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FROM

Prof. A. M. Schlesinger

LETTERS EVERYWHERE.

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LETTERS EVERYWHERE .

STORIES AND RHYMES FOR CHILDREN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE DOVE, AND OTHER STORIES OF OLD,"

ETC. ETC.

WITH TWENTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS BY

THÉOPHILE SCHULER.

LONDON : SEELEY, JACKSON, & HALLIDAY.

BOSTON : ROBERTS BROTHERS.

1869

Inv 869.4

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Prof. G. W. Schlegel

LONDON:
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS,
BREAD STREET HILL.

53-165-
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LETTERS EVERYWHERE.

Do you think A B and C are only to be found in books? Did you never meet them in the fields, and in the streets, and in the houses?

If you were asked to find something like a round O, you would soon think of your hoop; and you know you can make an X by laying two sticks across each other. But did you ever see great A riding on a donkey, and curly S all made of flowers?

When you have looked at all these pictures, you will be able to find letters wherever you go.

ALFIE.

ALFIE, little Alfie,
With the small, rough head.
Cheeks like rosy apples,
Oh, so round and red !

Alfie, mother's Alfie,
Best of all the set ;
Brothers' funny plaything,
Annie's little pet !

Alfie, merry Alfie,
Riding on the ass,
Picking up the apples,
Rolling on the grass.

Alfie, tired Alfie,
After fun and joy,
Fast asleep and dreaming,
Little weary boy !



ALFRED AND THE APPLE-TREES.

“ALFIE, I say, Alfie, come and have a ride on the old ass! We’re going down to the orchard to pick the apples!” So shouted Annie Arnold to her little brother. He tumbled two little blind puppies out of his pinafore on to the floor, and rolled over on to his feet. Then he ran out into the garden. Farmer Arnold used to say, “What a funny little chap our Alfie is!” I don’t think he was far wrong. Such a round boy he was!—round arms, round legs, a little round back, and the roundest of round faces! How he used to laugh! Ever since that day when he laughed at his father out

of his cradle. Five years ago, for the first time, he seemed seriously to have stopped laughing. And then how he would tumble about! He would tumble out of bed, tumble up-stairs, tumble down-stairs, tumble off the hay-stacks, tumble over the gates, tumble out of the carts, and tumble off the horses' backs. Yet he always managed to escape broken bones, and tumble as he would had always a merry laugh afterwards. His big brothers used to call him "Football." They kicked him about very roughly, but he liked nothing better.

This time it was only Annie and the yard-boy that were waiting for him. They showed him at once his seat on old Anna's back. There were two baskets at her sides for the apples. A little pair of steps was fastened to these. The steps made an

arch over the boy's head, as he sat astride the ass, his feet coming over the animal's neck. Away they went along the road. How Alfie shouted with glee as the ladder knocked against his head! How he chattered to old Anna, stroking her long ears, and trying to peep into her face!

I am afraid he did not do much work when they got to the apple-trees. He thought he was very busy. The brothers were calling him all the morning. "Here, Football, bring us a basket!" "Alfie, my lad, a hand this way!" Do you think his little hand was of much use? I fancy, do you know, that in truth the great fellows were so fond of their little pet, that they liked to have him with them. Yet they teased him well.

At one time he was up at the top of a

tree all alone. Brother Ben would not help him down, till Annie begged ever so hard with the tears all ready to fall. Alfie did not cry. He sat there, one arm round the bough, munching away at his rosy apple. Ben said he would leave him there, and the birds would take his red cheeks for pretty peaches, and come and eat them up! I half think Annie believed him, but the boy only answered by his own merry laugh.

At last came the resting-time, when they were all hot and tired. Then they made Alfie a pillow for Will's great, heavy head. He shouted and laughed and kicked, but a strong arm held the little legs, and he could not move. A great struggle did it, however; down went Will's head on the grass. In a moment the child was astride his brother's chest, eating his bread and cheese,

and taking many a sly bite from the green apple.

