy of the medicine man came true. The French and the English overran Nova Scotia. The tribe of the Micmacs became greatly reduced in numbers, and to-day there are only a few thousands of them scattered about the province.

Their lands have passed into the possession of the white people, and they have lost their ancient prowess in hunting and fishing, for the wild animals are nearly all gone from the forests. Some of the Micmacs still live in wigwams, others have small wooden houses, and they support themselves by cultivating meagre patches of ground, or by making barrels, baskets, and buckets, which they sell to the white people.

The little Kaloosa, whom we now have to tell about, is a descendant and namesake of the first Kaloosa. One winter day a few years ago she was sitting beside her mother in the marketplace of a Nova Scotian town. It was a cold morning, and Kaloosa's feet were quite numb as they stuck straight out before her on the snow bank which was her seat.

Her mother, Nancy, leaned heavily against her, and Kaloosa looked uneasily at her every few minutes.

They had made a number of gay pink and white baskets that they had brought to the town to sell ; but Nancy was not able to offer them for the inspection of passers-by, and Kaloosa being too shy to do so, none of them were being sold.

"Is your mother asleep?" asked a lady who was doing her marketing, and who stopped suddenly before them.

"No, no sleep," whispered Kaloosa softly.

The lady looked sadly down at them. She saw that the squaw had been drinking. "She is katheet," she murmured, for she understood a little Micmac.

Kaloosa shook her head. "No, no, not katheet—welopskeet." Welopskeet was a milder way of stating the case, for katheet means simply drunk.

"Poor child," pursued the lady pityingly, "you wish to screen your mother." Then she added, "Are you not cold?"

"Yes, me cold," drawled Kaloosa with the pretty accent of her tribe. "You got ole skirt for me?"

"Yes, come to my house the next time you are in town," said the lady, writing an address on a slip of paper for her; "and now you had better get your mother home. She will take cold if you stay here. I will buy three of your baskets now."

"Yes, me go," murmured Kaloosa, and scam-

bling to her little half-frozen feet she took her mother by the arm.

The lady watched them going down the street. "Poor things! dressed in our discarded garments, the victims of the wretched fire-water. How many sins we shall have to answer for."

Some people imagine that Indian children are very carelessly brought up, but this is not the case. Kaloosa had been taught to respect her parents, and she did so even when they were doing wrong things. She guided her mother's tottering footsteps carefully along the crowded streets, till at last they were out on a country road and walking toward their little hut in the woods.

The tree branches were laden with snow, only the rabbits and the foxes shared with them the track from the road to the hut, and by the time they arrived there Nancy's half-worn shoes and Kaloosa's old rubbers were thoroughly soaked, and their dresses were wet from the melting snow.

Kaloosa pushed open the rude door and assisted her mother to a bed on the floor in a corner of the tiny dwelling. Then she gathered a few sticks together, and touching a match to them started a fire in the crazy stove.

While they had been begging from door to door that morning before going to the market, some one had given them a pound of tea. Kaloosa put a handful of it into a teapot, for Indians drink their tea incredibly strong, and made her mother a good cup of it.

After drinking it Nancy felt better, and sat up on her bed of spruce to look at her little daughter.

"Kaloosa is a good papoose," she said in Micmac; "she cares for her mother, and in the lifetime of her father she never stepped between him and the fire, nor did she cross his fish spear. The good Sasus will reward her."

By Sasus Nancy meant Jesus. In common with nearly all the Micmacs she had given up the spirit worship of her forefathers, and was a Roman Catholic. She and Kaloosa said their prayers, attended mass, and went to confession. If they were in a part of the country where there was no chapel in which to assemble a service was held in a wigwam. They called Jesus, Sasus, and in their prayer books were extracts from the Bible with psalms and hymns.

Kaloosa looked kindly at her mother, and Nancy continued: "Will the little papoose sing to her mother some of the songs of the missionary?"

Kaloosa lifted up her little plaintive voice and half sang, half chanted a touching song written by a good old Baptist missionary, who went among the Roman Catholic Indians of Nova Scotia a few years ago, and without provoking controversy read the Bible to them in their own language, and sang beautiful hymns.

The song that Kaloosa sang he had written himself, and he called it "The Dying Indian's Dream." John Paul, a converted Indian, was the subject of it, and the first verses related his

skill as a hunter, and his toil in his humble home at "basket, bark, and broom," to gain the scanty fare doled grudgingly out to him by the white people who had taken the land of his sires.

At last he fell ill—consumption, the scourge of the Micmac tribe, was eating away his strength—and the poem describes his people sitting about him waiting to see their father die. He had become very thin, his flesh was gone, naught save the breathing skeleton remained to him, yet he was cheerful and happy. He slept and dreamed that he was in heaven in an immense golden palace, and little Kaloosa crouching over the fire told what he saw :

Oh, I have been in heaven ;
To me it has been given
To see the throne of God—the angels clothed in light,
And ransomed spirits in the purest white.
They knew my name,
And who I am,
And whence I came.
I heard them loud through heaven proclaim,
Make room ! make room !
John Paul has come ! John Paul has come !

When the papoose finished her song she too fell asleep ; hour after hour went by and she still crouched by the fire. Such a pitiful little figure she was, so pale and haggard, so miserably dressed, so utterly unlike the straight, graceful, prosperous-looking girl who had lived so many years before and for whom she was named.

Late in the afternoon she was startled by a knock at the door. She roused herself, and after a hasty glance at her mother went to let in the stranger.

It was the missionary himself who stood before her. He was a tall, remarkable-looking old man, and he held a staff in his hand. A cloak was wrapped around his shoulders, his hair and beard were long and white, and he wore a fur cap pulled down over his ears.

"Good-day, little papoose," he said putting his staff in the corner of the room and seating himself on an upturned box by the fire. "How goes it with the mother?"

He spoke Micmac with a pure and correct accent. No white man in Nova Scotia knew as much of the Indian language as he did, and Nancy, who was always glad to see him, raised herself up in her bed.

She put a great many questions to him about the different members of her tribe who lived in other parts of the province, for the missionary kept traveling all the time and never stayed long in one place.

He answered all her inquiries. Then he pulled a little book from his pocket and asked, "What shall I read to-day, Nancy?"

"Tell of the good Sasus on the cross," said Nancy softly.

The missionary, holding the Testament in his hand, read slowly to her the account of the crucifixion, putting the English into sweet-sounding Micmac as he went along.

"It is sad—sad," murmured Nancy dropping her head and shedding slow tears. "There is no white man now as good and kind as Sasus."

The missionary read on, and presently she exclaimed joyfully, "Do we not think the same things after all? Say the words of forgiveness."

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," repeated the missionary.

"Nancy will try to say that," said the Micmac woman. "Father, forgive the white people when they enter the camp of the Micmacs, which are dear to them, and pull our things about and say, what is this? and what is that? and Father forgive them for selling the bad drink to Nancy."

She hung her head on her breast in shame, and little Kaloosa averted her eyes from her, while the missionary closed his book and remarked kindly, "Jesus will help Nancy to give up the drink."

"Nancy has asked him," said the woman in a low voice; "but the devil takes her by the shoulder and says, Come."

"Kaloosa," said the missionary turning to the child, "have you recited the verses for your mother that you promised to learn for me while I was away?"

"Many times, good teacher," replied the little girl.

"Say them once again," requested Nancy.

Kaloosa turned her face toward her mother and repeated the following lines with touching humility of accent:

In de dark wood, no Indian nigh,
 Den me look hehun and send up cry
 Upon my knees so low ;
 Dat God on high in shiny place,
 See me in night wid teary face,
 My heart him tell me so.

Him send him angel take me care,
 Him come himself and hear my prayer,
 If Indian heart do pray ;
 Him see me now, him know me here,
 Him say: "Poor Indian, neber fear,
 Me wid you night and day."

So me lub God wid inside heart,
 He fight for me, he takum part,
 He sabum life before ;
 God lub poor Indian in de wood,
 And me lub he and dat be good,
 Me pray him two time more.

When me be old, me head be gray,
 Den him no leabe me, so him say,
 "Me wid you till you die" ;
 Den take me up to shiny place,
 See white man, red man, black man face,
 All happy like on high.

"Nancy will pray again," said the Micmac woman who had listened to her daughter with a radiant face. "Let the missionary hearken, and write the words in his book."

She slipped on her knees, and the missionary felt his heart melt within him as he listened to the pathetic prayer for forgiveness and safe-keeping from her besetting sin of drunkenness that the poor woman put up.

"Sasus will hear Nancy this time," he said

when they were again sitting around the fire. "I think that she prayed from 'inside heart.' Now I must say good-bye to you. I shall come to see you to-morrow; then not again for many moons. Now listen: I wish Nancy and her daughter to think over this plan before another sleep. Away in the town yonder is a warm place where Nancy can go for the winter where the devil will not tempt her as he does here in the cold and the darkness."

"Are there walls around the warm place?" asked Nancy looking out through the window of her hut at the fringe of an extensive wood.

"Yes; but in the spring Nancy can return to her home, and in the meantime the little papoose can be at school among the white people, where she will learn many things that will enable her to be a teacher among her own tribe when she grows up, if she wills it."

"Will the papoose be with her mother?" asked Nancy.

"No," said the missionary; "I am sorry to say that you must be separated; but it is not always winter. Look forward to the time of birds and the summer."

"Does the good Sasus wish us to do it?" asked Nancy wistfully.

"Ask him," said the missionary. "At sun-down to-morrow I will be with you. Adieu, for the present," and pronouncing a soft Micmac blessing he went slowly down the narrow path.

Nancy stood in the doorway looking after him.

"In the olden times," said the woman stretching out her hands toward the large pines bending toward their dwelling, "the forests and the meadows belonged to our forefathers. Now they are no longer ours. We, who made the earth tremble, must serve the pale faces. We must do as the missionary bids us, my daughter."

"In the olden times we had many things," said the little papoose; "but there is one thing which the missionary says is the greatest of good gifts that we did not have."

"What is that, my daughter?"

"The love of Sasus," said the child gently.

Nancy's eyes filled with tears. "True words, my daughter. Better the present days than the old ones."



6



"She looked . . . too sweet for anything."

VIII

BUNNY BOY

WHEN Diadem Gale got ready for school on a rainy morning and went trotting down the street she looked, as the housemaid said, "too sweet for anything."

In the first place she pinned up her frock, which was always rather a long one. Then she put on high rubber boots, a little mackintosh with a cape, and with her cap on the back of her head and her blue umbrella in her hand, she was ready for the worst rainstorm that could come along.

People always stared hard at her on rainy mornings,—she looked so comfortable as she jogged along the sidewalk,—while on fine days no one ever seemed to notice her more than they did any of the other little girls who ran up and down the streets.

Her brother Dan always carried her bag of books for her on rainy days. On this particular day he had had his breakfast early and had gone on before, and Diadem as she hurried toward the school was quite alone.

I wish I could give you a perfect description

of the town in which Diadem lived, it was such a charming place. Whenever Diadem was visiting and any one asked her where her home was, she replied, "I live in the city of Fredericton, on the beautiful River St. John."

This river, which is a Canadian one, is the loveliest feature of a smiling landscape in the province of New Brunswick. It goes leisurely toward the sea, sometimes winding between waving forests, sometimes over the broad and fertile intervale lands, which are green and luxuriant all through the summer, and where the crane rises silently from clumps of rushes as the river boats go by.

Sometimes the river passes little villages and larger towns; sometimes it is broad and peaceful and looks as if it were melting away into some wide lake; at other times the banks are closer together, and it goes hurrying along as if in haste to wash against the wharves and docks of the big city where it says farewell to the province and rushes into the embrace of the restless sea.

So much for the river. But we are going to speak of Diadem's town, which is nearly one hundred miles from its mouth. The river is charming, the town equally so. It is like a park. Tall trees stand over nearly all of the pretty houses, and just leave sunlight enough to keep children strong and well and to make the flowers grow in the lovely gardens. Outside the town are lovely pastures and grand old forests where the children go for nuts in the autumn days.

On this day the town did not look so attractive as usual, because it was raining. Diadem moved her umbrella aside to look up at the dripping tree branches. She was always sorry for the birds when it rained.

The trees in the town of Fredericton were full of birds. The blackbirds that usually build their nests in the woods, lodged all through the town, even in the business quarter in the branches of the enormous elms. Nobody was allowed to molest them, and they lived happily along with goldfinches, swallows, sparrows, woodpeckers, robins, and many other kinds of birds.

It was a celebrated place for birds, and the people of the town were rewarded for their kindness to them by the protection their little feathered friends gave to their gardens. The leaves of the trees were always glossy and green, and no grubs devoured the fruit and foliage in the gardens and orchards, for all through the spring and summer little beaks were busy eating thousands and thousands of worms and insects.

When Diadem reached the schoolhouse she shook the rain from her umbrella, stood it in a corner of the cloak-room, hung up her wet mackintosh, and entered the school-room.

The bell had not yet rung, and the children were scattered in groups about the room talking to each other. Diadem joined them, and her happy voice chimed in with those of the other children.

She had her back to the door and was not

among the first to look upon rather a strange sight.

The teacher, Miss Julian, entered the room and behind her walked a little gray cat, drawing a tiny cart by a string that it held in its mouth.

It was a very odd thing for a cat to do. The children could hardly credit their eyesight, and some of them laughed, while others, looking at Miss Julian's disturbed face, said "hush."

She glanced over her shoulder as she took her seat, and could not help smiling herself as she watched the little cat drawing the cart along the floor. Then she covered her eyes with her hands, and the children silently stood peering over one another's shoulders at the curious spectacle of the little cat, which was playing with the cart as intently as if it were alone, dragging it backward and forward and occasionally pushing it with its paws.

Miss Julian touched the bell. "Go to your seats, children."

They all sat down; then instead of opening the school with a hymn, as they usually did, Miss Julian began to speak to them leaning her head on her hands and sometimes putting her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Oh, children, I feel so badly," she said. "You have heard me speak of the little deformed boy in the house where I board who died a week ago. This little cat, that was his pet, is making his mother so unhappy that I have brought him here to give to one of you."

The children were as quiet as mice, and after

a minute's pause Miss Julian went on: "The cat was the child's playmate, and he cannot realize that his master is dead. He is looking for him all the time, and he stands outside his door or draws this little cart up and down, hoping that Larry will come back to play with him. He mews pitifully too, and Larry's mother says that she will not keep him in her lonely house, but will give him to some boy or girl who will be kind to him."

"Oh, the poor little pussy-cat," burst from Diadem's sympathetic heart.

Miss Julian smiled at her. "Do you wish to have him, Diadem? I think he would be happy with you."

Diadem went from her seat up to the platform and stood over the little gray animal.

"Ask him to come to you," said Miss Julian. "Larry called him Bunny Boy because he is said to be part rabbit."

"Bunny Boy, Bunny Boy," said Diadem, extending her fingers, "come to Diadem, she will comfort you."

"Meow, meow," said the little lonely animal, dropping the string of the cart to go to her.

"You see he is a very pretty creature," said Miss Julian. "Every one admires that long gray hair, and his disposition is something remarkable. He will play games and follow you more like a gentle dog than a cat. I never have seen an animal like him, and you will get to love him dearly. Now, children, we must get to lessons. I am late this morning, but I feel quite unnerved

thinking of the dear patient lad we miss so sorely. However, I must remember how perfectly happy he is now and that we shall go to him some day."

"What shall I do with Bunny Boy?" asked Diadem. She had taken the cat in her arms and sat hugging him with a very happy face.

"He will sit here under my desk till recess, and then we shall decide who is to have him."

Diadem got the cat subject to her father's approval.

When school was over that morning she trotted home with her new pet in her arms, while Dan trudged behind her carrying her books, her umbrella, and the little cart.

"Father, father," she exclaimed, entering the dining room, "look here"; and she deposited the gray cat on Mr. Gale's knee.

"What's this?" said that gentleman, looking up. "What's this?"

"It is the best cat that ever lived," said Diadem. "Miss Julian says it is. His grandfather was a rabbit and he never scratched any one in his life."

"I have no reason to doubt Miss Julian's word," said Mr. Gale; "but Diadem, you have such a succession of the best animals in the world and they so often die and leave you, thereby wounding your feelings, that I don't know about letting you have another."

"This is a healthy cat, father; I don't think he will die."

"It isn't Diadem's fault that the animals die," said Dan stoutly. "If some of those girls that bring her sick and dying creatures would keep away she would be all right."

"Well, I don't want to see that graveyard any larger," said Mr. Gale, taking up his paper, "nor to see you playing grave-digger quite so often, Dan."

"Who is talking about graves?" asked a young lady who at that moment appeared in the doorway.

"Oh, Miss Netta, Miss Netta," said Diadem, precipitating herself upon her. "Have you come to take dinner with us? How good in you."

"Yes, I have," said the young lady, returning Diadem's caresses. "How do you do, Dan?"

"How do you do?" said the boy gruffly, and sidling nearer to Diadem.

They all sat down to the table, Miss Netta taking the place that had been left vacant since the death of Mrs. Gale, three years before.

"If you don't mind my returning to such a dismal subject," said the young lady vivaciously, "will some one tell me what was meant by Dan's digging graves?"

"Have you never heard of Diadem's cemetery?" asked Mr. Gale.

"Never. What is it?"

"All the animals round about that are sick, or in distress, or dying, take refuge or are brought here, and Diadem nurses them till they depart this life. Then there are tears and sobs

and I have to console her while Dan digs a grave and plants a tombstone over the departed favorite. I must show you a photograph that I took of her two years ago where Dan is comforting her."

"How very trying for you, Diadem," said Miss Netta.

"It is very bad for me," said Diadem gravely, "but it is worse for the poor little things that have to suffer."

"And do you save none of your wrecks?" asked Miss Netta.

"Why, you know Grum Growdy," said Diadem merrily; "he was a wreck."

"That queer old raven," said Miss Netta.

"Yes," went on Diadem; "he fell out of a tree one day and went staggering about till he frightened Mrs. Denham and she gave him to me. Cook put some medicine down his throat and he fell over as if he was dead; but when the grave was ready he jumped up and said, 'Ha! ha!' then Mrs. Denham wouldn't take him back."

"Mrs. Denham was a sensible woman," said Mr. Gale; "that bird is the plague of our lives."

Diadem looked anxiously at their guest. "Father doesn't mean that, Miss Netta; he is good to all my pets. I think he is the best man that ever lived."

"So do I," said Miss Netta dryly.

Dan stared at her half-angrily, but she paid no attention to him and went on with her dinner.

"Well, father, what about the cat?" asked

Diadem, when she had finished her strawberries and cream and was about to prepare for school.

"Where is it?" asked Mr. Gale evasively.

"Here, father"; and raising her napkin Diadem showed Bunny Boy, who had been curled up on her lap during the meal. "I thought I would let him stay close to me because he might be lonely," she said apologetically. "May I keep him, father?"

"Ask Miss Netta," he said laughingly, putting aside the hand that his little daughter laid on his wrist.

"Miss Netta!" exclaimed Diadem; "she won't care, she lives away across the bridge."

"Oh no, she doesn't," said her father.

Diadem looked at the head of the table. "Have you moved to town, Miss Netta?"

"Yes," said the young lady composedly; "I was married to your father this morning."

Dan noisily pushed back his chair and went to the window, but Diadem continued to gaze first at her father and then at his wife.

"I suppose I should have told you and Dan," said Mr. Gale, "but I hate a fuss, and I knew you would ask a great many questions. However, I want to tell you this—you especially, my boy," and he glanced toward the window, "that I had in mind the fact that you two children are growing up and need a mother's care."

"I hate stepmothers," said Dan angrily.

"Do you?" said Mrs. Gale calmly. "You won't hate me. The boys have been cramming you with nonsense."

"No they haven't," said Dan.

"Go upstairs to your room and see what your stepmother has brought you from St. John and perhaps you won't hate her so decidedly," said Mr. Gale.

Diadem's face was quivering. "All the little girls but me have mothers," she said, putting the cat gently on the floor. "Is it true? Are you my very own mother now?"

"Yes, dear," said Mrs. Gale.

Diadem ran to bury her face in her lap. "You lovely, lovely darling!" Then she drew back and looked at her. "Aren't you very young to get married?"

"I am not so young as I look."

"I should think," remarked Diadem to her father, "that you would like an old woman."

"You naughty Diadem," said Mrs. Gale, shaking her head at her; "your papa isn't an old man."

"'Course he isn't," said Diadem; "he runs races like a boy with me and Dan. Only, old women are nice, and they mend your clothes and get good dinners like cook."

"Would you like me to send Miss Netta away and get some one like cook?" asked Mr. Gale.

"Oh, no, no, father;" and Diadem stretched out an appealing hand toward him. "Don't send her away now we've just got her, she'll be such fun. Will you?"

"No, I don't think I will," he said.

"It's time to go to school," said Dan, brushing by her as he went toward the door.

"You may have a half-holiday to-day if you like," said Mr. Gale.

"I don't like, sir," said Dan willfully; and he hurried away.

"What will you do, Diadem?" asked her father.

The child looked anxiously after her brother.

"Dan is cross about something," she said.

"Perhaps you had better go with him," suggested Mr. Gale. "Netta will take care of your cat for you. Come here, pet," and he kissed her, saying, "My own little girl." Then he stood by his wife at the window, watching the two children hurrying down the walk to the gate.

"See her little head going," said Mrs. Gale. "She is remonstrating with him and enumerating the advantages connected with having a stepmother. Isn't she a little jewel?"

"Yes; but she has a temper," said Mr. Gale, "a pretty stiff one sometimes; but you will have patience with her, Netta."

"I'll need to," said his pretty black-eyed wife, "for I have one myself."

That evening Mrs. Gale left her husband on the front veranda and went all over the house in search of Diadem. Finally, while looking out at one of the windows she saw her sitting on a rustic bench under one of the elm trees at the back of the house.

"What are you doing here all by yourself?" she asked, going out to her and seating herself on the bench.

"Just talking to my cat," said the little girl placidly, looking down at Bunny Boy who lay on a cushion beside her.

"Do you enjoy that?" asked Mrs. Gale curiously, "sitting here with no company but this animal?"

"It's better than a party," said Diadem dreamily. "The little cat is unhappy, he is only just beginning to purr. Do you know his master has left him? That makes an animal sorry. Poor little Bunny Boy. I shall be good to you and wheel the cart for you."

"I am not very fond of animals" said Mrs. Gale.

Diadem's face fell, but her new mother put her finger under her chin and said lightly. "Don't feel badly, little girl; perhaps you can educate me. I don't know anything about them."

"I'm a little worried about Grum Growdy," said Diadem.

Mrs. Gale began to laugh. "That ridiculous bird; I have not seen him to-day."

"Why do you laugh at him?" asked the little girl.

"He is so pompous and severe-looking; I cannot realize that his chief delight is in playing tricks."

"He is very jealous," said Diadem with a sigh. "He won't like you and Bunny Boy."

"Let us hope that he will soon get over it," said Mrs. Gale. "Where is Dan?"

"He has gone off to play with some boys," said Diadem. "He has just left me."

"Oh, that is why you did not come and sit with us," said Mrs. Gale, gently pinching the tip of one of Diadem's pink ears. "You are a good little sister; will you come now?"

"He will soon be back," said Diadem.

"Well, then I will bear you company till we hear him returning. Tell me more about your animals, won't you?"

"I have only Grum Growdy now and Bunny Boy," said Diadem. "Oh yes, and I have the blackbirds."

"The blackbirds! can you pet them?"

"I don't exactly pet them," said Diadem.

"But when the little ones fall out of the trees I put them back."

"I didn't know birds ever did such a thing. Why don't the parents keep them in?"

"I'll have to explain," said Diadem, looking up at the branching elm above them. "You know big birds are like fathers and mothers. They have to work for their little children and when they go out in the morning I suppose they say to them, 'Birdies, be good and stay in the nest till I come home,' but the little birds are like children again and they don't mind their parents. They get on the edge of the nest and looking out they say, 'I think I will try to hop on another branch,' but they fall, and when they find themselves on the ground they cry for the old birds to come and pick them up."

"How very odd," said Mrs. Gale; "I never heard of this. I suppose it is because my life has been mostly spent in a city."

"Then cats come along," said Diadem, "and very sad things happen."

"I suppose they eat them."

"When they find them they do; but first the cat roams all about, searching in the long grass for the little birds that peep to the old ones, and the old ones are nearly crazy and swoop down pecking at the cat and brushing it with their wings to try to frighten it away. They are such good mothers and fathers."

"And what do you do?"

"I run whenever I hear the blackbirds calling, and they know me, and cook brings a chair and stands on it and puts the little bird on a twig, and it goes step by step up near its nest, where it hears the old ones calling to it."

"Doesn't it go into the nest?"

"No; when a little bird once falls out it does not go back again. I think it sits near its parents all night."

"How interesting," said Mrs. Gale. "Tell me something more about your birds, won't you?"

"There is one very unkind thing they do that makes me ashamed of them," said Diadem.

"What is it?"

"Why, they push little weak birds out of the nest."

"Which does it?"

"I guess it must be the father," said Diadem innocently. "I don't see how the mother could do such a thing."

"Nor I," said her mother; "but perhaps there

are bad blackbirds just as there are bad men and women."

"I think that must be so," said Diadem. "Anyway, I find little sick birds on the ground with their feathers all ruffled, and I take them in the house and feed them and powder them."

