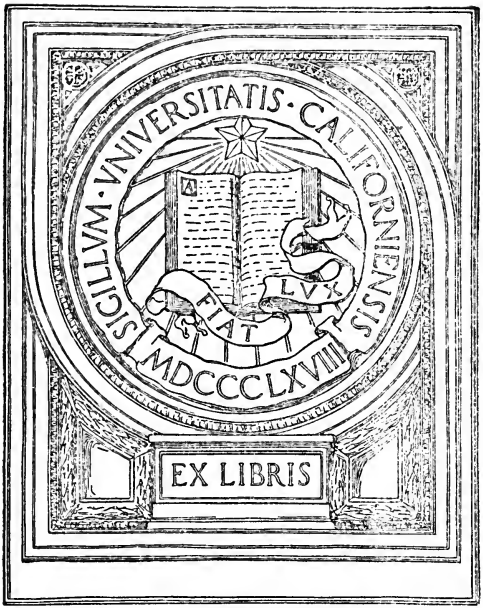
Irvington Stories


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
LVX
FIAT
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

First Edition / 00

First book by the
Author of Hans
Brinker

Rose -

"Softly and tenderly as snow flakes fell the touches of Elsie's hand upon that bowed head." See p. 22.

THE

IRVINGTON STORIES.

BY

M. E. DODGE.

ILLUSTRATED BY

F. O. C. DARLEY.

NEW YORK:
JAMES O'KANE, PUBLISHER.
SAN FRANCISCO; H. H. BANCROFT & CO.
M DCCC LXV.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864,
By M. E. Dodge,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the District of New Jersey.

M'CREA AND MILLER, STEREOTYPERS. C. A. ALVORD, PRINTER.

PS1545
D2
I78
1865
MAIN

TO

My Children,

JAMIE AND HARRY,

These Stories

ARE LOVINGLY INSCRIBED.

M269185

Old Mother Life to her children doth say:—

"Go on with your duties, my dears;
On the right hand is work, on the left hand is play;
See that you tarry with neither all day,
But faithfully build up the years."

To Fiction she crieth, "I pray you draw near,
You can help them my bidding to do,
Can mirror my smile, and enjewel my tear;
So enter and welcome—the children are here—
Indeed, they are calling for you!"

CONTENTS.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Irvington Stories.

THE HERMIT OF THE HILLS:

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

I.

OLD POP.

A CHILL December day was slowly creeping upward from the east. One by one, the stars that had been wide awake all night, began to blink drowsily, and finally, ceased to look down upon the earth. Only the morning star kept watch. All the homes of the land lay silent beneath her. Some were stately and beautiful, others were dingy and comfortless; some crowded thickly together between steeples and spires and a medley of mast-heads, others seemed kneeling amid the trees in the valleys; and many stood, stark and stiff, along the roadsides.

But of all those silent dwellings, none were

so dreary as one rough hut, that crouched, alone, upon a hill in the forest. Before it, stood a hemlock-tree, almost black in the cold, gray light, pointing with long, icy fingers to the sombre earth.

Soon the one door of the hut opened slowly and an old man came forth clothed in dingy rags. Barely glancing at the sky, and shivering with cold, he tottered down the slope of the hill and, bending, gathered one by one the dry sticks that lay about his feet.

No one viewing the scene could have supposed that holiday thoughts would ever reach the spot, or that before many hours the merry Christmas bells would startle the echoes from their hiding-places around that dismal abode.

There was no pleasant glow upon the old man's face as he bore his jagged armful into the hut, and cast it upon the rough hearthstone. The very smoke that afterward issued from a rusty pipe, projecting from the walls, crept languidly to the earth, as if even her frozen bosom were warmer and more genial than the fire it had left within.

Sometimes—when on clear, bright days the smoke curled hurriedly up from this same

pipe, eager to escape into the sunshine—the village children, looking up from the valley, would shout to each other that "Old Pop" was awake, and the bravest of them would propose a visit to his mysterious dwelling. The expedition once resolved upon, boys and girls by dozens would soon join the ranks, and with many a whisper and startled laugh the procession would wend its way up and down the forest hills until the forbidden spot was reached, where "Old Pop" reigned supreme. At the sound of the first timid footfall he would quickly appear, and, with angry frown and furious shout, rush upon his uninvited guests. The slightest flourish of his stick had power to scatter them, though the little scamperers would often halt at a safe distance and rend the air with merry shouts, expressive of any thing but love for the grim old man.

Many stories were current in the village concerning the "Hermit of the Hills," as he was called by the people of the place, though among the children he always bore the title of "Old Pop." Sour and grim the young folks well knew him to be, but his violence had

always expended itself in angry words and a ferocious shaking of his stick; never had a blow fallen from his hand upon a single pair of little shoulders, though more than once he had caught a stray invader near his very threshold.

"He won't hurt us, never fear!" the boldest of their leaders would sometimes say, by way of encouragement, "though he hates us awfully. They say the very sight of a child makes him furious."

"They Say" was a great busybody in this village, and, as usual, did a deal of mischief, because his statements were generally believed, and few cared to trace them to their source. "They Say" has blighted many a joyous heart and many a happy home since the world began; yet if we only are brave enough to attack him with a certain weapon called "WHO says?" we shall find that one thrust will finish him, and make him gasp out "Nobody!" just as he is dying. I call it dying, but you can kill "They Say" only for a little while. He has more lives than a cat; and will spring up as nimble as ever at the first breath of gossip that blows upon him.

The other rumors circulated by the great "They Say" were, that the old man was a miser, and had heaps of gold buried under the roots of his chestnuts and maples; that he was some great criminal skulking from justice; that before the village was settled the old hermit had already taken his abode in the dreary hut, and that the mound near it was a grave—the grave of one whom the old man had, years before, carried there at night, dying or dead. Again, that he was not an old man at all, but one still in the vigor of manhood. Many a boy and girl testified to having seen his bent figure straighten in his wrath until he had towered like a very Orson. Some of the villagers believed him to be a lunatic, and thanked their lucky stars that he chose to keep aloof from their sunny lanes; and others even went so far as to hint that he was a "weird one," gifted with strange powers, and that his very donkey, lean and weak-jointed as it was, had a "wrong" look out of its hollow eyes. None had ever seen the donkey except at nightfall, when, on very rare occasions, they chanced to meet the old hermit riding slowly in an

opposite direction from the village; but all asserted there was no mistaking the look in that donkey's eyes.

However all this may have been, some points were quite certain. "Old Pop" was not at all like other men. He lived alone and uncared for in his broken-down hut, seeking no company; never speaking to any of the villagers, excepting very rarely to the schoolmaster, or even returning their salutations, when they crossed his path, but by a low sound, half mutter, half growl; and never by any chance having a kind word or pleasant greeting for boy or girl. Unloved he knew himself to be, and he evidently resolved to balance the account by being himself unloving to the last.

II.

AN IDEA, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

IT happened that on the very morning with which my history opens, December 23, 185–, one of the biggest boys in the village had an idea. No one seeing him seated upon the

edge of the bed, his yellow locks dishevelled, his freckled face unwashed, to say nothing of a chronic swelling of lips and eyelids, would have deemed the thing possible: yet the fact is on record. Will Ripley (called William Augustus by his parents and aunts), though not a very bright boy, possessed a jewel that on this particular morning had succeeded in flashing a ray of light into his dull head. The consequence was an idea which, if successfully carried out, would secure glory for himself and any amount of fun for a host of young adventurers.

This idea was nothing less than a project to form a large party of boys, who at noon that day should march in a body to "Old Pop's" domain, and, in spite of his certain wrath, beg from him the beautiful young hemlock before his hut as a Christmas-tree for Jennie Todd, the juvenile belle of the village. The jewel that inspired the exploit was a warm heart under Will's jacket, beating just now solely for that same Jennie Todd, a blooming little lady of twelve summers.

No sooner did the idea strike Master Will than he sprang from the bed as if he had been

shot. "Josh!" he cried, "if that wouldn't be a go!" His tight jacket and outgrown trousers being hastily donned, and sundry huge mouthfuls of mush and molasses disposed of, our hero commenced his labors as recruiting officer. It was just two days before Christmas, and the first morning of a fortnight's holiday; the children were consequently in a very receptive condition as far as fun or adventure were concerned. Numerous volunteers quickly enrolled themselves under the banner of William Augustus. In the general enthusiasm even the petticoat uniform was admitted upon equal terms, until finally their brilliant commander sulked out that he wasn't "going to have more gals than boys, or the game would be all up."

Before starting on their witless expedition, the party agreed that six of their number, three boys and three girls, should advance nearest the citadel, and under an imaginary flag of truce confer with its glum commander concerning the desired hemlock; not that they had any possible expectation of a favorable reply, but, as Will had said, the thing was worth trying for at any rate.

This potent argument inspired all requisite strength and courage as the children hurried on in boisterous groups toward the forest. Soon their steps became more stealthy, their voices subdued, as they marched on, up and down, through the undulating wood. Now and then a faint shriek from some startled girl, who felt "sure" that she saw Old Pop rushing down upon them, called forth the stifled reproaches of her companions; or the reckless laugh of some very small youngster who had insisted upon joining the expedition brought forth terrible threats from the big boys.

Save these little interruptions, the invaders pressed on in stealthy concert, until the hermit's hill was reached.

Halting here, the main body, settled in anxious expectation, while three boys and three girls, after the manner of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives (as represented in sixpenny arks), walked in pairs hand in hand up the ascent.

"What shall we say to him?" whispered Elsie Brown, the head girl, to her companion.

"Say?" was the lucid response, "why, nothing; only tell him we want it."

"Oh, Will, that won't do at all. I do believe the poor old man hasn't heard a loving word for years and years. It won't hurt us, I'm sure, to talk kindly with him even if he refuse to give us the tree."

"Humph! Lucky for us if he gives us a chance," grunted Will, as he shuffled on. "I'm getting a little skeery of this business, though I started it myself. They say the old feller's got a pair of double-barrelled pistols to use at a pinch, and I, for—"

"Blazes!" cried the boy behind them, "there he is! Now for it!"

Instinctively the six adventurers huddled more closely together as they neared the mute figure standing, stick in hand, at the crown of the hill. Stern, almost savage, not a gleam of encouragement in the strange eyes.

Will spoke first, out of breath as he was, looking up to where the old man stood.

"We come to ask you, Old Pop—I mean, Mr. Hermit—for that air hemlock of yourn to—"

The old man raised his stick.

"If you please, Sir," put in Elsie, "for a Christmas-tree!"

"We'll cut it down ourselves, Sir," added the rest, laughing between terror and fun, "if you'll—"

"If I'll!" echoed the cross old fellow, with an ugly squeak—"go along with you, or I'll break every bone in your rascally little bodies," and, suiting the action to the word, Old Pop brandished his stick and rushed furiously toward them.

By this time curiosity or anxiety had brought all the rest of the party close in the rear, and when the *enfans perdus** precipitately beat a retreat, the entire *corps d'armée*† wisely fell in with the movement, and, laughing and screaming, performed a brilliant "double-quick" across the hills.

In an instant one of the rear-guard, looking back, screamed out:

---

* *Enfans perdus*—lost children, or leaders of the forlorn hope: a military term for a body of men singled out from the main army to lead an assault, enter a breach, or perform other service, attended with uncommon peril.

† *Corps d'armée*—body of the army, or main army.

"There! He's fallen—good for him!"

"Hi! good for him!" echoed nearly all the children, abating their speed not a whit, from sheer love of excitement.

Elsie Brown heard their cry, and, tender-hearted creature that she was, would have paused from sympathy had it been even a bear that had fallen, and not a friendless old man.

"Girls—Will!" she cried; "see! he's hurt. He doesn't get up. Oh, do come back!"

But the panting crowd had by this time nearly forgotten the old man's mishap, and amidst the din of so many voices Elsie's appeal for help was unheard.

Will, who, somehow, during the stampede had been drawn closer and closer to the coquettish Jennie Todd, was quite out of hearing; and when Elsie, tired of calling, turned toward the still prostrate man, none heeded her, or dreamed that she was not foremost among the scamperers.

Without a thought of danger our sweet little Samaritan hurried back to the spot where Old Pop was lying; no stick in his listless hand now.

"Are you hurt?" whispered Elsie, bending over him, but starting back with a shudder as she saw his white lips and the blood trickling down over his furrowed cheek and long gray beard.

There was no answer.

Recovering her self-possession in an instant, the noble-hearted child rushed into the hut for water. Finding none, she seized an old earthen pitcher, lacking both handle and spout, and ran to the stream near by. Around it ice lay in the hollows, holding with a firm clutch the yellow leaves that had fallen there in the soft Indian Summer days. Elsie sprang over them never pausing, as at any other time she would have done, to indulge in those blessed little slides so dear to school-girls. In a moment she was hastening back, with her pitcherful, toward the injured man.

His senses had returned, and he was trying to rise as Elsie approached.

"Ah! you little ragamuffin," he growled, looking drearily at her, "wait until I get at you!—you shall feel my big stick!"

"I am sorry, Sir," said Elsie, never paus-

ing, but hurrying toward him, and even laying her hand upon his shoulder—"I am very sorry you fell, indeed I am. See, here is water; let me bathe your head—you have cut it badly."

"Here! none of your tricks!"—with a savage scowl—"be off with you, or I'll pitch you down the hill!"

Elsie answered, resolutely,

"No, you will not hurt a little girl like me, I am sure. Come into the hut, and when I have bathed your wound and bound up your head then I'll go. It is cold out here, even in the sunshine."

He looked at her fixedly for a moment, and muttered, "It is cold in there too. Go back—go to your home, and let the old man die."

"But you are not going to die!" laughed Elsie, shaking her head at him, though she trembled all over at his strange manner. "You have only a cut upon your temple, and you couldn't die of that, even if you wanted to;" and she began busily to gather the pieces of broken branches that lay scattered on the side of the hill.

"Here! let that wood alone!" cried the old man, now fairly upon his feet, yet looking at her like one in a dream.

"Yes, in a moment," was Elsie's good-natured reply, as she bustled into the hut with her apronful. Old Pop lost not an instant in stumbling in after her.

Ah, little Elsie!—kind little Elsie!—you have dared too far! No: he does not harm her. He has sunk upon a rough bench near the hearth-stone, and watches her movements in silence.

There were a few smouldering embers left. Elsie scraped them together with a stick, heaped first a few dried leaves, then the twigs upon them, and kneeling lower, blew with all her little might into their midst, shutting her eyes very tightly, for the ashes were flying into her face.

Snap! crack!—the wood was in a blaze! Placing two or three larger sticks upon the top, Elsie rose with a solemn, business-like air.

"Ah, you are very pale and faint yet; you must wear my cloak until the room is warm, if it ever can get warm with all these cracks

in the roof"—and she wrapped a coarse but bright garment about his shoulders.

He pushed it uneasily away—no anger in his manner now; no kindness either. "I am not cold; go home."

"Very soon I will," said the child, cheerily, running out for the pitcher of water and breaking its thin film of ice as she came in again, the ruddy gleam of the fire playing upon her face.

"Oh, you haven't any rag here, have you? Well, my apron will do." And she dipped a corner into the water. "Now you must let me wash away that ugly blood."

Either the wound was smarting sorely, or Old Pop was stupefied by his fall, for he made no resistance. Softly and tenderly as snow-flakes fell the touches of Elsie's hands upon that bowed head. "It is not much," she said, when at last the blood was all carefully washed away; "you should hold cold water to the bump—that's what mother always does for me. And now, if I only had a cobweb!"

This humble wish was easily met in the rickety hut, almost by the reaching of her

hand, for spiders had woven there unmolested for many a day. The blood was soon stanched to Elsie's full content.

"Now I'll go," said the child, quietly, as with nimble hands she placed fresh sticks upon the fire. "Do you feel any better, Sir?"

"Hey?" very gruffly.

"You feel better, I hope? Does your head hurt you now, Sir?"

"No; go home."

Elsie moved sadly toward the door, and then—child that she was—a sudden impulse caused her to go back to him.

"Poor old man!" she almost whispered, "your heart has been broken."

His start frightened her. She believed he would strike her on the spot; but he only lifted his head and looked wearily into her face.

"Why, child?"

"Because—because you are so very cross: and you cannot be cheered even in these merry Christmas times. Why, it comes day after to-morrow! You surely will not be the only person in the whole world who does not

keep Christmas?" And Elsie stared at him in innocent dismay.

"Christmas!" echoed Old Pop, gloomily; "I have ?most forgotten what that is."

"Forgotten Christmas! Why, I think if I were to grow twice as old as you are I could never forget *that!* It's the dear Christ's birthday, you know; and every one, even the most miserable, cannot help being happy on that day."

"Happy?" whispered Old Pop under his breath, and looking absently at Elsie as she seated herself at his feet—"Happy? happy?"

"Yes, happy," repeated Elsie, gently. "Shall I tell you all about it?"

The old man nodded, never taking his eyes from hers.

"Why it is Christ's birthday—and was He not a good, a holy child?"

He did not reply; but a gleam, like something from the past, shot across his furrowed face, and Elsie read her answer.

"Oh, He was so pure, so noble! Never did He hold one harsh or wicked thought—mother has told me this often. He could not, you know; never had the slightest

quarrel; never did any thing the least bit wrong, and was always making everybody about him happy—just completely good and wise. Oh! He was a blessed, blessed child I am sure, and his days must have been like sunshine, with none of the dreadful trials that came to Him afterward. You've heard all about it, haven't you?—how they persecuted and tortured Him, and all for no harm He had done whatever."

The old man nodded as, with troubled eyes, he gazed into that tearful, upturned face.

"But it is all over now," resumed Elsie, brightening. "The saints in Heaven are never sad, and surely He is gladdest of all; and whenever His birthday comes, oh! I am certain all His childish thoughts must come back to Him. Then He visits earth as the Christ-child—comes to see all of us little children. We cannot see Him, but I know He comes and He blesses us, and makes us, oh! so happy. Mother says He enters everybody's heart and whispers, 'Love the children for my sake,' and He makes them feel just like giving all the boys and girls a holi-

day, and having lovely green Christmas-trees for them, hung with toys and all kinds of beautiful things; and the rich give to one another and to the poor, and the poor are loving and gentle to each other, for He tells them how He loves them and everybody.

"*Everybody*—child?"

"Yes, I am sure He does," cried Elsie, clasping her hands.

"No, He does not—not always," sighed the old man. "He has not crept into my heart, little girl; I am lonely, lonely."

"Ah, but He *will* though," insisted Elsie, looking brightly into his eyes and shaking her sunny curls against his breast. "He will; it is not too late yet."

The old man shook his head, gazing wistfully into her glowing face.

"Yes, He will; I am sure of it. Why, the wood has nearly burned away. Poor old man! how many, many cold days you must sit here shivering, while we are warm and comfortable down in the village. Why don't you come and live there, and get nice clothes and—"

The hermit glared at her so wildly that,

in very fear, Elsie moved toward the door. Standing outside, she looked in to say,

"Good-by! Be sure to keep that bump wet. May some of us children come soon and gather wood for you?"

"No, no, little girl. Here, wait a moment." And with a half-troubled, half-pleased expression on his worn face, Old Pop picked a large, dry maple leaf from the floor and proceeded to take something from a rough box in the corner of his cabin.

Elsie was only a child, and a girl-child too; who can blame her that she raised on tip-toe with curiosity?

"Here child, take this."

It was a leaf full of coarse maple-sugar. Elsie felt disappointed, scarce knowing why; but no duchess could have received it with truer politness than she.

"Thank you, Sir."

The mute figure, as it stood watching Elsie tripping back over the hills, was different in its aspect from that which two hours before had forbidden her approach. The same form and face, but with no anger in its gesture, no fierceness in its look. The noon-day sun lay

warmly upon the ground, shining through a network of shadows, the pines seemed whispering softly among themselves, and the icicles upon the hemlock branches were melting slowly away.

Turning at last with a long sigh, the old man moved toward his cabin, but instead of entering, walked around it to where his donkey stood in a rough boarded-up shed. The donkey, who was dining on bad hay and dead leaves, had paused to kick awhile at a scraggy heap of fagots behind him. These latter were generally sacred to stormy days; but the hermit seemed anxious not to let Elsie's fire-light die away, and he felt scarcely strong enough to collect wood, as usual, from the hills. Lifting an armful from his store, he moved slowly into the hut.

III.

THE CHRIST-CHILD.

THAT night the moonlight shone through the cracks of the cabin roof, falling in silvery lines across the bed of dry leaves

upon which Old Pop was lying. Poor old man! what terrible anguish possessed his soul? Moan after moan escaped him, and his strained eyes stared into the darkness with all the wildness of delirium.

"O God!" he cried again and again, "is it too late? is it too late? Oh, my girl, my poor lost girl! forgive me. I am broken-hearted, I am all alone!"

How the wind moaned among the pines! The old man had often before shaped whimsical thoughts from their weird whisperings, but now they seemed to respond with almost human anguish. He raised his head and listened. The rush of mingled voices settled into a cry—"Alone! Alone!"

He could hear the words distinctly, though he knew it was but the pines that spoke; yet there was comfort in them for him—a something akin to sympathy in their despairing cry—in its very truthfulness—and he fell asleep listening to their plaintive wail growing fainter and fainter as it floated off into the night: "Alone! Alone!"

Of all the tender, beautiful dreams stealing by myriads into the souls of God's children

on that glorious night, none were more tender, more beautiful, than that sent to the lonely sleeper among the pines. He thought there came to him, as he lay upon his bed, a gentle child radiant with light. In his misery he would have repulsed it; but the little one clung to him so closely, and nestled its head so lovingly upon his bosom, he could not force it away. Resting there softly, it lingered while even, in his dream, he slept a sweet, peaceful slumber, smiling upon him, when he awoke, with an angelic lustre in its loving, human eyes.

"Do not be lonely," said the child; "the world is rich for thee even now. Why not do thy part?"

Clasping the little one closer and closer, while his tears fell upon its golden hair, "What can I do?" he whispered.

"Love us, love all little children," answered the sweet voice. "Bless those that come to thee, make them happier for my sake."

"I will! I will!" he cried, joyfully, and he awoke—to find himself alone in the silent hut, the undried tears still coursing down his cheek. Gleams of gold and crimson were

flashing through the openings of the roof, and the pines were silent in the pure morning air. With an almost boyish leap, the hermit rose from his couch, busy thoughts crowding upon him, long-buried memories springing into a confused life within his heart.

After an hour of busy preparation, during which Old Pop was forced to stand still many times to collect his ideas, a bright fire blazed upon the hearth, lighting the face of the old man as he sat enjoying his very singular bachelor breakfast. Next the donkey was permitted to indulge in his own peculiar repast, turning his head, as he ate, in sheer surprise at the gentle strokes falling upon his lean sides.

"We are going to town to-day, my friend, and you shall have oats for Christmas."

The donkey, notwithstanding his big ears, did not seem to hear the remark, but crunched away as unconcerned as possible.

It was strange to see the old man draw from a dusty box something that had once been a handsome fur-trimmed cloak, faded and moth-eaten now, and throw it with old-time grace about his shoulders; very strange

to mark him, after looking warily from his cabin-door, lift a plank from the broken flooring and take from beneath it a pouch well filled with silver pieces; and stranger still to see him, soon afterward, mounted upon his donkey, a long, empty sack hung across the shabby old saddle, his cloak flapping in the keen morning air, and a smile of something like joy upon his face.

"What did she say?" he muttered to himself as he rode toward the distant city. "Ah, yes, that was it—'Lovely green trees hung with toys and all kinds of beautiful things.'"

Jog-jog went the donkey, shambling on a little more quickly, whenever a stray team or wagon (and there were more of them that morning than usual) passed him on the road. Into the bustling city at last, and straight, in spite of contrary jerks from the seat of government, to the wretched looking grocery where, at long intervals, the hermit's supplies had generally been procured.

"Not here, old friend," pleaded his master, with a gentle application of the stick; "g'long!"

Glad to stop anywhere after this outrage to his better judgment, the donkey obeyed with sullen grace when his rider "pulled up" at a showy store, whose windows had within a day or two blossomed into a very paradise of toys for the Christ-child's sake.

"Here they are," said Old Pop, "'toys and all kinds of beautiful things.'" And, sack in hand, he slid down from his sullen friend, and hastened through the gayly-decked doorway.

The clerks amused at his singular appearance, and won by the sight of the big pouch of silver, were very glad to attend to his demands. The most tempting articles on their shelves were promptly taken down for his inspection. It was a sight worth seeing—the light in Old Pop's eye as, with trembling hands, he dropped toy after toy, tenderly into the sack.

"Give me what the boys like. Now give me something for girls," he repeated over and over again, until he had nearly as much as the donkey could carry. After paying for his treasures, and counting the 'change' two or three times, the old man went into an

adjoining candy-shop. He soon came out chuckling softly to himself. Spying a book-store directly opposite, he hurried across the street, heedless of the staring eyes bent from every quarter upon him. The bookseller, too, stared when he saw an outlandish-looking old man enter his store, and, settling a huge sack upon the counter, accost him with—

"Give me picture-books for the babies—blue pictures, red pictures. 'Hey diddle-diddle, the Cats and the Fiddle'—'Old Woman in a Shoe'—here, put them in this sack; I'll pay for them—'Bean-stalks and Giant-killers'—"

Was Memory taking him back to his own boyhood, or was she busy with later years?

That night—it was Christmas Eve—the Christ-child sought the sleeper again, still with the same holy radiance, the same human love beaming from its eyes.

"I have come to play with thee," said the silvery voice.

The old man felt his infirmities fall away as, with a bounding heart, he sported with

the child, and, in a shower of golden light, chased it round and round the hemlock-tree before his door. When at last he clasped it in his arms the little one nestled in his bosom, saying:

"Thou knowest me now—peace be thine!"

With these sweet words still lingering in his ear the sleeper awoke, a new life flowing in his veins, and the glorious Christmas dawn flooding the eastern sky with splendor.

It was to be a busy day with Old Pop; for he had much to do at home (yes, *home* now, since love hallowed it), and he must be in the village betimes to confer with his only male acquaintance, the schoolmaster.

IV.

THE CHRISTMAS-TREE.

THE schoolmaster entered heartily into the old man's feelings. "I never taught a better set of boys and girls than there are in this village," said he. "There are a few like

William Ripley, of course, who never could get any learning, even if you fed them with ground school-books all their days; but I've two youngsters in my geography class, now, that I really would—"

Old Pop hastened to assure him that he had no doubt of it, but that what he wanted at present was to attend to Christmas matters.

"I've most forgotten about these things," continued the old man, with a dazed look. "It 'pears to me it used to be stockings and chimneys; but the child said 'lovely green trees'—I am sure she did. Help me to make the little ones happy, Mr. Schoolmaster! Tell 'em all to come."