“Alfie,” said quiet Annie at last, “Mother won’t like you to eat so many apples, I’m sure. How many have you had?” “T’ree,” said the boy, gravely. “Oh, Alfie, that’s not true, I know! You must have eaten six at least.” “T’ree, just t’ree, ’xactly,” said the child again. “Football, I fear you are a story-teller!” said Will, as if he were very grave. “Ben, we must beat him, we must!” “If ’ou can,” cried Alfie, starting up and darting off. His tall brother was soon on his feet. Away they went, in and out among the trees. They shouted, and dodged, and raced. Then Alfie was caught. He was brought back, laughing and fighting, flung over his brother’s shoulder, his little rough

head hanging down, his feet in Will's hand. What shall be done to him? Shall they leave him up in a high tree to scare away little thieving boys? How he laughs at the idea! No; Will has another plan. He carries him off, away from the trees. Then, at the top of a grassy hill, he sets him rolling down. Over and over and over he goes. Faster and faster and faster he rolls. At last, I think, he would have really tumbled into the ditch at the bottom if a great foot had not come in the way. At the same moment a strong hand catches him up. He never even looked at the long red scratch on his arm. Out of breath he was, but his only cry was, "Do it again, do it again!"

But there was other work to be done. The little cart must be loaded with apples, and Anna must draw it. They set to work

in earnest. Yet now and then a shower of little hard apples came down on Alfie's head. How fast he caught them up and threw them back! When all was done, they started for home. How did the child get there? Part of the time on the ass's back. Once he was in a sack, swung about between the boys. When they got to the door, he sprang from Ben's shoulder to his mother's lap. There he hid his little hot face, and his rough head, crying out all the time, what "sp'endid fun" he had been having.

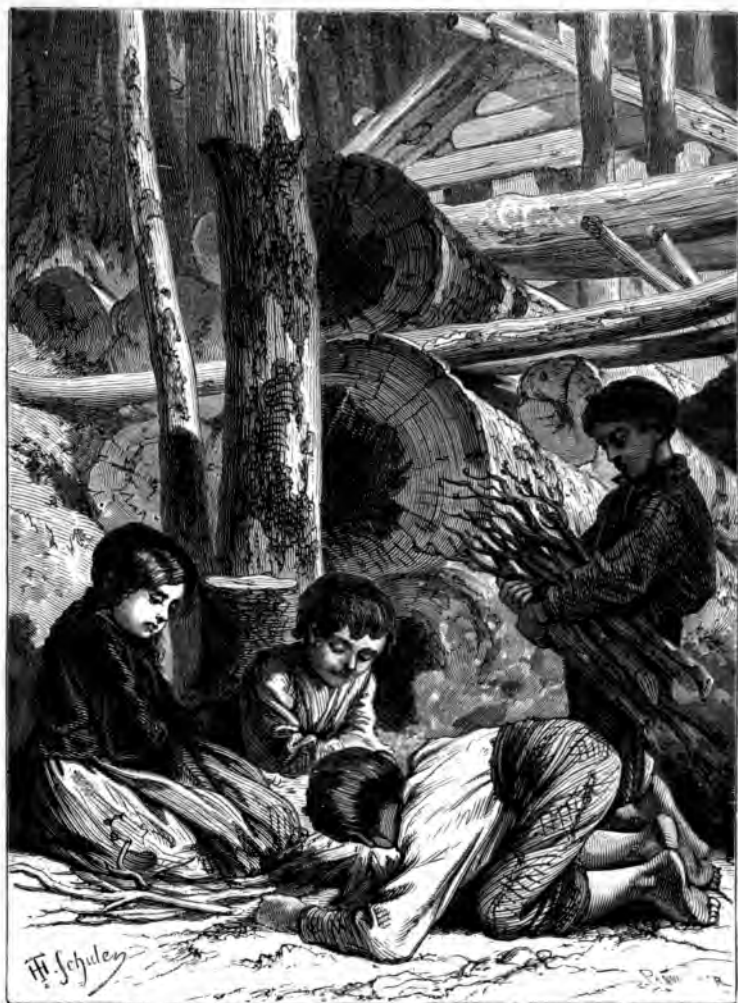
But before tea was over he had fallen fast asleep. He lay curled up on the hearth-rug, his head on his father's feet, his little fat hands clasping them tightly. And, as Ben said, he was smiling merrily even in his sleep. So ended Alfie's day among the Apple-trees.