"Powder them," repeated Mrs. Gale. "What is that for?"

Diadem laughed merrily. "Oh, it is such a funny sight, Miss Netta."

"You mustn't call me Miss Netta now," interrupted Mrs. Gale. "What will you say?"

"I don't know," replied Diadem with a puzzled face. "You seem too young to be just mother, and yet I feel as if you were my mother."

"Call me Mother Netta, then."

"That is just the thing," and Diadem reached out a hand to squeeze Mrs. Gale's fingers, "dear Mother Netta."

Mrs. Gale laughed too; then she said: "Please continue about the powdering of the birds."

"It is this way," said Diadem. "You know, Mother Netta, that young birds in nests can't take baths like old ones, but they can keep themselves clean by pecking themselves with their beaks or by having their parents do it. Well, when a bird gets ill it neglects itself and its parents neglect it, and horrid little red things get on it and worry it, and when it falls out on the grass I find these vermin all over it. That is when I put on the powder which kills them. The little bird gets back its strength and I feed

it, and when it is well I put it on a tree and it climbs up and goes to its parents."

"Hush," said Mrs. Gale suddenly, "there is some one calling you."

While they had been talking it had become quite dark, but it was a warm night so they had not gone into the house.

"It is Dan," said Diadem, "he has come home;" and clasping Bunny Boy to her breast she got up and went toward the back door.

"Why, Dan," Mrs. Gale heard her exclaim; then she too rose and approached the boy.

Diadem had drawn him into the rays of light that streamed out through the open kitchen door.

Such a sorry-looking object as the boy was, coat hung over his arm, his shirt torn, his face bruised, his hair disordered, and his mouth, against which he pressed a handkerchief, was cut and bleeding.

"Have you been fighting?" asked Diadem.

"Yes," he mumbled.

"Oh, you poor boy," said Diadem in a motherly tone. "Come into the kitchen and I will attend to you."

Dan drew back. "No, I don't want any one to see me. Is that Miss Netta?" And he peered through the darkness at her.

"Yes," said Diadem; "but she won't tell. Come upstairs;" and she ran nimbly into the house and up the back stairway to Dan's room.

She was lighting the lamp as he entered.

"I'm in a fearful mess," he muttered, throwing his cap on the bed and surveying himself in the glass. "Just look at my lips, they're like a dozen ordinary ones."

"I wish boys wouldn't fight you," said Diadem, averting her glance from his swollen mouth, while she looked in a drawer for a case of court plaster that had on it the words, "I cure all wounds but those of love."

"I told you I'd try not to fight any more," said Dan gruffly, "but I just had to this time; you'd say so too if you knew."

"It's b—b—brutal to fight," sobbed Diadem, trying to wink away the tears in her eyes so that she could see to cut the plaster. "I wish boys wouldn't tease you."

"It's my fault as much as theirs," said Dan, "except to-night," he added doggedly; "I was nagged."

A few minutes later his hands and face were washed, his hair was brushed, and his lips were ornamented with narrow strips of pink plaster.

"Now you look better," said Diadem with satisfaction.

"Yes; but I'm still a sight," said Dan shortly. "I can't go downstairs. Get me my books, will you, like a daisy; I'll have to study up here to-night."

"Your eyes are very red," said Diadem. "I'll read your lessons to you if you will help me with the hard words. I know mine."

"All right," said Dan, throwing himself into an arm-chair and trying to look like his father.

"I wish all the fellows had a sister like you. I'll not fight any more, honor bright, unless the same thing happens again."

Bunny Boy walked daintily along the bed and rubbed his head against Dan's arm.

"Poor pussy," said Dan, stroking him. "Poor young pussy; lost your master, did you? Well, you have fallen into good hands. Diadem will pet you till you don't know whether you are a cat or a king."

When Mrs. Gale left the children, she went into the parlor and took a seat in a dusky corner. She was thinking deeply and paid no attention to the sound of voices and occasional laughter that floated in to her from the veranda except once, when she murmured to herself that her husband must have a caller.

After a while she heard the sound of her own name in Mr. Gale's voice. "Netta, Netta, where are you?"

"I am here," she said; and her husband, stepping in through the open window, felt his way across the room like a blind man till he reached the sofa where she sat.

"Are you homesick," he asked, "sitting here alone? I thought you were with the children."

"No," she replied, "I am not homesick; I have been sitting with Diadem till she left me to go to Dan. What are you laughing about?"

"I ought not to laugh; it is a wrong thing in view of the circumstances," said Mr. Gale, with another chuckle, "but really it is too absurd."

“What is absurd?”

“Dan has been fighting for you, my dear. Sanders, who has just been in, was telling me about it. He saw and heard the whole thing from his window. Some of the boys, Dan among them, were playing baseball in a field near by, and in the course of the game the coacher told Dan to run as if his stepmother was after him. The reference displeased Dan, and he told him to hold his tongue, which the coacher wouldn't do. After the game they appealed to their fists. Of course Dan got whipped, for the coacher is a big fellow. However, Sanders says that public sentiment was with Dan, for he nobly vindicated the right of a boy to have a stepmother and to approve of her if he wishes to do so; and three cheers for Dan's stepmother were given by the lads lest he should feel cast down by his defeat. He has been the terrible fighter among the small boys till Diamond and I persuaded him to stop. I hope he isn't going to break out again.”

“I thought he didn't like me,” said Mrs. Gale quietly.

“Oh, yes he does, he is delighted with you; but he is as stubborn as I am, and being older than Diadem, he guessed how things were going, and being piqued because I did not consult him, made up his mind, as many children do, that a stepmother, because she is a stepmother, must necessarily be disagreeable. You should have seen his face this morning when I told him that you refused to take a wedding trip because you

knew it might cause him and Diadem to fancy that you were taking their father from them. I knew that he felt sorry for his shabby treatment of you. Give him time, give him time, my dear, and he will come around."

Mrs. Gale sat silent for a few minutes, then she got up, and drawing her hand from her husband's, said, "Good-bye for a little while."

"Where are you going?" he inquired.

"I wish to see whether Diadem is in bed. It seems to me that she sits up rather late for a little girl."

"Of course she does," returned Mr. Gale. "I told you that she isn't properly looked after. The servants spoil her."

Mrs. Gale went dancing upstairs just as Dan and Diadem were accustomed to do, and her husband smiled as he stood in the lighted hall and watched her.

Diadem sat curled up in a chair reading in a sleepy voice to Dan, who had undressed and gotten into bed.

He pulled the clothes up over his head when he saw his mother coming, but she did not look at him.

"Don't you want to go to bed, Diadem?" she asked. "It is getting late. I will read to Dan."

"No, no," said the boy hastily; "put out the lights, Diadem, and go away. I know everything now."

The little girl rose, and pressing her red lips together to keep from yawning, kissed Dan good-night.

"I will put out the lamp," said Mrs. Gale. "And Diadem, after you are undressed I will come and read to you."

"Thank you, Mother Netta," said the little girl. "I will keep awake till you come." And she went to her room.

"So you fought for me, did you?" said Mrs. Gale, going up to the bed and gently drawing the sheet away from Dan's disfigured face.

"Yes," he growled; "but don't look at me unless you want to get a fright. My right eye is closed, and my mouth feels as if it was half way up my cheek."

"Well, I am going to kiss you, anyway," said Mrs. Gale, "and say I am much obliged to you; but——"

"But you don't want me to do it again," said Dan. "I know, you women are all alike. Well, I'll tell you, I'll lick any fellow who says a word against you if it takes me all my time and if my mouth wriggles round to the back of my neck, so you needn't talk."

"Do you enjoy fighting?" asked Mrs. Gale curiously. "I don't know much about boys."

"I enjoy getting at a fellow that makes me mad," said Dan. "I wish you would leave me alone now; I don't like to have you looking at me."

"May I read to you first if I turn my back?" asked Mrs. Gale.

"Yes, if it don't take long. My head——"

"Your head aches, of course," said Mrs. Gale. "How stupid I am."

"It doesn't matter," said Dan. "I wish I had not mentioned it."

"I know something that will cure it," said Mrs. Gale. "Just wait an instant."

She fairly flew out of the room and returned with a bottle of something cool that she rubbed gently on his forehead.

Dan pretended that he did not like to have her kneeling beside his bed and waiting on him, but she said, "Hush, you funny boy; I like to have my own way too. I shall not leave you while you are suffering. Now I am going to sing you to sleep. You are too tired to listen to a Bible story this evening."

Mrs. Gale sang one hymn after another—good old hymns that Dan had heard since he was a baby. His little dogged face grew peaceful and happy; and at last he murmured, "My own mother used to sing like that to me."

"Did she?" said Mrs. Gale. Then she added softly, "Your mother was a very good woman. I shall be happy if I can be half so good."

"You are young yet," said Dan encouragingly; "perhaps you will be later on."

Mrs. Gale suppressed a smile; then she asked him if his head was better.

"Yes," he replied, "my headache is gone; but I would not tell you before because I liked to hear you sing. When I listen to you I feel as if I could toe the mark all the time; but in the morning it will pass away I suppose."

"I will just sing one more hymn," said Mrs. Gale, "about the wandering sheep and the

shepherd. I am a very poor Christian myself, Dan ; but I know the Good Shepherd will keep me in the fold if I ask him. Shall I ask him for you too?"

"Yes," said Dan, "I wish you would."

Mrs. Gale knelt by his bed and put up a prayer to the loving Shepherd for the safe keeping of two wandering lambs, then she tucked him in and left him to a dreamless slumber.

Diadem fell asleep that evening with one arm thrown protectingly around Bunny Boy who politely remained within his shelter till he saw that his young mistress would not be aware of his departure.

He had noticed that the door had been left slightly ajar and jumping on the floor he went in search of the boy who had reminded him a little of the dear gentle lad who had died and gone to heaven.

True, Larry had been a frail and delicate lad, while Dan was sturdy in appearance and manners ; but he was a boy, and strange to say, to boys rather than to girls, did the affections of this timid little cat go out.

He walked delicately across the hall, stepped over the threshold of the door and sprang quietly on Dan's bed.

First, he walked up to the pillow to make sure that it was the boy he wanted, then with a quiet purr of delight he touched him with his pink nose, and curling up on the foot of the bed went to sleep.

Cats do not sleep so long at night as girls and boys do, perhaps because they have so many naps through the day, and by sunrise Bunny Boy had opened his eyes and was listening to the birds waking up in the trees outside. He heard at first faint twitterings as if the robins and blackbirds were saying to each other, "Time to get up, time to get up." Then at last there were lower notes and snatches of song, and soon the older birds were all away looking for breakfast for the younger ones, which were peeping and calling to them from their nests.

Bunny Boy felt no temptation to go out to catch them. He was a cat that never hunted birds and mice, so he lay perfectly still blinking at the sunlight streaming into the room, and occasionally glancing at Dan who lay motionless and sleeping as if he never meant to wake.

After an hour or two his quick ear heard a slight sound. He looked up and there in the doorway stood a large, black bird with a strong beak and a fierce eye—and the eye was fixed upon him, he was sorry to see.

Bunny Boy stared uneasily at him, and the huge bird stared angrily at him. This was the bad Grum Growdy,—the raven which had been given Diadem,—the bird which was so naughty that no one could manage him.

Grum Growdy's stern glance seemed to say, "Ah, my enemy, I have found you—you are the new pet. Well, I shall make you sorry for coming to this house." Step by step he walked across the floor, took hold of the bedclothes

with his beak and swung himself up on the bed.

Bunny Boy was alarmed and crept close to Dan's head, but Grum Growdy was not afraid of Dan, and waddling over the white counterpane he came close to the little frightened cat and without uttering a sound seized the tip of his tail in his beak and tweaked it so painfully that Bunny Boy gave one fearful shriek and sprang under the bed clothes.

Dan started up. "You old rowdy," he exclaimed, winking sleepily at Grum Growdy, "what are you doing here, and what is this? Bunny Boy, you here too? Oh, I see, Grum Growdy has been bullying you. Get out, you scamp." And he lightly boxed the raven's ears.

"Ha, ha," said the raven scornfully, and flying up on a picture he looked down attentively at Dan and Bunny Boy, who had thrust out his head to glance fearfully at him.

"Ha, ha, indeed," said the boy; "you impudent fellow, I am going to give you a beating some day. What do you mean by being so ugly?"

"Nicely, thank you," said the raven, sitting on one claw and putting up the other to scratch his ear.

"Get away, you bad thing," and springing from his bed Dan chased the raven out through the window and closed it.

"Now, Bunny Boy, you may come out," he said, and all the time he was dressing he kept talking to the frightened animal.

When he went down to breakfast Bunny Boy was on his shoulder. He had told Diadem that the cat was with him, so she was not alarmed by the absence of her pet.

Young Mrs. Gale sat at the head of the table laughing convulsively at Grum Growdy, who was perched on the window sill looking at her. Being a bird no one had considered it worth while to notify him of her marriage, and he had just discovered the astonishing fact that during his absence from home on the previous day a woman as well as a cat had been introduced into the house.

One could tell by his actions that he was highly displeased. He stared at her, then at Mr. Gale and the children, then he struck the window frame sharply with his beak and repeated a great many times the word "veb."

"What does he mean?" asked Mrs. Gale.

"Nobody knows what 'veb' means," said Diadem. "Grum Crowdy just says it when he is angry. I will talk to him and you listen and hear how queer he is. Poor old Grum Growdy," she said, turning her head toward the window. "Did they bring a pretty lady to the house when you were away and make you angry."

"Veb, veb," said the raven hoarsely.

"But you must like her, Growdy dear, and try to be good to her."

"Veb, veb, veb," said the bird furiously, striking the window ledge with his beak.

"He is getting worse, Diadem; you had better not stir him up," said Mr. Gale. "Here, old fel-

low, have some porridge," and mixing cream and sugar with some he took from his plate he put it on the window.

Grum Growdy uttered a gratified caw and dipping his beak in it threw back his head and quickly swallowed all that had been given to him. Then he took a long breath, swelled out his sides and uttered a succession of rasping cries that made Mrs. Gale put her hands to her ears and say: "Oh, what a noise! does he often do that?"

"Yes, unfortunately," said Mr. Gale. "Quick, Dan, give him something from your plate—some meat he will like."

"It is queer, Mother Netta," said Diadem, "but you know we said birds are just like people, some are good and some are bad."

"Grum Growdy would have been a bad old robber or a bully if he had been a man," said Dan. "It it hadn't been for Diadem he would have been shot long ago. People hate to have him steal their things."

"Some of them laugh at him," said Diadem, "and perhaps he will be a better bird some day. He is good part of the time now."

"Yes," said Mr. Gale, "don't be too hard on him, Dan."

"I am not hard on him," said the boy, "I am only stating truths. I believe he would have half killed Bunny Boy this morning if I had not been near."

"He will get used to him," said Diadem; "just wait for a few weeks, Dan."

"What kind of bad things does he do?" asked Mrs. Gale. "I have never heard of anything but his flying about the town and occasionally snatching up some bright article that pleased him."

"He frightens the robins nearly to death," said Dan. "You should just hear them chattering when he gets up into a tree where their nests are, and he listens to them and laughs, 'ha, ha,' fit to kill himself."

"Does he hurt the young ones?" asked Mrs. Gale.

"No, because we feed him well," said her husband; "he simply enjoys teasing them."

"Tell Mother Netta about the political meeting, father," said Diadem.

Mr. Gale began to laugh. "Yes, that was funny. You"—addressing his wife—"hadn't come to Fredericton then. There was a political gathering held out of doors on the big grass square in front of the legislative buildings because there was no hall large enough to contain the people. It was a lovely day and a lovely sight to see the crowd down there under the trees by the river. We all went, Diadem, Dan, and I, and to our discomfiture Grum Growdy went too, flying over us and stopping every little while to clean his beak against some twig and give a caw of satisfaction, for he had had a remarkably good dinner. He perched just over us on an elm tree and I sincerely hoped that he would hold his tongue. He didn't, fortunately or unfortunately.

"There was a number of speakers; the two most important ones came last. While the honorable gentleman on my side of the question was speaking Grum Growdy said never a word, but when the other candidate opened his mouth Grum Growdy called out contemptuously, 'Bosh'. The crowd recognized his voice and went off into fits of laughter. 'Ha, ha,' screamed Grum Growdy; 'shut up, shut up.'

"The poor man could hardly get a hearing. He did, however, persevere with his speech, but the effect was lost, for Grum Growdy would not be driven away and kept interrupting him."

"A mischievous bird," said Mrs. Gale. "How am I to get him to like me?"

"Speak fair words to him," said her husband, "and wear a red gown, if you have one. He loves that color as I do."

"I have one and I shall put it on," said his wife.

Mrs. Gale was married on a Wednesday. On Sunday morning she went to church with her husband and the children, and instead of going into the house when she came home she sat on the veranda with Dan.

Mr. Gale and Diadem had gone to the dining room to get some ice-water, for it was a warm day and they both were thirsty.

When Diadem came hurrying back she threw herself on a cushion at her mother's feet.

Mrs. Gale leaned over and took off the little girl's hat. "Do you know, Diadem," she said

touching with gentle fingers the stuffed bird in the pretty white hat, "you do one thing that seems to me rather odd in a lover of birds."

"What is that, Mother Netta?"

"You wear birds' skins and feathers in your hats."

"But when the poor little things die, it does not matter," said Diadem. "I like to have them about me."

"I don't see much beauty in dead things," said Mrs. Gale; "but like you, Diadem, I did not know or think anything about the subject till yesterday, when I was reading a book about birds."

"Is it a nice book?" asked Diadem eagerly, "I should like to see it."

"You shall," said Mrs. Gale; "there are some delightful stories in it, and some that are painful to read. I think I can tell you in a few words what I read that made me think of you. In the first place, Diadem, for what purpose do you think that birds were put in the world?"

"Oh, to be happy and beautiful," said the little girl warmly. "The robins are so dear; I love the shy cuckoo that calls in the cemetery, and the swallows with their pointed wings that skim about the church; but best of all I love my blackbirds. They look as if they polished themselves every morning—that shining ring around their necks is so sweet. Sometimes I feel as if I should scream because I cannot get hold of them to squeeze them."

"A precious little goose you make of your-

self," said Dan good-naturedly, "kissing and fussing over the young birds. I like the night hawks best of all, Netta. It is fine to hear them swoop down when we are sitting here after tea. We had a fellow here from St. John one evening and he would not believe that they made that noise with their wings. He said it was a cry."

"But birds have something to do in the world besides being pretty, haven't they?" asked Mrs. Gale.

"Oh, yes," replied Dan, "they catch insects."

"Suppose there were no birds in the world," said Mrs. Gale.

"I guess it would go hard with boys," said Dan. "They would have to stay home from school to pick grubs from off the growing things."

"If there were no birds in the world there would be no boys nor any grown people," said Mrs. Gale earnestly. "We could not live without them, and I think it is perfectly horrible that so many are killed every year."

"Boys don't kill birds here," said Diadem; "they are very good to them."

"It is not the boys," said Mrs. Gale, shaking her head. "It is women, I am ashamed to say—good, gentle mothers, the book says many of them are."

Diadem looked at her in astonishment. "I don't understand, Mother Netta. Ladies don't hurt birds here."

Mrs. Gale touched the pink bird in Diadem's hat. "Where did you get this, little girl?"

"From the milliner."

"And where did the milliner get it?"

"Oh, I don't know," returned Diadem slowly. "It is not a Fredericton bird."

"No, I think it came from the South," said Mrs. Gale. "How many birds do you suppose the hunters kill every year for the women of America and their children?"

"I don't know how many," said Diadem.

"Five millions of birds."

The immense number conveyed no idea to the little girl's mind, and she stared blankly at her mother.

"Suppose you saw twenty dead blackbirds on this veranda," said Mrs. Gale.

"Please stop, Mother Netta," cried Diadem.

"Those are more birds than I have in my little cemetery. Twenty dead birds—oh, I should cry if I saw them."

Mrs. Gale drew a long breath. "This subject is new to me," she said, "and I don't want to pain you, Diadem, but I think you would like me to make my point."

"I see," exclaimed Dan; "the women don't think. Here you, Diadem, pretend to love birds and yet you stick a murdered one in your hat. If you wouldn't wear it the milliner wouldn't buy it, and the men wouldn't kill it."

"That is it," said Mrs. Gale.

"Please give me your knife," said Diadem with a sob.

The boy handed a penknife to her and she hastily ripped the little stuffed bird from her hat and placed her hands over its glassy eyes.

"Let us go and bury it," she said.

Dan gave a comical glance over his shoulder at his stepmother, then followed her willingly enough.

"Where are the children going?" asked Mr. Gale, suddenly appearing in the doorway.

"I have been talking to Diadem about wearing birds in her hats,—you know how tender-hearted she is about them,—and she has gone to bury the one that was the subject of my discourse."

"I often think that you women are very un-reasoning creatures," said Mr. Gale. "You are so kind and gentle and yet you do such cruel things without for an instant intending to be cruel. I have thought this subject all out. It seems a mockery to me to see women sitting in church singing

Oh, for the tenderness of heart,
Which bows before the Lord,

while their heads are adorned with his murdered creatures, and their horses stand outside with their heads checked up till their necks are ready to break; and you bring your daughters up in the same way. Men are powerless, for women set the fashions."

"I know," said Mrs. Gale in a low voice. "It makes me ashamed of myself; but I shall wear no more birds now that I have looked into the matter. I did not dare tell Diadem of the way in which the birds are killed at the season of the year when they are rearing their young, and how cruelly the young ones are left to starve."

"No, don't tell her," said Mr. Gale. "Tell her though of the loss to the country, for she has a practical little mind; of places where the birds have not been protected as they are here, and of the consequent failure of crops and the enormous expenditure of money to get rid of insect pests; and above all tell her not to grieve overmuch about this or any other evil in the world, but to devote her energies to putting a stop to it."

"I will," said his wife. "Now let us go and see what she is doing."

Side by side they walked over the lawn to a sheltered corner, where was Diadem's little cemetery for deceased pets.

The pink bird was just being put into the ground. "Lay him here, Dan, next to the chimney swallow," said Diadem.

"The chimney swallow," said Mr. Gale. "That is an addition I have not heard of."

"It was last week, father. Don't you remember," said Diadem, "after the fire in the tannery? He must have had his nest in the chimney, for he got his wings singed and some little girls found him in the street and brought him here."

"And Diadem stayed home from school all one day to nurse him," said Dan, "and put warm food in his mouth. He breathed heavily just like a sick person, then he died."

"Here lies old Mr. Jewry's fighting cock," said Mr. Gale, "the worst bird in Fredericton; but Diadem took him in. See the spur at the head of his grave. And there are the stones of a pet cat and a robin and three dogs belonging to

friends. But this is a melancholy business; let us go and have some dinner."

"Oh dear, dear," said Diadem; "birds have a very hard time. Good-bye, little pink bird," and she looked mournfully toward the grave. "I'm very miserable, Dan."

Mr. Gale and his wife looked back. Dan had dropped his spade and had thrown his arm protectingly around Diadem. "Never mind, old girl," he was saying; "there are lots of pleasant things in the world yet."

"Netta, Netta, don't move till I get my kodak," said Mr. Gale one day a few weeks later.

He had just come from his office and had sauntered out through the house to the spot where he knew he should find his wife and Diadem and possibly Dan.

Behind the villa was a field with a small stream running through it and having trees scattered about with rustics seats under them. Near one of these trees Mrs. Gale sat, and perched close to her head was Grum Growdy.

Mrs. Gale had on her red gown and the stern old raven surveyed her with the greatest approbation, occasionally putting down his beak to rub caressingly the rim of her ear.

At such times Mrs. Gale shivered and laughed saying, "Please don't, Grum Growdy; you tickle my ear." But the raven paid no attention to her remonstrance and continued to caress her.

Mr. Gale hurried out with his kodak and took a snap shot at her.

Then she moved farther away from the raven which however calmly hopped to the back of her chair.

Mrs. Gale changed her seat, but Grum Growdy flew on her lap.

"You silly old thing," she exclaimed, smothering him in a bit of fancy work on which she had been sewing; "go away and don't bother me."

Grum Growdy thrust out his head for her to scratch, which she did; then rising she threw him into the air.

He flew away and her husband said: "The old scamp, who would have supposed that he would get to care for you so quickly?"

"I paid most devoted court to him," she said, "and I have worn this red dress all through the warm weather till I am tired of it. I think I can venture to take it off now."

"Yes, I think so too," said her husband; "Grum Growdy will like you now, no matter what color you wear."

"He has taught me a lesson," said Mrs. Gale brightly; "the crossest and most disagreeable people can be won by kindness."

"That is true," said Mr. Gale.

"Fancy learning a lesson from a raven," said Mrs. Gale; "I should have laughed at the idea a few weeks ago."

"It is not safe to despise any creature that God has made," said Mr. Gale.

"No, indeed; Grum Growdy has been such a help to me in visiting old Mr. Smith. His manner is detestable you know. He says I read

the Bible as if my mouth were full of pebbles; but I find if one has patience with him there are grains of kindness in his heart."

"Where are the children?" asked Mr. Gale.

"They have not come from school yet. They are late to-day."

"Ah, I thought they had not; I see Bunny Boy up on the gate post waiting for Dan."