The astonished teacher looked sharply into Old Pop's eye, to see if he were not wild or crazy. He saw a light there, to be sure; but it was not the light of insanity. Grasping the old man's hand, he led him into the low building, where the deserted desks stood speckled with ink-spots, and polished with the touch of restless little elbows.

Soon afterward, a notice, in great dazzling letters, appeared upon the school-house door.

"THE HERMIT OF THE HILLS INVITES HIS FRIENDS THE CHILDREN, ONE AND ALL, TO VISIT HIM TO-DAY, ON THE RINGING OF THE SCHOOL-HOUSE BELL, AT NOON."

Such news as this was not long in flying through the village. The children, whose hearts had danced to the tune of "Merry Christmas" since before daylight, were half wild with expectation.

"Why, what can it mean?" they asked each other, with wondering eyes. "'His *friends*, the children'—why that's the queerest part of it!"

Even the grown persons were filled with astonishment and vague uneasiness. In fact, they would have put their fiat against proceeding in the affair at all, but for the schoolmaster; though how they would have "pacified" the children under a denial, I cannot imagine.

At last the familiar dingdong from the school-house roof—sweeter to the expectant ears than all other Christmas bells—sounded forth its welcome summons. The children,

wrapped in their thick coats and warm shawls, poured forth from every lane in the village—some in laughing groups, some alone, and some with arms lovingly entwined; while the schoolmaster trudged on in their midst, intending to form them into line at the foot of the hermit's hill.

This tremendous feat of drill-sergeantry finally accomplished, the procession commenced its ascent.

"Three cheers for Old Pop!" cried half a dozen voices, as his familiar form, wrapped in the unfamiliar cloak, advanced to meet them. A startled, half-way response was the result. Most of the children were too surprised, too expectant, to take up a new idea suddenly; but when the top was fairly reached, and their host received them with a hearty welcome and extended arms; and when, above all, they saw what had been prepared for them, shout after shout rent the air.

"Oh, what a beautiful tree! Hurrah! Three cheers for Old Pop! Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

Dozens of the frantic little creatures rushed to the door-step, where Old Pop had seated

himself, and threw their arms about his neck. Elsie was foremost among them.

"Poor Old Pop! dear Old Pop!" she whispered, pressing her rosy cheek close to his sunken face; "why, you're crying, and there you've made us all so glad!"

After a moment the old man walked forward, trembling with newly-found happiness.

"Mr. Schoolmaster," said he, "you know the wants of these little creatures better than I do; will you give them each something from the tree in Old Pop's name?"

It was beautiful to see the merry crowd sobered in a moment by their new friend's emotion, and to note the reverence with which they regarded him as he stood there holding Elsie's hand.

As the schoolmaster approached the tree, all eyes were turned toward it with intense interest; and well they might be, for never was Christmas-tree more generously laden. It was the same hemlock that had stood, phantom-like, in the early dawn, like the shadow in the old man's heart. Now, in the pure daylight, every delicate fibre quivered

with its fulness of life even in the frost of mid-winter. From Heaven's own fountain the rich sunshine poured upon it, tipping every branch with golden light. No need of waxen candles there. Glowing and sparkling in the sunlight hung "toys and all kinds of beautiful things" in abundance; not a color of the rainbow but peeped out from the labyrinth of green. Not a branch but was heavy with "things that boys or girls would like;" and I do believe that, with clearer than mortal eyes, all might have seen a sweet image of the Christ-child hovering above the tree.

The silence was broken by the schoolmaster, who, true to his calling, shouted in a brave, class-day tone,

"Take your places! Boys on this side of the open space, girls on the other!"

It is useless to dwell further upon the scene, or to attempt to describe the delight in each young heart when, in the name of Old Pop, the gifts were distributed one by one. Many a hearty "Thank you, Sir!" and round after round of "cheers for Old Pop," rang out in every possible note before the joyous little folk were gone.

As they ran down the hill, laughing, shouting, and talking, in excited groups, about their pretty gifts, and the blessed change in "Mr. Pop," the trembling old man stood near the hemlock, between Elsie and the schoolmaster, watching them until fairly out of sight.

Every movement of the excited children, from the tripping of their feet to the very bobbing of their heads, told of the delight he had caused. I wish he could have heard their words as well; especially those of an old-fashioned pair who, hand in hand, sauntered down the hill, wondering what *could* have wrought such an astonishing change in Old Pop.

"Only think, Johnny," said the younger one of the two, "I kissed him—upon my word I did! And he patted my head so softly, it almost made me cry—"

"Made you cry!" exclaimed her companion, rather scornfully, as he looked up from a survey of his best boots, "What for? You girls cry when you're hurt and cry when you're pleased, as far as I can see: but, if you won't tell anybody, I'll own up that a

great big lump got in my throat when he clasped his hands and looked as if he wanted to say something and couldn't. It seemed to me as if he loved us all in regular earnest. I'm going to work for him every Saturday this winter—that I am. Cracky! look at Will Ripley's skates!"

Will grinned with delight as he held up his treasures—"Strapped, and all complete!" he cried exultingly.

The next moment he was teasing Jennie Todd to let him take "just one bite" off her pair of sugar doves.

"Indeed I shan't do any such thing," pouted Jennie, "they're too beautiful to eat."

"They're meant to eat, anyhow," was Will's ungrammatical reply. "Don't you see their tails are ever so much too long? Just let me shape 'em off for you; I think you might!"

"Yes, you would *shape* them, I warrant you," laughed Jennie, as she bounded off, almost knocking over a little girl who was carrying a pretty doll in the most motherly style.

"Oh, what a lovely doll!" cried Jennie,

by way of atonement; "and you've wished for one such a long time, Fanny!"

"Yes, I'm delighted!" answered Fanny, hugging her present, "and I'm so glad that Elsie Brown has one too. Old Pop handed it to her himself,—it's a splen-did one, bigger even than mine."

Funny shadows were thrown on the frozen ground that morning—shadows that probably had never fallen on the Hermit's hill before—of wooden horses and little carts; and jack-knives and tools and sleds and skates; whips, pop-guns, swords, jumping-jacks and fluttering books—dozens of other things besides; and all dancing and bobbing along among the swift shadows of children, who soon rushed panting into their homes.

V.

A DISCOVERY.

OLD Pop's name fairly rang in the village on that Christmas Day; and nearly every time it was spoken an unuttered blessing went with it.

Meantime the changed old man turned from his long, wistful gaze as the last loiterer disappeared. Elsie and the schoolmaster were still beside him.

"We must go now, my friend," said the latter, extending his hand; "I promised this little girl's mother that I would take her back before sundown."

Elsie clung to Old Pop's cloak.

"Come with us," she urged; "do come; we cannot go and leave you here alone on these cold hills."

"But I am not alone any more, my child," said the old man, gently stroking Elsie's curls as he spoke.

"Oh! I am so glad. I shall love the dear Christ-child more than ever now!" cried

Elsie. "I knew he would come to you on Christmas Eve. But you surely won't stay here all by yourself now that every one will love you?"

"Every one, child!"

"Yes, every one; why not? But what makes you always call me 'child?' My name is Elsie."

The hermit gave a sharp cry, and would have fallen had not the schoolmaster held him with a strong arm.

"Elsie!" he repeated, in a whining voice, as they led him into the warm hut, "I had a little girl called Elsie once; where is she? Oh! she is gone, gone!"

Raising his head, he looked yearningly into the child's face. He shook his head.

"No, no—not like my Elsie—she was taller—her eyes were darker—black hair—she was all I had—but she left me. She did come back once, but I drove her away; and then, then," he continued, raising his voice almost to a scream, "she died; died alone and uncared for; no friend, not one to—"

He stopped short, glaring wildly upon them.

"Oh!" cried Elsie, shuddering, "do not look so. Speak to me—for the dear Christ-child's sake do not look so!"

The schoolmaster bent over him soothingly.

"My friend, God is good; there is some balm for this trouble if you will wait his time."

The old man bowed his head upon Elsie's shoulder, sobbing like a little child.

"Poor Old Pop!" she murmured, patting his arm softly. "There now, you will come; I know you will. Mother will be so good, so kind to you—she is to everybody—though she has never seen you. Say you'll come: it's too lonely for you here."

"Elsie!" exclaimed the schoolmaster, who had walked to the door for an instant, "here is your mother coming up the hill!"

Elsie gave a joyous cry. "Oh! I am so glad. Now you will see mother," she whispered to the old man, in a tone that implied that "seeing mother" was a balm for every earthly ill.

"Your long absence has alarmed her," said the schoolmaster. "Come in," he added,

holding wide the door. "Elsie is here, safe with her friends; forgive me for not taking her to you long ago. But how did you find us?"

"The village boys showed me the way," panted the mother as, flushed with her rapid walk over the hills, she walked up to Elsie, throwing a quick look of curiosity upon the old man as she spoke.

He raised his head suddenly at the voice.

"Elsie!" screamed the mother, "who is this?"

"Who? mother. Why Old Pop that used to chase us children, you know, but he's real good now. I love him ever so m—"

Even while she was speaking, the hermit, after staring fixedly at the comely woman, like one in a puzzled dream, staggered toward her with outstretched hands.

"Elsie!"

"Father!"

Locked in each other's arms, laughing and crying by turns, they could not see the look of wonderment in the child's eyes, or even hear the schoolmaster, who, with lifted head, exclaimed fervently—

"God is good!"

That night father, daughter, and grandchild sat together by a cheerful hearth in the village—Elsie's home, where for the past four months she had lived alone with her mother.

It would require a volume to detail all the circumstances that had caused the long separation and final meeting of father and daughter. It must suffice to say that Old Pop's real name was Robert Hall; that, years ago, his wife had died, soon after the birth of their only child, Elsie, who had grown up a motherless girl, wilful, but warm-hearted and generous. In time she had loved a young man against her father's wishes. Self-willed and reckless, she had married him in spite of all obstacles, and her father had forbidden her to ever enter the old homestead again. Once, after her marriage, she had tried to win his forgiveness, but was repulsed in bitterness.

"Go with him you have chosen," cried the incensed father. "You are my child no more!" This was her last attempt. All the pride of her nature aroused, she went forth into the wide world, never again to enter

the old home where she had passed her happy girlhood. Her husband soon ceased to value the wife whom he knew to be an ungrateful daughter. Indeed, his course changed in a short time from indifference to cruelty. He was a coarse-minded, worthless fellow, and the tavern soon finished what careless early training had begun. He carried his unhappy wife hundreds of miles away into the Western Country, and in a few years he died. Left alone with her infant daughter, the young widow had drifted about, raised above want, yet feeling that not a spot on earth was her rightful home. Those fearful words, "You are my child no more," haunted her night and day—while every hour her heart grew heavier with the love and sense of duty toward her father, that came too late. He had sold his homestead, and not a man or woman in his native village could tell her whither he had flown.

Meanwhile the poor father, with that blindness which sometimes falls upon noble natures, had resolutely closed his heart against his child. When, at last, he tried to learn her fate, all he could gather were

vague accounts tending to show that she had died childless in the far West, in sorrow and in want.

The rest of their story can readily be imagined. Perhaps a stronger Will and a deeper Love than theirs had drawn them, unconsciously, nearer and nearer together. Certain it is, the penitent daughter had said to a kind-hearted neighbor in the Western settlement from which she had moved—

"You ask me why I go away. I do not know any reason, except that a hand seems leading me eastward—I have no settled home on earth now."

VI.

HOME.

"GOOD evening, Mr. Hall," said the schoolmaster, just eight months after Christmas, as he walked into dame Elsie's cozy parlor with the air of a privileged friend—"Why, how well you are looking! and so spruce, too! I declare you are twenty years younger than you were last winter."

"Yes, yes; younger, stronger in every way. There is nothing like happiness for working these changes, my friend," replied the glad-eyed old man, shaking his neighbor's hand warmly while he was speaking. "Ha! ha! and my daughter Elsie too—she does not look very miserable either, if I see aright."

Dame Elsie smiled and blushed; while the schoolmaster answered the mischievous twinkle in the father's eye with—

"No, indeed, Sir; and she never shall be miserable if you and I can help it."

There seemed more to be said upon this point; but as the schoolmaster whispered it rather softly, and did not say it either to us or to our old friend, perhaps it does not concern us.

Grandfather might possibly have fallen into a doze by the open window if a sunny-haired little lassie had not run into the room just then, and taken her accustomed seat upon his footstool.

"Oh, grandfather!" she began, "such a time as the boys had to find him! But they

caught him at last; and where do you think he had strayed to?"

"I'm sure I don't know, my dear; but I felt certain enough of him, with every youngster in the village on the look-out."

"Well, grandfather, you'll never guess. Why, they found him on the top of Hemlock Hill (we children gave it that name), where the dear old hut is, you know. Yes, there he was, browsing away, just as happy as you please."

"You must thank the boys for me, Elsie—God bless them!"

"I will," she answered. "And now, grandfather, tell me something."

"Well, puss, I'll tell you a fine compliment Henry has paid me.

"A compliment!" clapping her hands. "What is it, grandfather?"

"He says I am looking twenty years younger than I did last winter. What do you say to that—hey?"

"I say it's no compliment at all," returned Elsie, shaking her head. "You were just right always."

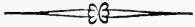
"No, no, not always; not before you

came to me, darling, in my desolation and sinfulness—came to cheer a lonely, cross old man."

Elsie stroked his knee, gently, without replying, and he continued—

"But for that, the crust might never have fallen from my heart—the film from my eyes. What blessed providence, my little girl, brought us together!"

"It was the Christ-child, grandfather," cried Elsie, earnestly; "oh, it was the Christ-child!"



CUSHAMEE;

OR,

THE BOY'S WALK.

CHILDREN, big and little, hearken to the story of Lulu and Thomas Laffer!

In a pleasant room, striped with deepening shade and setting-sunlight, a little girl lately sat talking with two dear friends—her cat and her doll.

She was rocking on a pretty wicker chair; the cat lay at her feet listening.

This was Lulu Laffer.

"Dear little Cushamee—precious little Cushamee," she said, hugging the doll with all her might, "what are you looking at with your big blue eyes?"

"Mam-ma!" cried Cushamee, who was a talking doll.

"Oh! Pussy, did you hear that? She

spoke without my touching the wires at all—at least if I touched them I didn't know it."

Most persons would have declared that Pussy only said, "Mieow!" But Lulu had not been long enough in the world to have her ears dulled; so she heard the rest of the cat's answer quite distinctly.

"That's a fine doll, Lulu; I only wish my kittens could speak as plainly. Put her down here, do, and let me tumble her about awhile."

"No indeed you sha'n't, Pussy. Lie still, and behave youself. Do you want to see me shut her eyes, Pussy?"

Pussy winked, as if to say—"You *can't* do it?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Lulu, "you shall see!"—and the doll's eyes were closed in a twinkling.

"Now go-sleepy, Cushamee—and I'll sing to you—

"By! by!
Never fear—
Mamma's watching
Baby dear."

"Pa-pa," cried the doll, in a whining voice, without opening its eyes.

"Oh!" screamed Lulu, almost throwing Cushamee down, "I *declare* I didn't touch the wire then. Isn't it strange?"

"Nonsense!" answered Pussy, blinking, "when you pat her you move the wires without knowing it. Now don't talk to me any more—I'm sleepy."

Lulu rocked softly and quietly, singing—to no particular tune—

"Cushamee, Cushamee!
Pussy won't speak to me!
Go-sleepy, Cushamee—"

Just then a terrible pair of boots sprang into the room. Lulu's brother Tom was in them. Puss rose slowly up, writing an S in the air with her tail, and looked at Tom with green eyes.

"Ha! ha!" shouted a voice that seemed to come out of the boots; "I've been listening to you, Miss Lulu. Ha! ha! Big thing on dolls,—ha! ha!"

Lulu hugged Cushamee more tightly than ever, and told him to "go away."

"Spiss-s! you great, ugly stone-thrower, you!" hissed the cat (but Tom could not understand her); "go away! spiss-s!" There-

upon Tom treated Pussy to a song—dancing around her as he sang, bowing and scraping at the end of every line—

"A cat came fiddling out of a barn,
With a pair of bagpipes under her arm;
She could sing nothing but fiddle-cum-fee,
The mouse has married the bumble-bee;
Pipe—cat—bee—mouse—
Who'll go quickest out of the house?"

With these last words, came a kick from the boots—Puss cried pitifully as she limped away.

Lulu, hoping to touch Tom's feelings, pulled the wires slyly.

"Mam-ma—Pap-pa," cried the doll, opening its big blue eyes.

Tom sneered.

"Ha! ha! 'Cushamee,' indeed! Call *that* saying 'papa' and 'mamma'—do you? And when the wax balls roll over, you call it 'shutting its eyes'—do you? Talking to the cat, too, like a little goose—Lulu, you're a baby!"

"I'm not a baby!" retorted Lulu, sobbing: "I'm a big girl. You're a baby yourself."

"Yes," pursued Tom, planting himself

before her, in a tantalizing way. "When you see me rocking dolls and talking to cats, I *will* be a baby—I own it. Why don't you go out-doors and play?"

"I have been out playing nearly all day," answered Lulu, wiping her eyes; "and oh, Tommy, what do you think! my walking-doll went alone, all the way down the brick walk, and—"

"There you are again, you naughty child! always talking about dolls—"

"Oh! Tom, that isn't naughty—quarrelling is naughty, and disobedience, and such things, but—"

"I tell you it is!" roared Tom furiously; 'I'll smash all their ugly little heads, if you don't stop it. Pshaw! I did'nt mean to make you cry. Girls *are* babies, anyhow! Before I'd be a girl, I'd—"

"Meow!" suggested Pussy—

"Yes, I'd meow! Ha! ha! that's pretty good! I was going to say—before I'd be a girl, I'd be a—"

"Pap-pa!" squeaked the doll, for Lulu was patting it now, in great agitation.

Tom, in quite a passion, declared the room

was bewitched. Just as he was about to finish his sentence the supper-bell rang. He rushed down stairs, intent on begging for at least six plates of bread and molasses.

Lulu followed, and, after putting Pussy's supper on the hearth, sat down, meekly, beside her brother.

This was Thomas Laffer.

That night he chuckled, as he pulled off his boots. "Ha! ha! I think I've shamed her pretty well out of it by this time. Such nonsense—pooh! If I were king, I'd cut off the head of every doll in the land; or else I'd hang all the girls. They're not much use, anyhow;" and Tom, kicking off his clothes, scampered across the room (he had a way of standing upon his head, and throwing his feet against the wall, just before he jumped into bed); instantly he stopped short, screaming,

"Oh, oh! Come, quick—mo-ther!"

His mother ran in. "What *is* the matter, dear?"

"Oh, ho, boo—hoo! I've run a needle, or something, into my foot!"

True enough, it was a needle. Lulu was

called. She held a light and cried for "poor Tom," while the mother fumbled at the twitching foot.

"There, Tom—it's out!" cried the mother, delighted. "Now go to bed at once; and don't play about the room with bare feet."

"Yes, ma'am," answered Tom, quite subdued.

He lay tossing half the night upon his little cot. Every one else in the house was asleep. Only the distant barking of dogs could be heard. The moon was bright and round; and restless frogs were jumping in the shadows of the garden.

"Pap-pa!" squeaked a voice close by Tom's ear.

He started up—"Who calls?" said he.

"*I* call," answered the voice, "Cushamee. Get up!"

Tom shivered, and strove to wake his mother who slept in the next room; but his voice died every time he tried to scream or utter her name.

"Get up!" repeated the voice, sternly.

Tom tried to lie still, but could not. He

slid slowly out of the bed, not daring to lift his eyes.

"Come with me," said Cushamee.

How dreadfully her feet sounded upon the floor! They creaked, they rattled and clicked, jerking her forward with a strange motion. But they never stopped, and Tom was forced to follow. On they went, out in the hall; down the stairway; into the garden—every blade of grass pricked Tom's bare feet, just as the needle did,—still he could not stop.

At last they paused by the garden brook. In an instant slimy things crawled and sprawled over him from head to foot, spluttering in his ears; trailing over his eyes; sliding up and down his nose, neck, legs, and arms; wriggling and twisting in his hair.

"Oh!" he cried, shuddering, "what are these?"

"Nothing," said Cushamee, rolling her great eyes at him, "but the frogs and harmless creatures you have tortured. Bite off his arms and legs now, my good fellows, and see how he likes it!"

"Murder! murder!" roared Tom. "Oh,

Cushamee, I'll never do it again! Murder! murder! they're killing me!"

"Gluck!" muttered an old toad, near his ear; "bite away, comrades, he hasn't any feeling—it doesn't hurt him a bit; the idea of an animal that can't jump the length of his own body, feeling any pain, is absurd."

"Murder! murder!" screamed Tom.

Cushamee held up her hand. "There, that will do! Jump back into the water, my friends. You have bitten him enough for the present. We have other work to do to-night."

Next she rattled on towards the well. Tom, trembling with fear, ventured to glance at her in the moonlight. She looked just as she did while in Lulu's arms, except that she was larger, whiter, and had a fierce look in her rolling eyes. Her feet were different; but that was because she had on a pair of shoes such as the walking-dolls wear.

On the curb of the well sat two kittens and an old cat.

"Here he is," said Cushamee; "do your duty."

The kittens glared at him, but seemed to have no other life. The old cat sprang upon

his head, and at a command from Cushamee jumped with him into the well. Instantly the two kittens tumbled in, and clung to his neck. Tom struggled in the black water and rose to the surface two or three times; each time the cat and her two kittens pulled him under.

"Don't let him go, children!" hissed the cat; "he drowned you, and now you may show him how it feels; you can't hurt him much, to be sure, for how can an animal who can't see in the dark, and never eats mice, have any feeling?"

"Help!" gasped Tom, the last time he arose. "Help! or I perish."

"Take hold of the well-rope," rattled Cushamee's voice, coldly.

He obeyed, and something drew him upward; the old cat scratching his face all the time as he rose. Faint and dripping, he stood once more upon the ground. Cushamee motioned him to follow her. After a long tramp she halted. The songs of birds filled the air; they came nearer and nearer, and hovered over his head; each bird gave a shrill cry as it saw him.

Tom looked upward, and noticed in the bright moonlight, that each one held a stone between its feet nearly as large as its whole body.

"These are the birds you have frightened and pelted," said Cushamee; "they will show you how stones feel."

"Tu whoo! hoo-whoo!" screeched an old owl, perched near by; "fire away! He can't suffer though, for how can an animal without wings have any feeling?"

Instantly the stones began to rain upon Tom. In vain he bent and wriggled and groaned—every one hit him upon a tender spot. Soon owls, squirrels, and hosts of little creatures joined in the attack.

"Take that!" they hooted and squealed, "and that—and that!"

Bruised, bleeding, half mad with pain, Tom cried in vain for mercy. Not until the birds, growing weary, flew away, one by one, did the storm of stones grow less. Finally, Cushamee rattled forward again, drawing him after her as by some invisible cord.

"Oh, stop!" cried Tom at last; "I cannot walk, the sand is too soft; I am sinking—sinking!"

"Crawl in there," commanded Cushamee, pointing to a hole in the ground.

Tom was forced to obey. He soon found himself in a smoothly finished cavern—not very large; but he was glad enough to sit down there and rest his bruised, aching body.

He could not see Cushamee, but after a moment, he heard her voice saying, "Ants, do your duty; show him how it feels to have one's house trampled down over one's head."

"We know him," buzzed a great chorus; "he has destroyed our cities many a time."

Tom sprang up, but it was too late; the earth was already falling upon him; down came the walls, rumbling, rushing like a sea of gravel; the roof was falling! He gasped, struggled, and tried in vain to call for help. For a while his sufferings were fearful, but Cushamee had not done with him yet. Soon the mountain of sand seemed to roll off his body, and he found himself once more beside the terrible doll.

Scarcely able to walk, he felt compelled to follow her. At last, he sank upon the grass from sheer exhaustion. Clatter, clatter, click, click, came back the feet, and Cushamee's

white face leaned over him. She had grown to a prodigious size, and her eyes rolled and glared at him with savage ferocity.

"Get up!" she shrieked, shaking him with her great wooden arms; "get up! I have not done with you yet."

"I can't," he moaned; "I am almost dead."

"Get up, you little scoundrel!" and she shook him until his very bones seemed to crack; "I'll teach you to call playing with dolls 'naughty.' I'll teach you to laugh at the innocent sport of girls!"

At this, hundreds of bells began to toll mournfully, as for his funeral.

"Mercy, mercy!" he sobbed.

"No mercy for *you!*" yelled Cushamee, tumbling him about as a tiger would a kitten; "no mercy for *you*, you great toad-killing, kitten-drowning, bird-stoning, ant-mashing young villain! Playing with dolls is naughty, is it?—s'-c-a-t—" and, with one tremendous push, she sent him rolling down the hill.

The shock made him open his eyes; he found himself sitting upon the floor in his

night-gown. Biddy had actually pulled him out of bed!

"Get up, you lazy boy!" she cried, in a rage. "If I haven't shuk ye, and rung the bell till the arms is 'most off uv me; and you a-moanin' like every thing, but not a bit would ye stir, till I tumbled ye clane out."

Tom hurriedly put on his clothes, and was surprised to find that he was not black and blue all over.

"Biddy," he asked, "is my back bruised or cut? Is it bleeding?"

"Arrah!" said Biddy, in astonishment, "nary a bit—what's the matter wid ye, anyway?"—and she bustled away to fasten Lulu's dress.

As Tom pulled on his jacket, he sighed softly to himself, "Oh, I'm so glad it was only a dream!"

Lulu has had fine times ever since that morning. Tom is always kind to her, and never thinks of laughing at her dolls. Indeed he always looks very solemn whenever Cushamee says "Pap-pa!"

CAPT. GEORGE, THE DRUMMER-BOY.

A STORY OF THE REBELLION.

I.

INTRODUCING CAPTAIN GEORGE, AND SHOWING HOW HIS COMPANY TREATED AN UNWORTHY MEMBER.

RUB-A-DUB-DUB—rub-a-dub-dub—r-r-r-r—rat-tat, rat-tat—r-r-r—

"Hallo, Jessup! what's that?" exclaimed Recruiting-officer Stearns, pricking up his ears.

"That's Captain George, Sir," replied Jessup, without raising his eyes from the musket-barrel which he was busily polishing—"that's Captain George, sir, a drumming on the fence with a couple of bones."

"Bring him in here," said Officer Stearns.

Jessup went out, whistling, and soon came back, leading a bright-looking lad of about fourteen years, who bowed and blushed as he entered.

"Here's Captain George, Sir."