BERTHA IN THE BEECH-WOOD.

BERTHA and her brothers play
In the old Beech-wood,
Brittle branches gather they,
Fire's readiest food.

Bring the bundles, Billy, bring,
Withered sticks and dry,
Set the fire, clap and sing,
See it rising high !

Blow the blaze and jump and shout !
In the smoky air,
Quick short flames are darting out,
Children, oh ! BEWARE !



BERTHA AND HER BROTHERS.

“BUT, Betty, you always say that, and I never know what you mean; you might just as well tell me all about it, how little Bertha got burnt and all the rest, and not be so cross.”

So said little Bertie to his young nurse as she caught him up and carried him off the hearth-rug with the usual cry, “I declare, Master Bertie, if you don’t get all alight some day like our Bertha at home, poor little dear, it will be a wonder, that’s all.”

“I wasn’t doing any harm,” he went on; “I only just rolled up that bit of brown

paper, and it looks just like the thing Brother Fred makes a smoke with in his mouth. If you'd only let me light it, I would blow it out at once, and you'd like it very much *then*. It isn't any harm."

"Any harm indeed!" said Betty sharply; "no more it was of those boys to set our Bertha burning, I suppose! But come," she added more gently, as she saw the little boy rubbing his eyes, "you nestle down here on my lap and I'll tell you all about it, a nice story before Nursie comes home and Baby!"

"Oh do, Betty," said the boy, and Betty began:

"It was not long ago, only just before I came to be your nurse, when I was at home in the winter. It was just after Christmas, and our boys were not going to

school for a whole week. Mother and I had enough to do to keep the house from being turned out of windows."

"Why, Betty, they couldn't turn the house out of windows, for the windows are in the house."

"Yes, yes, Master Bertie, but that's how the saying goes. Anyhow they went tramp, tramping about enough to bring the floor in. We were glad enough when they were out of doors, playing about among the trees. It's in a wood we live, and Father has to cut the trees down. There are lots of them lying about, great beech trees, ever so big. Here and there they grow so close that it's quite dark and gloomy. You would like to go with me there some day and play hide-and-seek, I know. Well, our little Bertha was always after the boys; Bob and she

couldn't be long apart, and go where they would, she was sure to be trotting after them. Mother didn't mind much, for she thought the child could take care of herself. But she had a lesson at last."

"Your mother had a lesson, Betty! Why, my mamma doesn't learn lessons; it's only Charlie and Nellie that do that. Charlie says *I shall soon*, but I don't want to."

"Not that kind of lesson, Master Bertie! Mother learned not to trust the boys, that's what I mean. It was very cold that day, I know, and Mother put a warm little coat on Bertha before she let her run out after the others—Bob and the two elder ones. Then Mother went to wash, and I began to peel the potatoes for dinner. I was busy, I remember, when Jack came in and took two or three of the biggest in his

hands very slyly and ran off with them. I called after him, but it wasn't any use ; so I let him go, and went on peeling. I could hear them outside playing with the red leaves that made a kind of pretty carpet all through the wood. You can't think how pretty it is, Master Bertie—all the red leaves and the green moss and the ivy, and the great blackbirds hopping about it all. After a little the boys went farther off. Once I heard the little one half crying, and she said she was cold, and wanted to come home. And then Bobbie called out : 'Never mind, Bertha, we are going to get a lot of sticks, and you'll be warm enough by and by!' I couldn't think what he meant, and even when Bill came past the door with a great bundle of sticks in his arms, I never thought what they were about. They had gone

round to the back of the house, and I could hear them talking very fast. Once I thought the boys were fighting. But I was busy thinking, wondering about the little children I was to go and take care of soon, right away in London. I was singing over all the little songs I thought I should want, and I never dreamt what was coming. All of a sudden I heard the boys shout out, 'Hurrah! hurrah!' and there was a great clapping of hands. Then I could hear Bill's voice :
'Now for the praties.'"