"Is it not remarkable that the little creature should feel such adoration for our boy?"

"Remarkable indeed; and do you see what a softening, humanizing effect it is having upon Dan? I notice that when he speaks roughly the cat shrinks from him and he notices it too and alters his tones."

"That cat has a mission in the world," said Mrs. Gale.

"Oh, father and mother, father and mother, it is just beautiful to see you," cried some one suddenly, and looking up they saw Diadem running toward them. "Oh, I am so pleased that you are out here. I've got a lot of things to tell you. We are going to have a Sunday-school picnic and a dear little heathen girl is to be there, and a concert is to be held to-night and she is to be there too, and may I go?"

"We shall see about it," said her mother, brushing back the thick fringe of hair from the little girl's face. "You had better sit down and rest now."

"Oh, you naughty, naughty thing!" exclaimed Diadem before she had fairly sat down. "Stop that this instant."

Mr. Gale laughed and murmured, "Old beast," at the same time.

Good little Bunny Boy, seeing that Dan was not coming, had started to follow Diadem to the field, but he was very much hampered in his movements by the teasing raven.

Grum Growdy, who had taken Mrs. Gale into his favor, had not yet ceased to dislike Bunny Boy and lost no opportunity of worrying him. Now he was hovering over him as he ran toward the group under the tree, and at every little run the cat took, he would swoop down and spitefully nip his long fur.

He was not hurting Bunny Boy, but he was decidedly annoying him and at every few paces the cat would stop and looking at him with gentle eyes, put up a protesting paw as much as to say, "How can you do such things?"

Diadem drove the raven away, and the cat ran beside her to the shelter of the tree.

"Ah, what a forgiving pussy you are," said Mrs. Gale, as the worried animal sprang on her lap. "Some cats would box Grum Growdy's ears, but you do not show the least resentment when he troubles you."

Bunny Boy sat for some time purring quietly and surveying the happy family party, then he showed signs of excitement and finally ran toward the house.

"Dan is coming now," said Diadem; "but it is odd we neither see nor hear him, yet Bunny Boy knows. How can animals tell, father?"

"I don't know, my child; they seem to have a

sense that we know nothing of. When I went hunting as a boy, I often had my hound come straight to me when he could neither see nor hear me, and had no track to follow."

"I think that we should love animals very much," said Diadem, "for they are so clever."

Dan soon approached, the cat as usual on his shoulder. "I have been to the woods," he said, laying a bunch of wild flowers on his mother's lap.

She smiled to herself as she put them to her face and thought, "How odd children are; this was the boy who was going to hate me." Then she gathered up her work to leave them.

"Where are you going, Netta?" asked Dan.

"To arrange for an early tea. We all want to go to the concert this evening."

"Oh, that will be jolly; but can't I do it for you?"

"No, thank you; I want to see cook myself, and you are tired. Lie down on the grass; here is a cushion for your head."

He stretched himself out at full length, and with the cat sitting close beside him, amused himself by counting the young apples forming among the leaves above him.

Two hours later tea was over, and they were starting for the concert.

Bunny Boy watched them from the front doorway and Grum Growdy looked down on them from an elm tree.

Then he began to think that it was time for him to go to bed.

He would fly up to the brook in the field and have another drink, for he was a very thirsty bird and was always drinking.

In the brook was a little place where there was a hollow between speckled stones. This was Grum Growdy's favorite spot. He lighted on one of the stones and took a drink. Then he wished that it was earlier in the day so that he might have a bath. However, he would not do such a rash thing as to bathe his big black body and then go to bed. So he simply waded in the clear water and looked down at his feet resting on the pebbles.

There seemed to be something caught and twisted around a sharp stone. What was it? A bit of fish skin? No, it was a string, and in moving toward it he got it around one of his claws. He tried to get out of it but it became more firmly entangled, so he stepped on a stone and picked at it with his beak.

Then a strange thing happened—he, Grum Growdy, who was always so agile and nimble, who could dodge anything, even a stone, that he would watch coming from the hand of a boy by simply jumping up and allowing it to pass under him, now became surely caught in a piece of stout twine that some careless person had thrown into the brook.

He got confused and turned around instead of standing still. This wound his legs tightly together and he fell over.

He became furious and managing to right himself he put his powerful beak under water

—the beak that had always been able to tear anything apart that he had wanted to tear—and tried to pull the string from his legs.

His head being under water, however, he choked, and falling over on his side he found that he would need all his strength to keep his head above water instead of thrusting it in.

Here was a pretty pickle for him to be in—he, the strong, cunning Grum Growdy, that no person but the Gales and Mrs. Denham had ever laid a finger on, to be caught by the legs like a silly young robin.

What should he do? Thank fortune it was getting dark. If some of his enemies came along now they would smite him hip and thigh.

If he had only known the right place in which to attack the string he could have thrust his head in quickly and with one swift stroke could have cut it in two; but he did not. It was twisted round and round the stone and round and round his feet, and like many human beings who can keep their heads perfectly on dry land, he became a complete simpleton when he fell into the water.

After a time it seemed to Grum Growdy that the water was rising. He had certainly floundered into a pool where it was well up over his back.

He did not think of drowning or of calling for help, he was simply angry, and he stood as best he could in perfect silence so that he would attract no enemies to the spot.

Perhaps he knew that even if he did laugh 'Ha, ha,' or shriek 'Bosh,' no one would have

come to his assistance. There were several houses near the Gales' villa, and the people were laughing and talking and sitting on their verandas or playing games inside, but they were all quite used to Grum Growdy and if he had lifted up his voice they would simply have said; "It is the Gales' raven. It is late for him to be chattering."

So the poor old raven stood in the brook and the neighbors went on amusing themselves.

How quickly Dan would have run to the spot if he could have seen him; but Dan at that instant was several blocks away enjoying the music at the concert. He could not come.

Cook, to whom Grum Growdy so often said "Veb," was sitting by her window resting. If it had been light she could almost have seen him, but if he had given any of his usual hoarse calls she would have ejaculated, "Oh, you impudent thing; you may screech your head off before I'll take any notice of you."

Grum Growdy was certainly in a desperate state. In his flutterings to and fro he had bruised one of his wings which was bleeding, and he had so far lost his foothold that now he was on his side in the water, having all he could do to keep his head out.

If Mrs. Gale, his latest favorite, could see him how sorry she would be, how quickly she would cut the cruel cord that bound his legs; but she was not there nor was dear little Diadem. While Grum Growdy lay in grim uncomplaining silence a crash of music at the concert filled the ears of

the small girl who would have flown to his side could she have known his sad plight.

There was only one creature in the family that suspected his misfortune and that was the despised little cat that he had worried half to death. How Bunny Boy knew no one could tell, but as he lay on the back doorstep he pricked his ears first one way, then the other, knowing quite well that away down in the field the old raven was either in trouble or very cunningly pretending to be so.

Bunny Boy was a very perplexed little cat. He was quite willing to go to the aid of the raven if he were really needed; but suppose this was a trap? The raven hated him. He knew that the family had gone to the concert. Perhaps he was trying to allure his rival into the field to peck him to death with his cruel beak.

Bunny Boy stood up and listened. No sound came from the raven, none would come, he would die in silence; and the cat, as if knowing this, suddenly sprang from the steps and went stealing through the grass to the brook.

It was perfectly dark now and there was no moon, but Bunny Boy's eyes were made so that he could see quite well. A brace of little field mice scampered by but he gave no heed to them and hurried on. What a splashing and tumbling there was in the brook! He was now quite near it and in a glance took in the situation. Poor Grum Growdy! he was indeed in trouble, his whole body was under water.

When the cat stood over him he ceased strug-

gling and lay with his wet black head just resting on a stone.

"Meow," said Bunny Boy gently, which meant, "Well, you have got yourself into a mess and I am sorry for you."

"Caw," said the raven feebly.

Bunny Boy for an instant did not know what to do. Being a cat he hated the water and if he got in he did not see how he could help the raven. So he stared at the bird and the bird at him. Then they understood each other.

Bunny Boy instead of returning to the house daintily crossed the brook on the stepping-stones and swiftly took a short cut leading to the church vestry where the concert was being held.

Grum Growdy knew what he was going to do and lay quite still without struggling.

Poor Bunny Boy's troubles were now to begin. He was a timid cat and hated the public street, where there were always so many dogs. Trembling and hiding occasionally when he heard any one coming, then hurrying to make up for the delay, he gained the hall. On arriving there he crouched near the doorway and wondered how he was to get in. A tall young man stood there and catching sight of him said, "Get home, pussy, this isn't a cat show."

"Meow, Meow," said Bunny Boy appealingly and crept a little nearer.

"No, no," said the young man, "you just go back to the place you came from. You would be frightened to death if you got in there. This is no place for cats."

Bunny Boy hid himself for a few minutes then when the young man's back was turned he rushed by him.

He found himself in a big lighted hall crowded with people, and as the young man had warned him he was half frightened to death. Where was he to find his dear family? He paused an instant in the aisle, then something told him where they were and he ran right to them and sprang on the knees of the astonished Dan.

"Good gracious," exclaimed the boy, "what is this?" Then he looked about at the lads scattered here and there who were giggling at him and pressing Bunny Boy down in his lap he covered him with his cap.

The cat would not keep still. He kept elevating his back and lifting Dan's cap in the air till he got for the first time in his history a gentle cuff on the ears.

It made no difference, Bunny Boy still put up his back, mewed and tried to jump on the floor.

"Well, get down then, you silly thing," said Dan, pushing him aside.

"Meow," said Bunny Boy dismally, standing on his hind legs as he had been taught to do when he wanted anything and looking appealingly at Diadem and Mrs. Gale.

The little Hindu had at that instant come on the platform dressed in the native costume of her country and was singing a curious song. The Gales were all interested in it, yet they could not help watching the strange actions of the usually quiet little cat.

Diadem, who understood animals better than Dan did, at last whispered to her mother, "Bunny Boy wishes us to follow him; something has happened at home."

The cat, as if conscious of what she said, sprang out into the passage between the seats and running back and forth, showed as plainly as possible that the little girl was right.

"Nothing could happen," whispered Dan, leaning over to speak to them. "Cook is at home."

"I am going to see, anyway," said Diadem, decidedly. "Bunny Boy is in trouble or he wouldn't act in that way. Mayn't I, Mother Netta?"

"Certainly, and I will go with you," said Mrs. Gale.

The two slipped quietly out preceded by the cat, that had now stopped mewling and ran in front of them, looking back anxiously to see if they were following.

He made a bee line for the brook. Mrs. Gale and Diadem hurried after him, sometimes laughing, sometimes saying anxiously, "Has he gone crazy?" as he took them across streets and down lanes and finally over a stone wall.

"Now, what is it?" said Mrs. Gale as, holding Diadem tightly by the hand, she at last stood peering down at the dark brook where Bunny Boy had halted.

A hoarse but happy caw at her feet made her start back.

"Oh, my raven, my darling, darling bird,"

shrieked Diadem. "He is drowning, oh, dear, dear," and she fell on her knees at the edge of the brook and plunging her hands into the water, she felt about till she found Grum Growdy's sleek body.

Mrs. Gale put her hands in too, and soon discovered the state of affairs. "Hold tightly to him, Diadem," she said, "and I will run to the house for a lantern and a knife. I am afraid to pull on that string."

She turned away, and Diadem, kneeling with the front of her white embroidered frock floating to and fro in the water, petted the now happy bird till her mother returned.

Cook held the lantern, and then a few sharp cuts of the knife set Grum Growdy free.

"Ha, ha," he said, and staggered to and fro on his stiff legs.

"Ha, ha, indeed," said cook; "this might have been a poor joke for you, sir. You had better mend your ways and not be so impudent."

"Bosh," said the bird with dignity, and turned his back on her.

Diadem took him up in her arms and carried him to the house. "My poor, bad, old bird—you will try now to be good, won't you?"

"Nicely, thank you," chuckled the raven.

"And you must apologize to this dear little Bunny Boy, who has saved your life," said Diadem.

The raven said nothing, but he looked at the cat in such a bright, quick fashion that Diadem thought he understood what she meant.

When Mr. Gale and Dan came home they found Mrs. Gale and Diadem sitting before the sofa in the dining room. On one end of it was Grum Growdy getting his wet plumage rubbed with a towel, on the other sat Bunny Boy eying him with visible satisfaction.

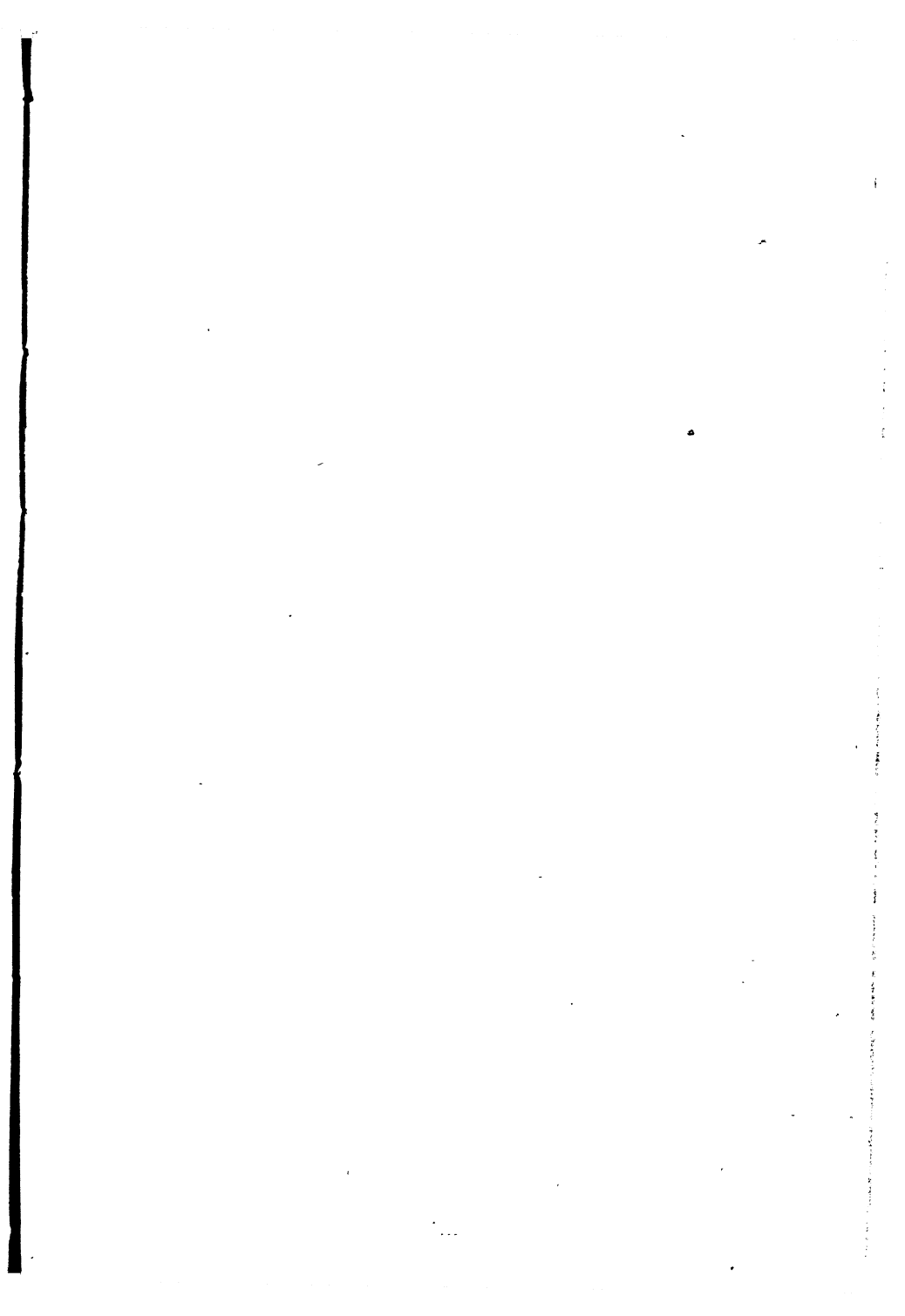
"Oh, father and Dan, what do you think has happened?" and Diadem told them the story of the cat's rescue of the raven.

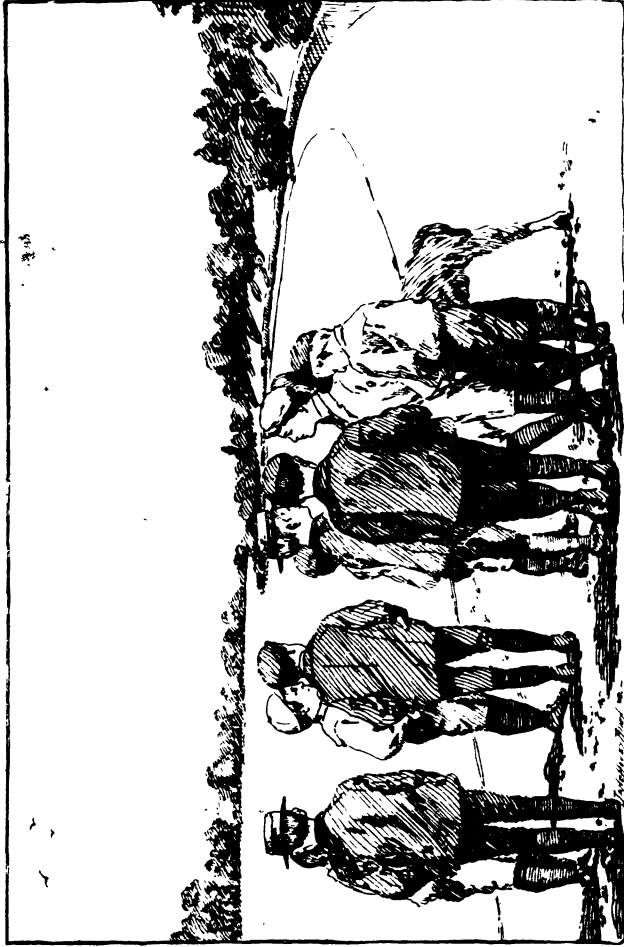
"Surprising," said Mr. Gale when she had finished.

"I tell you one thing," said Dan; "that raven will never worry my cat any more."

He was right. Grum Growdy never once molested Bunny Boy after that night. For many days subsequent to his ducking in the brook he would sit and stare at Bunny Boy in a very curious fashion, never going near him and never teasing him. Then after a long time they became friends and now the raven will perch beside the cat, eat with him and address long conversations to him, which Bunny Boy seems to enjoy hugely.







There were ten boys belonging to it

IX

TEN LITTLE INDIANS



THAT was the name of the club—the Ten Little Indians Club—there were ten boys belonging to it, Will Johnson, Percy Percival, Guy Fitzgerald, Bernard Griffin, Dicky Dougall, Jim Thomson, Rollo Jones, Jed Hammond, and John and Martin Fitch.

They were not very little boys. Percy Percival, the youngest of them all, was eleven. They were called the little Indians because they were the brothers of young men who belonged to what was called the Indian Club.

The Indian Club went in for out-of-door sports and games. They were great canoeists, and they played Lacrosse and other Indian games, and were very fond of spending all their leisure time in the woods surrounding the city where they lived.

The Indians, little and big, were all Canadians, and many a stranger in Fredericton, the capital of the Canadian province of New Brunswick, has been entertained in their camp on an island in the river.

Of course, they were not real Indians; they

just called themselves that for fun. They were all white; the young men who were the big Indians, and the boys who were the little Indians.

One day, a fine summer day, the ten little Indians stood in a group on the river bank. They had met there after school and were just debating how they should spend the afternoon.

"Let's take out the canoes and go up the Nashwaaksis," said Martin Fitch.

"All right, let's," said a number of the other boys.

Bernard Griffin put his hand in his pocket and with a rueful smile drew out a piece of paper. "Look here, fellows," he said.

"Read it" cried Dicky Dougall; "we can't all see it."

Bernard read aloud. "Old Mr. and Mrs. Saxon would be glad to have a call from the ten little Indians on Thursday."

"They would, would they," exclaimed Rollo Jones, "is'nt that like old Mr. and Mrs. Saxon."

"And it's signed," said Bernard, "with Mr. Everard's name."

"Bother Mr. Everard and bother old Mr. and Mrs. Saxon," said Jim Thomson. "Let him go and see them himself."

"It seems to me that we do a good deal of visiting the sick, for Indians," grumbled John Fitch.

"This child doesn't believe in keeping a dog and barking himself," said Dicky Dougall, balancing himself on a log and snapping his fingers.

The boys all laughed. "What's the joke?"

asked a pale, slight lad, who was staring intently at the Indians with bright dark eyes.

"See here, Crawford, I'll give you a few points," said John Fitch, taking him by the front of his coat and leading him aside; "you're a visitor and don't know. This club is called the Little Indians, do you know that?"

"Yes, I do," said the strange boy.

"And we go in for a good time like most clubs, do you know that?"

"Of course, I do."

"And Bernard Griffin is our secretary, and Jed Hammond is our president, do you know that?"

"I do now," said the boy from the far-away city of Montreal. "Let go my coat, will you," and he twitched himself away from the other lad.

"And all the old men and all the old women in the place want us to come and sit by their beds and hold their hands," said John. "Now, how are we going to do that and have fun?"

"Would you like to have your head punched?" said the Montreal boy politely.

Will Johnson turned around suddenly. "Here you, John Fitch, what are you about? Crawford's my guest, just you remember that."

John was inclined to be a little sneaky. "I wasn't doing a thing," he said, and he slunk away.

"Hello, Crawford boy," said Will, moving up to him, "how are you?"

"All right," said the other laconically. Then he started over again in his quest for information. "What was the joke just now?"

"Oh, it's about Mr. Everard; we all go to his church, you know. He likes fun and all that, but he says we ought to do some good, and he's always putting us up to something."

"Do you visit old men and women?"

"Yes," said Will half-shamefacedly. "They think we're more fun than a cage of monkeys."

"What do you do?"

"Troop in and sit down and look at 'em. Sometimes they ask us to sing our club songs, sometimes a church hymn, sometimes they ask questions till I'm rattled; sometimes we take them flowers and green stuff from the woods."

"That's all right," said Crawford, adjusting his necktie. "It's bad to be piggy, and I guess you're not softies."

"I guess not," said Will. "Hello, what's going on?"

There was a raft of logs floating down the river, and the boys were looking at it.

"That's nothing to see," said Will. "I wish you could be here in the spring, Crawford, when the ice breaks up."

"The St. Lawrence gets covered with ice," said the other boy.

"Our river is a sight," said Will. "The ice cakes crush together and the water comes tearing down and the logs jump and tear along and have a regular picnic; you would think they were alive to see them crowding each other."

"Sorry to break in," said Guy throwing Will a key, "but I wish you'd go and ask your brother to change this. We've brought the wrong one."

"Who'll go for the stuff to eat?" called Bernard.

"I and I," said some of the boys.

"Come on, Crawford," said Will, "they have decided to go across the river. Jed must have spoken."

"He's your president," said Crawford, hurrying along beside him.

"Yes; just take a good look at him when he opens his mouth. He hardly ever speaks unless he's spoken to."

"He must be a lively president."

"I tell you there's lots of quiet fun in Jed. You just watch him."

Ten minutes later the boys were launching canoes. Three bark ones there were, with their names painted in white letters on the bows—the Jemseg, the Canaweeta, and the Oromocto.

Will was carefully guiding the Oromocto into the water. "If we smash a hole in one it takes so long to mend it," he said to Crawford.

"I know," said the Montreal boy. "I've been in a canoe before."

The boys tossed in their parcels, then they stepped in, three boys in the Jemseg, four in the Canaweeta, and four in the Oromocto.

Will was paddling in the stern of the last canoe, and Crawford sat in the front of him. "We're pretty low in the water," said Will, "but I guess we're all right."

"Let's sing, boys," shouted Dicky Dougall when the canoes glided out beyond the wharf.

"The club song first," called Bernard. "Here goes," and he began singing to the tune of "John Brown had a little Indian,"

"Will, and Jim, and Guy, and Martin,
John and Rollo, jolly Griffin,
Percy, Jed, and Dicky Dougall,
Ten little Indian lads."

"Who's jolly Griffin?" asked Crawford.

"Bernard," said Will, "he's jolly, don't you know. That's why we say it. Hello, Indians, what's the matter with 'La Loo'?"

"Nothing, nothing," was the reply, and they started another song while Will said in a low, proud voice to Crawford, "I made it up."

"The sky is blue, the water too,
La loo, la loo,
We glide along a merry crew,
La loo, la loo,
We won't get home till late to-night,
La loo, la loo,
Our parents know that we're all right,
La loo, la loo."

The lusty young voices floated back over the river into the open windows of a bank where some of the boys' fathers sat having a business meeting. More than one smile flitted over the faces of the grave and sober men present. They were glad that their boys were having a good time.

"Do you really stay out late?" asked Crawford of Will.

"Yes; pretty late sometimes."

"I guess you put that in to sound big," said John, who happened to be in the canoe with them.

"Sit still, John; don't excite yourself," said Will teasingly. "It don't take much to upset a canoe, you know."

"Bah! they go slipping out from under you like a live thing," said Crawford. "I say, this is fine, Will."

"Yes, isn't it," said Will, paddling more vigorously than ever as he looked about him. "Fred-erickton is the prettiest place in the world. Just look at those church spires above the trees and the fine houses down there."