"Glad to see you, Captain," said Officer Stearns. "Who taught you to drum in that style?"

"Nobody, Sir," replied George, flushing between the fear that he was going to be court-martialled, and the consciousness that he was a free, American citizen, with a right to drum on gate-posts when he pleased.

"Well," ventured Jessup, "I've heard of Nobody doin' most every thing, but I never did hear of his givin' drummin' lessons afore!"

"Silence, Sir," shouted Lieutenant Stearns, who was always waging an undignified war with his subordinate.

Jessup chuckled under his breath, and rubbed the tarnished barrel harder than ever.

"Were you ever drummer to a regiment, George?" pursued the Lieutenant.

"Yes, Sir—no, Sir—that is—I've generally done the drumming for my own company, because the boy that owns the drum don't know how. I have a company, Sir, of about twenty boys, here in the village, that I've been drilling since March—"

"He! he!" laughed Jessup, cautiously;

"good month to drill in—*March*—he! he!" (A fierce look from the Lieutenant changed the laugh to a smothered whistle.)

"Aha! And that is why they call you 'Captain George,' is it?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Well, Captain George, what do you say to leaving your company, and entering into the service of Uncle Sam as a drummer? You're not afraid of bullets—are you?"

George's eyes flashed.

"No, Sir. I'll go to-morrow, if you can get mother's consent. It will be hard to get it, though, for my father fell in the battle of Bull Run;" and a peculiar look settled into the boy's face.

"You are made of the right stuff, I see, and long for a tussle with the rebels, as well as the best of us. You've a father's death to revenge—eh!"

"I've a father's intention to carry out, Sir," answered George, quietly. "The last words I heard him say were, 'What one soldier can do, mother, shall be done toward saving the Union.' I'd like to finish his share of the work, Sir, if I could."

"Bully for you!" cried Jessup, waving the musket over his head.

"Silence!" roared the Lieutenant. "The next time you make any of your outrageous racket in this office, you clear, Sir. Do you hear that?"

Jessup muttered that he "believed he did, as he wasn't particularly deaf."

Just then a party of boys came rushing down the main street, whistling and shouting for their "Captain" in the most un-military style.

"You're a pretty fellow!" cried one of them, at last, thrusting a headful of white hair and a pair of fierce-looking little eyes in at the door of the recruiting-office. "Here we've been looking all over for you, and Sam Tice has got mad, and taken his drum home. If you're going to drill us, come on!"

"Rather an insubordinate company this of yours, I should say, Captain," remarked the Lieutenant, as the white head popped out as suddenly as it had appeared.

George laughed — and, promising officer Stearns that he would be in again "towards evening," he hastened to meet his gallant

army, now playing leap-frog and hop-scotch near by.

"Boys," he cried, "very sorry I can't drill you this morning; I must go home right away."

"What's the matter, Capt'n?" sneered Napoleon Carter, one of the roughest boys of the company. "You haven't torn your clothes or any thing—have you? Maybe you're going down to fight Jeff. Davis. You look as if you were. Give him my compliments, will you? and tell him I hope his side will beat!"

Thereupon, a plucky little fellow, whose father and brother were in the Union army, fell upon the speaker, and threatened to "finish him" if he didn't "take that speech back."

"Take it back!" shouted half a dozen wrathful voices. "We won't have any secessionists here!"

Napoleon managed to free himself from the clutch of his assailant, gasping, as he did so—

"I won't; my folks are all for the South—every one of 'em—and I'll speak my own sentiments where I please."

"No, you sha'n't—not such sentiments as that!" yelled half of the boys.

Napoleon, becoming excited, jumped up on the box of the pump, and shouted—"Hurrah for Jeff. Davis!" with all his might.

This made the boys furious. "We'll Jeff. Davis you!" cried one and all, as they rushed upon him.

In vain Napoleon kicked and struggled; he was in their power at last.

"Now," exclaimed the biggest boy of the party, "we'll see if we can pump a little patriotism into you." And suiting the action to the word, they held "young secesh" under the spout of the old pump, while a few of their number took possession of the handle.

"Hurrah for the Union, Mister Carter, before we count 'three,' or you shall have a sousing," cried the biggest boy.

All joined in the chorus—"ONE!—TWO!"—

"Murder!" screamed Napoleon. "Hurrah for Jeff. Dav—"

"THREE! Give it to him!"—and a heavy stream poured over the shoulders of the gallant secessionist.

A few passers-by halted to call out—

"Hallo! what are you doing there?"

"We are ducking Napoleon Carter," and

swered one of the small boys. "He's been a hurrahing for Jeff. Davis like every thing."

"Pump away, then," called out one of the men—and the boys did pump away with a will.

"Hold up!" cried the biggest boy; "we'll give him one more chance. Now, sir, hurrah for the Union before we count three, or—" Here Napoleon's struggles entirely absorbed the big boy's attention.

The chorus struck up again, while cheers and groans resounded on every side.

"ONE!"

"Hur—rah!" gasped Napoleon, who, half blinded by the water, believed that the entire population of the village had by this time turned out to murder him. "Hur-rah-h for—"

"Two!" roared the boys. "Hurrah for what?"

Coughing, strangling, and crying, poor Napoleon managed to stammer out—

"The Union!"

He was released at once, and every boy struck an attitude of defence—a useless precaution, for Napoleon did not wait to look

about him. Amid the cheers and groans of his conquerors he ran, soaked and dripping, up the village street. History records that he used some pretty hard words as he flew along; but, as they did not relate to Jeff. Davis, and were of no political importance, I need not repeat them here.

II.

THE HOME-GUARD.

MEANTIME, Captain George—who, in his haste and excitement, had not waited to hear Napoleon's taunting words—reached his mother's cottage, and rushed very unceremoniously into her presence.

"Mother!" he panted; and then his courage failed him. He felt brave enough to be a soldier—to fight, and, if need be, to die; but he dared not face the questioning look in his mother's eyes.

Nearly an hour they remained together, and then the boy's voice broke forth in a glad

"Hurrah! God bless you, mother!"

If, tempted by this burst of enthusiasm,

a listener had opened the door, expecting to see a fiery youth waving an American flag over his head, he would have seen only a small boy sobbing in the arms of a mild-faced little woman. Bigger men than Captain George have shed tears as scalding since the war commenced, in the arms of women, smaller, milder-looking than this heroic little mother.

When George spoke again, it was to promise her that she should never have cause to blush for her soldier-boy.

"I won't keep company with any bad fellows, mother, I promise you; I'll think of you all, every hour in the day—that will keep me strait and good if any thing will—and, mother, who knows but I may beat the drum in Richmond, before you see me again? Hurrah!" and George's eyes shone and glistened, in the most remarkable and contradictory way.

Just then the Captain's little brother, Sandy, rushed into the cottage—

"George! mother! where are you?" he cried, bounding up the stair. "Oh, such a jolly time as we've had! We've been sousing Nap. Carter!"

Mrs. Benson raised her hands in horror.

"Sandy, child, what *have* you been up to, now?"

"Nothing wrong, mother," shouted the excited youngster; "you see, Nap. is all for Jeff. Davis, and he went to hurrahing for him, and me and the other boys just showed him a thing or two, that's all."

"The other boys and *I*, Sandy."

"Yes, 'um; the other boys and me just walloped—I mean, we most drowned—"

"Gracious, George! what does the child mean?" cried Mrs. Benson, in dismay.

The story was told at last. "We made him hooray for the Union, I tell *you*, we did!" was the final exclamation of the young rioter.

George laughed.

"I am glad of it," said he; "they'll make old Carter put out the flag yet, mother, or else leave the town, you may depend upon it. He's a rascally secessionist, that's what he is. But Sandy, do you want to hear the news? I'm going to the war—I'm going to be a drummer-boy in earnest!"

"Yes—you—*are!*" drawled Sandy, incredulously.

"I tell you I am. Isn't it so, mother?"

Mrs. Benson nodded her head, sadly.

Sandy struck an attitude—

"Whew! then I'm going too. I'll take a sword and cut off the rebels' heads as fast as they come along!"

"Nonsense, you foolish child!" exclaimed the mother, smiling through her tears.

Captain George laughed, and declared that Lucy would want to go next.

"Go where?" asked a bright eyed young girl, who entered the room at that moment.

"Why, to the war. Sandy, here, talks quite seriously of going."

Lucy looked grave for an instant.

"If I could leave mother, I would rather work in the hospitals than do any thing else, George. And so Master Sandy is resolved upon joining the ranks?" she added with a merry laugh. "A mighty warrior, indeed—seven years old. Why, the rebels would only take you up and kiss you, pet, just as we do!"

This was too much for Sandy's dignity to endure. He flew into a violent passion, stamped his feet, sobbed, and declared that

nothing on earth should hinder him from being a soldier. If George was going, he would go too, in spite of everybody.

"Sandy!" said Mrs. Benson, quietly, "do you wish to be sent to bed before supper?"

"No, ma'am," blubbered Sandy.

"Then stop crying, and behave yourself."

Thereupon Sandy rubbed his eyes about twenty times, upon his jacket-sleeve, and abandoned, for the present, all hope of a military career.

That evening Lucy and George had a long talk together. Lucy was a noble-hearted girl, and had the Union flag, stars and all, folded in a sunny corner of her nature, ready to be unfurled at a moment's notice. It stood a little at half-mast, though, when she put her hand upon her brother's shoulder, and told him that, heart and soul, she was willing to let him go.

"You are young, dear," she said, trying not to cry, "and will have many hardships to endure, but you are the only one we have to send."

"That's so!" answered George, proudly; "and you know, Lucy, I'll have a furlough

now and then. Besides, my pay will be some little help to mother."

"Yes, indeed," sighed Lucy, who, since her father's death had taught in the village school; "it almost breaks my heart to see mother bearing her troubles so patiently. Perhaps my salary will be raised, now that I am eighteen; and that, with your pay, will enable her to have many a luxury that is impossible to her now. You will often write to us, George?"

"Oh, of course I will! You know a drummer always has his desk with him, nothing better than a drum-head to write on. Officer Stearns says he will have me fitted out with a splendid one. You must write, too, Lucy."

"Indeed I shall, darling; very often. And, George, Captain Warner will be a good friend to you, I know. I hope you will be under his influence as much as possible. He promised mother this evening that he would take an active interest in your welfare. It is a grand thing to have one's captain on one's side, you know."

"Certainly," answered George, with rather

a patronizing air, "I understand all that. The captain's a prime fellow too!"

The next day saw George Benson regularly enrolled as drummer-boy in the —th Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers. Captain Warner, of Company A——, belonged to the same regiment. But few men were needed to make their number complete.

Whether the vigorous music of George's drum pealing forth from the entrance of the recruiting office, or the indefatigable exertions of Lieutenant Stearns, awakened the desired amount of military zeal or not, I cannot say. Certain it is, that in less than a fortnight from the day of Napoleon Carter's dismal cheer for the Union, the —th Regiment assembled with flying colors on the village green, all ready to start.

Some of the men had come from a distance, and had been encamped in the neighborhood for weeks. Many were from New Haven, and not a few were native-born, and had learned their A B C's within a stone's throw of the recruiting office. But one and all were surrounded by friends on that occasion.

Captain George's entire company turned

out to do him honor; and his heart glowed with honest joy and pride as their boyish cheers rang upon the air. Napoleon Carter was there, too. He watched his chance, and when no one was looking, stole up to George.

"Good-by, Capt'n," said he, holding out his hand; "I'm sorry you're going, though we haven't been over fond of each other. What's the need, anyhow, of your going down there to be peppered at?"

"THAT'S the need!" answered George, all aglow, as he pointed to a great Thing waving above him, shaking out its folds of red, white, and blue against the summer sky.

"Ahem! Well, it's a good feelin' to have, maybe; but my folks don't talk that way. Good-by, Capt'n!"

"Good-by!"

The houses were deserted. Men, women, and children crowded the grassy streets. Mrs. Benson, Lucy, and Little Sandy stood together under the great elm-tree before their door, straining their eyes for one more glimpse of George.

Like a young hero, he had bidden them all

farewell, with counterfeit gladness in his eye. Like a hero, he had sobbed upon his mother's bosom when, with white lips and tearless eyes, she had given him her blessing. And like a hero, he was marching now with his regiment up the village street—head erect, cheek glowing, heart full of courage, though nearer his throat, it seemed, than usual.

"There he is!" cried Sandy. "My! look at his new drum!"

"God bless him!" was all the mother and daughter could say, as, with brimming eyes, they saw him wave his hat and take one last look at the dear old home.

A clear "Good-by, mother! Good-by, Lucy! Good-by, little Sandy," rang through the din of voices—and George was gone.

III.

NEW DUTIES AND NEW SCENES.

OUR drummer-boy's first letter was post-marked "Washington," and gave many details of his camp life.

"We shall be stationed here for a few weeks," he wrote, "and then, onward! the nearer Richmond the better. I am getting on finely with my drumming, and know all the beats. There's the REVEILLE for calling the soldiers up in the morning. That is a good long one and lasts nearly ten minutes. All of the drummers get together and go beating it from tent to tent. Then there's the TATTOO for the last roll-call in the evening, about nine o'clock, when every man must be in camp to answer to his name. About a quarter of an hour afterward, we have the TAPS (no particular tune) for the men to go to bed. The ROAST-BEEF call is the favorite beat. It calls the men to dinner, and they seem to like the music of it. Then there is the LONG ROLL for giving an alarm when the camp must be wakened unexpectedly, and THE GENERAL to call the troops out to march, and THE ASSEMBLY to muster them to an ordinary parade. Then the beat, TO THE COLOR, which is used in saluting the flag—and THE RECALL and THE CHARGE, and more yet. Nearly all of these are separate beats, or tunes,—some in common time, some quick,

some double-quick,—and there are fifteen of them in all. So you see a drummer-boy has something to do. Every day the Drum-Major (my, how dressed up he is!) takes all of us drummers a short distance away and drills us. The buglers have to be drilled too. The Drum-Major says I am a natural drummer, that he shouldn't wonder if I used to beat the tattoo with my feet on the cradle. He's a queer man, with a hat as big as all out doors, and so grand when he walks, that I have to bite my lips to keep from laughing.

"I have not had to eat raw pork yet! like some of the poor fellows in the war; but I tell you I miss the hominy and fresh eggs, and griddle-cakes, that we have at home. As for cookies, mother, I have almost forgotten how they look. No—I'll take that back. I don't forget a single thing connected with home, and I never will. This first letter is written to both you and Lucy. I promised Sandy he should have all the stamps off my letters, but what he wants them for I cannot imagine. Perhaps he thought they would be rebel stamps. Those army

shoes proved too stiff and heavy. My feet were sore enough before I reached here; but Captain Warner secured me a better fitting pair when we reached Washington. The Captain is a splendid fellow, and talks to me as if I were twenty years old, instead of fourteen. (I shall be fifteen in nine days.) He had his photograph taken in camp last week, and, do you know, I think he sent it to you, Miss Lucy. You can't keep such things a secret from me very long. He made me stand for mine too. I send it in this letter, but it is not very good. The right eye is too small, and my drum looks perfectly enormous; the Captain says, that is because I held it in front of me and brought it out of fokus. That's a new word for me, and if I have not spelt it rightly, you must excuse it. Give Sandy a good shaking for me, all for love, and tell him, I am one of the smallest boys in camp. That will make him open his eyes; for I believe he thinks I am a kind of giant. This is the longest letter I ever wrote in my life. I have had it on hand three days. [Hallo! Miss Lucy, I saw a suspicious looking envelope in the Captain's

hand this morning. It's a pity you cannot disguise your handwriting.] There are some things, mother that we were talking about; you know what I mean; I shall not forget them, I promise you. As this is to three of you, I am

"Your affectionate son,
"Little brother,
"And big brother,
"GEORGE."

The next letter was from Fredericksburg, and was written in good spirits, though Mrs. Benson and Lucy could see that he had passed through more trials than he cared to describe. Then there was a silence of three weeks; and, at last, a short note written in a trembling hand, told them that he had been on the sick list; but would be on his feet again, very soon.

From this point, George's military life commenced in earnest. General Pope took charge of all the forces around Washington. The bulk of his army was concentrated on the Rapidan River, a branch of the Rappahannock, to resist the advance of the rebels

towards Washington; after a while he was forced to fall back fighting a series of battles, the last of which was near the scene of the Battle of Bull Run.

By this time George felt himself to be quite a veteran. He had tested his lithe little body, and had endured hardships from which many a strong man would have shrunk. He had suffered from hunger and thirst; had tramped for hours over rough roads, with feet blistered and bleeding. Once he marched for four days and nights, taking only six hours rest altogether, and eating but three meals in all that time. They were not such meals as you eat, my dear, beef-devouring, pie-demolishing young reader, but simply consisted of one square, dry cracker (called "hard-tack" by the soldiers) and a kettle of wretched coffee, or, perhaps, muddy water.

To city displays and story-books, he soon discovered, belonged the glittering show he had expected to see—the great, regular masses of men, line after line, marching close, with colors flying, music sounding, and grand displays of cavalry and dazzling cannon, adding their charm to the scene. A *real* army, on a

real march, proved to be quite a different affair—grand, indeed, but not in the way that he had supposed.

They were not picture-soldiers, those jaded, weary men, dust-soiled and nearly dust-choked—though they marched on sturdily enough. They were not picture-banners—those war-stained, tattered flags — doubly sacred now that some of the best blood of the nation had been shed in their defence. And those were not picture-horses that, treading fetlock-deep in the dust, dragged gun-carriage, ambulance, and wagon slowly on their toilsome way.

The men, artillery, and stores moved onward in separate bodies, sometimes by different roads, and sometimes in more compact form. Every thing under discipline and careful regulation, yet, to a looker-on, seeming to be in confusion and careless disorder, the army covered a vast tract of country as it journeyed on.

If George could have viewed it passing by in one continuous line of wagons, artillery, ambulances, and troops, he would have seen a column of nearly eighty miles in length.

The wagon trains alone would have made a chain of about twenty-six miles long.

Imposing as this spectacle would have been, he had witnessed far grander sights. He had seen the deadly cannon drawn up to do their work. He had seen how men can fight who fight for a noble cause. He had seen whole regiments rushing as one man upon the enemy, and amid the smoke and din of musketry, the roar of cannon, the rolling of drums (his own as noisy as any), he had seen our flag waving proudly amid the thickest of the fight.

If the pomp of war had grown familiar to him, he was no stranger to its misery. He had looked upon terrible battle-fields, where the dead and dying lay thickly together under the mid-day sun. He had felt the sting of defeat, too,—and that was harder to bear than all.

All his former ideas of warfare were soon proved to be very fanciful. He had heard of men being drawn up in "line of battle" before a fight, and supposed that the "line of battle" meant a wide front of soldiers standing in bodies of many men deep, as in parade.

Instead of that, the modern "line of battle" is only two ranks deep, merely a double line of men.

In ancient times, whole regiments and battalions attacked each other in solid masses. After the adoption of gunpowder, the mode was gradually altered, until at last the double line was established by Napoleon at the battle of Leipsic, in 1813. On that occasion, the wily Emperor, finding that his enemy's forces were stronger than his own, determined to deceive them as to his numbers by showing nearly all his army to them at once.

"Form them in double line!" said he to one of his officers. "Show a broad front to the enemy."

Since that day the double line has been universally adopted. It is the usual mode of combat in our present war; though in great emergencies, and where a heavy sacrifice of life is unavoidable, troops are sometimes led to the attack "in column," as it is called.

If you wish to fully appreciate the advantage of fighting in double line, instead of employing a great solid square of men, just imagine yourself in the front rank of a battle,

with a long string of nervous fellows close behind you, pointing their guns at the enemy. Wouldn't you devoutly hope they would "excuse your back," or, at least, wouldn't you gladly echo Napoleon's order?

George learned, too, that regiments rarely engage in a hand-to-hand fight, such as we see in pictures; and that to shot and shell is consigned the main work of destruction. In actual battle, soldiers seldom cross bayonets with each other; and in a bayonet charge one side or the other almost invariably gives way before the opposing party reaches them. All the strength and bravery a soldier can summon will, in such attacks, hardly enable him to stand still against an approaching bayonet. If it touch him, he will most assuredly be run through. Therefore, he generally becomes the assailant himself, or seeks safety in flight. Once, in a battle between the French and English, the two armies actually crossed bayonets; and in the Crimean war it is said that a Russian force stood still while charged upon by an English regiment.

Generally, in our own experience, the rebels have fled before our bayonets; but in a few

instances, as in the battle of Williamsburg, both sides have had the satisfaction of a hand-to-hand encounter.

IV.

HIRAM J—— AND OTHER FRIENDS.

GEORGE'S "patent desk" did good service among the soldiers. They knew him as the bright, good-natured boy who would often write a "bit of a letter" for them, and then drown their thanks with some wonderful "beat" that none could imitate.

One day George saw a glum-looking drummer-boy sitting apart from his comrades, and busily working over a soiled sheet of paper. He did not appear to be writing, nor yet drawing plans of fortifications—though his movements were very labored and deliberate, and he dipped his pen in a little stone ink-bottle at almost every stroke he made. One thing was evident: the boy seemed very much troubled; and, at last, our little "Cap-

tain" saw a tear trickling down the weather-beaten young face.

Water, in that shape, always acted as a strong magnet to George.

"Can I help you, friend?" said he, approaching him.

The boy pouted for a while, without looking up. Suddenly he raised his head, and thrust the paper at his companion.

"Can you make that out?" he asked, rather sullenly.

After looking at it a few moments in silence, George replied—

"Not very well."

"Can you make out *any* of it?" persisted the boy, anxiously,—"look sharp now."

The "Captain" obeyed orders, asking, innocently,

"Did you intend it to be a letter to anybody?"

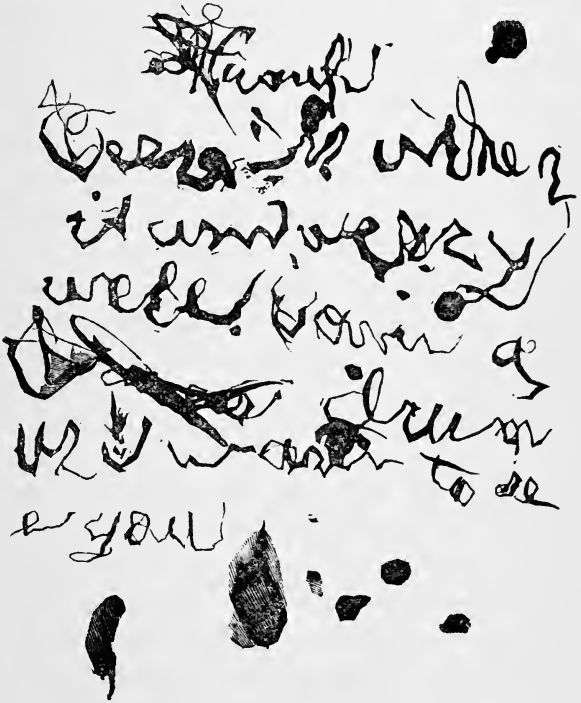
"Of course I did!" was the indignant reply. "You ain't half looked yet."

George turned the paper upside down, but it did not help the matter. Then he looked inquiringly at Jessup; but that young gentleman only thrust his hands in his pockets, and

glowered at the letter, without vouchsafing any remark.

His companion peered into the document again.

It is in existence yet, and here is an exact copy, blots and all.



Do you wonder that the "Captain" was puzzled?

He solved the riddle at last, however, though not until another half angry tear had rolled down his companion's cheek.

"I have it!" he cried.

"You *haint*, though!" exclaimed the other joyfully.

"Yes. It's plain enough now. I will read it to you.

"'CAMP ——.

"'DEAR MOTHER: I am very well. I am a drummer. I want to see you.'"

"Glory! You have got it, certain. But blame it, I've been an hour doin' that, and mother, maybe, can't make out a word after all. Struthers 'll be singin' out for his ink-bottle in a minute, too." And the boy sank disconsolately upon a stone, rubbing his eyes and nose with his jacket-sleeve.

"Can't help it," he sobbed; "I always hated schoolin' worse 'n thunder!"

George leaned over him, saying, cheerily,

"Let me give you a lift, comrade; there's some time to spare before roll-call. I'll write your letter for you."

The wet eyes stared at him in astonishment.

"You won't, though—will you?"

"Yes, I will. I have a good piece of paper here. What is your name? I'm George Benson, of the —th Connecticut."

"Yes, I know you be. I'm Hiram Jessup."

"Jessup!" echoed George. "I know a man of that name."

"You don't though? But I'm mustered under another name—I run away. Dad didn't want me to come. While he was totin' round the country with an old bear named Stearns, gettin' other soldiers, I just up and cleared. It warn't no more'n fair anyhow."

"Isn't that odd? The very Jessup I've met is your father! He was with Stearns in our place for a month or so before I came away."

"'Sakes! That is queer. He didn't say any thing about me—did he? I mean he didn't say any thing about having a son or nothin'? Oh, of course he didn't," said Hiram, eagerly, with rather a sheepish expression.

"Yes, he did."

"No! Well, 'twan't much good about him,

I guess," pursued the boy, striving to conceal his curiosity.

"It wasn't very flattering, if you wish to know the truth. He said he wished *his* boy was more like—like—well, like somebody who is not many miles from you at this instant."

"Humph!" said Hiram, flushing. "That was always his way—always totin' up other boys for me to pattern by!"

"He said, too, that you had 'good stuff in you, if it could only be worked up right.' Those were his very words."

"No! Did he? I didn't know he thought there was the first decent thing about me. I wish I'd bid him 'good-by,' anyhow. 'Twarn't right to run off as I did—I know it warn't;" and Hiram, with something like a sigh, poked harder than ever at a stone which, for the past few moments, he had been trying to pry out of the ground with the toe of his shoe.

"Mother, kind o' comes to my mind," he continued, "at night, or when I'm tired; and that's why I thought I'd get some kind of a letter to her."

(George sat down by his drum, arranged a crumpled sheet of paper, and held out his hand for the pen.)

"I ain't never been much good to her, neither," added Hiram, handing it to him. "You might just put in that I'm sorry for it now; and if you could just put in a message to father about my being willing to try and work up 'that stuff' he talked to you about, I'd like it."

"That I will, Jessup, with all my heart!"

The letter was soon written. After that day, the boys always exchanged a pleasant word when they met; and Hiram Jessup's parents often bent thankfully over a letter from their runaway boy—for the father's time of service was up, and he was now living at home.