"Praties! what did he mean by 'praties?'" asked little Bertie eagerly.

"Oh, Master Bertie, don't you know? That's what boys like Bill call the potatoes when they're at play. I found out afterwards that they had made a little fire there all among the logs, and that they were

trying to bake the potatoes that Bill had taken. They were very quiet then, as children always are when they are in mischief. I almost forgot all about them. But all of a sudden there came a great shriek that seemed to go all through the woods, and then a great cry of all the children at once. I hadn't time to run out and see what was the matter when Bob came rushing in, shouting, 'Mother, Mother, Bertha's all on fire!' In another minute Mother was out, and had caught the child, though she looked like nothing but a bundle of flames, out of Bill's arms. Quick as thought she turned the washing-tub over upon her, there on the brick-floor of the kitchen. In no time the flames were out, but the poor child lay quite still; her screams had stopped almost at once, and she seemed to have fainted away.

Mother said a piece of the burning wood must have fallen on her frock without their seeing it, and scorched away till the wind came and blew it all into a flame. Bill was across the wood and down the hill to the village for the doctor almost before we had time to tell him to go. When Dr. Brown came he shook his head, for the poor little feet and arms and legs were terribly burnt. The little dear's screams were dreadful when he dressed them. Bobbie couldn't stand it anyhow; he went and hid away in the wood, and we could not find him for ever so long."

"But didn't Bertha ever get well any more?"

"She didn't seem like it for days and days. She just lay still and quiet when you didn't touch her, and took no notice of anything. Mother fretted and fretted, and

thought she was pining away. We couldn't get as much as a look from her, but she just kept her eyes shut; or if she did open them, they had a look in them as if she had enough to think about in the pain. The doctor said the burns were getting well nicely, but he didn't know if she would ever get over the 'shock,' as he called it. At last, one day when it was getting dark, and we were watching her, Mother and I, by the firelight—we had put her cot close down by the side of the fire—Mother said to me all of a sudden, 'Betty, my dear, I wish you'd try a-singing to her a bit; maybe it would rouse her up, do ye see!' And I tried, though there did seem a lump in my throat at first. I sang the bits of songs I had all ready for you, Master Bertie: 'The Little Clock,' that you're so fond of, and the 'Little

Birds' that were stolen, you know, and the hymn, 'Glory, glory.' She did not seem to care for any of them till I came to the one you like best of all, about the 'Busy Bee.' When I began to sing that she turned her large eyes, that looked so sad, to my face; and when I had done, she gave a great sigh, and said, 'Over 'gain.' The second time there came the least little bit of a funny smile over her face. When I had finished she called softly, 'Mammy!' And then how Mother did cry and kiss her, and kiss her and cry again! We gave her something good to take, and then she went off to sleep. When she woke up she was quite a different child; and every day she got better and better, till I came away to you here in London. The boys will have it, it was 'Busy Bee' that made her well. Mother

shakes her head, and says they didn't deserve to have her well again at all, but she is so glad about it that she can't scold them much."

"And is she quite well again now, Betty?"

"Mother writes in her letter to-day that she is running about again, and that the boys can't call her anything but 'Busy Bee.' Yet she is not half so strong or rosy as she used to be. So that's what comes of playing with the fire, you see, Master Bertie!"

But Bertie did not seem to see it at all. He had caught the sound of Nurse's voice coming upstairs with Baby, and finding that the story was done, he slipped off Betty's lap, and ran away to meet her.

CLIMBING AND CHIMING.

CHIME away! chime away!
Set the old Bell swinging,
Send its music o'er the woods,
Ringing, sweetly ringing!

Clasp and cling! clasp and cling!
Spite the merry chiming,
Cool of head and calm of nerve
Need ye be in climbing!

Come away! come away!
Catch at beam and rafter,
Clambering thus is fearful chance,
Spite your careless laughter!