"Montreal is a bigger place," said Crawford.

"Of course; but it isn't so nice to live in."

"Have you ever been there?" said Crawford.

"No; but my father has."

"All right," said Crawford; "wait till you come. What's the place over there?"

"That's Gibson. Bare-looking, isn't it? It was nearly wiped out by a fire a year ago. They'll build it up, though. Away down there is the opening of the Nashwaak."

"Is that another river?" asked Crawford.

"Yes, it flows into this one; we must go up it some day. There's a jolly little town on it—Marysville it's called. It's all owned by one man, the Pullman of Canada. He has everything: houses, shops, a big factory where five hundred people work, and he built a boss—I mean a fine little church, that cost fifty thousand dollars. This river that we're going to is

called the Nashwaaksis because it is the little Nashwaak. You mustn't pronounce the k in Nashwaaksis. It's only for show."

"You pronounce it in Nashwaak," said Crawford.

"Yes."

"We're not going to the Nashwaaksis at all," said John; "we're bound for the camp."

"Good," exclaimed Will; "I didn't know that."

"Jed said so," replied John.

"Well, if he said so we must be going," said Will. "Hello, there, Jemseg."

"La loo, la loo," came back from the first canoe.

"Ask Jed," shouted Will, "to steer as close to the Nashwaaksis as he can. I want Crawford to see what a gay little river it is."

"Sorry; can't do it," came back. "Haven't time."

"Botheration," growled Will, as he clutched his paddle more firmly.

"Jed's what you might call 'sot in his ways,' isn't he?" said Rollo, who was the fourth boy in the canoe.

"He's the oldest one of the lot," said John. "The big Indians would not let us have their canoes if we didn't mind him."

"It's all right," said Crawford. "I don't care. What in the line of boats is this, Will?"

Crawford was laughing quietly and twisting his neck around to look at the craft approaching them.

"It's old man Lofty," said Will. "We're used to him. He goes down the river every summer like that. He calls it his oil-barrel raft. They're empty paraffine casks lashed together. Look at his wife and children peeping out of that canvas shanty on them."

"What does he do it for?" asked Crawford, who was still laughing as the crude white house-boat went floating by them with the current.

"He sells the casks down the river and returns by steamer."

"I say this is pretty," remarked Crawford.

They were in the middle of the wide river. They had passed the wharves and sawmills and the piles of lumber on the outskirts of the city, and the quaint old stone government house standing unoccupied and lonely in the midst of fine old trees. Now on either side of them stretched green fields with here and there a house. In the distance were some small islands.

"There's our camp—you can see it now," said Rollo. "Look, near that round hill wooded to the top."

Crawford was looking at it. "It's a fine place for a camp," he said.

"The first camp we had on that island floated away in a heavy spring freshet," said John. "We saw it coming down the river. This one has a heavier foundation."

"Does it belong to the little Indians?" asked Crawford.

"No; to the big ones," replied Rollo. "They

let us use it if we're careful. My, don't we catch it if anything is missing. The big Indians bring their young lady friends down here on picnics."

"I think I would like to belong to an Indian club," said Crawford, and a smile passed over his delicate face as the canoe grated gently on the sand.

As he stepped ashore he saw with secret delight the president, who was a much older lad than he, standing before him.

"Glad you could come to Camp Comfort," said Jed stuffing his hands in his pockets. "Sorry we couldn't take in the Nashwaaksis. I promised to be back on time. The big Indians go out by moonlight this evening with some girls."

"It's all right," said Crawford deeply gratified.

"Come see the camp," said Jed.

Some of the lads drew the canoes a little way from the water's edge, others ran up the steep bank to light a fire, and Jed and Crawford walked around the little island.

"It isn't big, but it's comfortable."

"I should think so," said Crawford looking about at the swings and hammocks under the trees, the rustic seats, the level place for games, the little well and sunken refrigerator.

"Come in," and Jed halted at the door of the big log camp that occupied the center of the island. The ends of the logs were painted red and green shrubbery pressed against the windows and hung about the entrance.

"There's our big stone fireplace," said Jed pointing to it. "Let's have a fire, boys, and show Will's friend how it looks later on when we sit around here popping corn and spinning yarns."

He threw off his coat and ran out for some birch bark and sticks of wood and soon a big fire went roaring up the chimney.

The red glow flashed into every corner of the camp.

"We sleep in those rows of bunks along the wall when we stay down all night," Jed said. "Look, here are the camp blankets and pillows; C. C. on each of them. Some of the girls gave the big Indians those pictures. See, here is our pantry. We bought those tin cans; salt, sugar, whatever we want is in them."

"What does this mean?" asked Crawford pointing to a big jar labeled "Palatables."

"Candy," said Jed lifting the lid. "It's always empty. There's one jawbreaker here. I won't offer you that. Whew, it's hot here. Let's get out."

Crawford followed him out of doors where the other lads were gathered around a small fire.

"I say, that coffee smells good," said Crawford.

Jed smiled and walked away.

"He's been showing you around, hasn't he?" said Will in Crawford's ear.

"Yes," said the smaller boy standing on his toes to make himself look tall. "He can talk. He's all right."

The boys had brought a very good lunch with them. They sat around a long, wooden table under the trees and devoted their attention to sandwiches, bread and butter, and cold meat, pies, tarts, cakes, and a basket of fruit.

All too soon the time came to break up.

"Eat some more, Crawford," said Will.

"I'm going to have one nightmare now," was the reply; "If you make me eat one bit more I'll have two."

"Stop then," said Will, "and help me carry these things to the canoes. This cake and stuff is for the dearly beloved Saxons."

On the way home the boys did not need to paddle so hard, for they were going down the stream. They laughed and talked and made jokes, and on catching sight of the lights of Fredericton again broke into song.

Jed's canoe went ahead, for there were some rocks and sandbanks in the river, and he knew them better than any of the other boys.

"There's the moon climbing the cathedral spire," said Will, when they got nearly to the boat house. Won't it be glorious later on. I wish we were going out with the big Indians."

"Come now, hustle," said Jed, looking at his watch and speaking to the other lads, who were inclined to dawdle. "Put the canoes on the shelves, then quick march for the Saxons'."

"Oh, hush up, Jed," "I say that's too bad, Jed," and "What are you thinking about?" were some of the exclamations that greeted him on every side.

"Hustle," he said again calmly.

"I'm not going to the Saxons'," said John Fitch viciously pushing a paddle into its place. "I've got lessons to learn and I'm tired."

"Give that Indian something to carry," said Jed; "he's lazy."

Dicky Dougall tumbled a bag full of soiled linen that he was carrying home from the camp on John's shoulders."

Everybody roared with laughter as John staggered forward.

"Carry that," said Jed throwing his hand over John's neck, "and stop your talk."

John wisely held his tongue, and the other lads, after locking the boat house and putting the key where the big Indians would find it, hurried on after the two boys.

"Let's serenade 'em," said Bernard when the little Indians all pulled up under the windows of a yellow house with a projecting roof.

One little, two little, ~~three~~ little Indians,
Four little——

started somebody.

"Hush," said Jed. "They're old people. Think of something quiet and solemn."

"What's their favorite hymn?" said Dicky Dougall. "'Hark from the tombs,' isn't it?"

Jed suddenly put out his foot and tripped Dicky, who went tumbling back on the two Fitch boys. "Stop your fooling and sing," said Jed, "or I'll——"

"Oh no, you won't," said Dick saucily; then

he composed himself, and in a sweet, clear voice, for he was a choir boy and sang in church on Sunday, began the grand old hymn:

“The church’s one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord.”

An old man and an old woman sat inside the yellow house. They had just finished their tea and had sat down and read a chapter in the Bible before going to bed.

Mr. Saxon had closed the book and was about to kneel down and pray when the boys’ hymn reached his ears.

“Listen, listen, wife,” he said clasping his withered hands, “and think of the singing in paradise.”

“With his own blood he bought her—his holy church,” murmured Mrs. Saxon. “Oh how can we refuse to hear him; but those dear boys—they must come in.”

She got up and hobbled to the door. “Enter, laddies, you are always welcome.”

The boys came quietly into the house and took off their caps. Bernard slipped aside and laid three paper bags on a chair, but Mrs. Saxon’s bright eyes espied him.

“Now, laddie,” she said, “what have you got there? Oh, my, my,” and she took up one bag after another and put her head down to it. “Doughnuts and cheese and a whole apple pie. Oh, father, father, we’ll have a bountiful feast to-morrow.”

“Can’t you eat some to-night?” said Will.

"We don't dare to, my laddie, we'd be ill. No, father, don't look at the pie."

"Can we do anything for you?" asked Jed.

"Is your wood brought in?"

"Yes, thank you, thank you, laddie."

"And your water buckets filled?"

"Yes, yes; a neighbor's boy came in; where have you been to-day?" and Mrs. Saxon surveyed them affectionately. "You smell fresh and nice, like the woods."

"Let's sit down, fellows," said Jed, "and some of you that can talk tell her how the river looks and the island. She's crippled and can't get out," he added in a low voice to Crawford.

The boys sat down and gave Mrs. Saxon various bits of information, and answered her questions for about fifteen minutes. Then Jed got up and said, "We must go."

"I can't bear to say good-night," said the old woman looking at them as affectionately as if they were her own sons.

"We'll come again," said Bernard.

"We were just going to pray," said the old man wistfully. "Will you wait?"

"Yes, if you cut your prayer short," said Jed. "Sometimes——" then he paused, not wishing to be impolite.

"I know, I know," said the old man humbly. "Sometimes I am rather long, but I'll be short to-night."

He knelt down, and his wife and the boys followed his example, and he prayed:

"O Lord, thou dost put into the hearts of

these dear boys, who are full of life and strength, to come and cheer two lonely old people. When they are old and gray-headed may they never lack a comforter. Fill them with thy Spirit, dear Lord. Now while they are young may they believe on thee and give their hearts to thee. We ask this for the sake of thy dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

"Thank you," said Jed gravely when they got up. Then he shook hands with the old people.

The other boys came behind him, and after they had filed out of doors Jed looked at his watch. "Just in time," he said. "I hate to be late. Good-night, Crawford and Indians."

"Good-night, Crawford and Indians," said the other boys politely nodding to Will's guest.

"Now run," said Jed. "No lazy Indians in this camp."

Old Mrs. Saxon leaned against the doorway laughing at them. "Such a show of heels, father," she said to her husband. "All went different ways. What funny boys. I feel as if a breath of fresh wind had blown through our little house and it does me good—it does me good."

The little Indians were to have a holiday; a whole and unexpected holiday. Their teacher—they all happened to be in the same room at school—had been called away from them by the death of a relative, and a substitute could not be found for her at so short a notice.

The little Indians gathered together and began to discuss plans for the next day. This was in the afternoon, and their holiday was to be on the morrow. They could not have the canoes, for the big Indians wished to use them for a picnic.

"I know," said Bernard. "Let's go down the river on the steamer. We haven't been for a long time, and Crawford here—laying his hand on the Montreal boy's shoulder—would like to go. He came to Fredericton by train, you know."

The boys all assented to this. They liked the river trip and then they were anxious to please Crawford, who had become a great favorite with them.

"Agreed then," said Jed. "We meet tomorrow morning at eight sharp on the wharf. Don't be late."

"All right, all right," said the boys, and they separated.

The next morning the little Indians were seen scurrying down Regent Street to the steamboat wharf. It was a charming morning and a number of people were taking the boat for places near Fredericton and for the distant city of St. John.

Crawford watched the scene with great interest.

"Watch out now," said Will, "for the draw. There now we are off," as a loud whistle sounded. "Now look at the railway bridge."

The steamer slowly drew out from the wharf and headed for a long bridge over the river. The

draw swung open—they could see the two men working it, going round and round on the bridge—the steamer passed through, and they were on their way down the river.

“Look at the train coming from Marysville,” said Will. “It must wait for the draw to close.”

Crawford gazed in the direction of the Nash-waak, then he began to ask questions about the places they were passing.

There were villages here and there and white farmhouses standing among leafy trees, and sometimes they passed long green islands with barns on them.

“Are they for hay?” asked Crawford of Will.

“Yes,” said Will; “the farmers make it on the islands in summer and store it in the barns, and when the river freezes over they haul it ashore on sleds.”

Soon the steamer gave a cheery whistle and began to move toward the left bank of the river.

Crawford, looking ahead, saw a number of people running down to a little wharf. When the steamer stopped beside it, some passengers came on board and a number of men rolled quickly over the wharf to the steamer's deck boxes and barrels containing potatoes, tomatoes, corn, bags of wool, and tubs of butter. Some of the potatoes rolled out, and the men had great fun, jostling and joking each other as they ran to pick them up.

“This boat has another way of picking up passengers,” said Bernard, coming to stand near Crawford. “Has Will told you about it?”

"No," said Crawford.

"Well, you wait and see. Our next stopping-place isn't a stopping-place."

The little Indians had all gathered under an awning spread over the deck. They went on down the river laughing and chattering with each other as usual, till after a time Bernard said, "Now, Crawford, keep your eyes open."

They were rapidly approaching a pretty little village, where Crawford could see no sign of a wharf. A boat had put out from the village with some women in it, which one man was rowing. The man pulled out vigorously toward the steamer and Crawford said, "He looks as if he wanted us to run him down."

"Come on, down here," said Bernard, scuttling from the deck down to a place where the freight was stored.

Here was an opening in the steamer's side. To Crawford's amusement he saw the rower cannily getting his boat into a position near the steamer. "We're slowing up," said Bernard.

One of the steamer's crew stepped forward with a long hook in his hand. He caught the boat and drew it alongside; then letting some steps down by ropes he took the women by the hand and assisted them on board. Their bundles were tossed after them, then the little boat was released and with the solitary rower went bobbing serenely up and down in the swell left in the wake of the larger craft.

"That's funny," said Crawford; "I'd like to try it."

"You can," said Bernard. "We're going to stop at a place where they will take us off in a boat."

"It reminds me of the way, I have seen passengers taken off the Pacific steamers that run along the coast of Mexico," said a gentleman, who had been observing the two boys.

"How was that, sir?" said Bernard respectfully.

"There the passengers were placed in a chair and lowered from the deck of the steamer to a boat. Once I saw a man mischievously hoisted instead of being lowered, and he dangled up aloft till his comrades saw fit to let him down."

"He must have felt queer," said Bernard.

"Are you going to St. John?" asked the gentleman.

"No, sir, we're just having a trip to lower Gagetown and back. We get dinner there and then take the other steamer from St. John to get home. Come, Crawford, let's find the other chaps," and touching their caps to their questioner they went away.

The little Indians visited every nook and corner of the steamer, which was named for an old captain who used to sail up and down the river; then finally they settled down in a group on deck to wait patiently till they should arrive at their destination.

They watched the cranes standing in the water, lazily looking for fish or flying across the meadows, their long legs sticking out behind them, their necks doubled up in front, and Craw-

ford stared intently at a horse ferry—a big, flat boat with horses standing on it, that surveyed curiously the man who was sculling them across the river.

At last Dicky Dougall cried out, "There's Lower Gagetown, and a boat is putting out to meet us. Won't they be surprised to see eleven boys and a dog. Come here, Yarb," and he whistled to his Irish terrier that was running about the deck.

Yarb went to his master, and with a little groan felt himself tucked under Dicky's arm.

The boys all hurried below and waited till the little boat came ducking and bobbing up to the steamer. Then with a loud laugh and a jump each lad sprang down the steps and settled himself for a row ashore.

"Look at the dog's face," said Bernard. "He looks as if he had had a fright."

Yarb sat near his master trembling and gazing alternately at the retreating steamer and the dark blue water now so near him.

"He is frightened," said Dicky. "He hates the water. Come here, old fellow," and he took him on his knees.

A mile and a half the two ferrymen rowed the lads, their boat sliding quietly along a green shore where all was verdure and freshness.

"No mud flats here, Crawford," said Will; "and not a bit of barrenness. This is a sweet, green river."

"Come on, boys," said Jed, "let's sing to forget our hunger. I'm starving."

"So am I, and I," joined in the others, and the ferrymen grinned broadly as they merrily sang:

"A loaf of bread,
A bit of pie,
We're not particular
You and I."

"See those horses a-switching their tails under them trees?" said one of the boatmen, nodding toward an island where some brown and white animals were peacefully feeding.

"Yes," said some of the boys.

"They're my father-in-law's. If you know any one in Fredericton that wants to buy let us know, will you?"

"The late summer isn't a good time to sell horses," said Jed. "However we'll make a note of it. Hello, what's wrong?"

Splash, splash, and Dicky's dog that did not like the water had gone headlong into it.

"He's into the river sure enough," said Dicky with a puzzled face. "Come here, Yarb."

The dog was paddling about among the lily leaves as if he was distracted, but at the sound of his master's voice he clung to the side of the boat, and was promptly lifted in.

"Hear him sneeze," said Dicky, "and see him shiver, and what a silly face. In the name of common sense what made you jump in, dog?"

"He thought he was ashore," said one of the boatman, looking at the beds of yellow lilies whose leaves overlapping showed no sign of the water below.

"That's just it," said Dicky. "You simpleton," and he petted the dog, which clung to him with wet paws.

There was a clean little hotel in the place to which the boys had gone. In a short time they had had a good dinner and were kicking their heels on the front veranda.

"Aren't they gamesome?" said a woman who was peeping from behind a window curtain at them. "I admire to hear them talk," and she smiled while listening to their discussion as to the direction in which they should go for a walk.

"They're good lads," said another woman. "I think I'll show them our birds," and she went out on the veranda and said, "Would you like to see my stuffed birds?"

The boys all sprang up. They loved anything that came from the woods, and with brief but hearty thanks they followed her to a room near by.

"I say, what a lot," exclaimed Rollo staring about him. "How many kinds have you, ma'am?"

"About two hundred," was the reply.

"I didn't know we had as many wild birds as that in New Brunswick," said Rollo.

"We have between three and four hundred," she said; "but I have not been able to obtain specimens of all. We have no good book on birds. I have to use a New England one."

"Do you stuff them yourself?" inquired Jed.

"Yes," she replied. "People know that I have a collection and they bring them to me."

"Crawford, come look at these wild ducks with feathers like hair hanging down the backs of their necks," exclaimed Will. "Aren't they beauties?"

"My father was once visiting the 'Zoo' in London," said Bernard, "and he saw some beautiful wild ducks, and when he asked the name they said they were Canadian ducks; wasn't he surprised?"

The boys admired the finches, humming-birds, blue-jays, king-fishers, gulls and terns with long white wings, some blackbirds with burnished necks, but above all the comical little saw-whet owls.

"Aren't they odd," said Jim; "they have shoulders rising over their ears, haven't they?"

"They always look to me like schoolboys in knickerbockers," said the woman who was showing them about. "Don't you know the solemn way they have of looking at one?"

"Why do you call them 'saw-whets'?" asked Crawford.

"Because they make a noise like sharpening a saw. Come now, Indians, this is fine, but if we're to have a tramp before the steamer comes we must be off. Thank you, ma'am; we like anything of this sort because we're in the woods so much."

In a few minutes the boys had made up their minds which way to go, and little knowing the result that was to hang on their decision they went trooping down the road.

They were not boys to stay long in the road.

They soon cut through an orchard, and went past a pond where willows grew, through a gate and up a hill over a snake fence. Then in and out they wound in Indian file among scattering pines and tiny spruces to a path that led them through the recesses of a lovely wood.

As they went they stopped frequently to examine some shrub or flower, or to listen to the occasional note of a bird, or to pry a bit of spruce gum from a tree and transfer it to their pockets.

Soon they came upon a quiet pool where big green frogs croaked and yellow lilies grew luxuriantly. The boys threw out sticks and stumps to make a bridge and gathered a number of the yellow flowers.

Around the edge of the pond were many muskrat holes. "I wish I could see a muskrat," said Crawford. "I have never seen one."

"Wait," said Bernard; "you probably will."

They rambled on by other marshy pools full of pretty water plants and tangled grasses and clumps of the purple iris.

"It's getting wet," said Jed who was in advance. "Let's turn to the right."

The boys followed him and he conducted them to a place in the wood where there was a number of round deep hollows.

"Kettle holes," exclaimed the boys; and to Crawford's surprise each lad sprang into a hollow and jumped up and down.

"Try it," said Will; so Crawford too sprang in one.

"How do you like them?" asked Jim as Crawford's head got lower and lower while he hopped like the other boys.

"Not much," said Crawford clambering out. "I feel as if I was going through to the other side of the earth."

"I believe you would, if you stayed in long enough," said Bernard. "That's a peculiarity of kettle holes."

"Hush up, fellows," said Jed, who had been reconnoitering and now came stepping quietly back. "Come on and let Crawford see a muskrat."

They had approached the banks of a small river that was making its way toward the wide St. John. The boys slowly ranged themselves along one side of it. Jed pointed ahead to a dark creature like a big rat that was swimming down the stream.

"It doesn't see us," he whispered to Crawford, "muskrats have dull eyes but sharp ears."

The muskrat landed on a tiny islet near them and began to nibble some tender grass that grew there.

"What a thick scaly tail," whispered Crawford. "I wish——" then he broke off his sentence abruptly, and stared at a man who at that instant appeared on the bank opposite them. He was sauntering along carrying his gun on his shoulder and was followed by a dog.

Dicky Dougall's Yarb, at the sight of a member of his own race, bristled up the hair on his neck and opened his mouth to bark across the

stream ; but Dicky caught him up. The hunter's dog knew better than to open his mouth and watched Yarb in discreet silence.

The hunter noticed the direction that the boys' glances had taken, then as quick as thought his gun was off his shoulder and aimed at the muskrat that had plunged into the river.

Bang went the gun, the muskrat turned over and over, splashed once or twice, then the hunter's dog sprang into the river and taking the little animal in his mouth carried it to his master.

The man held the creature up in his hand. "It's back is broken," the boys heard him say.

"Why did you kill it?" called Jed across the river to him.

The hunter smiled at him. "I don't know, my boy; I always kill anything I see when I have my gun."

"Did you want its skin?" Jed went on.

"No," said the hunter carelessly; "I used to skin them; I never bother now," and he tossed the dead animal back to the islet.

"You're not shooting," said the man lazily leaning against a tree and surveying the lads.

"No," said Jed. "We think it's more fun to see the birds and animals getting about and enjoying themselves. We like to live ourselves pretty well, and then we belong to a Band of Mercy."

The hunter did not reply. He was watching a second muskrat that was swimming down the river. No one needed to explain that it was the mate of the first one. It was moving to and fro

in the water with its head elevated. It was plainly looking for the first one.

Presently it sniffed at the islet and climbed on it. There was its mate, its body not yet cold; but it would never swim in the river again. The little creature with signs of grief pitiful to see touched its dead companion and the tiny blades of grass hanging from its mouth, as if to say, "Is it quite true? Are you really dead? Can you not eat that juicy grass and swim to our snug home by the river bank with me?"

"I wonder what he thinks now about killing for fun?" muttered Bernard with an indignant glance at the hunter.

The man looked really sorry. "I wish I could bring it back to life," he said; and lifting his gun he again plunged into the wood.

Suppose we stroll down to the river bank and get on that hill and see if there is any sign of the steamer," said Bernard after an hour had passed.

Jed nodded his head and the boys sprang up from the bed of moss where they had thrown themselves down to rest.

"Hasn't it a fixed time to come?" asked Crawford.

"Not exactly," replied Guy, who happened to be near him. "It's apt to be delayed at the stopping-places and sometimes it has to stop at more wharves than others."

Helter-skelter, running and jumping, the little Indians took a direct course for the river.

"Look at the people down there," exclaimed little Percy, who was among the foremost ones; "something's up."

Half a dozen men and boys were standing around a man lying on a broad strip of sand. The ten little Indians hurried to the spot and pressing forward began to ask questions.

It was the hunter who lay before them, his face purple, the water running from his garments, and his wet dog howling at his head.

"Poor fellow, he's gone! I pity his wife! too bad he was so stubborn!" were the exclamations that the boys heard.

"Tell us, quick," said Jed seizing a man by the sleeve, "how long was he in the water?"

"I dunno," said the man slowly; "ten, fifteen minutes, I guess."

Jed, the slow, quiet lad, gave a kind of shout. "Then he isn't dead. Quick, boys, artificial respiration!"

The countrymen and lads fairly gasped at the ten little Indians. Like ten animated machines they sprang at the apparently dead men.

He was lying on his back; they turned him over on his face and let the water run from his mouth. Then over on his back he went again.

Bernard tore off his coat, and seizing Jed's rolled them together and put them under the man's shoulders, while Jed stood over him and counting aloud one, two, three, four, lifted the hunter's arms in the air and brought them down on his chest to imitate the action of breathing.

"For pity's sake; well, I declare," ejaculated

the men watching them. "What be they agoing to do? Tryin' to get the breath of life back. It's gone, boys, it's gone."

"Let us alone," Jed exclaimed; "we can't hurt him, anyway."

"Sol Smith has gone for a barrel," said one of the boys; "here he comes; we'll roll him."

"No, no," said Jed. "Do you want to kill him?"

The man, who had just arrived trundling a barrel frantically down to the river, stood and gaped at them.

Some of the little Indians had managed without interfering with the others to strip off the hunter's wet garments and expose his limbs to the hot sun. They were rubbing him systematically and thoroughly, and every Indian had his coat off and spread under the cold wet body of the unconscious man.