"You have no idea, Lucy," wrote George a few weeks afterward, "how the boy improves. He is not one of the hardened kind. I've taught him to write very well in the sand with his drum-stick, and if paper wasn't so scarce, he could begin to practise penmanship in earnest. That boy will make a good man yet, if he lives. Though, if your idea is true

that every man has a good and a bad angel beside him, I should say that his bad angel has had rather the best of it, so far; but the good angel is getting the upper hand now, if I am not mistaken. You need not make any more of those Havelocks;* for the soldiers here don't wear them when they get them. They're used generally to 'wipe up' with round the camp.

"I left my Arithmetic book in school; you had better get it, and put it away, for it will do for Sandy one of these days. Captain Warner (!!!) gave me a chunk of boiled tongue yesterday afternoon. I never tasted any thing more delicious. If I ever get to be an officer, I mean to have jolly times, too. We privates think the officers have every thing, but they deny it. Just think!—I often make my own coffee, and cook my own meat. They're flavored with essence of smoke, I can tell you. We just stick a piece of meat on the end of a bayonet, or a stick, or any thing we can get, and hold it over the fire. Some

* A muslin or linen head-gear sometimes worn by soldiers to protect their throats and shoulders from the sun; so called after General Havelock, an English general, who served in India.

of the men, on a march, are foolish about their rations. Every man has three or five days' rations in his haversack, and sometimes they eat nearly all they have on the first two days, and have to go hungry the rest of the time. Those kind of men think they must eat every time they halt. The dust is terrible here in Virginia. You ought to see the men on a march; their hair and eyebrows are completely loaded with dust, and their faces and necks have a very respectable coating of it. If it were not for our canteens, we would be choked to death, for an army marching raises such clouds that you can hardly see ten feet ahead of you. My canteen holds about two quarts. I think nothing of sleeping out-doors all night now. When we are not under shelter, we are always made to get evergreen boughs, if we can, to sleep on, instead of the other kind. The doctors say it is a great deal healthier.

"Our soldiers sometimes have great fun catching rabbits. The woods are full of them; and whenever the boys start up one, they all rush after it, yelling and screaming. Of course they have no dogs to join the hunt,

and they are not allowed to fire their muskets at them; but they generally kill them with stones. This may seem very cruel to you—and I suppose it is so—but a soldier's time often hangs heavy on his hands. I would not like to trust your wonderful white kitten before the troops, even five minutes before a battle. They would certainly make a rush at it—every man of them.

"Yesterday, just as we were coming off parade, a fox ran across the ground, in front of the camp. Some men, who were not on duty, scampered after him, helter-skelter, and the rest, seeing the fun, pitched down their guns and cartridge-boxes, and joined in the pursuit. Such yells and shouts you never heard! He doubled in all directions, and the chase was kept up half an hour. It was very exciting. Finally, Mr. Fox happened to run right in front of me, when I was resting for a moment, and I knocked him over with a billet of wood, and now I carry his tail on my drum.

"This is another three days' letter. I am very glad that my pay was so welcome to mother. It is too bad that she has to pay

money on her cottage so often, when she owns it herself. In your next letter, please tell me what a mortgage is—I don't exactly understand it. Please don't read this part of my letter to Cousin Stephen, or any of the boys. No use in letting them know all our business affairs."

George might have said: "No use in letting them know that I ask what a mortgage is;" for that was what he felt. In truth, the "Captain" was a little proud; but he had so many good qualities that we can well afford to overlook this one failing.

George had other friends, and those far more to his taste, than young Jessup. Some of the other drummers were fine fellows, and could well appreciate the manly, generous qualities of their young comrade. Among the buglers, too, he soon had staunch friends, and he quite delighted them by saying, one evening, after an engagement with the enemy,

"You buglers ought to have more credit than any men in the army, for your work is the hardest. How you, Smith, could stand there to-day, tooting away, while horses were plunging, and shot whizzing and screaming

around you, I can't see. It was a kind of relief for me to drum, especially when I saw poor Clarence and the Sergeant topple over, and when Henderson's leg was shattered. But I was short of breath as a puffer, and couldn't have blown a note to save the Union."

"Ha! ha!" they laughed. "Smith had no business there, anyhow."

Smith seemed to think differently. He was a brave fellow. I wish I could give his real name, and tell you some of his noble deeds. There is one man in the army who could shake him by the hand, and that is the gallant Frenchman who was in Zangonyi's Regiment during the famous hundred days in Missouri. He was one of the buglers; and just before a dashing charge upon the rebels, Zangonyi ordered him to sound a signal. The Frenchman, instead of obeying, darted off with one of the lieutenants. A few moments afterward he was seen among the cavalry, rushing upon the rebels—his sabre flashing wherever the fight was thickest.

After the battle, the men were drawn into line, and Zangonyi noticed his disobedient

bugler standing by quite unconcernedly, with his bugle slung over his shoulder. Approaching him, the Major said,

"In the midst of the battle you disobeyed my order. You are unworthy to be a member of the guard. I dismiss you!"

The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders, and held out his bugle—the mouth-piece of the instrument was shot away.

"You see zat!" he exclaimed earnestly. "Him mouth vas shoot off. I could not bugle viz my bugle, and so I bugle viz my pistol and sabre."

Zangonyi accepted the explanation, and quietly made up his mind that the Frenchman *was* worthy to be a member of the guard.

V.

GUERRILLAS.

AT the close of the second battle of Bull Run, George's regiment lay in the woods all night. Worn out with fatigue and excitement, he had crawled beneath some bushes,

and fallen into a heavy sleep. When he awoke in the morning, he discovered, to his consternation, that he was alone. His regiment had been drawn off before daylight, and in the hurry of departure, he had been quite forgotten. Only an instant, however, did our plucky little Captain stop to look at the unpleasantness of his position. Seizing his drum, he started manfully on, trusting that he would be able to find his comrades at some point not far distant.

Suddenly his attention was caught by the sound of an approaching horse. The attitude of the rider was suspicious—he almost lay upon his animal's back—and George could not distinguish what uniform he wore. Was it friend or foe? Rebel guerrillas were lurking about, and in all probability this was one of them. While still at some distance, the horse stopped irresolutely. The mysterious rider clutched helplessly at the animal's mane, then, with a groan, fell heavily to the ground. His form was hidden by the underbrush, but our brave drummer-boy had heard enough. Whether the uniform were Union or Rebel, a wounded man was in it, lying helpless in the

forest. George hurried toward the spot. He could see the hand raise a pistol as he approached.

"Don't fire!" he cried. "I am coming to help you!"

The pistol was lowered.

"Good gracious! Captain Warner, is it you? You are wounded!—you are dying!"

"Water, lad! Give me water!"

George shook his canteen. It was not quite empty. In a moment the white lips had drained the last drop.

Oh! Captain, what has happened? Don't you know me?"

The Captain smiled faintly, and held out his hand.

"Yes!" he gasped. "Captain George. Bend closer, lad. I am bearer of dispatches to General Pope. About a mile from here I stopped, as you would have done, to help a wounded rebel. He was screaming for water. I gave him my canteen. He drained it, and —the wretch drew his pistol and fired. I had strength to kill him; but it's all over with me now. Listen! You must take —"

"Oh! Captain, let me run for more water. You can scarcely speak."

"No, lad—there is no time to lose. Is my horse there?"

"Yes, Sir."

"You must take him—here, this pistol, too. There's a knife in my belt—you may need it. Now, George—these papers must be delivered to the General, at all cost. Hide them under your jacket—is it done?"

"Yes, Captain."

"There!—keep on to the right—you will strike the main road. Then on, for your life—by the cedars—past a ravine—across burnt corn-fields; then take the road again, and on, until you see the pickets. Keep close along the road, my boy—look sharp! Here, take off my spurs, and put them on. There's a screw at the side—gently! Can you fix them?"

"Yes—but, Captain, I can't leave you in this way—not until I stop that bleeding!" And George hastily cutting and tearing off part of his jacket, tried to staunch the blood flowing from the wound.

"No! no! Go! It is too late! If you

love me, go at once ; and, George, tell your sister—tell Lucy that I—" He fell back with closed eyes.

"Captain, Captain, speak to me!" screamed George. In vain the poor boy, kneeling beside his friend, called his name again and again. In vain he loosened the blood-stained garments, and blew frantically between those white, parted lips—the Captain could answer him no more!

With a conflict of feeling raging within him, he hastened to where the horse stood quietly grazing. It was a noble, spirited animal, but made no resistance when George sprang into the saddle.

One look upon that dear, motionless form ; one hasty, backward glance at the drum that somehow had become as a part of himself, though he felt that he must leave it now, and he started on his perilous errand.

The main road was reached at last—the cedars were past—the shadows of the ravine were about him, when, at a sudden turn, he found himself surrounded by a party of horsemen. Dirty, ferocious-looking, attired in tattered rebel uniforms, and fully armed, they

were not a pleasant company for a small boy to encounter unexpectedly.

"Hello! youngster, whar yer bound ter?" shouted the foremost man.

"That's my own business," was Captain George's prompt reply, as he jerked the reins, and tried to dash past them.

Two horsemen were at his bridle in an instant.

"Let go, there!" cried George, seizing his revolver.

"Oh! murder!" shouted one of the men in mock terror, as he cocked a clumsy-looking pistol. "Doan't pint that thing this way—please, doan't!"

The speaker fell from his horse in a twinkling—George's bullet had pierced his shoulder.

This rash act doomed our little Captain, even if his fate were not already settled. He soon sat weaponless upon his horse, with a savage rider close on either side. All the others pressed closely about him as they rode along.

"They're guerrillas, sure enough!" said George, under his breath. "Now use your mother-wit, my boy!"

His captors, with the exception of the wounded man, were in quite a condescending mood. The latter, after being lifted upon his horse again, sat with drooping head and scowling eye, muttering threats of vengeance. His companions, however, did not pay much attention to him, but began, in a mocking tone, to question their prisoner.

"Whar were yer goin', little Yank?"

"I was going a-riding," was the saucy answer.

"Ha! ha! Prime stuff—ain't he? And whar did yer come from?"

"Where did I come from!" echoed George, looking confidentially around him. "Why, from no good place, if you want to know. There's not one man or boy belonging to me among the Yankee troops, and they use me like a horse." ("So they do," he added internally, to quiet his conscience; "they feed me, and make me obey orders.")

The guerrillas looked at one another.

"Pshaw!" muttered a deep voice. "He's tryin' ter guy is."

"Look here, youngster," shouted another voice, fiercely, "ef yer try ter come any

game over us, we'll let daylight thru yer scull—do you understand thet?"

"Fetch him up," put in a sharp-looking fellow, in an under tone. "Make him cheer fur Jeff. Davis. Thet'll bring out the Yank—clar es day, ef he's hoaxin'."

"Hooray for Jeff. Davis, young un, ef yer on our side, and no flumuxin'!" commanded the second speaker.

"Come on!" shouted the grim chorus, with oaths and mocking laughter. "Three cheers for Jeff. Davis—hip!"

George's heart beat heavily against the dispatch, and Captain Warner's words rang in his ears—"These papers must be delivered at all cost!" The full, boyish lips were pressed tightly together; but he was trying to conquer himself.

"Hip!" roared the men.

"It's only an idle form," pleaded the dispatch; "say it."

With a poor attempt at careless laughter, George managed to falter out—"Hip—hip—hoo-r-a-r."

"Pooh!" exclaimed a bony guerrilla, "that ain't got ther genu-ine ring ter it, no how.

Here's a testerment that I tuk from that whinin' Union wooman, whar we was runagin' yest'day. Try him on *that*. Here, young un, kiss this ere book fur Jeff. Davis, an' yer may shake hands an' go yer ways, or stay with us—as yer like. Ef yer doan't do it, ye'r Yank ter the backbone; an' we'll make cold meat o' yer in less 'n no time!"

"Ha! ha! Them's it! Thet'll fetch him!" cried several voices.

All this time they had been riding briskly across the country. Now they entered a dense wood, and pulled up their horses.

George's heart fairly thumped against the dispatch as they held the Sacred Book toward him.

"At all costs!" thought he, "but not at *that* cost!"

Captain Warner, his mother, Lucy, and dear little Sandy seemed crowding round him. Pale faces seemed looking pleadingly into his own. He stretched forth his hand imploringly.

"Guy!" cried the guerrilla, thrusting the Book at him. "Ef he ain't goin' ter do it!"

A few others shouted enthusiastically—

"Hi! giv us yer hand, young un!"

"Hurry up!" growled the leader. "We've been a foolin' here too long already. Kiss ther book fur Jeff. Davis, ef yer goin' ter—ef not, say yer prayers!"

A brutal laugh followed this hint.

"Kiss the thing 'fur Jeff,' an' hurry up!" growled two or three.

George sat erect upon his horse—his resolution was made.

"NEVER!" he cried in a loud voice, as he clutched the bridle, and, with all the energy of desperation, drove his spurs into the animal's sides. Before the astonished crowd could collect their faculties, he was tearing out of the wood.

"Get up!" screamed the boy, using his spurs again and again. The horse needed no further urging. Frantic with pain and terror, he dashed along, sending thick clouds of dust into the sultry air.

With fierce yells and imprecations, the Rebels came rushing after him. Soon half a dozen shots were fired in quick succession.

George did not hear them all. After the second shot, he was lying bleeding and mo-

tionless upon the road, and his horse was galloping madly toward the Union lines.

The guerrillas were soon hurrying on in an opposite direction, laughing and swearing together at the "desprit pluck" of the "dead little Yank."

VI.

KIND HEARTS IN ROUGH BODIES.

THE horse told his story in his own peculiar way when he dashed, panting and bleeding, past the Union pickets, into the Union lines.

Some of the soldiers recognized him at once as "that new horse of Captain Warner's."

"Poor fellow!" they sighed; "he's been murdered, most likely;" and then they talked about other matters, or sang, in careless chorus—

> "We'll hang Jeff. Davis on a sour apple-tree,
> As we go marching on!"

Soldiers, in war times, cannot stop to wring their hands over every hero that falls. Do

you remember reading the account of Doctor Livingstone, the traveller; how, when a huge lioness seized him, and his shoulder was yielding beneath her crushing teeth, a dull insensibility came over him? Perhaps God, in his mercy, sends some such dulness to our brave fellows that the horrors of war may not madden them.

Well, the horse told his story to the pickets and the other soldiers; and one of them repeated it to an officer who knew that Captain Warner had recently been appointed aide-de-camp;* and so it ended in a body of men being sent out to search for the missing officer.

Meantime, George, who had recovered his senses, sat by the road-side, wondering what had happened. He was bruised and lame from head to foot; and he had a very peculiar sensation in his left shoulder. His jacket was torn, and soaked with blood; and beneath its folds—though George did not know it—was the track of a guerrilla's bullet.

He tried to stand, but was forced to sit

* An officer employed under a general to convey his orders.

down again. Soon a sickening sensation came over him.

"Perhaps," thought he, closing his eyes, and shuddering, "this is death!" Then home-faces rose before him again, and the dispatch seemed to press against his side like a supporting hand. A soft, tender breeze passed and repassed him—wooing him back to life. He could even hear the birds singing. Perhaps he could stand now. If he could only reach his regiment, and deliver the dispatch, all might yet be well.

He rose slowly to his feet. Faint and bleeding, the poor boy staggered forward a few steps, then felt mechanically for his canteen and haversack. They had been taken from him by the guerrillas! With a remembrance of this loss, came a burning thirst. He glanced uneasily at the woods—there might be a brook or a spring there—but his persecutors might still be lurking in its shadows. No! he would go on, away from that spot, at any rate.

Six hours afterward, he was still plodding painfully onward in the dark, dreading lest he might be going in exactly the wrong direction, when suddenly a voice cried—

"Halt! Who goes there?"

Too much startled, at first, to reply, George managed to stammer out—"FRIEND!" just as an ominous click warned him to be expeditious.

It proved to be a Union picket, who, after a little stern questioning, allowed the wounded boy to pass. Before long, George, sick and weary as he was, stood by a sleepy Orderly, begging to be conducted to one of the staff officers at once.

"Impossible!" yawned the Orderly.

"But I have important business, I tell you."

"Pooh!"

"I am wounded, and I've walked for miles all alone in the dark, to bring something to the General from Captain Warner."

The Orderly opened his eyes at last.

"Captain Warner! That's a likely story. The Capt'n's just been brought in hisself—'most dead."

"'*Most* dead!" echoed George. "Isn't he dead?"

"No, he ain't."

Uttering a cry of joy, the boy fell senseless upon the ground.

"Hello! What's up now?" grunted the Orderly. "Here's another case."

Did you ever see a short, fleshy man, with a border of grizzly whisker around a red, hilly face—a great lumpy nose in the middle of it; a wide mouth under that, with its teeth dark and stained with tobacco—and just as this queer face seemed to be growling and grumbling at its worst, find out that the dumpy little man was in the kindliest humor possible? If so, you have seen a man very much like Orderly Block.

Grumbling and grunting, he threw water upon George's face, and carried him into his own tent. As soon as the boy showed signs of life, he bade him lie quiet, and not fret, and then ran growling and grumbling into his Colonel's quarters, near by.

The dispatch was delivered at last; and George, in spite of pain and anxiety, sank into a deep, refreshing sleep.

He told his story, the next day, to one of the officers, and even had an interview with General Pope, who thanked him heartily for his services, and made him blush like a girl by merely alluding to his coolness and bravery.

Next the surgeon came in.

"How now, my little man," said he, proceeding rather roughly, as George thought, to remove the stiffened jacket, and examine the wound. "What have we here?"

"A guerrilla's compliments, I believe, sir," panted George, trying to laugh.

"Ha! ha! you're not killed yet, I see. Humph! Hurts a little, eh? These bullets are ugly things. It's not much," he added, as he secured the last strip of plaster, "merely a flesh-wound. Is there any thing else?"

"No, sir—only bruises. The horse gave me an ugly tumble, I suspect."

"Just so. It's hardly probable that he knelt, camel-fashion, to let you slide off," said the surgeon, punching the youth from head to foot, in quite a professional manner. "Eh! Hurt you then?" he asked, as his patient drew a quicker breath than usual.

"No, sir, not particularly."

"Well, there are no internal injuries, it seems. All on the surface, my boy. You'll be all right in a day or two."

George gave a long sigh of relief.

"Could I have a drink of water, doctor?"

"Certainly. Here, nurse, just attend to this little chap." And the surgeon walked away.

"Doctor!"

"What now?" halting impatiently.

"May I see Captain Warner, Sir?"

"Captain *who?*"

"Warner, Sir—the officer who was brought in last night."

"Oh, no! You must remain perfectly quiet to-day."

A big tear rolled down George's cheek as the surgeon's portly form vanished from the tent.

"Was it wather ye wanted?" asked a low voice beside him—not a woman's voice—for there were no women nurses in the camp.

This nurse was an Irishman, with a big heart and a very little nose, who was wont to say to his intimate friends—

"If them as made me had divided the faytures ayvin, shure there'd a bin more ter smell wid, and not such a mighty convaynient openin' fur puttin' in the atables."

When George nodded feebly, the kind-hearted Irishman gave him a drink, supporting him, meanwhile, as tenderly as a woman could have done.

A few moments after the patient's head was laid upon the pillow again, he opened his eyes to ask—

"Can *you* tell me any thing about Captain Warner?"

"Faix I can. It was meself held the lanthorn for the docther alongside him, a half hour afther 'tattoo' last night. It was in the side he was hurted."

"Will he get well? Will he ever be able to walk?"

"Faith, it's to his grave he'll be walkin', before long, I'm thinkin'. There's a faver on him since the night."

George moaned.

"Tut, tut, don't be grievin', lad. Kape aisy, now—you've lost a power o' blood, and things luks kind o' dark to ye. Ye'll be another buy the morrow."

With this attempt at consolation, the nurse moved lightly away.

Soon a loud, boyish voice was heard outside the hospital tent.

"Let me in, I say! He's a friend o' mine, and I want to see him!"

The reply was smothered, but very de-

cided—"Go along wid ye; he's ashlape, and can't be disturbed for the likes of ye."

"But he must want to see a fellow. I won't say a single word. I'll just take one squint at him, an' come out. Will that satisfy you, Old Crusty?"

Old Crusty was persuaded more by the earnest tone than by the words of the appeal. He had a boy at home—just George's age.

"Well, ye may take one turn. Be aisy now! Don't ye get spakin' to the buy. It isn't meeself that 'ud kape the lad from seein' his friend, if it's that that's a wantin'."

In an instant Jessup sat on the edge of George's cot, taking a "squint," to his heart's content.

"I know'd it was *you* th' moment I heerd them talkin' about it. Why, man, you look as if all th' blood was washed out of you—clean sweep—"

"Pshaw!" answered George, feebly. "It's nothing. I'll be able to beat the Reveillé with you day after to-morrow."

"Not with *me* you won't, unless they hurry up and give me a drum. Do you know mine was shot clean through in the fight yesterday?

And it started me so, I kind'er flung away my drum-sticks afore I know'd it. (You ain't gettin' tired, are you?) Well, then, seein' it warn't no more use ter me, I jist pitched it down, and caught up a rifle that was layin' there, and popped at a Rebel. But the blamed thing missed fire. Wasn't I sorry, though? I wouldn't mind killin' one of them fellers a bit more'n toad-stickin'!"

"Have you heard any thing about Captain Warner?" asked George.

"I heard just now that he warn't dead yet; that's all. One of the officers was talkin' to another one. Them Rebels are too all-fired mean for any thing. Do you know they stript the Captain, as he laid for dead in the woods, of every thing but his trowsers? They even got his boots. And his trowsers pockets was all turned out. I heerd the officer say, 'if he hadn't given that little chap the dispatch, it would have been a bad bisness.' Who was the little chap, I wonder—not you, was it?"

Jessup's voice had gradually grown from a whisper to quite an audible pitch. It caught the "nurse's" ear. Instantly came a whis-

pered command, accompanied with a look not to be disregarded.

"Be off wid ye!"

Jessup ventured a hearty, almost tender "Good-by, Benson!" and shuffled hastily from the tent.

George sank into a doze, at last, and dreamed that he saw Captain Warner, and asked him what it was that he wished him to say to Lucy, and that the Captain instantly roared, "Jeff. Davis!" and held out a drum for him to kiss.

VII.

SHOWING HOW A GENERAL MADE A FALSE CHARGE.

WHEN it was ascertained, as stated in the dispatch which George brought to General Pope, that the rebels were moving toward Maryland, our forces commenced to fall back in the direction of Washington, so as to cross the Potomac River, and march to meet them. It was a hot, sultry afternoon when the march commenced, and the road leading from

Centreville to Fairfax Court-House, and from there to Alexandria and Washington, soon became crowded with troops, artillery, and wagons.

About five miles from Centreville our troops came into collision with the rear-guard of the enemy, at a place called Chantilly.

When the rebels were discovered, George's regiment was sent forward to skirmish with them. He accompanied it—though his wound was scarcely two days old, and pained him at every motion he made.

Our men were in ambush at first: that is, they all concealed themselves, as well as possible, behind trees and bushes. George sat at the foot of a large oak. Soon the cool little fellow was eating his supper off his drum-head. It was the same old drum that he had left in the forest. It had been overlooked by the guerrillas, and had been brought in on that night with the wounded Captain.

Our men were not quiet long. Suddenly the Rebels, in great numbers, rushed upon them, yelling and firing. Overwhelmed by a vastly superior force, the regiment was compelled to fall back; and George, who wit-

nessed their hasty retreat, was not able to follow them. He had been beating his drum, as well as his bandaged shoulder would allow, during the first excitement of the contest; but now he concluded that the more quietly and modestly he behaved himself, the better chance he would have of remaining unseen by the enemy.

He, therefore, crawled back under the bushes, and had just pulled his drum out of sight when the Rebels rushed by without discovering him.

Following them was one of their own officers on horseback. George was so nearly under the feet of the prancing steed, that to escape from being trodden upon, he quickly drew himself into as small a space as possible. At this movement, the horse gave a spring, nearly throwing the rider, and causing him to drop a sword which he was waving in the air. Without making any attempt to recover his weapon, the Rebel officer bent all his energies upon subduing the fractious animal, now bounding furiously with him out of the wood.

George waited for a few moments; then cautiously looking around him, he seized the

sword, and slinging his drum over his shoulder, dodged in another direction, among the thick underbrush.

After going about half a mile, he came upon some of our own men, and before long was with his regiment again.

He had now time to examine his trophy. It was a superb sword. Its shining blade reflected a funnily-shaped face, grinning with boyish delight; and its richly ornamented handle of pure gold would have caused even an older heart to thump with satisfaction.

"Whew!" thought George; "this is a treasure, indeed! Won't it make Master Sandy open his eyes!"

Just then he spied a name engraved upon the handle. Reading it, he fairly turned pale —it was the name of a Union General, the commander of George's own brigade!

"Then I can't keep it, after all," was the first thought that arose to his mind.

Thought number two whispered—"But it's *mine now!* It was certainly in the hand of a Rebel officer; and I saw him drop it." First thought growing stronger, insisted, "It's the General's sword, never mind who dropped

it." And so Captain George, like a right-minded boy, resolved to deliver the sword to its lawful owner, at the very first opportunity.

The Colonel of the —th Regiment was standing not far away, watching the boy's movements with great interest. Finally he spoke—

"What have you there, Sir?"

"A trophy, Colonel." And George told his story in a few, simple words.

Early the next day, George slung the sword over his shoulder—for he had no scabbard to put it in—and, carrying his drum as usual, was marching at the head of his regiment. He was very pale and weak; but he looked, every inch, a soldier, as he trudged manfully on.

Presently the General and his staff came riding along. While our hero was deciding how he should arrest his commander's attention, and what he ought to say in delivering up his trophy, the General suddenly stopped, and called out—

"Here! you drummer-boy, where did you steal that sword?"

"I did not steal it, Sir," replied George, flushing crimson. "I captured it from a rebel officer yesterday."

"A pretty story that is," said the General. "Here, Orderly, take it away from him, and bring him along to my quarters! I am glad I have at last found the thief who stole my sword!"

George's eyes fairly blazed with indignation.

"I am no thief!" he cried, looking defiance at the approaching Orderly.

It was Orderly Block. A sorrowful look shaded his red face, as with one flourish of his strong arms he removed the sword from the boy's shoulder, and handed it to his commander.

At this point, an officer rode forward and addressed the General, telling him that young Benson was as honest a lad as ever breathed, and that there must be some mistake in the matter.

"No mistake at all!" roared the General, who was not accustomed to being contradicted. "Hang it, Sir! can't I read my own name?"

Colonel R——, who had been in earnest conversation with a brother officer, and had but just noticed the commotion, now came forward.

He soon told his General the story of the sword, precisely as George had related it to him the night before.