COWARD OR NO COWARD.

“COULDN’T ! I *couldn’t* do it ?”

“ No, you couldn’t, Charlie.”

“ I *couldn’t* ! Do you mean what you say ? Do you dare——”

“ Come, come, Charlie, you know you couldn’t !” said Christie Campbell to his young comrade as they walked home together from school. They had just been talking, boy-like, of all the grand feats they could perform. They were rough, brave, fearless fellows, both of them, with this difference, Christie talked, and talked loudly, of what he *could* do ; Charlie boasted of what he *could not* do. In other words, Charlie thought his powers much greater than they were. He

would say in an offhand, careless way, "Now, if I liked, I could swim across that pond," everybody being quite sure that he could do no such thing. This time his boast had been that he would some day "climb the church-tower, say 'How do you do?' to the owls at the top, and take a look in at the little slits of windows and see if the old bell was all right." He would soon have forgotten all about it, if it had not been for Christie's provoking, "Come, come, Charlie!" This chafed his proud spirit, and he answered, tossing his head, "Oh, well, doubt me if you will! Anyhow, to-morrow afternoon sees me looking at that bell, ay, and sitting astride it too, if I'm not mistaken. And what's more, Chris, if you were a lad of courage, you'd be with me."

Courage! That was hard to stand, but

Christie only bit his lip and walked on. The boys had their caps full of cherries, and as they walked, they ate. For some minutes nothing was said. It was a splendid afternoon. Their way lay across a kind of waste of heather and broom, dotted over with small young firs. A little before them rose a hilly wood, just beginning to take its autumn colours, and at the edge of the wood was seen a fine old church-tower, very ancient in appearance, and thickly covered with ivy. Nothing more was said of the great climbing feat for a time. The cherries were eaten, there was a long chase after a butterfly, and at last the wood was passed, and the village street came in sight. But first there was the churchyard to cross, and for some time the two boys stood looking up at the grand old tower. Charlie pointed out the thick trunk

of the ivy, "as strong as strong could be." He showed how thickly and closely it grew, pointed out places of firm footing among its knotted stems; in fact, he declared the whole thing mere "child's play," hardly worth doing. However, he added in a minute, "Oh, well, my lad, be a coward, and leave the name and the fame to me." This was enough. Before they parted at the other gate, it was settled that they should meet to-morrow after dinner and spend their half-holiday in making "a name and a fame" for themselves. And so Charlie went home and boasted of what he was going to do. His mother looked frightened, but his father only laughed at the idea, and nothing was said to stop him. The whole thing was treated as a joke.

Christie felt very differently. He was

hot and uncomfortable as he went slowly home. His grandmother was looking for him. She had begun to get uneasy because he was late. He sat on his stool by her, his chin in his hands, very silently, as she stroked his head and fondled him. "God bless 'ee, my dearie," she said, "what should I do without 'ee then?" How guilty he felt! The colour rushed into his face; he had a fight to keep the tears back. Was his promise to Charlie right or wrong? At last he went up to bed. He stood for some time looking out of his window. There lay the quiet churchyard in the evening light, half twilight, half moonlight. He thought he could almost read the words on the slab of wood along the grave under the wall :

"A faithful friend, a mother dear,
A loving wife, lies buried here."

And his thoughts went from the dear mother there to the sailor father far away on the sea, and back to the kind old granny, who always called him her only comfort. Then came the thought of a slip!—a crash!—a fearful death!—Granny's tears. How he shuddered! But in a moment something seemed to whisper "Coward!" in his ear. Again he looked up at the grand old tower, stretched his arms, seemed to feel his hold on the ivy, fancied the bounding delight of being up there indeed, and pulling himself up to his full height, with a merry laugh, he turned round and went to bed.