"I say, doesn't it beat all to see them," said one of the men. "Where did you learn this, sonny?"

"In school," gasped little Percy, who was chafing a foot; "we're taught all this kind of thing. We practise on each other."

"One of you fellows take my place for a few minutes," said Jed, lifting his red face, which was dripping with perspiration. "You're stronger than I am. Mind now, one, two, three, four, then lift the arms."

"How did it happen?" he asked, turning to the late arrival, Sol Smith, whose clothes were also dripping wet.

"He's terrible impatient," said Sol, pointing to the hunter, "and he wouldn't wait for me to come and row him across to the Island to look at the horses, so he took an old shell he found here and started—him that can't swim a stroke. He'd nearly got there, though, when down he went, he and the leaky old tub that he was in. I dunno where his gun is. I hurried up, for I saw him go down, and I dove and dragged him out some way."

Jed's ears listened to what was being said, but his eyes never left the hunter's face.

"He's alive," he said quietly.

The men pressed around with curious remarks. "My, but ain't it strange. Run for brandy some one."

"Not yet," said Jed, "not a drop of anything to drink. You would choke him."

"You'd better let these boys run this thing," said Sol. "They're doing it scientific."

"That will do," said Jed, at last dropping the hunter's arms by his side. "Now, boys, fold your coats around him. We don't need to carry him to any house. It's warm enough here, and there's more fresh air."

The hunter opened his eyes, stared up at the blue sky, at the men and boys standing around him, then said weakly, "Where have I been?"

"Rouse up, old man," said Sol Smith kindly; "you've been drowned; don't you remember?"

The hunter raised himself on his elbow and looked about him. "I remember," he said, and fell back.

"You'd better lie still for a while," said Jed, pulling a hat farther over the man's brows to shade his eyes from the sun.

"I'm all right," said the hunter, and pushing the hat aside, he managed to stagger to his feet, but quickly sat down again on the sand.

"Boys," he said, "I've been dead. Oh, what an experience," and he laid his face on his arm.

"There's the boat whistle," said Jed calmly.

"Come on, fellows, we'll have to go. You're all right now," he said, addressing the hunter. "Mind you don't over-exert yourself."

"These young chaps saved your life," said Sol Smith.

The hunter stared confusedly at them. "I remember they didn't want me to kill the muskrat. Boys, I'll never kill anything again. I know now what it is to die myself."

"That's right," said Jed. "Good-bye; glad we could help you," and followed by the other Indians he threw his wet coat over his arm and started on a brisk walk toward the wharf.

"I know what Mr. Everard will say," muttered Will, who had fallen a little behind with Crawford.

"What?" asked Crawford.

"He'll say, the Lord sent us here to-day," replied Will.

"I guess he did," said Crawford soberly.

A week later the ten little Indians were all gathered in the railway station to say good-bye to Crawford.

"You'll come again next summer?" said Jed, gripping his hand hard.

"Sure, if I get an invitation," said Crawford with a quizzical glance at Will. "I've had a jolly time."

"Say, Indians," remarked Bernard; "did you see the bit in last evening's paper about us?"

The Indians looked at each other rather sheepishly.

"Yes, yes," the most of them said; then they began to talk of something else.

At that minute the engine went screeching by them; the train drew up and Crawford was obliged to step into one of the cars.

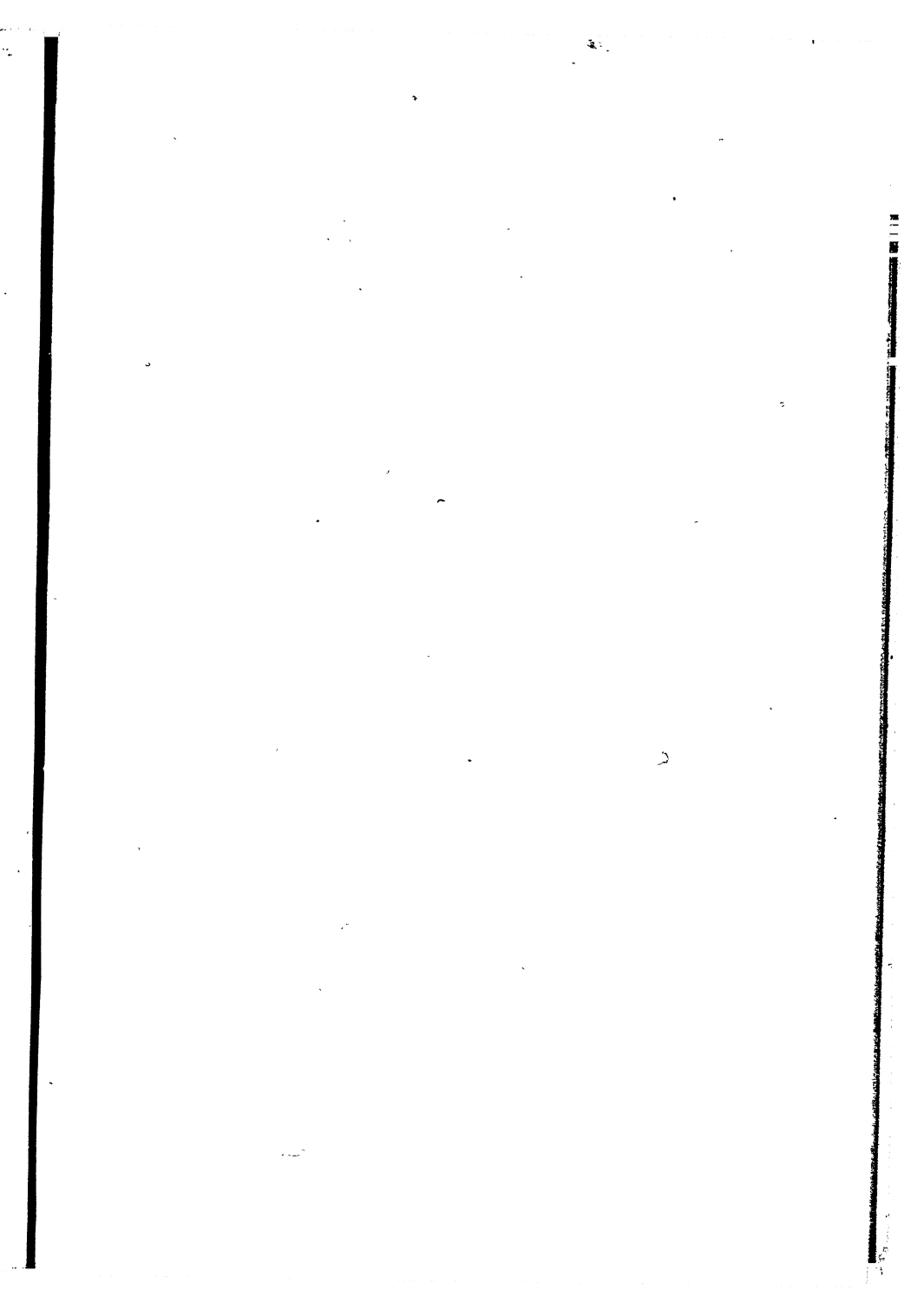
The ten little Indians went thoughtfully home. Bernard, who lived in a spacious house fronting the river, ran up the staircase to his room and shut his door. Then he pulled from his pocket a cutting from a newspaper and read the following words to himself:

We had a call yesterday from Mr. Simpkins, the well-known resident of Lower Gagetown. He wished to acknowledge through the columns of our newspaper the very great obligation that he is under to a number of boys who are sons of highly esteemed citizens of Fredericton. These boys saved his life by putting into practice the rules of artificial respiration. Mr. Simpkins had fallen into the river and was apparently dead. These lads arriving on the spot as he lay unconscious, took charge of him, and by means of methods used in their school, and which we cannot praise their teacher too highly for imparting to them, managed to counterfeit natural breathing till his lungs were able to do their work. This labor the boys accomplished with great fatigue to themselves. We have heard before of this club of young boys, and of various charitable and philanthropic

schemes to which they cheerfully lend their aid. We gladly add our words of praise to those of Mr. Simpkins. Boys that are banded together for noble purposes as well as entertaining ones will make good men and useful citizens.

Bernard was a handsome lad. He looked thoughtfully out through the open window over the broad river. Then a smile irradiated his face and he folded the bit of paper and put it back in his pocket, murmuring as he did so, "We only did our duty."








"There was Tom . . . looking over and under the potato leaves."

X

JESSIE'S DEBT

H, dear, dear, this bed isn't half so soft as it used to be," murmured a little child, who was tossing wearily to and fro on her cot.

"And my pillow," she went on, raising herself on her elbow and looking about her. "I guess there must be sticks in it; I'll shake them out," and she beat the little straw bolster with both her fists.

Then she put her head down again, but the bed did not become more soft nor did the sticks seem to have left her pillow, and she lay in the semi-darkness—a child crying alone in her grief.

After a long time she fell asleep and did not wake up in spite of the uneasy dreams that troubled her until a morning sunbeam touched her on the forehead.

At that she opened her eyes and with a strange vague sense of trouble sprang up in bed. In an instant it all came back to her. She had lain down with grief, slept with it, and now she rose with it; and sighing heavily she dressed herself, and after throwing back the little hinged window in the attic where she slept and pulling

off the clothes from the cot went slowly downstairs.

Her aunt Maggie, with whom she lived, kept boarders, and when she reached the kitchen she found it full of the smell of ham that was being fried for them.

"Open that other window, child," said her aunt, "and then run to the Smiths' for some extra milk—a pint will do."

The grocer, the blacksmith, and the school teacher, who boarded with Aunt Maggie, were all seated at the table when small Jessie returned with her milk pitcher.

"Hurry up, child," said her aunt, "pour that milk into the cups and then sit down and get your breakfast. Where's Tom?"

Tom was Jessie's brother, and like most boys he was inclined to be lazy in the mornings.

"He is not up yet," said the little girl.

"Well, go give him a shake and tell him if he's not soon up I'll be down on him with a little switch. Do you hear?"

"Yes'm," said Jessie; and she toiled up the back stairway to Tom's room.

How heavy her feet were. It really seemed as if they were made of lead.

"Tom," she said, taking him by the elbow, "you'd better get up; Aunt Maggie is——" and looking fearfully behind her the little girl crossed her two forefingers and held them up before the boy's sleepy eyes.

"Oh, my sakes, then, I'll have to hustle," he said; "get out with you."

Jessie left the room and in five minutes Tom sounded as if he was tumbling down the stairway though in reality he alighted on his feet.

The two children took their breakfast in silence. Tom listened attentively to the conversation between his elders, and never missed lifting his eyes to his aunt as she swept in and out of the room bearing hot potatoes, coffee, fried eggs, and rolls in her hands.

Jessie ate scarcely anything and never once looked at her aunt.

When breakfast was over she was called to wash the dishes. As it was Saturday morning there was no school, and for some time Jessie was kept busy waiting on her aunt who was making a large supply of pies and biscuits.

At last the woman threw herself into a rocking-chair by one of the kitchen windows. "I declare I'm dead beat; I'll have to rest awhile. You can run outdoors and play. I wish your mother hadn't died till you were big enough to make beds. Such a nuisance to bring up other people's children," she grumbled.

Jessie did not say anything; but she looked at her aunt and her lip quivered.

Where was Tom she wondered as she walked out toward the barn. "Is he here?" she asked, stretching her neck around the door of an empty stable where the school teacher was employing his holiday by cleaning his bicycle.

"No," said the young man; "I think I heard your aunt ordering him on the war-path for potato bugs."

Jessie went slowly up behind the stable and along a narrow path that led to a potato patch. Yes, there was Tom down on his knees in the hot sun looking over and under the potato leaves.

He lifted his red face when he heard her coming. "Hello, Jessie," he said, "guess how many I've caught?"

"I don't know," said the little girl. She had not a very good idea of numbers, but she did not like to say so.

"Ninety," said the boy triumphantly, "and I've only been here a short while. Help me catch some, will you?"

"Yes," said Jessie, "I will; here is one," and stooping down she laid nimble fingers on a crafty insect that was trying to conceal itself under a curled leaf.

"Kill him," said Tom shortly.

"How do you do it?" asked the little girl.

"This way; see," and Tom laid the unfortunate insect on a flat stone and brought down a round one smartly on him.

Jessie put her bug on a stone and held another over him. "Can he feel?" she asked.

"I don't know," said Tom; "I guess not."

"S'pose I was a potato bug?" said Jessie.

"Then you'd get smashed," said Tom cheerfully.

Jessie shuddered. "I'll catch them if you'll kill them," she said.

"All right," said Tom; "go ahead and catch some."

After a long time had passed during which Tom had caught and executed fifty bugs, and Jessie had only brought him three, the boy grew suspicious. "Look here," he exclaimed, "you're duffing me and letting those things go."

"S'pose I do," said Jessie.

"S'pose you do," sputtered Tom; "the bugs will get the potatoes and Aunt Maggie will get me."

"It's wicked to kill things," said Jessie.

"No, it ain't; not some things. 'Spose we didn't catch mice."

"I'd let them run," said Jessie.

"Well, now you're not to let those potato bugs run," said Tom standing up and looking wrathfully at her.

Just then the school teacher came guiding his bicycle around the corner of the stable. "Say, Mr. Taxby," cried Tom, "is it wicked to kill potato bugs?"

"Wicked to kill them?" repeated the young man winking his eyes in the bright sunlight and trying to take in the situation; "not according to my lights."

"Jessie says it is," growled Tom; "and she isn't picking worth a cent."

"Let us summarize the matter," said the teacher leaning on his wheel and surveying the children with one of the amused glances that he so often bestowed on them and that they so cordially detested. "Shall we sacrifice vermin life or human life? The former by all means, that the latter may be spared; but let us sacrifice

mercifully, humanely, and rather as if we sympathized with our victim."

"Then it ain't wrong to kill bugs," said Tom standing astride a row of potatoes and looking half-angrily at the young man, "not if you do it quick."

"Right you are, Mr. Wizard," said the young man leaping on his wheel and gliding down the pathway and through the open gate to the road.

Tom gazed after him. "You think you're very smart," he said disdainfully; then he turned to his sister. "I don't s'pose you understand half his big words."

"No," said Jessie, "I don't. I've heard 'accordin' to lights' before, though."

"Of course," said Tom; "that is something that grows inside of calves; and summarize, that means belonging to the summer."

"And what is wizard?" asked Jessie.

"It's a little animal that runs along the ground," said Tom. "Bother him, I'll put a frog in his water pitcher to-night for calling me that."

Jessie sighed and went to sit down on a patch of grass. Her trouble had come back to her and she had forgotten Tom and the teacher.

"What is the matter with you, Jess?" asked Tom; "you're so grumpy lately."

"Nothing, nothing," said the little girl, and with a half-frightened look she ran away from him.

Tom and Jessie lived in a little sea-coast hamlet called St. John's Rest.

One Sunday afternoon they were strolling along the shore. Away in the distance was the wide and sparkling sea where a few sails stood up like sharp white wings against the sky. Near at hand was the little harbor with boats drawn up on the beach. In the boats were great heaps of nets, for signs of mackerel had been seen and at any minute the signal might be given for the fishermen to put out and catch them.

Higher up on the beach were great iron pots full of the spruce bark dye in which the nets were colored to make them durable.

Beyond the dye pots were the little brown houses of the fisher people. A number of fishermen sat in their cottage doors exchanging remarks about the weather and watching the games of their children who were playing on the sand.

Tom had ordered Jessie to come for a walk with him. He loved his little sister, yet he was very fond of ordering her about.

"Jessie," he said when they were some distance beyond the last group of children, "I want you to tell me what is up with you."

"What's up with me," repeated Jessie feebly. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that," he said curling his brown fists and frowning at her. "What's wrong? You're mopy and mumbly, and I want to know. Are you sick?"

"No," said Jessie, "I am not."

"Has Aunt Maggie been hatefuller than usual to you?" he asked.

"No, she hasn't," said the little girl.

"I'll give you till we get to those rocks," said the boy; "then you've got to tell me." And seizing his sister's hand he started her on a run over the firm beach.

Jessie made no resistance. She was a very meek little girl, but she was also a very determined one, and pressing her lips together she muttered, "I sha'n't tell you, Tom Flagg."

Soon they reached the heap of black rocks, which had seemed very far ahead of them when they first started. Both children were so exhausted that they fell on the sand. Then after the happy manner of childhood the boy forgot his grievance and the girl her trouble, and they both laughed long and heartily.

"I say, what a pretty shell," exclaimed Tom at last beginning to dig in the sand. "I saw it first. It's mine."

"I saw it first," pouted Jessie, "but I didn't speak."

"Well, I'll give it to you," said Tom, "if you'll tell me what is the matter with you."

Jessie shook her head. "I shall not tell you, Tom Flagg, and you can just tease all you like."

"Maybe I'll slap you if you don't," said Tom snappishly.

"I don't guess you will," said the little girl shaking her head. "Do you 'member the time when you hit me and I cried?"

Tom hung his head. "Oh, stop your talk," he said feebly.

"And if you slap me I'll—I'll tell Aunt Maggie," said the little girl.

"No you won't," said the boy indignantly; "you're no tattle-tale."

Jessie pretended to be very much interested in a crab that seemed uncertain which way to take along the sand.

"I hate Aunt Maggie," said Tom dreamily. "Some day I am going to run away."

"Oh Tom," said Jessie.

"Yes, I'll be off for a cabin boy," said Tom, "next fall, when the men go to the Banks."

"Tom, stop," said the little girl beginning to cry.

"Yes, I'll go," said Tom, "unless you'll tell me that secret."

He had Jessie now, she was caught firmly in the net of sisterly affection.

"Oh, oh," she said beginning to cry dismally and quietly, "I don't want to tell you, but if you run away I'll have nobody—I'll have to jump off those old rocks."

"That wouldn't hurt you," said Tom.

"When the tide is high," said Jessie wiping her eyes with her little checked apron. "Then I would drown."

"Yes, you would drown at high tide," said Tom, "if you would stay under; but Jess, you can swim."

"I'd tie my hands," said the little girl.

"I wonder what makes Aunt Maggie so—so——," and Tom hesitated for a word.

"So scratchy," said his sister; "she's just like

a comb that tears your hair and it makes you cross."

"She is mad 'cause mother died," said Tom.

"And father," added Jessie; "but he couldn't help being drowned."

"I wish she'd got drowned herself."

"Me too," said little gentle Jessie, and a big tear rolled down her cheek.

"Jessie," said Tom turning suddenly and pouncing on her, "tell me that secret this minute. You promised."

Jessie began to whimper and twisted her apron in her hand. "Oh Tom, you'll never tell!"

"Never," he said holding her firmly by the arm lest she should escape him.

"It's—it's about a locket," said the little girl.

"Whew," said Tom; "what locket?"

"My locket," said the child, and even in the midst of her evident perplexity she spoke with some pride. "Look here," and she drew out of her pocket a little brass heart containing a bright red stone. "Ain't that just sweet, Tom?" and she tied it round her neck by a bit of velvet ribbon.

Tom stared at it in mingled surprise and admiration.

"Ain't it lovely?" said Jessie.

"Where did you get it?" asked Tom.

"At Jones'."

Tom did not ask where Jones' was. He knew quite well that it was the shop in the neighboring town of Seacliffe where his aunt did her trading.

"Who gave it to you?" he asked.

"Nobody; I bought it," and Jessie hung her head.

"You—bought—it?" and Tom stared at her. Ready money was a scarce article in St. John's Rest and the two children rarely had even a cent to spend.

"Yes," ejaculated Jessie, "I bought it, and Mr. Jones he charged it; and how shall I pay for it, Tom? I don't know," and the little girl dropped her head on her hands and began to cry hopelessly.

"Whew," said Tom again, "you've got yourself into a pickle this time, miss. If Aunt Maggie knew it, wouldn't she give it to you. Maybe she would put you in a closet as she did me when I broke her old china bowl."

"I 'spect she would," said Jessie mournfully. "Oh Tom, how shall I pay for this locket!"

"How much was it?"

"More'n five cents," said Jessie looking at him out of the corners of her eyes.

"Five cents," said the boy; "you are a dasher."

"More'n ten," said Jessie.

"Won't you catch it," said Tom cheerfully.

"It was fifteen," said Jessie desperately, and she looked far out at sea so that she might not see the expression of her brother's face.

There was a deep silence for a few minutes. The little sandpipers went sliding up and down the beach close to them, the gulls swooped down and almost touched their heads, and the

black rocks seemed to rear themselves more frowningly behind them.

"Aunt Maggie will kill you," said Tom at last.

Little Jessie's face became so pale and terrified that the boy was frightened.

"Come now, rough up, rough up," he said, slapping her on the back. "Let's try to get some money. 'Spose we look at the bank."

"I did," murmured Jessie in a voice so low that he could scarcely hear her.

"You touched my bank!" said Tom warmly.

His bank was a never-failing source of interest to him. He had always listened to the talk of the grown-up people in the house, but rarely asked a question. Having heard them speak of the increase of money in the banks, he and Jessie had with infinite trouble collected three cents and buried them in a bank of earth. To this bank they often went and digging up the cents looked carefully for the others that they expected to find beside them. At first they had been full of faith, now they were beginning to doubt.

"There were not any more coppers there," said Jessie with a burst of despair; "it is a bad bank—a bad bank. I can't get any money anywhere. Aunt Maggie will send me to prison," and throwing herself on her face she sobbed and screamed and tore up the sand with her fingers. She was in a passion of childish grief and terror, and Tom, who had never seen her like this before, sprang up and scuffled to and fro with angry eyes rolling about him, and ejaculated

fiercely, "I wish Aunt Maggie was at the bottom of the sea."

After a time Jessie's grief exhausted itself and she allowed Tom to take her hand and guide her home. Soberly and mournfully the two trotted along together, never once turning to look back at the black rocks where some one was peeping over a ledge and watching their retreating figures.

After they were out of sight this some one came out from behind the rocks and shook her skirts. It was Aunt Maggie.

"Well, I declare," she exclaimed, looking about at the sea and the sky as Tom had done, "that's all the thanks you get for bringing up other people's children. They wish me at the bottom of the sea do they? And I came out here to get a little peace and quietness this Sunday afternoon—the only holiday I have. I'm glad I came though and chanced to hear their talk."

Aunt Maggie did not look very glad. Her face was red and angry just like Tom's. She walked with quick vicious steps in the direction of her home, still talking to herself. When she came in sight of the first house in the hamlet she calmed down a little and tried to smooth her ruffled brow.

There was a woman sitting on the doorstep of this house holding a baby in her arms.

"Good evening, Miss Flagg," she said quietly when she saw Aunt Maggie.

"Good evening," said Aunt Maggie.

"Sit down a spell, won't you?" said the woman.

"I don't care if I do, Mrs. Chase. I'm fagged out," said Aunt Maggie sitting down on the doorstep beside her. "I work hard all the week and when Sunday comes it seems as if I hadn't any strength."

"We all have to work," said Mrs. Chase.

"Yes, we work," snapped out Aunt Maggie, "and get no thanks for it. What with three boarders and two children who are always grumbling I have a pretty hard time of it. I expect folks think I am a reg'lar pepper-box."

Mrs. Chase smiled. Aunt Maggie's queer temper was well known all through the length and breadth of St. John's Rest. "Your children never talk," she said; "they are quiet compared with other children. I never hear a word of what goes on in your house through them."

"Nothing ever comes back to me" said Aunt Maggie; "but I always s'posed they talked. All children do."

"They don't seem as if they were just happy," said Mrs. Chase with some hesitation. "I noticed them just now going home."

"I've slaved and toiled for those children as if they were my own," said Aunt Maggie earnestly. "I've even laid by a little sum for each of them. Don't I dress them better than any other children round about? 'Don't I send them to school reg'lar and give them trips to Seacliffe?"

Mrs. Chase looked down at her sleeping baby

with an expression of unutterable love on her face. "Do you ever kiss them?" she asked half-shyly.

Aunt Maggie was off the doorstep in an instant, her face flaming. "I don't believe in molly-coddling," she said; "my sister was a Flagg and married a Flagg. When she died and he died I took the children. I consider I've done my duty by them. What other folks think I don't care. Good evening to you," and she flounced away.

Mrs. Chase looked after her with a demure smile. "The shoe pinches, the shoe pinches, and I am glad it does."

Aunt Maggie acted rather queerly on the way home. She kept sniffing and tossing her head as if she were angry, and she made a wide detour around some fields to avoid passing a certain little house where she had been brought up.

With her young sister, the mother of these children, she had roamed these fields and played on the beach. What a long time ago it seemed. Well, she had nothing with which to reproach herself; she had nursed her sister through a long illness and had buried her decently and had taken the children to bring up.

Why then did she cry? For tears were certainly rolling down her cheeks.

"Bother," she said, and dashing them away she fairly ran home, and plunging into the kitchen she put the kettle on for tea and rushed about from room to room like a whirlwind.

"Where is Jessie?" she said when Tom came in to get the buckets for well water.

"Jessie's sick," he said shortly; "she's gone to bed."

Aunt Maggie said nothing except to signify to him by a gesture that he had better hurry.

A few minutes later, when they were all seated at the tea-table except little Jessie, Aunt Maggie broke out with a vehement remark: "It's a wicked shame that we don't have any Sunday-school in this place for the children."