"This is the same drummer-boy," he added, "of whose encounter with the guerrillas I lately spoke to you. He cannot have recovered from his wound yet. General Pope himself would vouch for that boy's character, Sir."

"A very singular affair this!" exclaimed the General, somewhat subdued — "Very singular, indeed. I cannot understand it at all—for the sword is certainly mine. I missed it from my tent one morning when we were on the Peninsula."

The Colonel replied with a positive, but respectful—

"Well, Sir, I can affirm that Benson did not steal it. May it not," he added, "have been taken by some other person who was afterward made prisoner, or killed by the Rebels?"

"Ahem! Hardly," was the thoughtful reply.

"Benson never had it in his possession until last night," ventured two or three voices, whose owners now felt that they "must speak, if they died for it."

"All right!" cried the General, "for here I see engraved on the end of the handle something that explains it all." And peering closely at the inscription, he read aloud these words:

Captured at Fair Oaks by Captain Randolph Leslie.

"That proves," he continued, "that the Rebel Captain obtained it at that battle; but how it ever got there is still a mystery. You are cleared, however, my little man (turning to George). Here is five dollars for you as a reward; and I beg your pardon, Sir, for accusing you so hastily."

The tears sprang to George's eyes, as he answered, proudly—

"I forgive you, Sir, with all my heart; but I cannot take money for returning the sword.

I intended to restore it to you at the first opportunity."

"Well, well," said the General, laughing. "If you won't accept any money, we must give you the sword itself. As soon as we get to Washington, I will have a scabbard made for it, and express it wherever you may direct."

George's heart beat joyfully, as with a quiet "Thank you, General," he took his place again at the head of the line.

VIII.

THE BRAVE SOLDIER BOY.

CONCLUSION.

THE army crossed the Potomac, and marched into Maryland, to encounter the enemy. After various preliminary conflicts, in which the Rebels were driven back, they finally made a stand at Sharpsburg, on the range of hills behind Antietam creek. After our army had come up in front of them, and their position had been learned, an attack on their

right was decided upon. The brigade to which George's regiment belonged was ordered for this service. It marched along at the foot of the hill for about two miles; and then, fronting by the left face, commenced to ascend. They had not gone far before the Rebel sharpshooters began to fire. Presently a Rebel battery opened upon them. The shells screamed horribly through the air, and burst over their heads; but still the brave fellows pressed forward up the hill—not yet having had chance to fire a shot. The General, accompanied by his staff, came riding down the line.

"Now, boys!" he shouted, "we must take that battery!"

The men responded with loud hurrahs.

"Forward! Double-quick! Charge!" cried the General. Instantly the line started on a quick run, with which George could scarcely keep up; but he followed as fast as possible, beating his drum and cheering. The Rebel line now opened a terrible fire. It seemed as if a sheet of flame had burst forth from the edge of the woods where they were. The roar of cannon was terrific. More than

a hundred of our noble fellows fell dead or wounded; but still our brigade pressed on. They were just on the point of closing with the Rebels when a battery in the woods, which had not before been seen, opened on the left, and commenced throwing canister-shot—which swept down our men as though a tornado had come upon them!

Not being able to withstand such a terrific fire, the poor fellows wavered, and soon commenced to fall back—slowly at first, but finally getting disordered, and breaking into a run, while the Rebels yelled in derision.

George followed his regiment a short distance; but when "second thoughts" came, he jumped upon a rock, and commenced beating "the charge" on his drum with all his might.

"Come back, men! Come back!" he shouted. "Don't run!—PLEASE don't run!"

Rub-a-dub-dub! "Come back!—come back!"

George made enough noise for a dozen. What did he care for the shot falling around him in every direction. He heard only those mocking yells—saw only that the men with

Right on their side were yielding to temporary Might.

"Come back! Come back!"

Meantime, the General and his officers had succeeded in rallying the men. When they were formed into line again, they looked up and saw George. He was growing hoarse by this time; but nearly every man heard his glad "hurrah!"

With one tremendous cheer they rushed past him, and onward, closer and closer, to the rebel battery.

Just at that moment George felt a peculiar shock, which sent him rolling headlong. He fell upon the ground with his drum at his side. Somebody came running up. The boy felt a strong, tender arm around him.

"Hello, Jessup!" he cried faintly. "Is it you? They've hit me at last!"

Jessup was in great distress. If he loved any one on earth, besides his parents, it was Captain George.

"What shall I do?" he cried. You can't lie here. The rebels will be sweeping down over you in an instant."

"NO!" cried George, raising himself on

his elbow. "They shall not come back. Our men *must* take the battery! Get me up on the rock again, Jessup! Let me drum for them once more!"

It was a difficult undertaking; but George was resolute. Soon, with the aid of Jessup's strong arm, he was sitting upon the rock beating his drum, with all the force he possessed. Once, in his excitement, he even tried to rise, but in vain. His limbs were powerless beneath him.

Our men were now going on gallantly amidst fire and smoke. Soon a tremendous cheer told that they had driven the rebels from their position, and gained the height.

"Hear them!" cried Jessup, who felt his friend suddenly growing heavier.

But George could not hear anything now—he had fainted.

This time George's wound was far more serious. It was in his leg; and when the surgeon dressed it, he shook his head gravely.

"With great care," said he to the Colonel, "we may save the limb; but I fear it will

have to be amputated, in the end. Best plan will be to send the brave little chap home as soon as practicable—he won't be fit for service for many a month to come. Such young boys as that have no business to be in the army, anyhow. They ought all to be treated to a sound spanking as soon as they come, and then sent back to school—where they belong."

The Colonel shrugged his shoulders, and laughed. But when, that very afternoon, he started a subscription for the disabled boy, he knew well enough that he would get a good round sum from the Surgeon.

The General and all the staff-officers entered heartily into the Colonel's plan. In a few hours, no less than one thousand dollars were contributed.

"Take it," said he to George, as soon as our gallant little "Captain" was strong enough to bear the good news. "It is a tribute of respect and esteem from your officers."

George's eyes sparkled.

"Oh! God bless you, Colonel! God bless them all! Why, one thousand dollars will

more than pay off mother's mortgage—now she can own the cottage all herself!"

"To be sure she can!" responded the Colonel, heartily—though he had not the slightest idea to what particular cottage George referred. He knew enough of the boy's history, however, to feel sure that the money would be well applied.

"You see, there's a mortgage on it, Sir," continued George, "of five hundred dollars; and now it can be paid off. But, Colonel, I don't deserve this money!"

The Colonel laughed.

"Why, you are quite a business man already. But never mind your deserts. We may think differently on that subject. Shakspeare says:

> "'Use every man after his desert,
> And who shall 'scape whipping?'

"Ha! ha! So you see you're a pretty lucky little dog, after all. Good-by, my man. The surgeon says you are to be sent home in a fortnight. So get well as soon you can. Good-by!"

Throughout the entire Union camp, not a more earnest prayer ascended to God that night than that which arose from the heart of Captain George.

A few days afterward, he was able to write to Lucy again.

"By the time this reaches you," the letter said, "mother will have received the package from Colonel R——. So I need not tell you *that* good news. I hope my note did not frighten her. It must have been written in queer style, for I was in a great deal of pain at the time—though I did not think it best to say so.

"The doctor says I can be sent home in ten days; and that I shan't be really lame—only just a slight limp that I may possibly outgrow. You must all try not to feel badly about it; because, you see, it might have been so much worse. For my own part, I shall be so glad to get on my feet again that I shan't be very particular. And really, Lucy, I would be willing, for the sake of the Union, to limp all my life. But don't tell Stephen or the boys that I said so, for they would just call it 'blowing.'

"It is very good in you to put off the wedding till I get back. Who knows but I may be able to dance the polka on the grand occasion! Good-by, Lucy! Give a kiss to mother and Sandy, and tell mother that her letters are all under my pillow. Kiss the Cap—, I mean, give my respects to the Captain, and tell him there's a good deal for him to do here when he gets ready to come. How strange it seems! The last time I looked upon him, I thought he would never breathe again—still less that—but I don't want to be sentimental. I can wish you joy, though, if I am only a boy—you dear, good sister Lucy.

"Jessup has turned out to be a splendid fellow. All the soldiers like him. He is rough in his ways, to be sure, but there isn't a better-hearted boy in the regiment. He has improved in some things; but I tell you, Lucy, a camp is not the best place in the world for learning fine manners.

"I am very weak yet, and I have had to rest two or three times while writing this short letter.

"Your affectionate brother,

"GEORGE."

The "wedding" took place early in October. It was a very quiet affair; but the cottage was sunny and pleasant; and, better still, the guests, one and all, were bound together by love and good-will. Lucy and Captain Warner played a very important part in the performances. She looked very bright and happy. He looked happy, too; but he was very pale, because, poor fellow! he had just passed through such a terrible illness. Indeed, if he had not been sent home for care and tender nursing, he probably would never have lived to stand beside Lucy in the pretty cottage.

Captain George was there, too, arrayed in a bran-new suit of clothes—bought especially for the occasion. He was perched upon the sofa, and near him, leaning against it, were a pair of crutches. No one felt very badly about them, however, for George had brought an encouraging letter from his old friend, the surgeon, saying, that the crutches were only temporary affairs in this case; and if his patient behaved himself, and obeyed orders, he might play leap-frog yet with any boy in town.

Mrs. Benson was a proud mother that day, and Sandy was a very happy and delighted little brother, for a box had arrived at noon, by express, addressed, in grand style, to "G. Benson;" and in the box was a superb gold-handled sword.

The sword was in a beautiful new scabbard; and on the scabbard were engraved these words:

"PRESENTED TO

GEORGE BENSON,

THE HONEST AND BRAVE DRUMMER-BOY,

BY HIS GENERAL."

THE GOLDEN GATE.

A LEGEND.

ONCE upon a time there were two little girls living within a quarter of a mile of each other, in an old German city. They were of the same age, and both had golden hair and eyes as blue as the summer's sky. Fleeta's hair hung in glossy curls, and, when she was in a good humor, the blue sky in her eyes fairly sparkled with light. Gretchen's hair, on the contrary, cropped out in short, unequal lengths from under her close-fitting cap, and the blue beneath her lashes was dimmed by suffering and care. Fleeta was rich; she dwelt in a beautiful house, was idolized by her parents, and gratified in every whim. Gretchen was poor, lived alone with her invalid mother in a bare garret, and knew not

the meaning of play. Fleeta had exquisite toys in abundance, and great big dolls with real, flaxen hair, dressed in gay silks, spangled with silver and gold. She was often taken to grand concerts, and many a time the rarest music floated through her father's house. Then she had beautiful clothes, and, for a pet, the loveliest little white dog in the world, which she led by a bright ribbon fastened around its neck. Sometimes the little fellow would wish to lie still, for Fleeta gave it so much cake and sugar that it grew fat and lazy; but she would jerk him and make him follow her, for was he not *her* dog? And if the ribbon choked him, it certainly was his own fault.

Now Gretchen had only a wooden doll which she had picked up in the street. It had no flaxen hair, for the simple reason that its head was off when she found it; and no fine spangled dresses either, for it had come into her possession naked; and naked it always remained, except when, on bitter cold nights, she would press it closely to her, as she lay on her straw in the corner, and wind her scanty covering about its stiff little limbs. *Her*

music, on week-days, came from a strange square box, which she sometimes met with in the street. A sick man with a long beard would turn its handle, and straightway the sounds came pouring out of it. If it happened to be near Fleeta's window, she would shudder at the "horrid noise," and beg her maid to close the sash; but Gretchen would listen to it with parted lips, sure that some blessed spirit was within trying to make itself known. Sometimes the box would be large and high, and in its upper portion she could see stiff little men and women bobbing up and down toward each other, or turning solemnly to the music, in a measured waltz.

On such occasions, Gretchen felt herself to be among the favored of the earth; and when the organ-man had walked away further than she dared follow, she would run up the rickety stairs to describe to her mother all she had heard and seen. Then the poor, worn woman would smile faintly, and for awhile cease to drop tears upon her needle-work.

Gretchen's clothes, unlike Fleeta's, were scanty, and of the coarsest stuffs; and for a pet she had only a poor lame kitten, which

she had rescued from some cruel boys. The kitten, weak and half-starved as it was, needed no bright ribbon to make it follow her; she led it by the cord of kindness, and though poor pussy often had only a soft caress and a gentle word for its supper, it knew well enough at such times that Gretchen's own porringer must be empty also.

Fleeta had troops of friends, and often went to gay parties, where the girls danced gracefully, and swung their beautiful dresses daintily, and felt quite like little women; where the boys bowed like princes, and slipped pretty confections or flowers into the hands of the maidens they liked best; and where brilliant lights and gay music kept the party awake long after their young eyes should have been closed in sleep. On the other hand, Gretchen's friends, alas! were few. Her companions were the children of the street, whose wicked words often made her tremble, though she would sometimes wind her thin arm about some tattered little shoulder, and whisper that it was wicked to swear, and that mother said God wanted everybody to be gentle and good.

Both of the little girls had heard the blessed

lesson which the Son of God taught, and is ever teaching, to the sons of men. There are no "rich" and "poor" in his school, and whether Fleeta was shown in her gilded Bible the words, "Thy will be done," or "Love one another," or Gretchen heard them from her mother's lips, the lesson was the same. The same, yet not the same; for with Fleeta, the words entered no further than her eye or ear, while Gretchen's heart opened to receive them, and they nestled there, and grew until her poor life was glorified by their radiance. They taught her not to murmur at her lot; to take cheerfully the few joys that were given her; to toil patiently; and in hunger and cold, in hardship and suffering, to kiss the Hand which was still steadily leading her onward.

No harsh, unkind word ever fell from Gretchen's lips; and on fair-days, when she stood in the market-place selling, or trying to sell, her mother's knitting and needle-work, her voice was as gentle and cheerful at the close of the day as in its beginning, however wearied she might be.

Sometimes when trudging through the long

streets, with her basket hanging on her arm, or balanced upon her head, she would pause to soothe some poor fretted child, or aid another in carrying a heavy burden, or help a blind man over the crossings, or pick up and restore the fallen fruit of the old woman who sold plums and cabbages at the corner.

But the duty she loved best was aiding her mother, who was often too sick to work, or in helping the poor little lame girl, who lived in the room below, to go down the broken stairway and breathe the air and sunshine of the street. This poor little cripple loved her, and well she might, for Gretchen's cheerful words and gentle arm were the joy of her life, and since that sweet face had lit up the old garret, had not the boys in the street ceased to mock her and call her "little broken-back?"

Yes, Gretchen had friends, after all, besides her mother and the lame girl and the kitten, but cold and hunger and rough usage had made their ways uncouth and distant, and their dingy rags might have soiled Fleeta's beautiful garments had they chanced to brush past her in the street.

Fleeta's days were not spent half as wisely or usefully as Gretchen's. They were often marred either by discontented repinings after pleasures beyond her reach, or by her pride and unkindness of heart.

Even those who loved her most would sometimes shake their heads sadly and say, "Ah! Fleeta, why not be happy and good? Thou hast nothing to make thee otherwise." But the wilful girl would generally make some angry reply, or burst into a passionate fit of crying, and declare that there never was a girl more ill-used or scolded than herself.

Her little brothers and sisters looked in vain to her for amusement or gentle counsel, though in her own selfish way she would play with them as long as *her* will and *her* pleasure were allowed to rule.

She would sometimes, it is true, throw her arms around her mother's neck and kiss her with some show of affection, when a new toy or longed-for pleasure awaited her, though the same mother had perhaps a moment before been grieved by her sulkiness or fits of passion. On Sundays, too, she would drop the silver into the poor-box with her pretty

little fingers in such a dainty way, that her aunt said it would do any one's heart good to see her. But, for all that, the "love one another" had not yet entered her heart.

She was exacting and thoughtless toward all her playmates; and as for *poor* children, she had no pity nor kindness for them at all. To her eyes they were all only ragged or dirty or vulgar; and she quite forgot that human hearts beat as strongly in their little human bodies as in her own. Money was to her the great good of life; and she was proud of her wealth, not because it gave her the means of making others better or happier, but because it made her, as she foolishly supposed, of more consequence than the poorer people about her.

Fleeta's maid was a second cousin to Gretchen's mother, and she would sometimes find her way to the garret where her kinswoman lived, and startle her listeners with glowing accounts of all that was going on at her master's house. She would tell of the splendid balls and feasts held there, how the ladies and gentlemen sparkled with diamonds, and how the room seemed alive more

with velvets and satins and flowers and jewels and perfumes than with human beings, and how lovely Miss Fleeta looked in her ball-dress—"just like a cloud of lace and gauze;" and how, above all, the little girl had been "fairly loaded with gifts on Christmas Eve, and the other children too—though Fleeta had the most."

"If you had seen the tree, Katrine," she said one day to Gretchen's mother, "you'd have remembered it all your days. There the grand company all stood, Miss Fleeta first, and I holding her by the hand so as to make her wait till the Christ-child, you know, Gretchen, lit the candles and rang the little bell. At last we heard it ring, and the doors opened and the company all crowded in, Miss Fleeta springing away from me in an instant, leaving me there alone among all the fine ladies—"

"But the tree?" interrupted Gretchen breathlessly.

"Oh! it was beautiful; all lit up with thousands of little lights and sparkling with colored glass balls. Every branch was hung full of the loveliest things, and on the top of

it was a tiny angel in gold and silver, with such pretty wings—"

"A *real* angel, Lena?"

"No, no; and then down in the moss under the tree there was an image of the Christ-child made of wax, but just for all the world like a beautiful baby, with lambs standing 'round him."

Gretchen listened with sparkling eyes and head bent eagerly forward as Lena talked on.

"And oh! you should have seen the things—such heaps of presents, all the tables about were covered! Miss Fleeta had rings and bracelets and chains and books and dolls and a play-house with little mirrors in it, full of the loveliest furniture, and little doll-ladies standing in it, and sitting as natural as life. And then there were china cups and saucers, and a little gold goblet and pitcher, and a big box full of wild animals that would have stood your hair on end to see them—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Gretchen, starting, "were they alive?"

"No, no, you foolish little one," said the maid, "they were not a bit bigger than your kitten there. And near the tree there was a

new chair all of carved wood and red velvet, just big enough for Miss Fleeta; and a dancing man worked by machinery, and dozens of other things."

"And what did the other children get?" asked Gretchen, delighted.

"Oh, I haven't time to tell you half; there were drums and trumpets and whips and shops and tools and drawing-books and violins and villages, for the boys; and horses on rockers as big as live ponies, and lots of things for all, down to the baby. Even we servants got something, and I've a present for you, too, Gretchen," added the maid, quite out of breath, as she drew something from her pocket.

It was a pretty blue-and-gilt bonbon box filled with candies.

"Oh! Lena, thank you! thank you!" cried Gretchen, as she eagerly received her treasure. "Oh! see, mother, how beautiful! Did the Christ-child send it to me, Lena?"

Lena hesitated a moment, and then said, "Yes, certainly he did, as much as to any of the other children."

Gretchen insisted upon her mother and Lena

tasting some of her candies, and then ran down the stairs in great glee to give a share to the little lame girl.

"Bless her," said Lena to the mother, "she hasn't any more envy than a baby. Now, do you know, with all these things, Miss Fleeta cried herself to sleep on Christmas Eve because her sister's new wax doll opened its eyes the widest? I declare, Katrine, my back aches from sitting so long on this box. It's a shame you're not able to have things more comfortable, and you so sickly, too. But Hans and I are going to get married next month, and after that, you know, you are always to have a home with us, for didn't your mother nurse mine in her last long sickness, and close her poor eyes, may God bless her soul!"

At this moment Gretchen came running up the stairs.

"Oh, Lena, there was a beautiful sugar strawberry in the box, and I gave it to Bertha. You ought to have heard her laugh. Oh! how good the Christ-child is! Do you know I dreamed, one night, that he came to see me, and put his arms around my neck, and promised to bring me something on Christmas Eve;

and when I woke up, there pussy had been lying all the time close by my head."

"That was a fine dream," said Lena, "but, bless me! how late it is growing, and I have to curl Miss Fleeta's hair yet for supper. Good-by!"

And this was the way that the two children, Gretchen and Fleeta, lived and felt in the great German city. They seldom met each other, and when they did, Fleeta would turn her head haughtily away from "the forlorn, ragged little thing," and Gretchen would look eagerly after her in simple admiration of the beautiful little lady with the golden curls.

The time came soon, however, when the two girls could no longer pass each other in the busy street. It so happened that a few weeks after Christmas, a fearful disease appeared among the children of the town; and on the self-same day two little graves were dug; one in a beautiful cemetery where the tall, white monuments glistened in the sunlight, and the other where plain headstones and grass-grown mounds were all that could be seen.

In one grave was placed a rosewood coffin,

garlanded with flowers and bound with massive silver. It was borne to the spot by a procession of young girls clothed in white, followed by grand carriages filled with weeping relatives and friends, who gathered mournfully around while the solemn funeral rites were performed.

Into the other grave a plain wooden coffin was lowered, and the hurried burial service pronounced over it was broken by the sobs of the sole mourners—a pale careworn woman, accompanied by three or four frightened-looking children, barefooted and capless, and a lame girl holding a kitten in her arms.

Even then the two children, Gretchen and Fleeta, were walking side by side up the lanes of Paradise. The cruel disease was forgotten; and, free from languor or suffering, they trod the pearly path, with eyes eagerly fixed upon what seemed a cloud of glorious light in the distance. At length, as they drew nearer, they found themselves in front of a golden gate, around which a rosy light played and trembled, while from within soft music seemed pressing against it, causing it to vibrate in sweet accord.

Gretchen drew back awed and bewildered by the flood of dazzling light which streamed upon her; but Fleeta approached boldly, casting a look of scorn upon Gretchen as she passed. What was the gate to Fleeta's eyes, after all, but gold; and had she not always been used to gold? Music, too, had ever been as her daily food, though this music indeed disturbed her strangely. Surely this gate was for the rich, the honored of earth; and was she not one of them? So she knocked confidently; while poor Gretchen, feeling unworthy, drew timidly aside, though the golden light streamed upon her whichever way she turned.

"Stand back, little beggar-girl!" said Fleeta; "do you not see that the gate can open only for such as I?" and she knocked again more impatiently than before.

At last, as though the music could be contained within no longer, the golden portal opened, and a shining angel stood before them.

Fleeta would have pushed in past him, but, with a firm hand, he gently forced her back.

"Why do you knock at this gate?" he asked; "only the truly rich can enter here."

"Let me go in, then," replied the girl, "*I am rich!*" and she cast back a look of triumph upon poor Gretchen.

"Well," returned the angel, "if you are rich you shall enter; but where are your riches?"

"My riches!" exclaimed Fleeta, "why, they are down in the world; father and mother have them now; but they used to be mine."

"But," returned the angel, pityingly, "what have you brought with you? I must see your treasures before you can enter."

Fleeta hung her head.

Then the angel turned to the other child, and said kindly,

"Why do you not arise and enter?"

"Alas!" replied Gretchen, "I have no treasures. I have always been very poor, so I cannot enter the gate of the rich."

"Poor!" exclaimed the angel, "where is your poverty?"

"I left it upon the earth," said Gretchen, brightening with a sudden hope.

"And have you brought nothing with you?"

"Nothing, nothing at all," rejoined the child sadly; "but," she added earnestly, "I am willing to wait, for I know that the dear Lord Jesus will yet send his angel for me."

"He *has* sent his angel," said the gate-keeper, "and this is the portal through which you are to enter; for your soul, though you know it not, is laden with treasures;" and, with these words, he gently drew the child in and closed the gate.

And so the poor little "rich girl," who had misspent her earthly blessings and brought no treasures, was forced to remain outside.

PO-NO-KAH.

AN INDIAN TALE.

I.

THE HEDDEN FAMILY.

WE who live in comfortable homes, secure from every invader more formidable than mice, flies, and mosquitoes, find it difficult to conceive the trials that beset the hardy pioneers who settled our Western country during the last century.

In those days, and for many a year afterward, hostile Indians swarmed in every direction. Often-times did the settler, after cheerfully leaving home in the morning for a day's hunt, return at night to find his family murdered or captured, and his cabin a mass of smoking ruins. Only in the comparatively crowded settlements, where, as in every thing

else, "union proved strength," could the white inhabitants hope for security—though bought at the price of constant vigilance and precaution.

In one of these settlements, where neatly whitewashed cabins, and rougher log huts, clustered rather thickly on the banks of a bend in the Ohio River, dwelt a man named Hedden, with his wife and three children. His farm stretched farther into the wilderness than his neighbors', for his had been one of the first cabins built there, and his axe, ringing merrily through the long days, had hewed down an opening in the forest, afterward famous in that locality as "Neighbor Hedden's Clearing." Here he planted and gathered his crops year after year; and in spite of annoyances from the Indians, who robbed his fields, and from bears, who sometimes visited his farm stock, his family had lived in security so long that, as the settlement grew, his wife sang at her work, and his little ones shouted at their play as merrily as though New York or Boston were within a stone's throw. To be sure, the children were bidden to never stray far from home, especially

at nightfall; and the crack of rifles ringing now and then through the forest p ıled their cheeks for an instant, as the thought of some shaggy bear, furious in his death agony, crossed their minds.

Sometimes, too, the children would whisper together of the fate of poor little Annie Green, who, a few years ago, had been found scalped in the forest; or their mother would tell them, with pale lips, of the dreadful night when father and neighbor Freeman encountered two painted Indians near the cabin, and left them lying dead upon the stubble-ground. The tomahawk of the Indian their father killed was still hanging upon the cabin wall, and the children could never look at it without a shudder.

But all this had happened twelve years ago—before Bessie, the oldest girl, was born—and seemed to the children's minds like a bit of ancient history—almost as far off as the exploits of Hannibal or Julius Cæsar appear to us. So, as I have said, the children of the settlement shouted joyously at their play, or ran in merry groups to the rough log hut, called "The School-House,"

little dreaming of the cares and anxieties of their elders.

Bessie Hedden was a merry-hearted creature, and so pretty that, had she been an Indian maiden, she would have been called "Wild Rose," or "Singing Bird," or "Water Lily," or some such name. As it was, half the village called her "Sunshine," for her joyous spirit could light up the darkest corner. She was faithful at school, affectionate and industrious at home, and joyous and honorable among her playmates. What wonder, then, that everybody loved her, or that she was happiest among the happy? Her brother Rudolph was much younger than she—a rosy-cheeked, strong-armed little urchin of seven years; and Kitty, the last and least of the Heddens, was but three years of age at the date at which my story opens.

There was one other individual belonging to the family circle, larger even than Bessie, stronger and saucier even than Rudolph, and yet younger than Kitty—who ate more than father and mother together—had no hands, yet once did, as all admitted, the best day's work ever performed by any member

of the family. This individual's name was Bouncer, and he had a way of walking about on all-fours, and barking—probably in consequence of his having been created a dog.