Once or twice that night he started, and awoke with a cry. But the morrow came. Lessons were over, and the school shut up. Another hour, and from the cottages round appeared the children, come out for their

afternoon's fun on the green. Then Charlie and Christie met, three or four boys with them to see the joke, as they thought it. Coats were thrown off, and away went the boys. Hand over hand like a couple of cats they climbed. In truth it was not hard for such nimble young fellows, for the tower was in many parts much fallen to pieces, stones were out of their places and gave good footing, nor was the height very great. At last Charlie reached the narrow opening, and Christie was only just behind. The boys below set up a cheer, and rushed into the porch to set the bells ringing. They looked up, for the old porch had almost lost its ceiling, and there were the two climbers!

They had squeezed themselves through the slit in the tower, had clambered along the beam to which the bell was fixed, and were,

indeed and in truth, astride the bell itself! How hard they pulled, and what a funny muffled sound rang over the woods! It didn't last long, for it brought the clerk down quickly, and he, in a terrible voice, ordered the children off, and shouted to the climbers to come down.

Christie was not sorry. His heart was beating fast, his head seemed to go round as he looked down below. How he got through to the air again, how by clinging with hands and feet he reached the ground in safety, he never knew. When he heard the shouts of the children, and indeed of many older than children, he did look up and try to copy Charlie's offhand way. But a whisper had come to him from a little girl: "Your granny's so frightened; she's dreadfully bad." As soon as he could he broke

away from them all, and rushed home. He hardly looked at the kind neighbour who was chafing the poor trembling, wrinkled hands. In a moment his face was hid in his granny's lap. It was her own voice he heard then: "Thank the Lord! It's my laddie, my comfort! He did keep ye then, after all!" And she told them that she was quite well now, and bade them leave her with her boy. But when Christie looked up again and saw what that afternoon's trouble had done,—how the dear, loving face had grown ashy pale, and looked twenty years older than it did in the morning,—oh, how he felt! All the evening he kept saying over and over to himself, that, let who would call him coward, he would leave this climbing to other people, that he would!

DISHONESTY.

DOING mean, dishonest deeds,
Ever leads to sorrow ;
Short the pleasure won to-day,
Dark disgrace to-morrow.

Down, then, little pilferers, down !
Trust not to deceiving,
Dream not there are none to see,
Or detect your thieving !

Doubt not, doubt not, little sins
Are but the beginning,
Darker deeds do follow fast,
Deeper sorrow bringing.





DAN'S DISGRACE.

DANIEL DEANE was a hard-working man, but a very poor one. Things had long gone hardly with him ; work on the land had been scarce, and no other work could Deane do. They had, as his wife said, " a large little family," which it was not easy to feed. Deane had left his old master to seek higher wages, and had come away into a county where nobody knew him. He had an idea that he should find better work there ; but he was disappointed. A day now and then was all the work he could get. So the children's clothes got very ragged, their schooling could not be paid for, and they

were often very hungry. Then the mother would be, as she said, "very down and low." She lost her spirit, and began to think that they should all go to ruin.

The little ones seeing this, soon understood that she did not try to manage them, and they grew very wild and rough. This was a great trouble to poor Deane. He was not quick to see a thing; there was not much sharpness about him. But he knew right from wrong; he might, as he often said, go down in the world, but do a mean, dishonest deed he never would. So he watched his boys, and grew very anxious about them. And the more he saw them getting wild and unruly, the more he turned to his youngest, the little sickly boy of two years old, who could but just say "Dada" to him as he came home, tired and vexed, after a long

search for work. Poor little fellow! they watched him getting thinner and paler with aching hearts, for what could they give him to save the dear life that was fast slipping away? It was altogether a heavy weight of care that was dragging the poor man almost down to the ground.

It was a beautiful part of the country that the Deanes had come to live in. High, steep hills ran up into the clouds, the sun shining hotly on their grassy sides. Streams of clear water came dashing down among the rocky cuttings, making sweet music as they ran along. These streams were in some parts turned to good use. They were drawn into pipes and made to turn water-wheels. One such water-mill was not far from the poor cottage of the Deanes. It was the boys' favourite place to play in. There was

And his thoughts went from the dear mother there to the sailor father far away on the sea, and back to the kind old granny, who always called him her only comfort. Then came the thought of a slip!—a crash!—a fearful death!—Granny's tears. How he shuddered! But in a moment something seemed to whisper "Coward!" in his ear. Again he looked up at the grand old tower, stretched his arms, seemed to feel his hold on the ivy, fancied the bounding delight of being up there indeed, and pulling himself up to his full height, with a merry laugh, he turned round and went to bed.