The grocer, the blacksmith, and the school-teacher looked at her.

"There were the boys and girls this afternoon all down on the beach like so many heathen," pursued Aunt Maggie. "We needn't sing about India's coral strand. I'm going to make a move and start a Sunday-school."

"We shall have one then," murmured the school teacher; "you are a person of great energy, Miss Flagg."

"I'll begin this very week," said Maggie, "to take it up. There are enough Christian people in this place to have a Sunday-school, and we ought to have a prayer meeting once a week too. It's shameful that we've only one preaching service a month. I declare, we need a missionary here."

"Some of us do powerful bad," said the blacksmith; "others not so much."

"I do," said Aunt Maggie; "I am not what I ought to be."

No one contradicted her, and she turned

sharply to Tom. "Tom, do you know who Moses was?"

No, Tom didn't, and he stared at her in sulky silence.

"There now," she said, "you see."

Again nobody contradicted her, but she had aroused a train of thought and her hearers took the rest of their tea in silence.

After tea was over she washed her dishes and went upstairs to Jessie. Tom retreated to a corner of the attic when he saw her.

"Jessie," she said kindly, "can you eat something?"

"I'm not hungry," said the little girl.

"What's the matter with you?" asked her aunt.

The child gave her one glance from a pair of frightened eyes, then turned her head away from her.

Aunt Maggie saw a tear stealing down the smooth brown cheek and she felt as if something had suddenly pierced her own soul. What tortures the little heart was enduring.

"Jessie," she said, "if you will get well by Tuesday I'll put off the ironing and take you to Seacliffe with me."

The child clung to the wooden sides of her cot and half raised herself from the bed. To go to Seacliffe—to face Mr. Jones without the money for the locket—to have him expose her naughtiness in running up a bill without the knowledge of her aunt—how could she do it? She must stay at home; yet her aunt would go.

She would find out; and little Jessie, stupid with fright, gazed speechlessly about her.

"And I shall give you twenty-five cents to spend," said Aunt Maggie, "in any way you like, and I shall not ask you what you have done with it."

Jessie fell back on her pillow. What balm to her soul, what delicious music to her ears the words were; yet could it be true? Her aunt had never been known to do such a thing before. Was it—could it be possible that the long-drawn-out misery of the past week was over?

"Yes, we shall go," said Aunt Maggie; "so hurry and get well, and here is the twenty-five cent piece to look at," and she drew it from her pocket.

Jessie clasped it as a starving child would clasp a morsel of bread. Then turning her back to her aunt she buried her face in her straw bolster.

Aunt Maggie went away. She had been hasty and severe with the children; it would be some time before she could gain their confidence.

Tuesday came; the clothes were sprinkled and folded and put away in a basket, and Aunt Maggie and Jessie went to Seacliffe.

Tom had to go to school; but he did not mind missing the trip to the town, for his aunt had promised to take him the next time she went. Then he loved his sister, and while he bent over his lessons he kept repeating to him-

self, "She has paid for the locket, she has paid for the locket, and now she'll not be grumpy."

Jessie was not only less grumpy but she was positively wild with delight. Seated beside her aunt she was driving home along a beautiful winding road. In the back of the wagon were numerous interesting purchases: a game for Tom, a red dress for herself, and a new hat and gloves and some fruit and candy.

She was so happy, she must do something. Suppose she told about the twenty-five cents.

"Aunt Maggie," she said shyly, "you haven't asked me what I did with my money."

"No," said Aunt Maggie, "I haven't."

"I bought something with it, something I just love," said Jessie enthusiastically. "See," and putting up her hand she drew the little locket from the bosom of her dress.

"Ain't it lovely?" said the little girl eying her aunt somewhat doubtfully.

"I am glad you like it," said Aunt Maggie.

"I've wanted one, oh, ever so long," said Jessie, "ever since that little city girl came to the beach and had one on."

"How much was it?" asked Aunt Maggie.

"Fifteen cents," said Jessie, "and I spent the rest in popcorn for Tom."

Aunt Maggie said nothing for a time. She was wondering whether Jessie was going to confess that she had not bought the locket to-day, but had only paid for it.

"I didn't see any lockets like that in Mr. Jones' show-case," she said at last.

Jessie looked nervously at her. "I didn't know you were on that side of the store," she replied.

"Yes, I walked over," said Aunt Maggie.

Jessie trembled and Aunt Maggie seeing it trembled too. "O Lord, forgive me," she miserably ejaculated. "How many times I have frightened this little soul into telling a lie."

"I bought the last one," faltered Jessie.

Aunt Maggie suddenly took both the reins in her strong right hand and put her left arm around the little girl. "Tell me all about the locket," she said and kissed her.

Jessie was too happy to cry, and she was too much confused to refuse her aunt's request. Before she fairly understood what she was doing she had told the whole story of her trouble.

"And you've carried that locket about a whole week without daring to wear it," said Aunt Maggie.

"Yes'm, and it felt like a barrel in my pocket," said Jessie; "now I can wear it all the time, can't I?"

"Yes," said Aunt Maggie. Then she added, "Why were you so anxious to pay for it? I have never told you not to run in debt."

"I don't know," said Jessie.

"It's just in you," said her aunt; "your mother was like that. She would tell stories too. You know it is wicked, don't you?"

"I s'pose it is," said Jessie.

"Why is it wicked?" asked Aunt Maggie.

"I don't know."

"Lord, forgive me," groaned Aunt Maggie. "I haven't given these children any religious training; but I'll begin now."

Several weeks went by. The Sunday-school had been started and Aunt Maggie with secret pleasure heard both Tom and Jessie requesting to be put in her class.

"Seems as if Aunt Maggie is lots nicer than she used to be," said Jessie as they waited outside the schoolhouse for her one day after Sunday-school was over.

"Yes, she is," said Tom; "I guess I'll not run away now. Here she is," and they walked along the grass-bordered road beside her.

"Didn't we have a nice lesson to-day?" said Aunt Maggie.

"Yes," replied Jessie, "I wish I had known about trusting Jesus every day when I bought the locket. Can I really, truly tell him every little bit of trouble, auntie?"

"Yes," said Aunt Maggie; "Jesus will help us with everything we take to him. If we try to bear things alone it almost kills us."

"And I didn't know he was sorry when little boys and girls told stories," said Jessie; "we've told lots, haven't we, Tom?"

"Yes," said her brother.

"Now," said Jessie thoughtfully, "I stop to think—I must not grieve the gentle Jesus, meek and mild, and if we tell stories we shall be 'shamed to go to heaven. I love the Bible stories," and she affectionately pressed her Tes-

tament to her cheek. "What will you tell us to-night, auntie?"

"About Samuel, I think," said Aunt Maggie.

"That's a boss story," said Tom. "I know how it goes. Speak Lord, for thy little boy is listening."

"We shall read it together," said Aunt Maggie. "Children, I want to tell you something—I was out on the sands behind those rocks that day when you wished I was dead."

The children both stopped short in the road. Tom's face grew crimson, and Jessie's grew pale. Their aunt had been so kind to them lately. Would this make a difference?

"I'm not going to talk about it," said Aunt Maggie hastily, "only to say I happened to be there and couldn't help hearing you. Now let us go home and get tea. I have honey in the comb to-night for you."

"Auntie, I'm sorry I said I wish you were dead," whispered Jessie that evening when her aunt bent over her cot to kiss her good-night. "I pray every night to Jesus Christ to make you weller and stronger so you can live always and always with us."

"Aunt Maggie," said Tom, starting up and peering through the darkness as she went to tuck him in his bed, "a feller often says what he doesn't mean."

"And a woman too, Tom," said Aunt Maggie bending over him. "I've a rough tongue; but all the Flaggs had soft hearts and I guess we're like them. I've always loved you and Jessie,

but I've never thought to tell you so—that was the mischief of it, and when you said you wished I was dead it cut me like a knife. Thank God, I heard you. I'll be cross to you again maybe, for if I don't pray every hour in the day my tongue runs away with me; but keep this in mind, you're my children and I love you.

Tom was not a demonstrative boy; but he understood her, and reaching up a hand he softly touched her cheek before he lay down again.



XI

PROUD TOMMIE

PROUD TOMMIE sat on a little stool under an apple tree reading a story book as the sun went down.

It was a most interesting book, and she scarcely lifted her eyes from the pages till she came to number twenty. Then she looked up with a gesture of impatience as she read some lines written in a round, childish hand across the page :

If my name you want to see,
Tern to page thirty-three.

Tommie knew very well whose book it was. She had read these lines many times before, for it was a custom among the school children to scribble them in almost every book that they owned, yet from force of habit she turned to page thirty-three and there slowly read the words :

Now you are left as you were before,
Tern to page forty-four.

The little girl patiently turned over some

more leaves. Forty-four, there it was at last, and she knew what was written on it long before she got to it :

Now you see you're in a fix,
Turn to page sixty-six.

Over to page sixty-six went Tommie—

If my name you cannot find,
Turn to page seventy-nine.

The rhyme here was not very good, but Tommie never thought of that. She licked her little fingers and rapidly flipped over the leaves, for she was anxious to conclude this business of looking for the owner's name so that she might get on with the story.

Page seventy-nine told her jestingly that she had had a look and she had better turn to the back of the book.

Turn was at last spelled correctly, and with one more flutter of the leaves Tommie was at the end of her journey, finding just what she had expected—

Greta M. Moore owns this little book,
She lives in the house by the deep meadow-brook.

Tommie heaved a sigh of satisfaction, and was just about to make her way back to page twenty, when her eye was caught by a rough sketch on one of the blank leaves.

She examined it—at first carelessly, and then

curiously, then angrily, till finally she flung the pretty volume on the grass—and springing from her stool she stamped on it, exclaiming furiously, “I hate that Greta Moore!”

The apple tree under which she stood was situated on a little patch of grass in front of a small brown cottage. There was the cottage, the tree, the grass, a tiny gate, and then a strip of dusty road leading in one direction to the village, and in the other to a high hill where some rich people from a neighboring city had summer residences.

Coming along the road from these big houses was an old man in a homespun suit bearing a spade on one of his shoulders and walking with the aid of a stout stick.

When he got to the gate of the cottage he stopped, and staring from under his heavy eyebrows at the little girl who was literally dancing with rage, he said, “Hey, Tommie, what’s wrong with you?”

The child started and made an effort to control herself.

“Come and undo this bothersome latch, will ye?” said the old man, letting his spade slip to the ground, “it always beats me.”

Tommie forgot her passion and ran to let him in.

“Is your mother in?” he asked. “No? well then I will settle down here for a bit,” and he took possession of Tommie’s stool.

“Would ye give me the conclusion of that wee bit dance ye were having?” he said good-

naturedly, yet slyly. "You reminded me of the Highlandmen I've seen flinging about their toes when the bagpipes were going."

Tommie hung her head.

"What were you vexed about?" asked the old man; "come now, tell me."

Tommie's wrath blazed up again. "I hate Greta Moore," she replied passionately.

"Oh, oh; well, ye're a brave lassie to dare to hate any one, especially when the sun's going down so fast. Come, now, tell us smartly what the trouble is, and perhaps before yon yellow ball gets below the horizon we can mend it."

Tommie opened her mouth, but she was a child of few words and no explanation seemed to come.

"Look here," she said, suddenly picking up the story book from the grass and laying it on his knee. "Just see that," and she pointed to the sketch that had offended her.

The old man slowly drew a pair of spectacles from his pocket and set them astride his big nose, and then stared hard at the page.

He tried not to laugh, but he could not help it. "My, but that's mighty clever!" he chuckled, holding the book now near, now far away.

Tommie wrathfully watched him. She saw nothing clever in the sketch.

"Who wrought it?" asked the old man, taking off his glasses and wiping away a tear of enjoyment that was trickling down his cheek.

"Rob Gerrish, I s'pose," said Tommie sulkily.

"Well, Tommie, mark ye what I say—that

lad 'll make an artist. Come, now, be a good lassie, let us search into this thing," and the old man dropped his finger on the page. "Don't fret ye so finely; ye'll wear all your flesh off your bones, and you but a bairn. This is you, Tommie Warner, I take it?"

"Yes," snapped Tommie, and standing behind him she looked at the obnoxious drawing over his shoulder.

It was labeled, "Proud Tommie, the Wash-erwoman's Daughter," and with a few rough, strong pencil marks she was depicted as strolling along the street, a flounced dress standing out about her, a smart hat on her head, and a parasol in her hand.

The pride and haughtiness of her appearance were ludicrous, while unmistakably pathetic was the smaller sketch in a corner of the page of a young and slight woman who was leaning over a washtub with both arms buried in soapsuds.

"Tommie, Tommie," said the old man, his whole frame shaking with silent laughter, "this is a bit hard on ye, I'll acknowledge it."

"I'll never go to that hateful old school again," blurted the child. "It's just horrid in them to call me Proud Tommie."

"I've heard them say it," said the old man, closing the book so that he would not be tempted to laugh again and hurt the child's feelings; "I've heard them say it, and I'm grieved that you've gained yourself such a nickname, for you're a good lassie in other respects."

"Do you think I am proud?" asked Tommie.

"Well, I'm not saying that you're proud, lassie, but do you think now that you help your mother all ye can?"

Tommie gulped down something in her throat, then she said a little shamefacedly, "She won't let me."

"Oh, aye; I daresay there's more like her, but perhaps you don't beg hard enough, lassie. There's lots of tasks about the house you might do."

Tommie felt the rebuke, but she was not going to admit that she did so. "Well, anyway," she exclaimed, speaking very fast, "if I am proud, I am not half so proud as Susy Brown."

"And what has Susy Brown to be proud of?" asked the old man, with a comical gesture. "Good sakes, to hear the lassies talk you'd think they were queens on their thrones."

"This is the way that Susie walks," said Tommie, showing all her glittering teeth as she laughed at the old man. "Watch now, Uncle Ben," and crossing the grass patch she switched the tail of her cotton frock and lifted her stout leather boots high in the air as if she spurned the ground she walked on.

Uncle Ben shook his head. "Well, now tell me, what has Susy to be proud of?"

"Susy's sister has a gold ring with a red stone in it," said Tommie.

"Oh, aye, a fine thing to have."

"And Susy is going to have a party next month maybe," continued the little girl her face clouding, "and they will have a candy pull and

a great spread in the field; and oh, Uncle Ben, I don't believe I'll be asked."

"On account of pride?" inquired the old man.

"On account of the washing," said the little girl.

Uncle Ben did not reply to her; he was watching the slight, delicate woman of the sketch, who was coming up the road. She was dressed in black and carried one arm in a sling.

"Well, mammy," cried Tommie affectionately, as she ran to meet her, "here's Uncle Ben come to see you."

Mrs. Warner's pale face flushed with pleasure. "Good evening, Mr. Primrose," she said; "you are always kind in remembering us."

"You're a bit warm from walking," said the old man; "I guess we'd better go in the house."

Mrs. Warner led the way to her small sitting room and threw off the shawl that she wore.

The arm in the sling she did not use, and the old man, looking keenly at it, asked, "Is the bone mending?"

"Yes, thank you; the doctor thinks that I shall be able to use it in a few weeks," said Mrs. Warner.

"'Tis a pity that you broke it just now," said the old man. "If it had to be done, why didn't ye do it in the winter?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Warner with a sigh. "It is strange that a fall on a loose board in the cellar steps could give me all this trouble. Yet I suppose it is all right. These trials are for our good."

"You'll do no washing this summer for the fine visitors," said the old man.

"No," replied Mrs. Warner; "and how I am going to get through the winter I don't know. I don't feel bound to tell all the village, Uncle Ben, but I'll tell you, that what I get in summer from those rich people on the hill keeps me through the winter."

"Oh, aye, I'm not surprised," said the old man, "'tis well known they pay you well, and you're quite a pet among them. You're a kind of a sister to gentle folks, your husband having been a scholar and a gentleman."

"I wish I had had a good education myself," said Mrs. Warner with a sigh. "I might have, but I never thought of the good it would do me, and my parents wouldn't make me study. Children don't understand these things."

"I guess you've made up your mind to bestow a good education on the lassie, haven't ye?" asked the old man.

"I'd work my fingers to the bone to keep her at school," said Mrs. Warner warmly.

"She takes kindly to her books, doesn't she?" went on Uncle Ben, pointing out the window to Tommie, who was under the apple tree deep in her story.

"Yes, she likes study, but," said the widow, "I wish this teacher would go away."

"Oh, aye, I've heard others say the same thing," remarked the old man.

"When my husband used to teach," said the little woman warmly, "he used to put noble

thoughts into the minds of the children under him. He was a good Christian man, and I often cry because he is not here to train his little daughter. Oh, why are parents not more careful about the people they allow to influence their children? Tommie is just like wax in Miss Miller's hands."

"And Miss Miller is such a fibbertigibbet of a thing," said the old man; "full of nonsense about dress and ribbons and the like."

"Yes, a poor little shallow-pate," said Mrs. Warner; "and she is making the children just like her. There was never any boasting or talk about pride before she came here, nor any line drawn between the families. I was just as good as anybody; but may God forgive me for judging my neighbor so harshly. I must bear with Miss Miller, I suppose."

"She's young, perhaps she'll improve," said the old man charitably. "But I must tell ye what brought me here and I hope you'll not take it amiss. You know the big white house on the hill, which is Colonel Warrington's?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, I was up there to-day doing a bit of gardening, and I heard Mrs. Warrington, the colonel's lady, asking one of the maids if she knew a bright smart lassie with good manners, that she could get to come up every day and wait on her daughter, Miss Ethel, who is part invalid. I made bold to speak up and say I knew such a one—a child as it were, yet she could shake up the young lady's cushions and run

errands for her and wash her dog and such like. Mrs. Warrington seemed not to be taken with the plan of having a youngling till I mentioned it was your child; then she said, 'Let her come and see me.'"

The old man paused and waited for Mrs. Warner to speak.

Her face had grown very red and she hesitated a little as she said, "You and your wife have been very good friends to us, Mr. Primrose, but in this case—do you think——"

The old man put up his glasses that he had been holding in his hands and thoughtfully scratched his nose. "What's this nonsense the children have of styling her Proud Tommie?" he asked.

"Oh, that is childish teasing," said Mrs. Warner uneasily. "Tommie boasts a little, especially since this teacher came and since she hears the other children doing the same thing, of what she considers our former greatness. That we once lived in a large house and kept a servant and a pony carriage she thinks was great magnificence. There is really no offensive pride in the child. I don't think it would annoy any one in the Warringtons' position; in fact it might amuse them."

"And I suppose you've trained her to do housework and the like," said the old man, "such things as might be useful in waiting on the young lady."

"No," said Mrs. Warner, "I have not."

"Ah, well, I daresay she'll pick it up," said

Uncle Ben, "and most easily if she brought her mind to it."

"Tommie will do anything for a person she loves," said Mrs. Warner. "It is my fault that she does not help me more. You know what children are like, Uncle Ben."

"They're the laziest creatures that God has made," said Uncle Ben. "Eat, sleep, and play is their doctrine; yet they've got consciences. Talk to your lassie and see if she'll try going on the hill; 'twill be a grand chance."

"Tommie, Tommie," called Mrs. Warner raising her voice, "come in, dear."

Tommie put her thumb in her book to keep her place and came running to her mother.

"Oh, dear," she exclaimed, "this is the meanest story."

"What is the matter with it?" asked her mother, drawing the child to her with her uninjured arm.

"Why, it is called 'Little Mollie's First and Last Lie,'" said Tommie indignantly, "and I thought there would be a dozen at least, and there is only one."

"My dearest child," said Mrs. Warner, "do you like to read about little girls doing wrong?"

"Oh, but it is so lovely when they are sorry," said Tommie enthusiastically. "Mollie steals her sister's necklace and it burns in her pocket and she tells stories, then she gets sorry and prays, and her sister forgives her; and I read on, for I thought the next story she told would be worse than the other, but there wasn't any."

"Her first lie was her last?" said Mrs. Warner.

"Yes, mammy dear."

"Well, I think you ought to be glad of it."

"I suppose I ought to be," said Tommie reluctantly, "but I ain't—I mean I am not."

"Tommie dear," said her mother earnestly, "I want you to be just as good as it is possible for a little girl to be."

"So do I," said Tommie kissing her, "and maybe I will be some day. I try to be now, mammy, that is, mother, really truly black and bluely I do, sometimes."

"I know," said Mrs. Warner; "but it is impossible for you to be good in your own strength. Who will help you, Tommie?"

"Ask Jesus to help you, he will carry you through," whispered the child in her mother's ear; then she said aloud and curiously, "What were you and Uncle Ben talking about?"

Her mother's arm tightened around her. "Listen, and I will tell you," she said.

Tommie's eyes grew more and more surprised as she heard what her mother had to say.

"Isn't that funny," she remarked, when Mrs. Warner had finished speaking, "that a little girl like me can help."

"Do you want to go up to that big house?" said Mrs. Warner anxiously. "I shall not force you to go if you do not wish it."

"I guess the girls will call me Proud Tommie then," said the child, laughing gleefully.

Mrs. Warner looked apprehensively at Uncle Ben. The teasing girls would call Tommie a servant, she feared. "We can try it," she said, "and if you are not happy you need not stay."

"She isn't hired yet," said the old man drily. "You women are all alike. You think your children are jewels that all the world is eager to snatch from you."

"I guess—I mean, I'd better finish 'Little Mollie's First and Last Lie' before I go to bed," said Tommie soberly, "if I am to go to the hill tomorrow," and she disengaged herself from her mother's arm.

"Aren't children queer?" said Mrs. Warner as the child left the room. "I thought she would be so excited that she would not know what to say."

"As queer as monkeys," said the old man getting up to take his leave. "I don't see the pride of this one very much to the fore in this case; but she does not comprehend that she has got to work and that the children's tongues will wag. Good-night to you," and he left the cottage.

Mrs. Warner went to look over her store of clothes. The child must wear her best frock in order to present a good appearance, and yet suppose Mrs. Warrington wished her to stay—if Tommie were set to work washing a dog, for example, in that thin muslin, she would ruin it.

"There is no knowing what Miss Ethel will put her to," murmured the little woman to herself. "I fancy, like most rich girls, she is

spoiled; oh, my baby, how can I let her go out into the cold world?" and burying her face in the garments hanging before her she burst into tears.

Going up on the hill was not exactly a journey into the cold world, yet the poor little mother felt that it was, and for a long time she cried dismally. "I have had such grand dreams for her," she said; "what a beginning is this!"

"Duty, duty," something seemed to say within her; "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," and finally she was comforted.

"Mother dear," said Tommie sleepily, when she was going to bed, "what makes your eyes so red?"

"Give me your shoes," said Mrs. Warner evasively, "I want to rub some polish on them for to-morrow."

"I don't think I will cry now, 'cause maybe I will have to cry by and by," said the child sagely, as she crept between her sheets.

She slept soundly, yet a kind of subdued excitement made her wake up with the birds.

For the first time in her life she slipped out of bed before her mother did. What was the first thing to do in the morning?—to light the kitchen fire and sweep out the front hall.

She seized a broom and was just propelling it with awkward, eager strokes over the matting when her mother called her, "Tommie, Tommie, why are you up so early?"

"I thought I might as well begin to help,"

said the little girl meekly, as she dragged the broom behind her and went to speak to her mother.

Mrs. Warner fell back on her pillow laughing. "See, child, you are drawing all the dust back again. Never mind sweeping."

"Well, then, I will set the table," said the child vigorously. "I am going to be smart Tommie now; but first I will help you dress."

After Mrs. Warner had been assisted into her clothes Tommie turned her attention to the breakfast table.

"Two napkins, two knives, four teaspoons," she murmured, "two plates, two cups and saucers—I believe I have everything—all but the flowers," and she ran to the garden, where she was soon stooping over a bed of dewy violets.

Some of Mrs. Warner's neighbors laughed at her for always having a flower on her table, but she said quietly that a love for the beautiful was something that even a washerwoman could cultivate.

At eight o'clock Tommie was ready to start for the hill, but her mother detained her for two hours, saying that rich people did not get up so early as poor ones.

At last when it seemed to Tommie that the middle of the day had come she was allowed to put on her best muslin dress and her turban trimmed with green ribbons.

Her mother kissed her till her cheeks were quite rosy and drew her back and let her go so many times that Tommie at last said gravely,

"Seems as if I must be a mouse that a very affectionate cat has got hold of."

At that speech Mrs. Warner smiled tearfully and let her go, and Tommie went spinning up the dusty road, soon becoming nothing but a little gray speck to her mother.

Tommie went on gayly, sometimes humming a tune and sometimes stopping to pick a flower and stick it in her belt till at last she came in sight of a big square house that seemed to frown down on her from the top of the hill.

Then she began to feel a little timid and to wish that her mother had come with her. She did not know that Uncle Ben had said, "Let the lassie go alone. Mrs. Warrington is a proud woman, and if you went and there was any haggling with her she'd get impatient. Tommie will not be afraid of her, and the lady is one to do the honorable by ye."

Tommie went slowly up the steps and pulled the door bell. What was it her mother had told her to say to the maid who would open the door? Is Mrs. Warrington in? No, that was not it. Is Mrs. Warrington at home, and if she is, please tell her that Mrs. Warner's little girl that she sent for has come.