Bouncer loved all the children dearly; but, noble-hearted fellow that he was, he loved the weakest one best; and, therefore, little Kitty was never without a friend and protector. Ever since a certain day in the Summer, when she had fallen into the stream, and been carried home insensible by Bouncer, Kitty had loved the huge mastiff dearly, and nightly added to her simple prayer, "Please, God, bless dear Bouncer, too!"

And Bouncer *was* blessed beyond most dogs. Gentle as a baby when Kitty's arm was about his neck, he was fierce as a lion when fierceness was required. His great white teeth were a terror to evil doers, and his bark in the dead of night would make venturesome bears sneak back into the forest like kittens.

Often would Mrs. Hedden say to her neighbors, that with "husband's rifle and Bouncer's teeth, she felt that she lived in a fortress. As for the children," she would add,

laughingly, "I scarcely ever feel any anxiety about them, when I know that Bouncer has joined their little expeditions. He is a regiment in himself."

II.

EXPLORING THE STREAM.

ONE of the favorite holiday resorts of Bessie and Rudolph was a lovely spot in the forest, not a quarter of a mile from the house.

Shaded by giant oaks, whose gnarled roots lay like serpents, half hidden in the moss, ran a streamlet, covered with sunny speckles, where parted leaves admitted the sunshine. Flowers grew along its banks in wild profusion, and it held its wayward course with many a rippling fall and fantastic turn, until it was lost in the shades of the forest.

"Where does it go to, I wonder?" the children would often say to each other, longing for permission to follow its windings farther than the limits prescribed by their parents would allow.

"To the ocean, of course," Rudolph would answer, triumphantly; while Bessie, looking at its golden ripple, and listening to its musical song, half believed that it carried its burden of sparkling jewels to Fairyland itself.

Sometimes, when Bouncer was with them, they lingered so long by the mysterious streamlet, sending chip boats adrift upon its surface, or trying to adjust troublesome little water-wheels under some of its tiny cascades, that Mrs. Hedden would blow the big horn as a signal for their return; and as they ran home, playing with Bouncer by the way, or scolding him for shaking his wet sides under their very faces, they would inwardly resolve to coax father to take them up the stream on the very first pleasant Saturday.

Accordingly, on one bright Friday in June, as Bessie and Rudolph returned from school together, they ran toward their father, who was working in the lot.

"Father! father!" they shouted, "will you take us down the stream to-morrow?—we want to see where it goes to."

"Goes to?" laughed back the father.

"Why, it goes to the moon; didn't Kitty say so last night?"

"Now, father," returned Bessie, pouting just a little, "you *know* we don't believe that. We want you so much to take us in the boat; it don't leak at all now—oh! do." And both children fairly jumped up and down in their excitement.

Mr. Hedden smiled; but, after wiping his forehead with a red and yellow handkerchief, went on with his work without returning any answer.

The children, looking wistfully at him a moment, turned toward the house, wondering between each other "what father meant to do about it."

That evening, at the supper-table (where they didn't have napkin rings or silver salt-cellars, I can assure you), Mr. Hedden asked his wife whether Tom Hennessy was back from "up river" yet?

"I think he came home yesterday," returned his wife. "Why do you ask?"

"Because I thought, as to-morrow'll be a holiday, I'd get him to take the youngsters down the stream in the scow."

"Oh! husband," rejoined Mrs. Hedden, looking up anxiously, "do you think it's safe?"

"Why not, Betsey?—the scow don't leak; and even if it did, the water isn't above Tom's waist anywhere."

"I don't mean any thing of that kind," pursued the wife, smiling in spite of herself at the joyful faces of the young folks. "I—I mean the Indians."

"Oh, never fear about them—I'll give Tom every necessary caution," was the answer. "They won't be gone more than two hours altogether; and, to my mind, there wouldn't be the slightest danger in letting even little Kitty join the party."

"Oh! tanky, Poppy, tanky!" shouted Kitty, clapping her chubby hands in great glee. Every one at the table laughed heartily at her unexpected response.

Bright and early the next morning the children stood in the door-way, eagerly looking out for Tom. Big Tom, the village boys called him; and well they might, for he was a staunch, burly fellow, who looked as if he could crush an Indian in each

hand—not that he had ever had an opportunity to perform that remarkable feat, for Tom Hennessy had but recently arrived from a large town in the East; but he *looked* as if he could do it; and, therefore, had credit for any amount of prowess and strength.

After sundry directions given by Mr. Hedden to Tom, and a command from their mother for the little folks to be home at dinner-time, our party set forth amid shouts of laughter and merriment. Kitty was there in all her glory, for, after what "Poppy" had said, she had insisted upon joining the party. Even Bouncer, in spite of many a "Go back, sir!" "Call him, mother!" had quietly insinuated himself into the midst of the group, and neither threats nor coaxing could force him away.

It was a glorious day; and, as they neared the stream, it seemed to sparkle into joyous welcome at their approach.

Soon, comfortably seated in the scow, they were pushed and rowed laboriously along by the good-natured Tom, while Bouncer panted along the bank, or dashed into the water, splashing the boat in fine style. In passing

the accustomed "limits," the delight of the children knew no bounds.

"Now for it!" cried Bessie, clapping her hands. "Now we shall find out where the stream goes to."

And so they sailed along, following its graceful windings—sometimes touching bottom, and sometimes skimming smoothly over deep water, where Kitty could no longer clutch for the tall, bright grass that in some places had reared itself above the surface. Often Big Tom would sing out, "Lie low!" as some great bough, hanging over the stream, seemed stretching out its arms to catch them; and often they were nearly checked in their course by a fallen trunk, or the shallowness of the water. At last, upon reaching a very troublesome spot, Tom cried good-naturedly—

"Now, youngsters, you must all get out while I turn the scow over this 'ere log, and then you can jump in again on t'other side."

With merry shouts they leaped out, one after the other, Tom holding Kitty in his arms, as he stood knee-deep in the water.

"What is the matter with Bouncer?" cried Bessie.

There was no time for a reply. Looking up, the frightened party saw three hideous faces peering at them over the bushes!

"The Indians! the Indians!" screamed Bessie.

Springing to the shore, and catching Rudolph with one arm, while he held Kitty tightly in the other, Tom Hennessy dashed madly into the forest, calling upon Bessie to follow. Poor Bessie! What could she do? With a thrill of horror she saw two armed savages bounding after them with fearful yells, while a third, with upraised club, and tomahawk and scalping-knife in his belt, was rushing like a fiend toward her.

Uttering one long piercing scream, the poor girl knelt upon the sward to await her doom. A prolonged roar of fury caused her to raise her head. Bouncer, brave, noble Bouncer, and the Indian had fallen together in a deadly struggle! Now was her time! With new energy and hope she sprang to her feet, and darted through the forest, rending the air with cries for help, and unconscious of whither she was flying.

"Rudolph! Kitty!" she cried, frantic-

ally. "God in heaven help us! Oh! help us!"

III.

WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

IT was nearly dinner-time in the Hedden cottage. Farmer Hedden sat in the doorway, equipped in his hunting dress—for he generally spent his Saturday afternoons in the forest; and it was only at his wife's solicitation that he had consented to wait and "take a bite of dinner" before starting. Every now and then he raised his head from the almanac, over which he was bending, to listen to the whirr of his wife's spinning-wheel, and her merry song issuing from the cottage, or to cast an impatient glance in the direction of the streamlet.

Within, all was neatness and cheerfulness; the clean deal table was arranged with its row of yellow platters and shining pewter-mugs—even the stools were standing round it, ready for the hungry household that usually assembled at noon, eager for dinner.

"Father's" and "mother's" places were at either end of the table; Rudolph's and Kitty's at one side (Kitty had a high chair made by "father" out of young oak branches); Bessie's opposite; and, beside hers, the prettiest plate and the brightest mug for Big Tom—for, of course, he must be asked to stay.

Every thing was ready. Far back in the open fire-place the fagots were blazing and snapping. Hanging above them, the great iron pot threw forth a circle of noisy steam around the loose lid, while the potatoes within were in a high state of commotion—little ones tumbling pell-mell over big ones, and big ones rocking mournfully backward and forward in the boiling water as though they felt sure their end was approaching.

"Blow the horn again, John," called out Mrs. Hedden, as she cut another slice from the big brown loaf that had been rapidly growing less under her shining knife. "Ha! ha! they can't help hearing *that*," she laughed, as her obedient husband blew a blast even louder than usual.

After waiting a moment, Mr. Hedden came

in, throwing the almanac on a low wooden settee as he entered.

"No use waiting any longer, wifey—let's sit by. I don't see a sign of the youngsters; though it did seem to me I heard some of 'em screaming and laughing in the distance a bit ago. 'Twon't do, though," he continued, shaking his head; "we must make the crazy little cubs mind the horn closer. Play's play, and all well enough in its way, but you must teach children regularity from the very outset, or they'll never be good for much."

"That's true enough, John," answered his wife, as she "dished" some of the steaming potatoes—leaving a goodly number in the pot for the little folk—"that's true enough; but you know this is a day of extra frolic for the children. They're having such fun, likely, they've no notion how the time is passing. As for the horn, who could expect mortal ears to hear *that*, with Bessie and Big Tom laughing and singing, and Rudolph screaming with fun—as I know he is; and little Kit, bless her! just frantic with delight; I think I can see them now, the merry madcaps!"

Ah! happy, unconscious mother, if you

could see them now—if their wails of anguish could but reach your ears!

Finally, neighbor Hedden arose, shoving back his stool on the sanded floor.

"Well, well, wifey, you're right enough, no doubt; but I tell you it ain't best to be too easy with youngsters, though ours are the best going, if I *do* say it. A good trouncing all around, when they come in, wouldn't be a bit too much for them for being so late;" and, half in fun, half in earnest, he shook his head rather fiercely at his wife, and stalked out of the cottage.

Presently she laughed outright to hear the loud, impatient tones issuing from the great tin horn.

"That'll fetch them, I reckon," said neighbor Hedden, showing a smiling face at the window.

As another hour passed away, the songs grew fewer and fainter upon the mother's lips—at first from vexation, and, finally, from weariness and a vague feeling of anxiety.

"Bessie should know better," she thought to herself, "than to stay so long. I wish I had not let Kitty go with them."

The next moment she smiled to think how hungry the children would be when they returned, and half wished that it would not be "spoiling" them to make them a good sugar-cake for their supper.

Not until the shadows grew longer upon the edge of the forest, and threatening clouds grew thicker overhead, did her heart quail or her cheek grow white with sudden fear.

"Oh! what *can* keep them, I wonder? Why didn't I ask John to go look for them?" she asked herself over and over again. But Mrs. Hedden was not one to sit weeping with folded hands while any thing remained to be done.

It was not long before their nearest neighbor, who was still at work, enjoying the coolness of the afternoon, leaned upon his spade to wonder what on earth neighbor Hedden's wife was up to now.

"Why, look there! Bob," he called out to his son, "if she ain't leaping over this way like a year-old colt!"

In the mean time, neighbor Hedden himself

was having but sorry sport in the forest. He saw nothing worth even pointing his gun at, and felt altogether so ill at ease and so fidgety as he trudged along, stepping now upon the soft moss, and now upon fallen branches that crackled even under the stealthy tread of his hunting moccasins, that I doubt whether half the bears hidden in the depths of the forest were not in a livelier mood than he. Not that he had any thing to make him feel especially ill-humored, unless it was the disobedience of his children in having failed to appear at dinner-time—but it seemed to him that there was something going wrong in the world, some screw loose in his affairs that, unless he turned it tight in time, would cause his happiness and the prosperity of his home to fall in ruins about him. After awhile this feeling became so strong that he seated himself down upon a stone to think.

"I haven't been as neighborly as I might have been," he reflected; "there's many a turn been wanting by these new-comers, the Morrises, that I might have 'tended to, if I hadn't been so wrapped up in my own business. Come to think, almost the only kind-

ness I've done for nearly a year past was in giving a bag of potatoes to that sick fellow, Po-no-kah, who seemed to me to be a good fellow, if he *was* an Indian. However, it ain't much kindness to give to those murderous red-skins when there's plenty of white men wanting help. Heigho! if I ain't agoin' to shoot any thing, guess I'd better go back."

With these last words, uttered half aloud, neighbor Hedden arose, and walked a few steps in the direction of his home. Presently he paused again, muttering to himself—

"It's blamed queer I haven't heard the youngsters coming down with the scow; I certainly would have heard them if they'd passed—guess I better walk on a little way up stream."

So saying, he turned, with a new anxiety upon his countenance, and moved with rapid strides toward the rivulet, that still ran rippling on, though the bright sparkles that lit its surface at noon had vanished. Indeed, by this time the sunshine was fast vanishing, too, for heavy clouds were gathering overhead, while those in the westward were gilded on their lower edge.

IV.

THE SEARCH.

NEIGHBOR Hedden, now intent upon his new thoughts, hurried along the bank of the stream. There were pretty tassel-flowers and Jack-in-pulpits growing there, which, at any other time, he might have plucked, and carried home in his cap for Kitty; but he did not heed them now. Something in the distance had caught his eye, something that, showing darkly through the trees, from a bend in the streamlet, caused his breathing to grow thicker and his stride to change into a run—*it was the empty boat!*

Hastening toward it, in the vain hope that he would find his little ones playing somewhere near the spot, he clutched his rifle more firmly, and gasped out their names one by one. Where were they?—his sunny-hearted Bessie, his manly little Rudolph, and Kitty, his bright-eyed darling? Alas! the only answer to the father's call was the angry mutter of the thunder, or the quick lightning that flashed through the gathering gloom!

In frantic haste he searched in every direction.

"Perhaps," thought he, "they have become frightened at the sound of bears, and hidden themselves in the thicket. They may even have got tired and gone to sleep. But where is Tom Hennessy?"

Again and again he returned to the boat, as though some clue might there be found to the missing ones; but as often he turned back in despair, trusting now only to the flashes of the lightning to aid him in his search. The sharp twigs and branches tore his face and hands as, bending low, he forced himself where the tangled undergrowth stood thickest. Soon his hunting-cap was dragged from his head, as by some angry hand; he knew that it had caught upon the branches, and did not even try to find it in the darkness.

The heavy drops of rain, falling upon his bare head, cooled him with a strange feeling of relief. Next his gun, which he had leaned against a tree, while on hands and knees he had forced his way into some brush, was swallowed up in the darkness.

In vain he peered around him at every

flash that lit the forest—he could see nothing of it. Suddenly a bright gleam, shooting across his pathway, revealed something that instantly caught his eye—it was a small bit of blue ribbon, such as Bessie often wore. Bending to pick it up, he started back in horror! The light had lasted but an instant, yet it had been long enough to show him that the ribbon was stained with blood, while near it the stones and leaves shone crimson! Even the gnarled roots of a fallen tree were dabbled with a fearful stain. He could see it all distinctly. With upraised arms, he knelt and poured forth an agonized prayer—

"Great God! where are my children? Oh! have mercy! have mercy!"

Flash after flash threw its lurid light upon the kneeling form. Presently loud voices resounded through the forest:

"What, ho!" "Hedden! Hedden!" "Hennessy! Tom!" "Hallo!"

Hedden stood upright. The voices were familiar. He shouted back lustily, and hurried toward the approaching lanterns. Alas! he came upon faces almost as pale and inquiring as his own—no news on either side!

His neighbors had eagerly responded to the mother's appeal, but so far had searched the forest in vain. If Bouncer could only be found ; and, for almost the first time in years, Hedden called, "Bouncer ! Bouncer !" without seeing the great fellow leaping toward him. What wonder, though—even Bouncer could scarcely have recognized that voice now !

"Hark !" cried one of the neighbors.

They listened. There was certainly a panting sound from some spot not far away.

"Bouncer ! Bouncer !" cried the poor father. The panting again ; they lowered their lanterns. What was that lying upon the sward—lying there close by Bouncer ? It was Bessie ! They rushed toward her, catching their breaths as they saw her white dress streaked and dabbled with blood. She was lying very still, but Bouncer was alive.

They raised her from the ground.

"Bessie ! Bessie ! my darling, speak to me !" cried the father.

Her eyes opened slowly ; for an instant she did not know who held her.

"Bessie, child, it's father—speak to me !"

She looked at him an instant, then with a pitiful cry buried her face in his bosom.

Bouncer staggered forward, and now, by the light of the lanterns, they could see a broad gash upon his shoulder, and another upon his head. He looked up at Bessie with a mournful whine.

"Oh, Bouncer, dear Bouncer! can't *you* tell me where they are?" cried Bessie, turning suddenly, and gazing upon him with streaming eyes.

The brave fellow tried to wag his tail, but his strength was failing fast.

"He came to me only a little while ago," sobbed Bessie. "Oh! I was so thankful! but he came so slowly I knew he was hurt. I put out my hand and felt him all hot and wet—I can't remember any thing since then. Oh! father, don't let poor Bouncer die—see! he is falling! Dear old Bouncer!" and she threw herself down beside him.

The poor fellow turned his head, and tried to lick her hand; then started up, growling with something like his old savageness, and fell over. They tried to lift him; they called his name. Bessie even attempted to arouse

him with a cheerful call. There was no movement—Bouncer was dead!

It seemed hard to leave the body of the faithful creature lying exposed in the forest, but this was no time to bury him.

All that they could gather from Bessie's confused account of the surprise by the Indians, and her own escape, served to make the party feel that further effort was almost hopeless—still they would not despair. It was decided that one of their number should take the rescued girl back to her mother, while the rest should proceed in their search.

The fury of the storm had by this time abated, though the rain fell in great splashing drops, and the wind muttered angrily among the trees in answer to the distant rumbling of the thunder. Drenched to her skin, and shivering with excitement, Bessie begged that she might go with her father.

"We will find them soon," she pleaded; "I'm sure we will; and then we can all go home together. It will frighten mother so dreadfully to see me coming alone, without Rudolph and Kitty, and with all this blood upon me, too—Bouncer's blood!"

The man whose lantern had gleamed upon her, hastily shaded the light from her dress with his great rough hand, and in a voice as tender as a woman's, urged her to go with him at once.

"Go, Bessie," said her father, hurriedly, on seeing that she still resisted, "we are losing time."

This was enough. "Good night, dear father!" she sobbed, as she was led away; "don't tell Rudolph about Bouncer until he gets home, father—it will almost break his heart."

A voice that even Bessie could scarcely recognize called back through the darkness: "Good-night, my child. Go easy, Joe, and keep a sharp look-out."

"Ay! ay!" answered the man in a suppressed voice, as he grasped more firmly the little hand in his, and hurried on.

After a wearisome tramp, they at last reached the edge of the forest. Bessie started to see a tall, white figure rushing with outstretched arms toward them.

"It's the mother," said Joe, pityingly, raising the lantern as he spoke.

"Oh, Joe!" screamed the poor woman, "have you found them?—tell me, quick!"

"Well—no, Miss Hedden," he shouted in reply, "not exactly that—but we've got the gal safe an' sound—not a scratch on her."

In another moment Bessie was in her mother's arms.

"Only me, mother!" she sobbed; "only me; but father's looking for them—and, oh! mother, Bouncer is dead!"

The next day brought no better tidings. At noon the men returned from their search, jaded and dispirited. After the first explanations were over, Mr. Hedden called one of the party aside and whispered, huskily—

"Give her this, Dennis—I can't; and tell her how it was the only trace we could find."

The mother's quick eye caught sight of the object before her husband had fairly drawn it from beneath his hunting-jacket. "It's Kitty's hood," she cried, stretching forth her hand as she fell fainting to the floor.

That evening, and for many a day afterward, the search was continued, but without success; no trace could be found of either Tom Hennessy, Rudolph, or little Kitty.

V.

THE CAPTIVES.

WE will now relate what befell Tom and the little ones on the fearful day of their sail up the beautiful stream. Bessie's eyes had not deceived her when, in one agonized glance, she had seen Tom dash into the forest bearing Rudolph and Kitty in his arms, closely followed by two yelling savages. The chase, however, was a short one; before Tom had advanced many steps his pursuers closed upon him, and tearing the children from his embrace, bound his arms close to his body with long strips of bark. The children, screaming with terror, struggled in the arms of the Indians and called frantically upon Tom for help; but he, poor fellow, could only turn his pitying eyes upon them and beg them to remain quiet.

"It'll save you from something worse," he groaned. By this time several savages, darting from near hiding-places, had surrounded them, and Tom abandoned all hope

of escape. Bessie's screams had died away, and he felt sure that she had been killed and scalped by the Indian who had first rushed upon her.

After holding a moment's council, the Indians began a rapid march, hurrying Tom on in their midst, and almost dragging the terrified children—who, each with its tiny hand in the grip of a painted warrior, ran panting by their sides. Hurrying on, faster and faster, until even Tom was nearly out of breath, the savages, without exchanging a word among themselves, continued their flight (for such it seemed), carefully avoiding even the breaking of a twig, or any thing that could furnish a clue to those who might come in pursuit.

Soon Kitty, who could run no more, was snatched angrily from the ground and carried, like a bundle, under the great muscular arm of one of the savages. But when Rudolph showed evident signs of exhaustion, the wretches paused, evidently consulting together whether they should not tomahawk the children at once. Tom could stand it no longer; determined to die on the spot rather

than have his charges butchered before his eyes, he stood obstinately still, declaring that he would not go another step if the children were injured a hair.

"Let me carry them," he cried. "I am strong enough to bear a dozen youngsters—unbind me, I say, and hand 'em over.'

Some of the red men knew enough of English to understand his meaning. With a contemptuous sneer one of them tossed Rudolph on Tom's back; they then set one of his arms free, and drove him onward with many a brutal kick. It was hard work for Tom, shackled as he was, to bear the frightened boy, who clung to his throat so tightly as to sometimes almost strangle him.

"Hold on, Rudolph, boy," he whispered; "lower down — there, that way. Now don't cry; you're father's little man, you know."

"Oh, Tom," sobbed the poor boy, "they'll kill us, I'm sure, like they did little Annie Green. See, now, how they carry Kitty—how they scrape her face against the bushes; oh! oh!" and Rudolph hid his eyes in Tom's hair, crying as if his little heart would break.

"Hush!" muttered Tom, sternly, "or I'll put you down."

This silenced the child, and it was well it did, for more than one of the Indians had laid their hands on their tomahawks with a view of quieting him once for all.

In an instant one of the red men whose look, though grim and fearful enough, showed less savageness than his companions, gruffly took Kitty from the Indian who was carrying her with such brutal carelessness. The change comforted the child, and in a few moments the exhausted little creature was sleeping soundly upon his shoulder, never waking even through the thunder-storm that ere long seemed to rend the forest.

In this way the Indians hurried on, pausing once to change their captives' bands, so as to leave his right arm free instead of his left. Now and then Tom would put Rudolph upon the ground for awhile, and when the little fellow flagged he would lift him up to his shoulder again.

At nightfall the party halted and made a large fire of brush, by which they cooked some venison and hominy, which had been

carried by them during the march. After partaking of their meal, and giving their prisoners a liberal supply, they disposed themselves for the night, first taking care to fasten Tom's hands and feet securely, and even to bandage the children's ankles so that they could not stand. In vain Tom peered about him for a chance of escape for himself and his charges—for he would on no acconnt have left them behind—but there was no hope. His knife had been taken away from him, and all night long he was watched by two Indians, who remained near him in a sitting posture. Even when their dusky faces were lost in the darkness, he could see the gleam of their piercing eyes as the fire-light flashed and faded. Once, when the pain from his fastenings became insupportable, he complained to one of the watchers and begged to be unbound for a moment, while a wild hope rushed through his heart that he might then, quick as a flash, seize Rudolph and Kitty and fly through the darkness out of the reach of his pursuers. Vain hope! no chance occurred, though the Indian readily complied with his request. Almost

every warrior raised himself upon his elbow in an instant, and he felt the glare of a dozen eyes upon him at the slightest motion he made. After the Indian had loosened the fastenings somewhat, and given Tom a drink of pure spring water, he even offered him some parched corn, and in no unfriendly way motioned to him to try and sleep; but all this show of kindness did not reassure Tom. He knew enough of Indian warfare to feel that any consideration they might show their prisoners at first was often but a proof that they were reserving them for the greatest cruelties afterward.

Long before daylight the next morning the march was resumed, in the same manner as on the previous day; and, indeed, for three or four days it was continued over a country dense with cedar thicket, and becoming more and more rocky as they journeyed on. At last, after travelling westward for a distance of about a hundred and fifty miles—as nearly as Tom could estimate it—they saw, rising from the lowlands, the smoke of an Indian encampment.

Some one had evidently been on the look-

out for them. Before they reached the spot, they were welcomed with loud whoops and halloos. Presently the entire community, as it seemed, turned out to receive them—hundreds of savages, men, women, and children—who, when they saw the prisoners, pierced the air with wild shouts of joy—and, surrounding them like so many dancing fiends, appeared anxious to wreak instant vengeance upon them.

The men were painted in every conceivable way, with hideous daubs of color upon their limbs and faces, or tattooed so as to look more fearful still; their leggings and clubs were trimmed with human scalps, and their heads were shaved closely, leaving only a lock on the crown, called the scalp-lock, which was twisted up so as to hold tufts of brilliant feathers. The women, scarcely less hideous than the men (excepting here and there a young maiden, the joy of her tribe, standing apart from the rest), crowded fiercely about, and the children, naked and dirty, whooped and yelled like so many little fiends.

The scene was certainly not likely to inspire the prisoners with any keen sense of

security. Indeed, Tom expected instant death at their hands, and only hoped that he and his companions in misery might be spared the fearful tortures which he knew were often practised by the Indians upon their victims. As for Rudolph and Kitty, the poor little creatures were stupefied with terror, and clung to Tom in a way that seemed to make the Indian children half mad with delight.

Suddenly all the warriors arranged themselves into two long lines, facing each other—and, brandishing their tomahawks, switches, and clubs, called upon Tom to run the gauntlet! One of the savages proceeded to set free the limbs of the captive, at the same time explaining to him, in broken English, the nature of the ceremony about to be enacted. This was nothing less than for Tom to run between the lines, along their entire length, with the chance of receiving a blow from each Indian as he passed.

"Run like deer!" said the Indian, as he jerked off the last strip of hide from the captive's arm, "then he get more few knock."