Tommie thought she had rung the bell, but she really had not and no servant appeared. She did not venture to pull it again, but stood first on one foot and then on the other her eyes lifted to the sky and her lips repeating her message louder and louder in her intensity of anxiety lest she might forget it.

"Is that some one preaching on the front doorstep?" said a gentleman who was sitting in the near dining room, and he got up and walked to the window.

Tommie did not see him nor observe his astonished stare through his eye-glass, but went on with her lesson, "Is Mrs. Warrington at home, and if she is, please tell her that Mrs. Warner's little girl that she sent for has come."

Colonel Warrington gave way to silent laughter. "Do come here, Gertrude," he said looking over his shoulder, "and tell me what this means."

Mrs. Warrington put down her coffee cup and went to his side.

"That is an odd specimen of humanity," said the gentleman; "she looks like a little race-horse."

Tommie certainly was not beautiful. She had a dark, lean face, small eyes, hair of a peculiar shade of brown, and she was at the awkward age of growing out of her clothes.

"Yes, she is," said Mrs. Warrington, her glance running critically over Tommie's lank figure; "but she seems wiry and energetic."

"What do you want of her?" asked Colonel Warrington.

"To wait on Ethel."

"That child!"

"To wait on her," remarked the lady with some irritation, "not to work hard. There are enough servants in the house, and really it is very depressing for Ethel to have so many grown

people about. I thought at first this child would be too young; but I really believe she will amuse Ethel."

"Oh, very good, my dear, very good," said the gentleman.

"Let us have her in," said Mrs. Warrington ringing the bell, "I want to ask her some questions."

Just as Tommie was beginning to get a little tired of "Is Mrs. Warrington at home, and if she is," etc., a maid in a very white dress and a very white cap stood suddenly before her.

"Come in," she said hurriedly without listening to a word of Tommie's carefully prepared message. Down in the kitchen she had heard three peals of the dining-room bell, which meant "There is some one at the front door whom you have not admitted."

"In here," said the maid swiftly opening the dining-room door.

Tommie, intensely interested, gazed straight before her, and then made a bow, fearful and wonderful in its angularity, to the combined splendor of the room and its occupants, for her mother had warned her not to rush up to the people at the big house with her little brown paw outstretched, as she was in the habit of doing.

"Good-morning," said the lady, and the gentleman made Tommie a grand military bow that caused her to say later on to her mother in enthusiastic tones, "He bent himself just like a bit of whalebone, mother; just like a bit of whalebone."

"You are Mrs. Warner's daughter, are you not?" said the lady; "what is your name?"

"Tommie, madame——" then the little girl stopped with deep anxiety on her face. She was inwardly determined to help her mother and put this affair through in a creditable manner and she knew that she must pay attention to details.

"Would you mind telling me," she asked nervously, "if I should say madame or ma'am or missis to you? I just forget what my mother said."

"Madame is very good, ma'am a little better perhaps," said the lady encouragingly.

"I'm much obliged," said Tommie, then she went on like a little wound-up talking-machine. "My name is Tommie, short for Thomasina—my dear papa was called that; he has been dead ever so long; he was a terrible good man, and there was a long piece about him in the paper when he died. I guess Susy's Brown's father won't have half as long a piece when he dies. I hope I may be faithful in all things and do my duty in every walk of life. The girls call me Proud Tommie, but I am not except just a little bit, and I never tell stories. Susy does; she says her mother used to have four silk dresses, but I know she's stretching. Anyhow it's silly to talk about clothes; my mother once had three silks, a green and a spotted and a tabby-color. She wore the tabby-color when she got married. Then it was cut up to make a *pelisse* for me and there's a sample of it at home in the ebony work-box.

That was one of my mother's wedding presents. She got a butter knife and a book mark and——"

"Can't you stop this flow of eloquence," murmured Colonel Warrington in an undertone to his wife.

"Would you like a glass of milk?" asked Mrs. Warrington politely.

"If you please," said Tommie; "my throat does feel rather dry."

Colonel Warrington reached out his hand and seizing a pitcher of milk from the breakfast table hastily poured out a glass of it.

"And you think you would like to come and wait on my daughter?" said Mrs. Warrington.

"Yes, ma'am."

"What wages would you expect?" asked Colonel Warrington mischievously.

Tommie rolled her round black eyes toward him. "I never thought to ask my mother about that. Would fifty dollars a week be too much?"

"Well, I cannot afford to pay you that," said the gentleman holding his newspaper very high so that his laughing eyes just peeped over at Tommie. "Perhaps my wife could; she has lately come in possession of some money."

"I am afraid it is a little too much for me also," said Mrs. Warrington shaking her head.

"I want to get all I can for mother to live on next winter," said Tommie; "but I would not want you to rob yourselves. Let's say five cents."

"Five cents a minute or an hour or a day?" asked Colonel Warrington.

"Oh, five cents a week," replied Tommie; "could you pay that?"

"I'll ask my banker," said Colonel Warrington. "I am just going to write to him."

"Suppose I take you to see Miss Ethel before we make any final arrangements," said Mrs. Warrington rising.

"Good-bye," said Tommie cheerfully to Colonel Warrington, "in case I don't see you again."

"Good-bye," said the gentleman with another bow.

"That is a beautiful gentleman," said Tommie as they went out into a handsome hall; "but I am glad he isn't my husband."

Mrs. Warrington stopped with her foot on the lowest step of the staircase. "What do you mean, little girl?" she said haughtily.

"'Cause he's a tease," said Tommie doggedly. "That's what I mean, ma'am."

Mrs. Warrington stifled a laugh. The child was sharper than they thought her. Then she opened the door of a room where there were sunshine, flowers, and a beautiful girl.

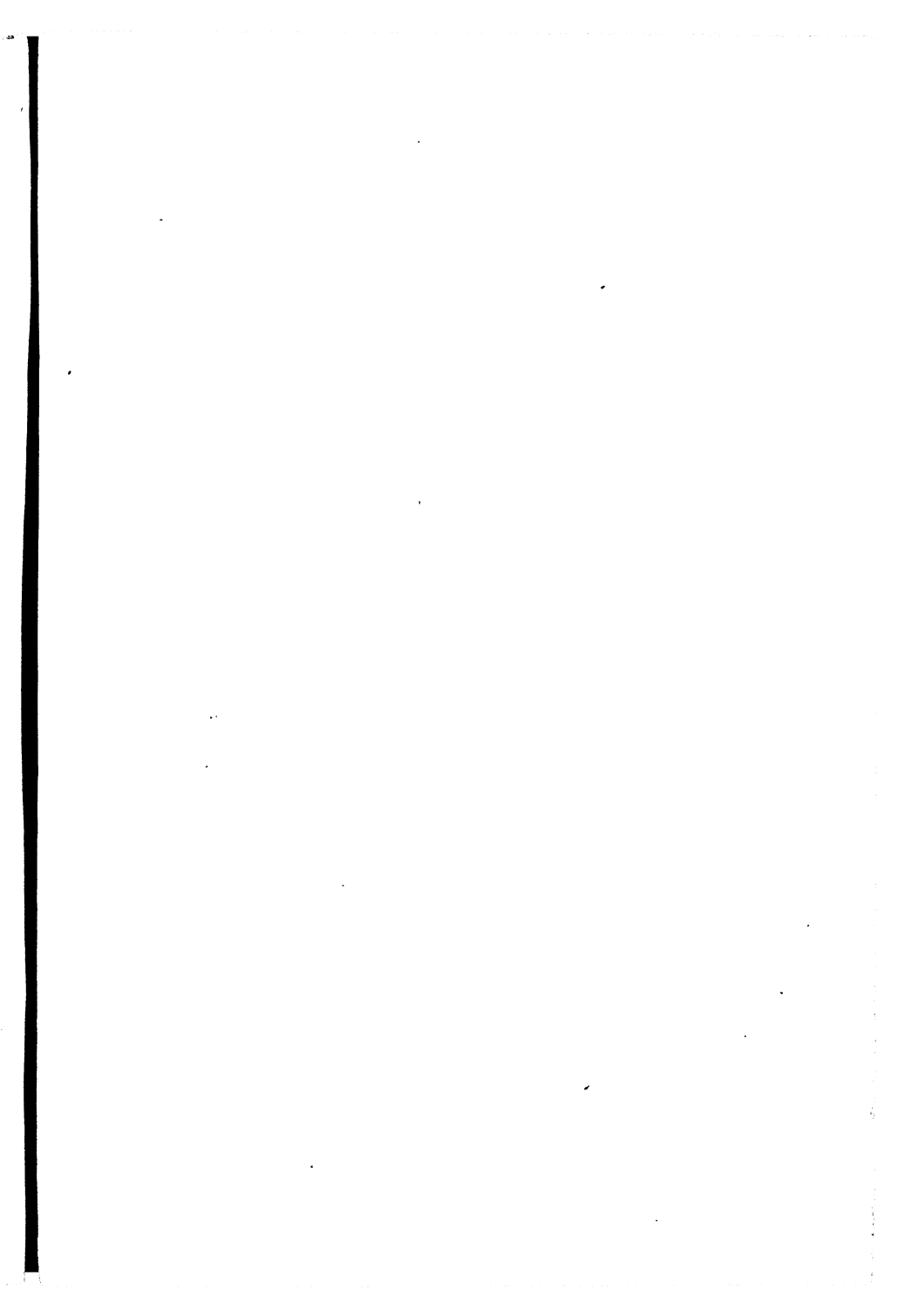
She lay on a sofa drawn across a window, and her head with its curls of light hair was propped on her crossed arms.

"Well," she said, turning a pair of bright blue inquiring eyes on them.

"This is the child whom I told you about," said Mrs. Warrington significantly.

"Oh, indeed; come here, child, and let me look at you," said the young lady languidly.

Tommie gravely placed herself at the foot of





... Are you Miss Ethel? she asked curiously

the sofa. "Are you Miss Ethel?" she asked curiously.

"Yes; why do you ask? Don't I look as you thought I would?"

"I thought you were sick," said Tommie, "and old—heaps older than I am, and, and——" and without finishing her sentence she let her eyes wander around the room.

"Well, I am neither," said the girl with a laugh. "I am not very sick, as you call it, and certainly I am not old, as my years number eighteen, and as for being ugly, if I can believe my glass and my friends, I am not that."

"What is the matter with you?" asked Tommie bluntly.

"I have a weak back," said the girl tossing back her hair, "and my doctor says that I think it is weaker than it really is. I suppose a person in your walk of life would call me lazy."

"I'm no walker," said Tommie briskly. "I'm a runner, and I couldn't have a weak back—I'd break it. Look here," and ducking her head she tumbled her little round cap off into her hands.

"I don't see anything more remarkable about you with your hat off than with it on," said Miss Ethel, "except that your hair, which is the present fashionable color of brickdust, is considerably faded on the top."

"That's from running," said Tommie.

"Indeed! I don't see the connection."

"Here it is," said Tommie, trying to look at the top of her head in a near glass; "that's

where the faded spot is. After school we have such fun running races on the meadows. When the wind blows it make me crazy. I tie my hat like this, see—" and she strung her unfortunate Sunday turban to her belt—" then I shake my head and run. All summer I wear no hat, and by fall my head is yellow on the top; then mammy shears me like a sheep."

"The sun fades your hair does it?" said Miss Ethel.

"Yes, lots," said Tommie. "Mammy says it is a mercy I don't get a sunstroke. I have promised her to wear my hat the rest of the summer."

"Take this child away, *ma mère*," said Miss Ethel in French. "She displeases me."

"Tommie did not know French, but she saw the young lady's gesture and caught the disdainful accent of the words *cet enfant*.

With her eyes almost starting from her head in anxiety she said, "I thought at first maybe I would like to come on the hill, but now I am here I don't like it much. Everything is big and lonely, and you seem queer; but I'll put up with lots of things if you will only keep me. I will wait on you real well. I can run like sixty."

Mrs. Warrington said nothing and Miss Ethel continued to stare at her.

"Can't you keep me?" Tommie continued plaintively. "I want to help my mother and I am sorry I used to be lazy. If I don't stay mother will be real disappointed, and I guess we

will be plumb poor this winter. I will wash clothes or do anything. I am not proud. Proud Tommie is only a nickname," and she gave a quavering little laugh. "Why, I'll—I'll even wash your clothes for you."

Poor Tommie! and she hated the washboard.

"Mother," said Miss Ethel, flinging one of her white arms impatiently over her head, "this girl will get on in the world. If we both started now, she and I without a cent, she would beat me in the race. Look at her. Isn't she the picture of resolution? How old are you, child?"

Tommie stood with her hands on her hips, her slender, lean neck stretched forward, and her dark, thin face aglow with excitement. Her whole appearance was not unlike that of the little racehorse to which Colonel Warrington likened her.

"Well," she said, pausing an instant to think of a diplomatic answer, "I am only ten by the big Bible, but if you saw me work you would think I was a hundred."

Miss Ethel burst out laughing. "Let her stay, mother. Let her stay, by all means."

About three o'clock that afternoon Mrs. Warner, looking toward the hill, saw something like a dusty comet coming in her direction.

"There is my child," she said, her mother's heart stirring gladly within her.

"Well," she said breathlessly, as Tommie pulled up at the gate; "what kind of a time have you had?"

Tommie looked tired. "I have had an elegant time," she gasped, sinking on the low stone step in front of the door, "just elegant; but I am glad to get home," and an immense relief was in her tone as she glanced at their little brown cottage. "I have had lots of fun, *lots*. I think it is a beautiful thing to work and earn money."

"What did you do?" asked Mrs. Warner.

"I talked to Miss Ethel; first she was kind of cross."

"Cross!" ejaculated Mrs. Warner.

"Yes, but I guess she was sorry after, I mean I think she was, but she didn't say. They didn't want me much, but I begged like ten dogs to stay."

"Ten dogs," said Mrs. Warner; "Oh Tommie! And they didn't want you? Here, child, drink some of this cool well water, your face is like a poppy."

Tommie drank the water, fanned herself, and between whiles gave her mother a jerky account of the hours spent on the hill.

"But I stayed, and I am to go to-morrow, and I washed Miss Ethel's dog, and when I said I had on my best dress she laughed. He is a curly fellow, and when you throw a ball out of the window he runs and gets it—and I had dinner with a lot of women in white caps, only they didn't call it that."

"Lunch," suggested Mrs. Warner.

"Yes, and curly dog Dover followed me and begged for scraps of meat, and Miss Ethel gave

me some strawberries and cream in her room, and Dover begged for them, and when he got them he made a face. He will eat biscuits, though—buttered.”

“Does Miss Ethel walk downstairs?” asked Mrs. Warner.

“Yes, with a stick; and I asked her if I could go for a drive with her to-morrow, and she laughed and said yes. She laughs all the time; and before I came away she said maybe she would give me a party in that grass field in front of her house.”

“On her lawn, you mean,” said Mrs. Warner; “but surely, Tommie, you must be mistaken.”

“I am not, mammy dear. I told her how mean Susy Brown is, and she said what could I do to make Susy real mad, and I said if I could give a party she would be madder than hops.”

“Oh, Tommie!”

“Then I was sorry, like little Mollie, and I said wouldn’t it be better to heap coals of fire on her head, and Miss Ethel said yes, that would burn; and we are going to give a party that will beat her’s hollow, and ask her.”

“And be nice to her?” said Mrs. Warner, “and not let her feel that you are trying to show off?”

“Oh, no,” said Tommie indifferently; “only I hope she will have the sense to be ashamed of her mean tricks.”

“You are very hot and very excited,” said Mrs. Warner. “I think I never saw you so much so. You must stop talking and lie down.”

"I am to be there at ten o'clock to-morrow morning," said Tommie as she stretched herself on the black haircloth sofa in the parlor, "and Miss Ethel says I am the funniest little girl she ever met, and the most ridge—ridge—it is something like ridgepole."

"Original?" said her mother.

"Yes, that is it," said Tommie. "Oh, mammy, why isn't everybody born rich? It is such fun to have a beautiful house and beautiful clothes and beautiful things to eat."

"Tommie, Tommie," said her mother, "riches are a snare and a temptation very often. Don't you know the Bible says so? Don't wish too much to be rich. I want you to be a ladylike, well-educated little girl, but it seems to me now that if I had my own way I would not be willing for you to have much money."

"I could give lots of parties if I was as rich as Miss Ethel," said Tommie.

"There," exclaimed Mrs. Warner, "your first thought is of self-indulgence."

"What is that, mammy?"

"Why, having a good time yourself. People who have money should spend it on others."

Tommie thought a moment, then she said, "Couldn't you do both?"

"A great many people besides you have said that, my child; but you will find that the usual effect of riches is to harden the heart."

"I would like to try being a rich girl," said Tommie drowsily, but before the words were fairly out of her mouth she had fallen asleep.

While Mrs. Warner sat beside her, demure, pink-cheeked Susy Brown came tripping up the walk and knocked timidly at the front door.

"Come in, Susy," said Mrs. Warner looking over her shoulder.

Susy minced into the parlor, and staring in astonishment at the prostrate figure on the sofa said: "I thought Tommie was up at the Warringtons'."

"She was there," said Mrs. Warner; "she has just come home."

Susy cast a decidedly anxious glance at the sleeper. "Did she have a good time, Mrs. Warner?"

"She says that she did; of course she had some work to do in waiting on Miss Ethel."

"Oh, but that ain't real work," said Susy still in a dissatisfied way, "like—like washing clothes. Ma says she wishes she had known about it. I would love to drive around with a young lady, and feed her dog and shake her pillows. Uncle Ben says that is all Tommie has to do. It ain't being a servant," and Susy curled her lip at the word.

"To be a servant is an honorable thing," said Mrs. Warner.

"No it ain't," said the little girl; "'scuse me for contradicting."

"Jesus Christ made himself a servant," went on Mrs. Warner. "We are put in this world to minister to each other. There is no more glorious calling than that of serving another. Nothing ought to be too humble for us to do."

"Now, Mrs. Warner," said the child, "would you go out as a hired girl?"

"Certainly, Susy, if I thought it was my duty."

"I wouldn't, and I don't believe Tommie would," said Susy. "Uncle Ben says she isn't a servant, she is Miss Ethel's little 'chiffioner.'"

Mrs. Warner said nothing for a long time; she was puzzling over Susy's last word. "Do you mean her little chaperon?" she said at last.

"Yes'm; and I have come to see if Tommie will come to my party."

"I think she will be delighted to do so; when does it take place?"

"I dunno," said Susy; "in a few weeks, I guess; I'll let her know. I must be going now."

"Can't you wait a little longer?" said Mrs. Warner politely, and Susy, trotting one foot comfortably as she swung to and fro in a little rocking-chair, sat for an hour asking questions innumerable about the Warringtons' household.

Miss Ethel's back was getting stronger, there was no doubt about it, yet Tommie continued to go up the hill to wait on her.

Miss Ethel had taken a fancy to the little girl, and though some of her young lady friends laughed at the way in which the village child was, as they said, "dragged about" with her superiors, Miss Ethel paid no attention to them.

There was a vast difference in the minds of these young ladies between living in the village and living on the hill.

Tommie did not appreciate this difference, and Miss Ethel, who was of a mischievous disposition, liked nothing better than to engage Tommie in a discussion with some of the young ladies whose airs and graces laid them open to rebuke.

"It is delicious to hear the child take them down without intending to do so," said Miss Ethel one day to her father. "Her ideas of life are so much purer and more unselfish than theirs. I feel a miserable egotist when I listen to her."

"Don't spoil her," said Colonel Warrington. "You will be going away by and by."

"I am going to look after her," said Miss Ethel with a little willful movement of her head. "Tommie is a plucky child and deserves some help in the race for a place in the world."

Colonel Warrington smiled as she walked away. She was very like him, this pretty light-haired girl of his, much more like him than any other child that he had.

"I am glad to see her taking an interest in something," he murmured. "We really are under a debt of gratitude to her *protégée*." Then he lifted up his eyes and said aloud to his wife: "There comes Trotters streaking up the road with the usual cloud of dust in her wake. What energy!"

Trotters was a nickname bestowed on Tommie by Miss Ethel, and in the white house she was more generally known by it than by her own.

"Miss Ethel is on the tennis lawn, Trotters," he said when Tommie halted before him. "The

doctor gave her permission to knock about the balls a little. Go and help her."

"I'm late," gasped Tommie; "but I'll make it up."

"What a conscience," said the gentleman. "I wish that washerwoman could be induced to bring up some more members of the rising generation."

Tommie ran under the trees to the back of the house. There was Miss Ethel, with a racquet in her hand, just about to throw a ball into the air. "Go to the other side of the net, Tommie," she said, "and play with me."

"If you will just wait a jiffy," said the child dropping on the grass; "I feel like a steam-engine."

"Bah, I am thoughtless," said the young lady looking down at her. "You would let me kill you, Trotters, I believe."

"Maybe I would and maybe I wouldn't," said Tommie.

"Oracular as usual. Tommie, what do you think is going to happen to-day?"

"Are you going to a party?" asked Tommie.

"Bless the child! you think a party is the most delightful thing in the world. No, my youngest brother, Reggie, is coming to visit us."

"Is he like you?" asked Tommie.

"He is a great tease," said Miss Ethel.

"Will he tease me?" inquired Tommie.

"He will tease everything and everybody in the house, from Dover up. Perhaps you had better not come here while he is at home."

"Miss Ethel," said the little girl scrambling to her feet, "let's play now, let's do anything, but don't keep me from coming here. If I couldn't come on the hill I'd get to be crazy, like young Sam Pickles."

"Why, are you so fond of me?" asked Miss Ethel much gratified.

"No, I'd rather be with my mother; but if I don't work for you the money will stop, and what shall we do next winter?"

"Nonsense, child, don't fret," said Miss Ethel lightly. "You shall not suffer next winter."

"I like you too," said Tommie, "just heaps, and I don't mind doing things for you, 'cept when you keep me running too much. I guess I'll miss you when the freezes come and you have gone away."

Miss Ethel laughed again. "You shall see me again next summer, child. Come, now, let us have some tennis. Ah! there goes the dog-cart. Father is just setting out to get Reggie."

"Am I keeping you from going?" said Tommie politely. At times the idea that she was a guest on the hill was very strong in her mind.

"Oh, no," said Miss Ethel. "It is a long, hot drive. Let us play some before Reggie comes."

An hour later the dog-cart crawled slowly up the steep hill. Colonel Warrington and a young man with a head of thick, light hair sat on the front seat.

When they came in sight of the house the young man began to wave his hat at all the front windows, and as soon as the cart pulled up before

the front door he sprang out and threw his arm around his mother. "How do you do, mamma; and where is sister?"

"Out in the hammock; let us go to her. She feels the heat, now that the sun is getting high."

The two went slowly over the grass until they came in sight of Miss Ethel lazily swinging in a hammock, when Mr. Reginald bounded ahead and pretended to shake her.

"Why didn't you come to meet me, Miss Lazybones?"

Tommie gazed curiously at the newcomer, who turned suddenly to her. "Who is this young lady? Won't you present me?"

Miss Ethel chuckled with glee. She certainly had effected a change in Tommie's appearance during the weeks that she had been coming on the hill. The faded light hair had been neatly cropped. Tommie's face was rather aristocratic, if it was lean, and she had on a made-over dress of Miss Ethel's—a brown gingham with little streaks of red that was most becoming to her—while her legs and feet were neatly encased in black stockings and shoes.

"This is the queen of Ashantee, Reggie," said Miss Ethel, "and she is here looking for a shipment of nice young men, to be sent to her native country."

"If you'll excuse me, madam, I'd rather not make your acquaintance," said the young man, bowing low; "you would be sure to want me."

Tommie scrutinized him. She felt that she

was getting used to the ways of polite society, and she did not feel at all embarrassed. "How do you do?" she said agreeably. "Have you got any old postage stamps?"

"Lots of them, heaps, barrels," said the young man.

"I'm making a collection," said Tommie. Then feeling that the hint was sufficient, she laid her little brown hand on the hammock and again began to swing Miss Ethel to and fro.

Mrs. Warrington soon went away and the brother and sister left together laughed and talked of matters as foreign to Tommie's understanding as if she had really been the queen of Ashantee that Miss Ethel had called her.

Tommie thought that Mr. Reginald was a delightful young gentleman and his teasing was so good-natured that, far from being annoyed, she rather seemed to like it.

Late one afternoon, when it was beginning to get cool, Miss Ethel looked up from a book that she was reading and said to Tommie, "Here is a German word that I don't understand. Go down to the library and get me the dictionary—the German dictionary."

"If I was a little German girl maybe I would find it quicker," said Tommie slowly, putting down her picture book.

"Look here at these crazy-looking letters," said Miss Ethel, "the dictionary will have plenty of them in it."

Tommie nodded her head, and with Miss

Ethel's dog at her heels ran nimbly downstairs and opened the library door.

"Hello!" said some one. "What is that language?"

Tommie started; she had not seen Mr. Reginald sitting half buried in one of the big chairs in the library.

"I'm talking German," she said, "to 'tract the 'tention of the German dictionary."

"Talk away," said the young man, "and see if it will come to you."

"Onery orery ickery Ann, filsy falsy Nicholas John, sweemy swimy Tommie's kitten, speak book speak."

"Here I am," said a squeaky voice which came from Mr. Reginald's lips, but Tommie pretended to think that it came from between the lids of a black book to which he pointed.

"Thank you, book," she said gravely, taking it up.

Mr. Reginald sat with his back half turned to a large table that stood near an open window.

"Oh, my!" said Tommie suddenly as she passed by the table.

Mr. Reginald turned round. "Isn't that fine?" he asked, looking at the contents of the little velvet box that had caught Tommie's eye.

Tommie stood clasping the dictionary to her breast. "I wish Susy Brown could see that. Her sister's ring ain't anything to it."

Mr. Reginald smiled. It was very unlikely that there should be anything in the village to equal his valuable diamond ring.

"Is it for you, Mr. Reggie?" asked Tommie in childish curiosity.

"No," he said, "it is for a young lady."

"And did you buy it with your own money?"

"Yes," he said, "and a pretty penny it cost. I am going to be married some day, Trotters, to the most charming girl in the world. Look here!" and he drew a photograph from his pocket.

"You—to be married," said Tommie, drawing back and staring at him in undisguised astonishment.

"Yes, why not? Everybody knows that."

"Well, I declare!" said Tommie; "mother says you look like a boy."

"Run away, child," said the young man, turning to his book with a laugh; "you speak unpleasant truths. However, tell your mother that I am twenty-five."

Tommie stood for a few instants by the table, then he heard the door close behind her.

He read on without interruption for some time, then the door opened again.

This time his mother stood before him. "Did the ring come?" she asked.

"Yes, mamma," he said springing up; "Ethel thinks it is a beauty, and I hope you will. Why, where is it?" and he drew back the hand which he had stretched out toward the table.

Then he frowned a little. "That child must have taken it; how tiresome."

"What child?" asked Mrs. Warrington in surprise.

"Wait a minute, mamma," he said; "I will get it," and going into the hall he went upstairs two steps at a time.

His sister looked up inquiringly when he entered her sitting room, and Tommie crawled out from under the table where she was playing with the dog.

"Will you give me back my ring?" he said, holding out his hand toward Tommie.

"What ring?" asked the little girl meekly as she scrambled to her feet.

"My ring," he said impatiently; "the one you took from the table downstairs."

"Why, I didn't take any ring, did I?" said Tommie wonderingly.

"You ought to know," he said; "come, I am waiting."

"I guess he's gone crazy, like young Sam Pickles," said Tommie, addressing her remark to the dog.

"Ethel," said the young man turning to his sister, "will you get it from her?"

"I don't understand what you are talking about," said Miss Ethel. "Do explain."

"It is Violet's ring that I am trying to get. I had it on the table in the library. This child was looking at it, then she left the room; when I put out my hand to take it, it was gone."

"Most mysterious," said Miss Ethel. "Trotters, are you sure you did not take it?"

"Sure," said the little girl, with an aggrieved glance at Mr. Reginald. "I wouldn't touch his old ring for fifty hundred dollars."

"You had better search her pockets, Ethel," said Mr. Reginald quietly.

"I haven't any pockets," said Tommie indignantly. "I have to carry my handkerchief here," and she patted her waistband.

"What is all this discussion about?" said Mrs. Warrington suddenly.

She had followed her son upstairs and now stood beside the little group.

"Perhaps Mrs. Warrington has it," said Tommie with relief. "Let me feel in your pockets, ma'am. Your hands are big and won't go down far; mine will reach to the bottom."

"Stand back, child," said Mrs. Warrington, as Tommie advanced with outstretched arm.

"Everybody's cross," muttered Tommie, retreating to the sofa with the dog.

"You don't mean to say that the ring cannot be found?" said Mrs. Warrington.

"Just that, mamma," said Mr. Reginald, and he went over the story to his mother.

Mrs. Warrington gazed in astonishment at Tommie. "Why, Trotters," she exclaimed, "to do such a thing and then to deny it!"

Tommie flew off the sofa, her wrathful eyes fixed on Mr. Reginald. "Did you ever hear of Ananias and Sapphira?" she asked vehemently. "Do you suppose I want to be struck right down this minute?"

"Come, come," said Miss Ethel, "we are becoming melodramatic. Tommie, did you take that ring?"

"No, I didn't," said Tommie wildly; "paint

me black, paint me blue, scratch my face and beat me too, if I did."

"That is enough," said Miss Ethel, turning to her brother. "She did not take it."

"Then where can it have gone?" he asked with a puzzled face.

Miss Ethel shrugged her shoulders. "I do not know, but I know that it would be a moral impossibility for this child to lie. She might take something in a fit of temper——"

"No, I wouldn't," said Tommie, from the sofa.

"But she would never lie about it," Miss Ethel went on.

Mr. Reginald put his hands in his pockets and muttering, "It is a most singular thing," went away.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Warrington, "this is very disturbing. Ring the bell, child. We must have the servants search the whole house."

"And the grass under the window, mamma," said Miss Ethel. "The wind might have blown it out."

"My dear," said Mrs. Warrington, "there hasn't been a breath of wind to-day."

Miss Ethel sat looking earnestly at Tommie.

"Do you think I ought to go and help look for it?" asked the little girl.

"No, no, Trotters; you won't be of any use, and my brother is a little annoyed. You had better go home."

"All right," said Tommie stoically, and she was soon trotting down the road at her usual gait.

Mrs. Warner was in great distress of mind. She had heard Tommie's story and she sat silently wringing her hands.

Fortunately Uncle Ben came strolling along the road, and she poured her troubles into his sympathetic ear.

"I'll mind the house and do you go up to see Mrs. Warrington," he said.

Mrs. Warner put on her bonnet and shawl and hurried toward the hill. Her arm was out of the sling by this time, but she would never be able to use it for hard work again, the doctor said.

Mrs. Warrington was at home, but could not see her. She was entertaining some friends at dinner. Miss Ethel would give her a few minutes, the maid said.

The young lady soon came softly through the hall to the little room where Mrs. Warner was sitting.

"Oh, Miss Ethel!" was all that Mrs. Warner could at first manage to say.

"Don't trouble about talking the thing over," said the young lady kindly. "I know what is in your mind—the ring has disappeared—no amount of talking will bring it back, and the best way is to drop the matter."

"But," stammered Mrs. Warner, "my child's reputation. Every one will believe that she is a thief."

"That cannot make her one," said Miss Ethel.

"And the value of it," said Mrs. Warner. "You rich people pay so much for your jewels."

"This stone was not so very expensive," said Miss Ethel. "It was only—well, it doesn't matter how much it was. If it isn't found my father will probably buy another for my brother. I wish you would not worry about the matter, Mrs. Warner. My father is looking into it, and you are safe in his hands. He has examined the servants and had the grounds searched, and he is going to the village to do something about it. I think he has a clue, though he does not say that he has."

"And he does not believe that my child is guilty," said Mrs. Warner eagerly.

"No, no; he said he would as soon believe that Reggie has it himself."

"Thank you, thank you," said Mrs. Warner rising; "I must not take up more of your time."

"Mrs. Warner," said the young lady a little stiffly, and holding her pretty head very straight, "I am not by any means a religious person, but I have often wanted to say to you that I think you are bringing up your child in the right way. She isn't all the time prating about being good, but she tries to overcome her faults."

"My dear little girl," murmured Mrs. Warner. "Thank God that she does try to be good."

"She has a quick temper," said Miss Ethel, "and she is given to laziness, but she strives against both. I often feel ashamed when I see her battling with things that I yield to."

"She does not do it in her own strength, dear Miss Ethel," said Mrs. Warner.

"No, I know she doesn't. You religious

people war against your failings with verses from the Bible and scraps of hymns, don't you, and you pray for strength? I often see Tommie in a corner repeating something to herself. Perhaps some day I shall be religious too."

"Oh, Miss Ethel," said Mrs. Warner.

"I must go now," said the young lady hurriedly. "Let Tommie come to-morrow just as usual, and remember that she always—always will have a friend in me. Mary will let you out," and with a charming smile Miss Ethel disappeared.

"O Lord, touch that dear young lady's heart and make her one of thy children," murmured Mrs. Warner as she left the house.

Half-way to the gate she met a young man who looked like Miss Ethel.

"You are Mrs. Warner, are you not?" he asked, politely lifting his cap.

"Yes," said the little woman, "and you are Mr. Reginald that I hear my little girl speaking of."

"I am," he said, "and I have stopped you to ask whether she is fretting about the little fuss we had up here this afternoon."

Mrs. Warner hesitated. "She went to bed earlier than usual. I think it did worry her, but she did not say so."

"She is an interesting child, don't let her fret," said the young man kindly. "I fear that I spoke rather sharply to her."

"I thought I heard her crying when she was undressing," said Mrs. Warner; "but when I went to her she was singing."

"To keep herself from crying," said the young man. "She is an odd little mortal." Then as Mrs. Warner went away he murmured to himself, "A child's teardrop is a needless blot upon the earth."

On reaching home Mrs. Warner said to Uncle Ben: "I am not going to worry about this matter; God's hand is in it, and as a dutiful child I will trust him."

"The village will be with ye and the hill against ye," said the old man shrewdly.

By the next morning the story of the lost ring had flashed from the hill to the village, from the village out into the country, and as Uncle Ben had prophesied, Mrs. Warner's neighbors and acquaintances and all the people in her own station in life were for her and Tommie, and openly expressed their opinion that the child could not by any possibility be a thief.

The people on the hill shrugged their shoulders and said: "Of course the child has it. It is just what the Warringtons might expect for elevating one of the common people to the level of their own family. They have treated her more like a child than a servant. Perhaps they will change their behavior now."

One lady even went so far as to say that if the village people took to robbing the residents on the hill, she would sell her fine house and seek summer quarters elsewhere.

Tommie had heard none of these things the next morning, and being young and unused to

carrying care of any kind, she woke early, and after begging for an early breakfast, ran off in the direction of the village. She had a small business transaction to accomplish there before going on the hill.

With surprised and gratified vanity she saw that she had suddenly attained to a position of great popularity. The children came running out of their houses to speak to her, and soon there was such a crowd at the corner that Tommie was obliged to take Susy Brown aside under a willow tree to name a very serious proposition to her.

The other children watched their dialogue of nods, shrugs, and mysterious words and gestures, and finally when Susy left Tommie and went running to her home, they all settled around the heroine like a swarm of bees.

Six parties—to take place at some future time—she was invited to on the spot, and with a beaming face and escorted by a bodyguard of twelve girls, she at last turned her face toward the hill.

When she passed her mother's cottage, she ran in to kiss her and show her something that she carried carefully wrapped in paper in the palm of her hand.

"Seems as if it's nice to be called a thief when you're not one," said Tommie cheerfully; "and I never saw such elegant girls—never, mammy; and Miss Miller kissed me and gave me this rosette," and Tommie drew a knot of faded ribbon from her bosom.

Mrs. Warner's face grew a little anxious. "Don't say too much about the vanished ring, Tommie," she said, "but run away to the hill. Oh, dear!" and looking out the window, she sighed at the flock of girls. "Well, it can't be helped. Run along, pet."

Half-way to the Warringtons' the girls trooping along the road were overtaken by a phaeton driven by a colored coachman. At a gesture from one of the two ladies sitting in front he stopped.

The elder of the ladies looked at the children and said in a sweet voice, "Is the little thief among you?"

"Oh, yes'm, yes'm," and Tommie, blushing and bridling, was pushed forward.

"Poor child," said the lady solemnly; "so young to be so depraved. Yet I always mistrust dark-featured children; they are like Indians and gypsies, don't you think so, Gwendolen?" turning to the other lady.

"Yeth, alwayth," lisped her remarkably pretty neighbor.

Tommie did not quite understand what was meant, but she knew that she was the subject of their conversation, so she blushed and bridled a little more.

"Are you going to confess?" asked the lady tenderly.

"Yes," said Tommie; "I was dreadful cross yesterday, and after I've been like that I have to go around asking people to forgive me."

The lady saw that Tommie did not know

what she meant. She was a very clever lady. Her friends called her "the diplomatist," and many a secret had she worried from the breast of man and woman. Now she would try her hand on a child. She would cover herself with glory if she could induce this little common village girl to tell her where she had concealed the beautiful diamond that had been stolen.

She fixed her fine eyes on Tommie. She leaned over and spoke in a confidential tone and with childish curiosity. "How I wonder where that ring went."

Tommie looked up admiringly at the charming lady whose voice was like music. "Well," she said soberly, and pointing over her shoulder at the village girls who stood drawn up in a staring group behind, "we were just talking about it. Here was the ring," and Tommie pointed to the lady's gloved hand; "there was the open window," and she stretched out one of her arms toward the other lady who was observing her attentively from under the shade of her red parasol; "and there was the big black table," and she pointed to the stolid-colored coachman.

"Yes," said the lady; "go on."

"And the ring went," said Tommie, "just went and nobody saw it. Maybe an eagle flew down and took it in his beak. Maybe a man came down in a big balloon and reached out a stick with a hook on it, cause you know Mr. Reggie's back was half turned and he could not see him when he was reading. Maybe a little mousie crawled up the table leg and maybe——"

"What is that you are holding so tightly in your hand?" asked the lady, her sweet voice suddenly becoming sharp.

Tommie blushed furiously and half uncurled her little brown fist to see if the treasure that she had there was safe.

The sweet-voiced lady did nothing so vulgar as to snatch the tiny parcel that the child held, yet it certainly slid almost imperceptibly from Tommie's hand to hers.

"Drive on, drive on, Stephen," she cried excitedly, while Tommie stood staring incredulously at her. "I have the ring. I have the ring; I feel it here inside this paper. I said the child would carry it about with her."

The coachman struck his horse smartly with the whip, the phaeton gave a leap, while Tommie stood as if rooted to the dusty roadside.

"Let me thee—let me thee," exclaimed the other lady in the phaeton.

The sweet-voiced lady looked over her shoulder at Tommie, who had gathered herself together and was tearing after them. "No, no, Gwendolen, you might drop it. We are pursued, but there comes Reginald Warrington down the road. He shall open it, he shall open it himself."

The coachman held his whip over the horse's back, and Tommie, open-mouthed and panting, ran as she said she could, "like sixty," through the dust behind, while Mr. Reginald rode smartly toward them on his tall hunter, Tartar.

"Good news, good news," screamed the elder

lady in the phaeton, waving her hand high in the air. "The ring is found—the ring is found."

Tommie, with her mouth full of dust, gnashed her teeth at the victorious words. She was pretty long-winded, but she could not speak for a few instants after the phaeton drew up beside the horseman and she flung herself on the back of it in silence.

Handsome Mr. Reginald looked at her in amazement, and stooping down from his horse took from the lady's hand the little roll of brown paper.

"Give me my ring," Tommie managed to gasp out. "You mean lady. You are a thief."

"Oh, protect me, protect me from this little cat," exclaimed the lady childishly, for Tommie was trying to climb into the front seat.

Tommie however, suddenly abandoned the attack, for she had just discovered that the ring had passed into Mr. Reginald's hands.

She hopped nimbly to the road and ran to his side, crying, stamping her feet and clinging to his trousers' leg, while she breathed out confused and wrathful exclamations against the mistress of the phaeton.

Mr. Reginald did not quite understand the situation, yet he saw that his duty was to get inside the roll of brown paper.

"Yes," gasped Tommie, "hurry up. Open it quick. I wanted to give it to you myself, but you'll see," and she shook her fist at the phaeton. "You're worse than ten Susy Browns. You—you, oh, my," and looking behind she bit her lip,

for the village girls, breathless and panting, were just drawing themselves up in a phalanx behind her.

Mr. Reginald had at last made his way through the network of strings, and throwing away the paper, he sat holding up a little ugly brass ring in which a red stone was trying to sparkle.

"There now," said Tommie to the discomfited lady, who murmured, "Well, really this is very strange. I beg your pardon, Mr. Reginald, but I found the little girl acting in a suspicious manner. I took the ring from her. I thought it was your ring. I felt it through the paper. I am very sorry."

Mr. Reginald bowed politely to her. "I suppose you thought this might be called a case of circumstantial evidence. You knew that I had lost a ring and you felt one inside this paper. I am obliged for your interest, but I must say that I should regret extremely to find my jewel in the possession of this child."

"It is most unfortunate," said the lady. "Stephen, I think you had better drive on. Good-morning, Mr. Reginald."

"Good-morning," said Mr. Reginald, holding his hat in his hand as the phaeton disappeared.

Then laughing all over his face he turned to Tommie.

She was glaring after the retreating phaeton. The village girls had drifted away. It was getting hot and the fun was over.

"To-morrow," said Tommie, "I'll have to

forgive that lady, or maybe to-night. Now, I'd like to shake her like a rag doll."

"Poor Trotters," said Mr. Reginald, biting his lip. Then he slipped off his horse. "Don't you want my handkerchief? You have without exception the dirtiest face I ever saw."

"Have I?" said Tommie. "Oh, dear, I wish I had a rocking-chair, I am so tired."

Almost before the words were out of her mouth, Mr. Reginald had her by the shoulders and had swung her carefully up on his saddle.

Tommie had been up there before, and with a grateful, "Thank you, Mr. Reggie," she sat polishing her face vigorously and talking to him in broken sentences. "I'm sorry I was so ugly to you yesterday. I cried when I said my prayers last night, and I wrote a 'pology'—here it is—and I went to Susy Brown this morning. Susy, says I, I want to trade for that ring your sister gave you. It's all over the village about me and your ring, you know, so I thought I would make a good bargain. Susy she hemmed and hawed, but at last she traded. I got it for six slate pencils, my best doll, five cents, and that big whistle you gave me—and you'll wear it, Mr. Reggie, won't you?"

"Yes, I'll wear it," said the young man, slipping the ugly ring over his little finger. "Tommie, I'll have to beg your pardon; I spoke harshly to you."

"Did you," said the child quietly. "I don't 'member."

"Good child," said the young man, "you are

more taken up with you own wrong-doing than that of others. It's the other way with most people."

He unfolded the half-sheet of paper and read aloud: "Before I lay me down to sleep, I 'pologize humbly and with my heart for bad lang-widge used in my mind 'gainst a young genlman called Mister Reggie, hoping as he will forgive yours truly, Thomasina Warner."

"The writing's bad, 'cause I hadn't any light 'cept the moon."

"That doesn't matter," said Mr. Reggie gravely, and he folded the paper and put it in his pocket.

"Do you receipt it?" asked Tommie meekly.

"Yes, I receipt it," said Mr. Reggie, "with thanks for prompt payment."

"That's good news," said Tommie joyfully.

"Mr. Reggie, I wish I had a horse."

The young man had turned Tartar around, and with the bridle over his arm was conducting Tommie toward the gates of his father's estate.

"Perhaps you will have one some day," said the young man. "Work hard at your lessons and try to improve yourself in every way, and when you are grown up you will be able to support yourself and buy many things that ignorant and lazy people have to do without."

Two weeks went by, the ring had not been found, and although the subject was never mentioned before Tommie by her mother or the Warringtons, she heard of it in other places.

To Mrs. Warner's sorrow her little girl developed a sudden shyness. She would not go anywhere alone except to the hill, and when she was there she begged Miss Ethel to let her run away if she saw a stranger coming.

One day Colonel Warrington, in strolling about his grounds, came upon Tommie—the proud and stoical Tommie—in tears under a chestnut tree. He stood still, hoping that she would go away without seeing him, but she suddenly threw herself on the ground and extended her arms to Miss Ethel's little dog that was following her.

"Oh, Dover," she sobbed, "my heart is most broke. Once I was like you, and played and played. Then they called me Proud Tommie, and I asked God to let me help my mother. Miss Ethel was good to me, and Mrs. Warrington and Mr. Reggie. He didn't tease me much, but the colonel did. I guess he don't mean it. How can he tell how little girls feel?"

The dog wagged his tail and licked her face, but Tommie went on more drearily than ever. "The doctor says that mammy's arm can't work any more. It never can wash, and the winter will come. When Miss Ethel goes away, and Mrs. Warrington and Mr. Reggie and the colonel, what will I do? No little girl that might have stole a ring can go away and work, and there's nothing in the village. And mammy cries at night; I've heard her. And, Dover, I'm getting tired of being a little thief girl. Everybody says, She didn't take it, but where is it? If it

wasn't for mammy and Miss Ethel, and Mrs. Warrington and Mr. Reggie and the colonel and you, Dover, I'd like to die and go to heaven and be happy."

"Trotters," said a voice suddenly behind her.

The little girl sprang to her feet. "Oh it is you, Colonel Warrington," she said with relief. "It sounded strange, your voice did."

"What is that little verse I heard you singing to my daughter the other day?" said the gentleman, sitting down on a circular wooden bench under the tree. "Something about trials and temptations. Can't you sing it for me?"

"Yes," said Tommie, "I will," and she began in an unsteady voice:

"Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged,
Take it——"

then she broke down.

"Well," said Colonel Warrington, "take it where? that's the point of the hymn. Don't cry, child."

"Take it to the Lord in prayer," gasped Tommie. "But it won't stay there, colonel, it comes back."

"Then what is the good of your religion?"

"It's a lot of good," said Tommie; "and the trouble doesn't always come back. Sometimes it stays. I guess it always does if I remember to put it right. Jesus knows our every weakness; do you know that part, colonel?"

"I forget it ; sing it to me."

Tommie threw back her head and sang like a bird as she sat on the grass before him. Dover ran his little soft tongue over her hands occasionally, and Colonel Warrington smiled at her, and she soon fell into a more cheerful mood.

"I guess I'll go back to the house now," she said getting up after a time. "I feel better."

"Trotters," said the gentleman, "that ring affair is worrying you."

Tommie winced. She could not bear to speak of it now. "I—s'pose it—does," she said reluctantly.

"Well, don't worry any more. By this time to-morrow I hope to have news of it. Don't say a word about it though, and run away now."

Tommie stared at him, then a bright smile flashed all over her face, and pressing her lips together lest she should be tempted to speak, she ran swiftly in the direction of the house.

The next day was wet and stormy, and Tommie did not go on the hill.

During the morning Colonel Warrington received a number of telegrams from a neighboring town. In the afternoon he left home, and in the evening he returned.

Mrs. Warrington, Miss Ethel, and Mr. Reginald were at the dinner table when he walked in and sat down in his usual place.

"A wretched day," he observed, then he smiled as he unfolded his napkin and met the eyes of his family.

"Papa," said Miss Ethel, "I believe you have been away on that ring business."

Colonel Warrington smiled again, and putting his hand into his breast pocket he drew out the sparkling, glittering ring that seemed to have gained added brilliancy during its disappearance.

"Oh," cried Miss Ethel breathlessly. "I am so glad."

"Take it, Reggie," said Colonel Warrington handing it to his son. "And see that better care is taken of it in future."

"Who had it, papa?" asked Miss Ethel.

"An organ-grinder."

"An organ-grinder! Where did he get it? Did he steal it?"

"No, or rather yes and no."

"But how could he?" asked the young lady. "How did he get into the room?"

"He didn't get into the room," said her father.

"Did he have a monkey?" asked Mr. Reginald.

"Yes."

"Oh, and the monkey climbed in over the Virginia creeper under the window," said Miss Ethel.

"Precisely."

"How did you find all this out?" asked Mrs. Warrington. "I haven't heard before of any organ-grinder or monkey being near the house that day."

"Papa has been quietly asking questions and turning the thing over in his mind," said Miss Ethel.

"Yes," said Colonel Warrington, "that is the way to find things out in this world. The first discovery I made was that the diamond was not in the room, then it was not out of doors, and Tommie hadn't it, and Reggie hadn't it—that only a beast or a bird could have taken it through the open window while Reggie was absorbed in his book. From that it was easy to get on the track of the organ-grinder who had that day passed through the village."

"He was not on the hill, was he?" interposed Miss Ethel.

"No one had seen him come up, but he must have been here," said her father. "I had him watched, and he soon gave himself away by letting his thievish monkey run in at other open windows. The little creature is a Carthaginian monkey, and is as bright as a child. I would have bought him only I thought he might get us into trouble."

"And is the man in jail, papa?" asked Miss Ethel.

"Yes, he is to be tried next week. I shall have to be present. The ring was found hidden in his dirty clothes."

"I am intensely relieved," said Miss Ethel, "and I would give a kingdom to see Tommie."

"Have the brougham out and go down and see her," said Colonel Warrington.

"It is too bad a night," said his wife.

"It won't hurt her at all," he said, "if she drives."

"I am more glad for Tommie's mother than I

am for Tommie," said Mrs. Warrington. "The poor woman has really lost flesh over this thing."

"Tommie is a child," said Mr. Reginald, "and her mother is a woman."

"A child, but a remarkably sensitive one," said Colonel Warrington. "She has had her bit of suffering too. Well, I am heartily glad to wash my hands of this thing, and thankful that it has ended so well."

Miss Ethel hurried upstairs and put on a long cloak, and then she went to see Tommie.

What she said, what Tommie said, and what Tommie's mother said, would take too long to tell, but one sentence apiece may be recorded.

"I feel happy," said Tommie with a sigh, "and little—most as little as Dover. I guess I'll never be Proud Tommie again, and I am going to work real hard so I can help mother. It's pleasant not to be a thief girl. I guess those folks on the hill will be sorry."

"We propose to do something handsome for Tommie in the way of educating her," said Miss Ethel with a charming, middle-aged-lady air.

Mrs. Warner said, "The hand of God is in this thing. He never forsakes the widow and the fatherless who put their trust in him."