"Casting one despairing look about him,

and seeing not a possible chance of escape, even if he were not bound to the spot by the presence of Rudolph and Kitty, poor Tom commenced the fearful race. All his weariness was forgotten as, in very desperation, he flew between the lines so rapidly that for a short distance the blows fell but lightly upon him. Soon a crushing stroke from the back of a tomahawk fell heavily upon his shoulder, but he did not falter; the yells and blows of the savages lent wings to his feet—until, at last, when the end was nearly reached, a huge chief struck him a blow, with his club, that felled him to the ground. Springing up instantly, Tom dashed forward, when one of the wretches threw a handful of sand into his eyes. Blinded with rage and agony, he staggered on; but, no longer able to evade the strokes falling thickly upon him, he soon sank again to the ground, and was beaten until he became insensible. Up to the last moment he could hear the shrieks of Rudolph rising above the din. The poor child had been forced to witness Tom's sufferings from the first. And now, when the victim lay senseless upon the ground, the savages

brought both children to look upon him, and seemed to enjoy the pitiful cries of the unhappy little creatures upon finding that they could gain neither look nor word from their old friend.

As soon as Tom opened his eyes his glance fell upon their pale, tearful faces. "Don't cry, youngsters," he gasped; "be good, and we may get home again yet."

"Oh, come *now*," urged Kity; "come tell mammy—mammy'll 'ip 'em for hurtin' 'oo; nassy Injins!"

Rudolph, forgetting his misery for an instant, laughed outright at Kitty's words. The next instant he shook his head solemnly at her—"No, Kitty, mother couldn't whip 'em; they'd kill poor mammy the next instant. Oh, I wish we were home! I wish we were home!" he screamed, giving vent to his terrors again, as he saw a group of red men moving hastily toward them.

After dashing water upon Tom's wounds and laying him upon a bed of deer-skins, the savages seated themselves in a ring, and held a council to decide the fate of the prisoners. The warriors sat in silence while a great war-

club was passed around the circle. Those who were in favor of burning them alive struck the ground heavily with the weapon before handing it to the next warrior; while those who objected to putting them to death in that manner merely passed it on in silence.

Tom saw all this from where he lay, and he knew its meaning well. With a sinking heart he heard the heavy thump of the club as each warrior gave his cruel vote, until at last one chief, holding the club in the air, pointed with a meaning gesture—first at Tom, then at Rudolph and Kitty. The chiefs responded with a grunt of assent to his inquiry concerning the latter, but shook their heads when their attention was directed to Tom. Then the noble fellow knew that not his fate, but that of the children was being decided; while they, unconscious little creatures, looked on half amused at what seemed to them some singular game.

"Hi!" whispered Rudolph to Kitty, "didn't that fellow hit hard, though?—he'll beat, I guess."

A moment more and the council was ended. One of the Indians approached the children

and daubed their sweet little faces with black; it was a fatal sign, for it proved that the vote had been against them—Rudolph and Kitty were to be burned to death!

VI.

KA-TE-QUA.

ALL that night, and for many days afterward, Tom lay in a burning fever, quite unconscious of what was passing around him. The savages, with a refinement of cruelty peculiar to many of their race, deferred putting the children to death until he could be an eye-witness of the scene.

Meanwhile, Rudolph and Kitty were treated almost with kindness. They were well fed, and were given the softest deer-skins to lie upon at night. Finding themselves unharmed as the hours went on, the little creatures became more confident, and finally resumed their natural playfulness.

Kitty was never weary of the bright beads and ornaments of the Indian maidens, and

Rudolph found great delight in shooting with the bows and arrows of the *papooses* or children, who, in turn, were wonderfully amused at the bad shots of the little pale-face. Now and then, to be sure, the vicious child of some chieftain would amuse itself by sticking sharp thorns into Kitty's tender skin, and hearing her scream in consequence; or, having seen the black-and-blue marks upon her delicate arms, caused by the rough handling of her captors, they would pinch her flesh and watch for the change of color with intense interest. One day they tried it while Rudolph was standing by, holding the hand of the squaw who had him in charge. No sooner did the usual scream escape Kitty's lips than, quick as thought, the boy broke from the woman's grasp, and, rushing upon his sister's tormentor, laid the little savage in the dust and pummeled him well. Instead of resenting this, the Indians seemed to admire the pluck of the young pale-face, and he rose in their favor at once. Especially did the old squaw, as Indian women are called, applaud him. She was a strange old creature, named Kate-qua (*female eagle*), and, being half crazy,

was looked upon by the Indians as one inspired by Manitou, or the Great Spirit. Besides, her brother had been a famous Medicine* of the tribe; and her two sons, who had been slain in battle, were celebrated braves or warriors, each owning long chains of scalps, which they had taken from their enemies. So, of course, when she wagged her head in approbation of Rudolph's conduct, half the women near her wagged their heads also. Indeed, had Tom remained ill a few weeks longer, the black marks on the children's faces would have worn off without any further injury being done them. But as he grew better, and, finally, was able to sit upright on his deer-skin couch, the malice of his captors was renewed. They resolved not only to carry out their original designs upon the children, but to put the sick pale-face to the extremest torture as soon as he was strong enough to afford them the requisite amount of sport on the occasion. Accordingly on the fourth day after Rudolph had punished the little "Red-skin," preparations for carrying out their fiendish rites were commenced. Heaps of fagots were industri-

* Mystery-man or Indian prophet.

ously piled against an oak tree, which stood apart. Tom, with feet shackled, and his arms tightly secured to his sides, was led out to witness the fearful scene. Rudolph and Kitty were stripped naked, and, in spite of their struggles, bound side by side to the tree.

Already the wild dance of the inhuman murderers had commenced. Frightful yells and whoops filled the air, and even women and little dusky children clapped their hands and shouted with malignant delight. They brought armfuls of brush and laid it close to the pile. Nothing was needed to complete the deed but to apply the fatal torches, now sending forth hot, lurid gleams into the pale air, and brandished by a dozen yelling savages.

At a signal from an aged chief, the brush was lit. The fire cracked and snapped ; soon its snake-like wreaths curled about the pile, sending thick smoke around the screaming victims, when, suddenly, old Ka-te-qua—she who had taken charge of the children—rushed from the neighboring forest. Tearing through the crowd, she flew to the pile of fagots, and with vigorous strokes scattered the blazing wood in every direction.

Then, turning toward the astonished savages, who had retreated a few paces to escape the burning brands, she addressed them passionately in the Indian tongue :

"The Great Spirit," she cried, "scowls upon you—the very flames hiss in the wet grass. The sons of Ka-te-qua are gone to the happy hunting grounds of the dead.* Her wigwam is dark. The young pale-faces are to her like the water-lilies of the stream. Why, when she was in the forest gathering herbs for the sick of her tribe, did ye steal them from her lodge like dogs ?

"Is the tongue of Ka-te-qua forked ? Has she not said that no warrior need hunt the deer for the young pale-faces ? With her they shall grow like hickory saplings, towering with strength. The deer shall not be more fleet than they, nor the songs of the birds more glad. The sun shall paint their white skins. The love of the red man shall enter their hearts ; they shall be as the young of our tribe. Unbind them ! Give them to Ka-te-qua, or by the next moon a burning fever shall fall upon you. Like panthers will you

* The Indian's Heaven.

bite the dust. All the waters of the great cataract cannot quench your thirst, and your mightiest hunters will be as women."

She paused. A fine-looking chieftain arose and spoke:

"The sister of the great Medicine has spoken well. She dwells alone in her wigwam. Her arm is strong. Her eye is keen, like the hawk's. The deer fall before her, and her arrow can find the heart of the grizzly bear. Her corn stands higher than the grass of the prairie. She can feed the young pale-faces. The Great Spirit gives them to her. Let it be so."

A council was held at once. This time more than half the chieftains passed the club on in silence, for Ka-te-qua, as I have said, was respected among them; she had great powers of healing, and many of the Indians regarded her with a superstitious reverence.

The children were unbound and borne in state to the old squaw's wigwam. From that hour, though they were closely watched and guarded, their lives were safe.

VII.

BIG TOM.

FROM the conduct of the Indians towards Tom, it was evident that his time for torture had not yet arrived. He therefore had tact enough to remain "weak" as long as possible, tottering languidly about the grounds whenever they allowed him the liberty of exercising his limbs, and drinking the mixtures and decoctions of Ka-te-qua with the patience of a martyr. In the meantime, the shrewd fellow took care to win the good-will of the tribe by taking apparent interest in their games, and showing a great amount of admiration at their feats of strength and agility. He amused them, too, by the display of numerous accomplishments peculiar to himself, such as whistling in close imitation of the songs of various birds, and performing feats of jugglery that he had long ago learned in his native town. He could bark like a dog and howl like a wolf; imitate the distant tramping of horses' feet, and give the sound of a whizzing arrow so perfectly that the old-

est chiefs would turn their heads quickly in the direction of the sound Neither at this, however, nor at any other of Tom's performances, would they show the slightest change of countenance, for an Indian never allows himself to exhibit feelings of surprise, considering it quite beneath the dignity of his race to do so. Even when, by some dexterous trick, Tom would show them two or three acorns under a leaf where their reason told them there could be none, and then as mysteriously cause the same acorns to disappear, the stony faces looking on never changed a muscle, though at heart they were probably quite as much astounded as the Welsh monster was when Jack, the Giant-Killer, performed such wonderful feats with his hasty-pudding. By degrees, as Tom deemed it prudent to appear stronger, he would dance the sailors' hornpipe for them, or sing wild, rollicksome songs, or make beautiful rustic seats and bowers for the squaws. He was a capital marksman, too, and soon won respect by showing that he could handle a musket with the best of them. The few Indians who owned guns had become very expert in their

use; and Tom, whenever they had trials of their skill, took care to shoot just well enough to prove himself a good marksman, without provoking their anger by excelling too often.

After awhile, in his desire to win their confidence, he even went so far as to signify to the Indians that he would like to become one of them; that their mode of life suited him well, and he would be glad to hunt and fish with them and be a pale-face no more. Alas! poor fellow, he did not know what he was saying, or how soon he would find out that even in cases of great temptation no one can tell a lie without suffering unhappy consequences. The savages took him at his word. They held a council. After it was over, while most of them were still smoking their long, richly ornamented pipes with great deliberation, two or three of the Indians seized him and gravely commenced plucking out his hair by the roots. Soon Tom twitched from head to foot, and water stood in his eyes; but the red men still kept on with their work, dipping their fingers in ashes occasionally to enable them to take a better hold. Before long his head was completely bald, with the exception

of one long tuft upon his crown, called the scalp-lock.* This was immediately stiffened and plaited, so as to stand upright and hold a variety of ornaments, which his glum hair-dressers fastened upon it. Then two old Indians pierced his nose and ears and hung big rings in the smarting holes. They then took off all his clothing and painted his naked body with every variety of color. Next they hung a gayly embroidered cloth about his loins, put a wampum chain about his neck and fastened silver bands on his right arm. When this was done the whole party gave three shrill whoops, and men, women, and children crowded around him, making the most frantic gestures, and uttering the most horrid sounds that ever a poor fibbing white man heard.

Next the maidens of the tribe rushed upon him, and, hurrying him to a stream that ran near by, dragged him into the water until it reached his waist, and tried to force his head under. This, of course, aroused all his spirit of resistance; but, when one of the girls, named She-de-ah (wild sage), cried into his

* See American Adventure by Land and Sea. Harper Bros. 1842.

ear, "No kill! no kill!" he concluded to submit.

After this he was ducked and held under most unmercifully, until, believing by this time that "the white blood must be all washed out of him," they led him up the shore, all shivering and dripping, and presented him to their principal chief.

The next performance was to dress him in an Indian shirt, ornamented with feathers and beads and bits of porcupine quill. They put leggings on his legs and moccasins on his feet, and, seating him upon a bear-skin, gave him flint and steel to strike a light with; then a pouch, a tomahawk, some tobacco, and a long pipe. Then the chiefs seated themselves beside him, and smoked in silence. Tom knew well enough that he was expected to smoke too, and filled and lit his pipe accordingly, never dreaming of the consequences. Old as he was, nearly twenty, this was his "first smoke," and very soon the poor fellow found himself growing deadly sick. He could feel the cold chills creeping one after another into his very face. Finally, something within him seemed to turn a somerset, when, yielding to

a sudden impulse, he flung the pipe upon the ground, and rushed into the recesses of the wigwam, where he usually slept. This the Indians, who attach an almost sacred importance to the pipe, took as a great affront; and only when Tom afterward, by the most earnest gestures, explained to them the real cause of his conduct, did they allow their injured feelings to be pacified; though it cut him sorely to notice the expressions of contempt that were freely lavished upon him. Whether this proof of what seemed in Indian opinion a want of manliness had any thing to do with their conduct or not, I cannot say, but certain it is that no further ceremonies towards making him a red-man were performed, though he was allowed to wear his Indian costume. Neither did they allow him to hunt with them, as he had hoped. Whenever they went forth to shoot the bison or deer, or to trap the beavers, or wage war with hostile tribes, they always left him with the squaws, the old men, and the warriors who remained at home to take charge of the settlement.

Rudolph and Kitty were sorely frightened when they first saw the strange figure, "half

Indian, half Tom," as Rudolph afterward described him, stalk into Ka-te-qua's wigwam. His bald head and painted body struck poor Kitty with dismay. When he spoke soothingly to her, and gave her a handful of bright feathers, she ventured to approach him, though she cried pitifully all the time for Tom, dear, big Tom, who knew poppy and mammy, and taught Bouncer to jump in the water for stones.

Neither Kitty nor Rudolph had forgotten the brave dog through all these days of absence, and they loved to hold long conversations with Tom about him; though the little creatures oftener talked of their parents and Bessie, as they lay at night upon their bed of dried grass, with arms entwined lovingly around each other's necks.

VIII.

BOUNCER'S WORK.

THERE was another person in the settlement, besides the prisoners, who was not likely to forget Bouncer very soon. This was

an Indian who, wounded and exhausted, had reached the settlement four days after the arrival of the prisoners. He had an ugly mark upon his throat, and another on his breast, and sulked aside from the rest of his tribe as though he felt that his wounds were ignoble, and a dishonor to his Indian birth. It was his blood that Farmer Hedden had seen on that fearful night; and when more than once the agonized father had listened to what seemed to be the tread of some skulking wolf, he had heard this very Indian, who, half dead with pain and loss of blood, was dragging himself slowly through the depths of the forest.

This discomfited warrior had looked upon Tom and the two little pale-faces with dislike, from the hour when he first saw them as prisoners in the encampment. They were constant reminders to him of his mortifying struggle with the dog. He felt it all the more because, though his jacket and leggings were trimmed with the scalps of his enemies, he had lately been forced to receive charity from the white man's hand. This was when, starving and nearly frozen, he had fallen insensible in

the forest, after an unlucky trapping excursion; a settler had found him, restored him to consciousness, and sent him on his way with a bountiful supply of provisions.

Big Tom saw the dark looks of this Indian, and regarded him with suspicion; but little Kitty was quite unconscious of the resentful feelings of "the sick man," as she called him. In fact, as soon as she grew more familiar with the Indians, she often sought him in preference to the rest, and loved to sit upon the ground beside him, and trace with her tiny fingers the patterns worked upon his leggings and moccasins.

At first the grim warrior repulsed these familiarities; but when, as he gradually mingled with his tribe, he heard her sweet voice calling him by name, and saw her day after day display her store of beads and feathers at his feet, his feelings gradually softened. Before long he ceased to scowl upon her when she lifted her sunny face to his, and, on very rare occasions, even allowed her to count his arrows.

Once, when Rudolph had shot a wild turkey, he rushed to Ka-te-qua's wigwam with

his prize, for he had learned to love the strange old squaw, though he feared her, too, sometimes. Kitty clapped her hands with delight at her brother's skill, and begged him to go with her and show the dead bird to her Indian favorite.

"Come, Rudolph; come show 'Nokah,'" she pleaded, pulling the young hunter by the arm. "Come twick! he goin' away."

Rudolph suffered himself to be led. They found Po-no-kah standing alone by a tree, fully equipped for the hunt.

He looked at the turkey and gave a grunt, not particularly flattering to Rudolph's vanity.

"I've shot THREE," said the boy, holding up three fingers to make his meaning clearer.

"Ugh!" grunted the savage again. "Paleface no shoot much."

"But I'm only a little boy," persisted Rudolph. "When I'm big, I'm going to shoot bears and bison. Did you kill the bears to get all these claws?" he added, pointing up to Po-no-kah's necklace, which was formed entirely of huge bear-claws, strung through the thickest end.

"Ugh," replied the Indian, nodding his plumed head, "me shoot him."

"And these scalps," said Rudolph, shuddering as he pointed to the fringe of human hair hanging from the buckskin leggings; "did *you* get all these?"

"Ugh," he answered grimly, nodding the plumes again.

"You are bad, then," exclaimed Rudolph, looking fearlessly into Po-no-kah's eyes. "I know *you*," he added suddenly, after gazing at him intently for an instant. "Father brought you into our kitchen last winter, and I ran behind the door. Mother gave you meat and hot drink, and father warmed you and gave you a bag of potatoes. Oh!" he continued, clasping Po-no-kah's knee, "*you* know where our home is. Nearly every night I dream that mother is calling us. Show me the way, please do. Ka-te-qua says there are dreadful things in the forest that will eat me up, but I am not afraid. Oh! do tell us the way home."

The Indian gave a sharp look at the sobbing boy, and seemed in part to understand his words. Stooping, he whispered in a stern tone:

"No speak; no tell Ka-te-qua." And without one glance of encouragement, he stalked away to the spot where the other Indians had assembled, preparing for the hunt.

The children saw him no more for weeks. Rudolph remembered his parting words, and though he could not fully understand Po-no-kah's motive, he faithfully obeyed his command. Not even to Tom did he relate what had occurred.

IX.

INDIAN LIFE.

RUDOLPH and Kitty learned many things from the Indians that they never would have studied in the rough school-house near their pretty home, and became familiar with many singular customs that at first filled them with wonder.

For instance: when they, or any of the little papooses, were naughty or disobedient, they were put under what might be called the water-cure treatment. Instead of being whipped or locked up in a dark pantry—as is, I

am sorry to say, the custom among some white people—they were simply "ducked" under water until they became manageable. Winter or summer, it was all the same. A bad child would very soon become a wet child, if there were any water within a mile.

There are bright sides, as well as dark, to the Indian character; and in considering their cruelties and inhuman practices, we must remember that the white man has not always set a good example to his uncivilized brother, or been careful not to provoke him to deeds of resentment and wrong. An Indian rarely forgets a kindness, and he never tells a lie. He is heroic, and deems it beneath a man's dignity to exhibit the slightest sign of pain under any circumstances. Among the Sioux tribe the young pappooses are trained to bear as much hardship as possible. They have a ceremony called the Straw Dance, in which children are forced to maintain a stately and measured step, while bunches of loose straws tied to their naked bodies are lit and allowed to burn slowly away. Any poor little creature who flinches or "breaks step" is sorely punished and held in disgrace.

There are certain dances among the Indians performed by the warriors, before going either to battle or to the hunt. If to battle, they spend hours, and often whole days and nights together in the fearful war-dance, accompanied by clashings on their drum-like instruments, and whoops that ring long and loud amid the echoing hills. If to the hunt, the Bear-Dance or the Buffalo-Dance is kept up nights and days before starting, in order to propitiate the Bear Spirit or Buffalo Spirit, whichever it may be. They have a funeral dance also, which is very solemn and impressive. And if a chieftain is to be buried, sometimes in the river, and sometimes, as among the Mandans, on rough platforms erected on poles high up from the ground, the warriors dance before his wigwam, and assign to a few of their number the duty of seeing that his widow and children, if he have left any, shall never be without food and shelter.

Kitty and Rudolph often looked on with mingled feelings of terror and delight, while some of these strange ceremonies were being enacted. It was curious to see the stalwart

warriors, with bent backs and glum faces, and many a grunt or whoop, stamp through the measured dance. Often Kitty would clutch her brother's arm in terror, when, in strange concert, the savages would suddenly halt, and with fiendish look and stealthy gesture, seem to be listening to the approach of an enemy.

Sometimes, too, the women danced, but usually apart from the men. Even in their games the warriors and squaws never played together. Among the Crow Indians, famous for their long black hair, it is not uncommon for a thousand young men to play in one game of ball for three or four consecutive days without interruption. As soon as one player retires, exhausted, another takes his place. Often hundreds of women play together, and they are generally as expert as the men in throwing and catching the ball.

Another strange feature among Indian customs, is the importance attached to the *medicine-bag*. Every warrior has one, and would no sooner hunt, or go to battle, or appear among his tribe without it, than he would neglect to wear his bow or his scalping-knife. Not that the bag contains any medicine, such

as we understand by the word—for it is nothing but a small piece of skin sewed like a bag, curiously ornamented, and stuffed with straw or leaves—but because he regards it as a *charm*. With him, "medicine" means some mysterious power that will protect and guide him, and propitiate the unseen powers in his favor. When about to obtain his medicine, the young Indian goes alone to some solitary river or lake in the depths of the forest, or mounts to some lonely peak. Here he fasts, and remains until, sleeping, he dreams. The first animal he dreams of, whether it be a bear, buffalo, deer, weasel, or bird or reptile of any kind, becomes his "medicine" forever. He at once hunts until he finds one, and obtains its skin for a bag.

Rudolph and Kitty looked with awe upon many of the rare medicine-bags of the tribe, though they were never on any account allowed to touch them. Indeed, Kitty had managed to construct a rough little one for Rudolph, dotted with clumps of beads, and he wore it next his heart with secret pride. The little fellow had once, while tramping through the forest with Katequa, seen a num-

ber of deer gathered around a spring, or salt-lick, as it is called, and had quivered with frightened delight to see the finest one fall wounded by her arrow. When the large eyes of the wounded creature had turned plaintively toward him, he had tried not to feel sorry, but his heart ached in spite of his efforts.

"I shall be a mighty hunter one of these days," he said to Kitty on his return; "but I won't shoot deer, for they look at you just as if they wanted to speak. I'll get bears though, lots of 'em, and buffalo; and I'll have a steel trap when I get home, and catch badgers and foxes, just as the Indians do."

Tom and Rudolph saw with indignation that, throughout the settlement, the labor and drudgery were forced upon the squaws, while the warriors stretched themselves lazily upon the ground, or smoked their pipes under the spreading trees. As for Kitty, she was too busy watching the women cook, dig, chop, and carry, to draw any moral reflections.

She loved, also, to sit beside them when they prepared the skins brought in from the hunt, or while they were busy with their cu-

rious sewing, so different from that with which she had seen her mother occupied.

Bright-colored rags, feathers, beads, porcupine-quills, and even scraps of tin, were the ornaments upon which the squaws relied to make the toilets of their tribe "stylish" and beautiful; and Kitty soon grew to agree with them perfectly in matters of taste.

To be sure, the Indian women never did any thing quite so barbarous as to hang steel frameworks, made like hen-coops, beneath their skirts, and fancy the effect graceful. Neither did they put the little girl-pappooses' feet in narrow shoes, nor fasten tight belts about their waists, so that the God-given machinery within could scarcely work. But they did many preposterous things, for all that. They painted their bodies and tattooed their skins, by pricking figures on the flesh and rubbing in some staining juice when the blood appeared. They even pierced their noses, so that bright rings could dangle from them. Many, too, hung bits of metal from their ears in a similar way—but that may not strike my civilized readers as being a very barbarous custom.

X.

KA-TE-QUA'S "GOOD NIGHT."

THUS weeks and months passed away, not so wearily to the prisoners, as to the poor, sorrowing hearts that mourned for them at home. Tom's brain was always busy in planning some mode of escape for himself and his little charges. But, as he was still closely guarded, never being left alone for an instant, night or day, and as the children slept in the wigwam of Ka-te-qua, whose eyes seemed never intended to close, he concluded to wait patiently rather than to risk the lives of all three by an unsuccessful attempt.

Meantime, Ka-te-qua's strong arms grew feeble, her arrow became less fatal in its aim, and her strange fits of moodiness filled Rudolph and Kitty with dread.

For hours she would sit at the entrance of her wigwam, chanting mournfully in the Indian tongue. At such times she would compel the children to remain within,—becoming frantic with crazy rage should they attempt to force past her into the pleasant sunshine;

and they would sit together in the shadow, hoping that by some freak she would walk away, or that the long, long song would cease. One afternoon she kept them waiting in this way for hours. The sun sank lower and lower into the distant prairie, and the crimson clouds faded to a dull gray. Rudolph and Kitty sat listening to the wailing tones of Ka-te-qua's voice until, as the evening grew dark and chilly, they found for themselves a scanty supper of parched corn, and after whispering their simple prayer, groped their way to bed.

The strange old creature ceased singing after awhile, and entered the wigwam. They could distinguish her form as she slowly moved about, before throwing herself down near the entrance to indulge in her usual cat-like sleep. Afraid to speak to her, for they were not quite sure in what mood she might be, they watched her movements as well as they could, and at last felt sure that she was tottering slowly toward them.

Kitty clasped Rudolph's neck more tightly, and broke into a frightened sob. In an instant they felt her hand steal gently over their tangled curls.

"Night! night!" she whispered softly.

"Good night, Ka-te-qua," they answered in a breath, for their fear was all gone now.

"Night, night," repeated the voice, as kindly as their own mother could have said it, and after giving each a caressing stroke, their old friend moved softly away.

Very early the next morning the children were awakened by a buzz of many voices. Ka-te-qua had been found lying stiff and cold at the entrance of her wigwam. Not a bruise nor injury of any kind was upon her. The Indians, crowding round, shook their heads gravely. Ka-te-qua was wise, they said, but Manitou* had sent for her. She had gone to the happy Hunting Grounds of her fathers.

XI.

FIRE-WATER BECOMES MASTER.

AFTER a long absence, the hunting party returned. As soon as Po-no-kah's stalwart form appeared in sight, Rudolph and Kitty rushed, with a cry of joy, to meet him;

* The Indians' God.

but, to their great dismay, he pushed them away with a frown and a grunt that told them plainly that they were to be familiar with him no more. Poor children!—Ka-te-qua gone, Po-no-kah changed, and Tom scarcely heeding them,—they felt friendless indeed. Kind words they never heard now, and kind looks rarely, except when Tom threw them a hasty glance that warmed their hearts, though they scarcely knew why. They did not know how his feelings yearned towards them, nor how eagerly he would have joined in all their simple pursuits, had he dared to do so; but the poor fellow had discovered that any notice he took of the children aroused suspicion, and he therefore concluded to pursue a prudent course.

In the mean time the children had one great joy. Their love for each other was always the same. Kitty trusted in the belief that "mammy" would send for them; but Rudolph looked ever up to the Great Love that he knew was watching over them and the dear ones at home.

"If it's *right*, Kitty," he would whisper, "I *know* we'll go home one of these days. Don't be afraid. God will take care of us."

"But Dod took Te-qua away," Kitty would sometimes say.

"Yes, I know He did, Kitty," and Rudolph's eyes would look sadly up to the blue sky, "I know He did, but then I guess she was tired and wanted to go."

Summer, autumn, and winter had passed away, and now came the season when the Indians carried their largest supply of furs and skins to sell in the city far over the prairies. Often, after their hunts, they had met with traders, and exchanged the skins they had taken for such articles as the white man had to give—guns, blankets, knives, powder, pipes, and fire-water ;* but this was the grand trading excursion of the year.

When the party returned, after a few weeks, absence, they brought with them, among other things, a keg of whiskey. After the first welcome was over, the savages held a council.

It was soon evident that a fearful scene was to be enacted. The prisoners had seen some-

* Brandy, rum, and all alcoholic liquors.

thing of the kind before, but never on so large a scale as this.

The Indians had decided to hold a revel, in which nearly all the men were to drink fire-water until they could take no more.

Even savages know the horrible consequences of parting with their wits in this manner. Before the drinking commenced, they appointed a few able-bodied Indians who were to remain sober and take care of the rest. They then deprived themselves of all their dangerous weapons—tomahawks, clubs, guns, arrows, and knives, and prepared for their fearful riot.

The scene that followed need not be described. The very beasts might have blushed to see men thus degrade themselves.

Soon the confusion became fearful. The few sober chiefs were constantly risking their lives in their efforts to prevent mischief. Women were screaming, and frightened children were hiding in every direction.

Tom, who was half forgotten in the general excitement, saw Po-no-kah whisper hurriedly to one of the women. In a moment she caught Rudolph and Kitty by their hands and stole

cautiously with them into the forest. Tom's suspicions were aroused. He started up only to feel a strong arm force him back to the log upon which he had been seated.

"No move," muttered a voice, close by his ear; "soon come—very drunk."

In a few moments, while the tumult and uproar were at their height, Tom saw Po-no-kah reeling toward the forest.

Wondering what the fellow meant to do, yet filled with a wild hope, Tom watched his chance, staggered past the rioters, and managed to follow the warrior by another path, without creating any suspicion.

When, at last, they met, Po-no-kah had Rudolph and Kitty in his arms, and, staggering no more, was hurrying through the forest, armed with bow, quiver, and travelling pouch. The astonished prisoner, after taking Kitty from his companion's arms, followed him in silence. Not for hours did Po-no-kah look back or speak, and then it was but to say a few broken words:

"Po-no-kah was hungry. The father of the little pale-faces fed him. Po-no-kah no snake—he grateful—he take 'em home."

XII.

SHOWING HOW THE BAG OF POTATOES CAME BACK AGAIN.

FARMER HEDDEN was busily at work in the fields, looking ten years older than on that sunny day, nearly a year ago, when he had shouted a laughing "good-by" to Tom and the little ones.

Bessie was trudging alone from school, wondering why the birds sang less sweetly than they did the May before, and wishing that the noble dog that bounded by her side looked a little more like the first Bouncer.

Mrs. Hedden sat with her brother in the lonely cottage, talking on the old, old theme; the memory of that terrible night had never left her heart.

"No, no, Robert," she said at length, in reply to some appeal from her brother, "we must not go. I know it would be better for us to sell out and go to Philadelphia. But it cannot be; we must never leave this spot."

"Surely, Betsy," urged her brother, "you cannot be so wild as to suppose—"

"No!" she interrupted, "I never dare to even hope for that now. I know my lost darlings are not in this world, and yet—and yet why not hope? why not think that perhaps—"

A shadow fell upon the threshold. What wonder that the mother sprang forward with a cry of joy! What wonder that Farmer Hedden, looking from the field, came bounding toward the house! Po-no-kah was there—Po-no-kah and little Kitty!

Laughing,—crying,—clasping Kitty frantically to her heart, then gazing at her at arms length, Mrs. Hedden raised her eyes to the Indian, and gasped faintly—

"Rudolph? the boy—is he—"

She could say no more.

"Yes—boy all good," answered Po-no-kah, eagerly, "white man say break heart see two—he here."

Just then Farmer Hedden, Tom Hennessy, and Rudolph rushed in.

Oh, what a meeting that was! And Bessie, too, was in their midst before they knew it. Such laughter! such tears! such shouts of

rejoicing had never been known in the Hedden cottage before.

Soon the barking of a dog was heard. Rudolph sprang from his father's arms:

"Oh! it's Bouncer," he cried, "let me see him. Here, Bouncer!"

Bouncer indeed came leaping in at the call, but it was not *the* Bouncer, though it was a great, shaggy fellow, worthy of the name.

Rudolph started back; the dog, too, eyed him with a suspicious look.

"That isn't Bouncer! Where is he, mother?" exclaimed the poor boy, looking up with a bewildered glance.

Po-no-kah slunk aside.

"Do tell me where Bouncer is," he repeated. "We are all here but him. Here, Bouncer! Bouncer!" and he ran to the door.

Bessie wound her arms about his neck.

"Rudolph, darling," she sobbed, "don't cry. Bouncer was killed on *that* day. He saved my life, Rudolph—"

"Bouncer dead!" screamed the boy.

Just then the new dog, seeing Bessie and her brother so close together, felt that he had a right there, too. With many a frantic leap

and bound he endeavored to draw Rudolph's attention, until, finally, the tearful eyes of the boy were turned upon him. Then, if ever a dog tried to do his best, that fellow did. He sprang into the air, barked, tumbled, leaped, whined, wagged his tail till it almost spun, and, finally, licked Rudolph in the face until the chubby cheeks shook with laughter.

All this time Tom's Indian dress had scarcely been noticed. At last Mrs. Hedden, grasping both his hands, exclaimed:

"Why, what in the world have you been doing with yourself? I knew you, though, the moment you came in. Oh, Tom, how you have suffered!"

Tom tried to answer her; but somehow his great faithful heart was overflowing, and he could only look at her with a tearful smile.

"'Taint nothing," he said at length. "It's all ended well, anyhow. But a fellow can't help thinking of his own folks, dead and gone, when he sees such meetings as this."

Mr. Hedden, who had been talking with Po-no-kah, walked over to Tom and placed his hand upon his shoulder.

"*We* are your folks now, my faithful fellow.

God bless you! I can never repay what I owe you. Remember, our home is yours from this hour. I shall take no denial."

"Good!" laughed Bessie, clapping her hands; "now I shall have two brothers!"

Mrs. Hedden, who had listened to Po-no-kah's broken words, kissed and hugged Tom in her motherly way. "Dear me," she exclaimed, "how can we make you look like a white man again; and to think you have had chances to escape and would not leave the children," and then she hugged him again.

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian, nodding his head and holding up three fingers—to signify that Tom had had three chances.

"Pooh!" said the brave fellow, blushing through all the red paint, "I didn't have any at all until a month or so ago, and I'd got kind o' use to staying then."

Soon the red man turned to go. In vain the grateful parents tried to force their gifts upon him, and to persuade him to at least partake of some refreshment after his long journey.

His hunting-pouch and his bow, he said, would furnish all the food he required, and he must be far on his way before sundown.

As Tom gave him his hand, and the rest crowded eagerly about him, all, even to little Kitty, thanking him, over and over again, he waved them off with dignity.

"No thank," he said; "Po-no-kah was cold and hungry; the father of the young pale-faces gave him food. He come tell white man Indian no forget."

Tom expressed anxiety lest their deliverer should suffer for his act when he returned to his tribe.

"Po-no-kah no fear," replied the Indian, with almost a smile upon his face; and nodding a farewell to Kitty, he strode majestically away.

Years ago the Heddens settled on a fine farm near Philadelphia. Rudolph and Kitty have doubtless walked many a time by the old hall where the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Bessie Hedden's children live not many miles from there now, but their names are Hennessy; so you see the maiden, probably, in the course of time, changed her mind about having Tom for a brother.

BRAVE ROBBY AND THE SKELETON.

ON last Christmas Eve I put on a large apron and went down to the kitchen to prepare a plum pudding for next day's dinner. The children, instead of being

> "Nestled all snug in their beds,
> While visions of sugar-plums danced through their heads,"

crowded eagerly about me, begging that they might be allowed to sit up an hour longer "just this once," and help pit the raisins.

With four sweet voices pleading at once, eight earnest eyes searching my face, and as many eager hands pulling at my gown, how could I resist? Permission being granted, the children gave vent to shouts of joy that brought Aunt Mary into the kitchen.

Order being finally restored, the "pitting" and "stemming" commenced in good earnest;

and, as a consequence, in the course of three minutes Robby had cut his finger; Minnie had spilled her cup of raisins on the floor; and all had their hands well besmeared, and their mouths full.

"Och, mum!" said our faithful cook, Biddy, seating herself despairingly on a bench by a range, "where's the use? The children's fairly stuck togedder wid the muss, and the flure's sp'iled on me intirely, after all me scrubbin'."

Anxious to make friends with her, so that they might not be sent to bed at once, the children crowded around her, and Robby begged her to be good, and tell them about Mrs. Maloney's pig, or something funny.

"Oh yes! do, do!" echoed all the rest, half smothering her with embraces.

"Och! Is it tell a *funny* story on Christmas Eve, now? Go 'long wid yez! Who ever heard of such a thing? It's the horrible kind, all about the ghosts and goblends, that belongs to Christmas, and they'd scarr the wits out of yez."

"Pooh!" said Robby. "I'd like to hear the story that could frighten *me!*"

"Would ye, now?" asked Biddy, with a wicked twinkle in her eye. "Pigs, indade! I could tell yez something about Mrs. Maloney, now, that 'ud cruddle yer blood."

"Well, tell us!" cried the children, crowding more closely about her, all but Robby, who stood at the other end of the hearth, feeling very brave indeed.

"Pshaw!" he muttered, "you might scare the girls, Biddy, but you couldn't scare *me*, never mind what you told us."

"Well," began Biddy, "yez must know that before Mrs. Maloney came to this counthry, she had a mighty hard quarrel, indade, with one of her payple. Did yez ever mind, now, a quare scar on the furhead of her?"

"Yes," answered all four in a breath.

"Well," resumed Biddy, "I'll tell yez more about that same in a minute. She had a mighty quarrel, I say, in the ould counthry, concerning the ownin' of the farm she was livin' on. Ye see Misther Maloney—as fine a buy as ever lived, pace to his soul!—well, he left it all til his wife, and he hadn't been dead a month before his Cousin Mike came flusthering around wid a law paper called a mor-

ragage, or some sich name, and claimed the property hisself—the baste! And she—poor crayture!—afther payin' 'most every thing she kud lay her hands on to the lawyers, was glad to get shet of the whole business, and come over to this counthry, with nothin' but the clothes on her back and one chist; Mike, he livin' on the farm like a gintleman, an' she a-washin' and scrubbin' here in Ameriky by the day. At last, jest about a month back, what should come from Ireland to her but a letter from Mike, telling how he was after dyin' in great trouble of mind an' body—"

"What! from Mike?" interrupted Robby.

"Och, how ye bother me! from one of Mike's payple, then—where's the differ?—and tellin' how he had confessed he had sold the farm, and that the paper he had got it by was all a lie indade; and he frettin' to the last bekase he must die widdout Mrs. Maloney's forgiveness; and in the letter they sent her fifty dollars that Mike left her on his dyin' bed."

"That was good in him," suggested Johnny.

"Och, good!" exclaimed Biddy, wrathfully. "An' what good was it, an' he afther

almost breakin' the poor crayture's heart? Well, she was plazed enough to get the money for all, as she told me herself, indade, here in this blessed kitchen; for she said it would get her many a little convaynience that, barrin it, she'd a had to do widdout. And that same evenin' she came to ask would the mistress let me go stop wid her that night, she felt scar-ed to be slaping alone afther hearin' uv Mike dyin,' an' he worryin' afther her. The payple of the house where Mrs. Maloney was stoppin', ye mind, was strange to her, as she hadn't been in it but about tin days. Well," continued Biddy, dropping her voice to a whisper again, "I went back wid her, and thin she lit a candle on the table standin' in the middle of her room, and asked would I sate myself for a bit, while she just wint up the strate for some things she was wantin'. But I tell yez she wasn't gone ten minutes before I wished meself out of it again. There was the quarest creaking noises goin' on yez ever heard, and the candle began to flare back'ards and forrards—so," said Biddy, as, suiting the action to the word, she accidentally extinguished the candle on the table be-

side her, leaving the large kitchen quite dim, except in the corner where Aunt Mary and I were silently working.

"Wait," said Johnny, who was becoming rather nervous; "let me light the candle before you go on."

"Och, what's the matter wid ye?" chided Biddy. "Be aisy, will ye, and kape yer sate till I tell yez. Well," she resumed, "the quare noises got worse and worse, and the candle kep' flarin' wilder and wilder, until at last it went it out on me intirely, and there I stud in the dark. All in a flusther, I made me way to the door, and, belave me, if Mrs. Maloney—bad luck to her!—hadn't locked it by mistake and taken the kay wid her! So afther gropin' me way about the room, and knockin' over the things trying to find a match, I bethought me to knock on the wall and see was there any one in the next room that would push me in a match under the door, when—the saints protect us! if I didn't hear the awfullestest groanin' a-comin' out of the wall that iver a mortal heard! So I just whipt the shoes and frock off uv me, and lept into bed like a flash."

"Oh dear! I don't wonder you were frightened, Biddy," said Kitty, as the children huddled more closely about her, and even Master Robert drew a few steps nearer and sat down.

"Do yez, now?" whispered Biddy, confidentially. "But the worst hasn't come yet. Well, there I lay, all gathered up in the bed, tryin' to kape the groanin' out uv me ears, when I felt somethin' pullin'—pullin' softly at the quilts, and thin if somethin' warrm didn't kind uv brathe over me face. Just as I was goin' to skrame out, Mrs. Maloney came bustlin' in, all uv a flusther for kapin' me alone so long; and I felt quite comforted-like when she had the candle lit again. After she was in the bed, she told me how she had bin persuaded into buyin' iver so many things more 'n she meant to, spendin' tin dollars in all. 'And do ye know, Biddy,' sez she, 'it puts me all in a shiver-like when I think how I've bin spendin' Mike's money, and he moulderin' in the grave, widdout me ever forgivin' him at all, at all!' 'Och, don't be silly, Mrs. Maloney!' sez I, tryin' to comfort her, though I couldn't help shiverin'

meself when I bethought me of the dreadful groanin's I had heard; 'don't be botherin' yerself wid such notions; Mike's got other things to trouble him now, I warrant, besides the likes of ye!' And so we kept a talkin' till at last we both fell aslape."

"And didn't any thing more happen, after all?" asked Robby, quite disappointed.

"Wait till yez hear, and don't be spilin' me story," said Biddy, mysteriously, as she looked nervously around her, causing all the children instinctively to do the same.

"Well, as I was sayin', we both fell aslape, and I didn't wake up till the middle uv the night. The moonlight by that was a-pourin' in the room, showin' all the furniture and every thing distinct, and there, in the corner, I saw the black Thing a-standin' that had bin pullin' me bed-kivers, an' it a-lookin' at me wid glarin' eyes; and the next minute if I didn't see a sight that near brought me heart into me mouth. There, on a chair close by Mrs. Maloney, was—yez may belave me now, for I saw it wid my own eyes—a skeleton! A skeleton, stark an' stiff on the chair, a kind uv leanin' over forninst Mrs. Maloney;

an' she slapin', only fur the snorin', like a young baby."

"Oh, Biddy!" exclaimed all the children, in a breathless whisper, "what *did* you do?"

"Well, I somehow fell aslape, and me lookin' at it. But after a while, the wind a-moanin', or the groanin' in the wall, woke me up again, and—"

"Was it there yet?" whispered Robby, faintly, drawing his stool closer to Biddy.

'Indade it was then, just the same as iver," she answered.

"Did it come to reproach her, Biddy?"

"Is it *spake* ye mane? Shure, Masther Robert, how kud it spake widdout a tongue; and did ye ever hear uv a skeleton wid a tongue? But wait a bit till I tell yez. Well, there was I lyin', kind o' dumb like, when the room gettin' lighter wid the comin' morning, Mrs. Maloney giv a start and lept from the bed. *Whist!* but the black Thing let a great cry and Mrs. Maloney screamed! Then she retched out her hands to the skeleton—'Oh! Mike,' sez she, 'but I forgive ye wid all me sowl!'

(At this point of Biddy's story I chanced

to drop the lid of the flour-barrel, extinguishing my candle in the act. The children screamed "What's that?" and Robby, quite forgetting his courageous qualities, fairly tumbled over on the floor at Biddy's feet. Finally, after the candle was lit again, and they all clung tremblingly about her, anxious to hear the end of the horrible story, yet almost afraid to speak, Robby managed to gasp out—)

"Well, what happened then? Tell us quick! When she spoke to the skeleton."

"Happened!" exclaimed Biddy. "Why, nothing—only Mrs. Maloney, afther liftin' it, giv it a shake or two and *put it on;* and a very fine skeleton it was! It had thir-r-ty springs to it, and made her look mighty grand, I tell yez. But who'd a-ever thought of Kitty Maloney wearin' such toggery! Och! the money had overcome her sinse intirely; an' to think uv her forgivin' Mike fur fifty dollars. Tho' it's not meself as 'ud a held out longer."

The children began to laugh, and Robby looked rather sheepish as he said: "Humph! I *knew* it would turn out to be something of that kind!"

"Did ye, now?" replied Biddy, quietly.

"But the black goblin, Biddy, with the glaring eyes, that gave the awful cry?" asked Robby, not quite satisfied.

"The gobble-in!" cried Biddy, in mock amazement; "and did I say now it was a gobble-in? It was Mrs. Maloney's black cat, ye silly crayture; an' what cat wouldn't scrame out, wid Mrs. Maloney jumpin' on it?"

"And the creaking, Biddy, and the groans in the wall?"

"Och! sure, I clane forgot to tell yez what that was; that was a poor soul in the next room a-rockin' in an old chair, an' a-groanin' wid the toothache."

"And Mrs. Maloney's scar," asked Kitty; "how did she get that?"

"Didn't I tell yez?" said Biddy, innocently. "Well, that came from her tumblin' on the hot coals when she was a baby. But sakes alive! if it ain't strikin' nine! Go to bed wid yez, now; and you, Master Robert, don't be so aisy scar-ed with skeletons and such trash after this."

Thus ended Biddy's first and last "horrible story."

THE ARTIST AND THE NEWSBOY.

SOMETIMES men say of an artist, "He is great;" "He has learned the trick of nature;" or, "He loves the Beautiful." Sometimes they say, "He is famous," and sometimes, "He is good."

All these things were spoken of the late Henry Inman. As a man, he was revered and beloved by all who knew him, and as a painter, his name ranks among the highest in the land.

Among his more celebrated pictures, and one of which many of my readers have no doubt seen an engraving, is one called "The Newsboy." It represents a ruddy, ragged, but honest-looking little fellow leaning against the steps of the Astor House, with a bundle of newspapers under his arm.

No one can look upon that bright, intelligent face, with its glowing cheeks and sparking eyes, lit with energy and sturdy purpose,

without feeling that the picture is no fancy sketch, but a veritable portrait of some rare prince among the newsboys. And a portrait it really is.

When Mr. Inman first conceived the idea of painting this picture, he sauntered slowly along Broadway, in the hope of seeing some fine specimen of the newsboy race who would do for a "subject." Many passed him, or, meeting his attentive eye, pressed eagerly through the crowd, shouting, "*Sun*, *Herald*, and *New-Era!* want *New Ery*, sir?" but the right face was not among them. Some had a squint; some looked vicious; some had straight red hair sticking out like bristles; some were badly formed, and some showed a deformed spirit within. One and all either offended his artistic eye, or fell short of his idea of a genuine out-and-out newsboy.

Almost in despair of finding what he sought, our artist was about turning into the Astor House on Broadway, when suddenly one of the motley group of boys collected near its steps arrested his attention. Here, at last, was his ideal, in living, breathing form! In the stalwart, roguish, noble-looking youngster

before him, and now, indeed, rushing forward with an eager "Morninpaper, sir!" he felt sure that he beheld the original of his future picture. The little fellow was ragged and dirty enough, but what of that? Health and cheerfulness fairly gleamed through the dirt (though I know Dr. Lewis will have me indicted for saying so); and the black, tangled hair, shining where it curled in spite of every thing, straggling from beneath the tattered straw hat, made the ruddy face look all the handsomer. Then the man's coat that he wore, with its tails cut off, and its sleeves shortened by a great roll at the wrist, was a picture in itself; while the trousers full of patches—to say nothing of the places where patches ought to be—filled the artist's heart with delight.

Yes! he would paint him, rags, dirt, and all. The grand boy-nature would be there still. "How fortunate!" thought the happy artist; "begrimed though he be, the fellow looks as if a king's heart were beating in his bosom."

So Mr. Inman bought a paper of the boy, and asked him whether he would be his

model; in other words, stand for a picture. The boy looked astonished, but gave a ready assent. After a few moments' talk, it was agreed that early on the following morning, Joe (for that was the young gentleman's name) should appear at the artist's studio, to have his portrait taken.

"You will certainly be there," said Mr. Inman, looking searchingly into the boy's face.

"Sir!" exclaimed Joe, growing very red, and straightening himself up to his full height.

"You won't disappoint me?" reiterated the artist, at the same time offering the boy a silver quarter by way of "a retaining fee."

"Look here, mister," rejoined Joe, fiercely, laying his papers on a hydrant, so as to be ready for a fight if it should prove necessary, "none uv yer foolin'—didn't I SAY I'd come? And I don't want none of yer money, nuther, till I've earned it."

So saying, Master Joseph turned haughtily upon his heel, and catching up his papers, commenced shouting, "Sun-'erald-and-New-Er-y!" in sublime disregard of artists in general, and of Mr. Inman in particular.

Early on the following morning, while the artist was in his studio, preparing for the day's work, he was startled by a "double-quick" on the bare stairway.

In another instant, strangely in contrast with the daring ascent, a modest knock was heard at the door.

"Come in!" shouted the artist, well pleased at the punctuality of his sitter. The door creaked. Looking up, what a sight presented itself to his astonished gaze! There stood his "sitter," indeed; but, alas, it was no longer the newsboy, no longer the Joe upon whom the artist's soul had been feasting in dreams the long night through. The boy had actually been washed; his pantaloons had been neatly brushed and mended; his coat exchanged for a "stylish" Sunday jacket; his fine throat enveloped in a fearful collar; his tattered straw hat abandoned for a trim cap, and the shining, matted curls were cropped off close to his head, leaving only a dingy stubble in their place.

"You young rascal, you," gasped the disappointed artist, "what in mischief's name have you been doing to yourself?"

"Doin', sir?" was the meek reply, "I haint bin doin' nothin'.—It taint nine o'clock; and I had ter sell all me mornin' papers, sir, afore I went home ter slick up and dress."

"To dress?" echoed Mr. Inman, savagely; "and who told you, you little scoundrel, to rig yourself up in that style?"

"Couldn't help it, sir," apologized Joe; "me shoes an' jacket is new, sir, or was a month ago—every thin' on me's decint but me breeches—and for that, sir, I could have a new pair by next week, if you'd wait."

This was too much for the poor artist. He sprang from his chair, and would have gone into a violent passion, had he not burst into a hearty fit of laughter.

The boy looked puzzled for an instant, and then, after casting an almost tearful look upon the breeches, which he believed to be the sole cause of the artist's emotion, turned indignantly toward the door.

"Stay!" said Mr. Inman, suddenly checking his mirth, "come back, my boy; we do not understand each other. I wanted to paint you *as you looked yesterday*, and now you have spoiled yourself for my picture, by put-

ting on your best clothes and cutting your hair. Do you understand?"

"He! he!" grinned Joe, "that's the go, is it, sir? Well, I'm blowed if I ever'd a-thought of gettin' my picture took in them air old clothes; but I'll step around an' put 'em on ag'in in a jiffy, sir, if you say the word."

"No, no, Joe; not to-day. The hair was what I wanted particularly. How long do you think it will be before you can raise another headful, my man?"

"Not long, sir," replied Joe, cheeringly; "I've got a reg'lar mop, sir, gen'rally. It 'ud have bin down to me heels afore this, if mammy hadn't cropped it off last Sunday-school exhibition. She chipped it extra close this morning, yer see, on account uv having me pictur' took, he! he! But it'll be out in less nor a month, sir."

Whether the artist concluded to wait for the hair or not, I do not remember, as it is many years since he narrated the incident. Certain it is, however, that Joe, though a man grown now (and, let us believe, an honest and good man), is living an eternal youth in Inman's picture of the Newsboy.

THE BOYS' BATTLE-SONG.

AIR.—*Benny Havens.*

WE are marching on to battle, boys,
With banners floating high,
In the field of Life before us, boys,
To conquer ere we die!
With brave old Truth for general,
And Honor as his aide,
We'll face the thickest of the fight,
And never be afraid.

Chorus.—For *we* are "Young America,"
And if our hearts are true,
There's nothing right or possible
Our army cannot do.

As we march along to manhood,
We must get a full supply
Of the scholars' ammunition, boys,
And keep our powder dry!

And Faith must build our fortresses,
Where lurk the hosts of Evil ;
And if the Arch-fiend storms the walls,
We'll teach him to be civil.

Chorus.—For *we* are "Young America," etc.

Let no jealousy or discontent
Our ranks divide—and then
If we cannot all be officers,
We can at least be MEN !
Soon the legions of Temptation
May assail us ere we know—
We'll watch, and strike them as they come,
Nor take the second blow.

Chorus.—For *we* are "Young America," etc.

In the contest for our principles,
Oh ! Father, make us strong,
To ever battle for the Right,
And struggle with the Wrong !
May we shield the weak and helpless,
And aid the striving soul,
And spread the Gospel's banner out
From icy pole to pole.

Chorus.—For *we* are "Young America," etc.

Though our sires are bravely toiling,
They'll leave some good undone;
And the heritage of noble work
Descends from sire to son.
Then shout aloud our battle-song;
Columbia joins the chorus,
And bids us speed to win ere long
The victories before us.

Chorus.—For *we* are "Young America,"
And if our hearts are true,
There's nothing right or possible
Our army cannot do.

THE END.

TURN CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT
202 Main Library

DAN PERIOD 1	2	3
HOME USE	5	6

ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS
Renewals and Recharges may be made 4 days prior to the due date.
Books may be Renewed by calling 642-3405

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

MAY 19 1997
REC.CIRC. APR 17 1997

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
BERKELEY, CA 94720

U. C. BERKELEY LIBRARIES
C055074290

M269185

D644

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Irvington Stories