Once or twice that night he started, and awoke with a cry. But the morrow came. Lessons were over, and the school shut up. Another hour, and from the cottages round appeared the children, come out for their

afternoon's fun on the green. Then Charlie and Christie met, three or four boys with them to see the joke, as they thought it. Coats were thrown off, and away went the boys. Hand over hand like a couple of cats they climbed. In truth it was not hard for such nimble young fellows, for the tower was in many parts much fallen to pieces, stones were out of their places and gave good footing, nor was the height very great. At last Charlie reached the narrow opening, and Christie was only just behind. The boys below set up a cheer, and rushed into the porch to set the bells ringing. They looked up, for the old porch had almost lost its ceiling, and there were the two climbers!

They had squeezed themselves through the slit in the tower, had clambered along the beam to which the bell was fixed, and were,

indeed and in truth, astride the bell itself! How hard they pulled, and what a funny muffled sound rang over the woods! It didn't last long, for it brought the clerk down quickly, and he, in a terrible voice, ordered the children off, and shouted to the climbers to come down.

Christie was not sorry. His heart was beating fast, his head seemed to go round as he looked down below. How he got through to the air again, how by clinging with hands and feet he reached the ground in safety, he never knew. When he heard the shouts of the children, and indeed of many older than children, he did look up and try to copy Charlie's offhand way. But a whisper had come to him from a little girl: "Your granny's so frightened; she's dreadfully bad." As soon as he could he broke

away from them all, and rushed home. He hardly looked at the kind neighbour who was chafing the poor trembling, wrinkled hands. In a moment his face was hid in his granny's lap. It was her own voice he heard then: "Thank the Lord! It's my laddie, my comfort! He did keep ye then, after all!" And she told them that she was quite well now, and bade them leave her with her boy. But when Christie looked up again and saw what that afternoon's trouble had done,—how the dear, loving face had grown ashy pale, and looked twenty years older than it did in the morning,—oh, how he felt! All the evening he kept saying over and over to himself, that, let who would call him coward, he would leave this climbing to other people, that he would!

escaped the miller did not get off without a good beating. Night fell upon the whole family in a sad state,—the mother fretting, the sick baby wailing, and the boys grumbling in the corner. Almost before daylight there was a cry in the cottage that little Davy was dying. There was running hither and thither, the children getting things for their mother, while the father was gone for the doctor. What a change his coming made ! The kindest of white-haired gentlemen, he soon soothed the weary moaning, and cheered the mother, and brightened up poor Deane himself. Then hearing the baby's constant cry of "Dan, b'other Dan," he turned on his heel and left the cottage. The whole family were gathered round a good breakfast sent from the doctor's own kitchen, when the door opened and his pleasant face ap-

peared. Just behind him, almost clinging to his coat, was young Dan. Tired and pale he looked indeed, but so grateful to his friend, so glad to be home again, that no one could do anything but welcome him.

A kind friend was the doctor to the whole family from that time. Young Dan Deane became his errand boy, and afterwards, in good time, his coachman. But never did he forget to his dying day the danger and disgrace which had followed his first and last deed of dishonesty.

EDDIE AND HIS BROTHERS.

Eddie and his brothers,
Eager, happy boys,
A stable is their playground,
And horses are their toys.

Eddie and his brothers,
Happy as the day,
Perched upon the crossbeams,
Every one at play.

Eddie and his brothers,
See each curly head
Shaking with the laughter
That echoes thro' the shed!




EARLWOOD FARM.

“ELIZABETH,” said Farmer Ellis to his trusty old servant one evening, “I shall be away all day to-morrow at the market; you can just give an eye to the boys, you know.” “Very well, sir,” she answered; and then added, “You couldn’t take, maybe, one of them with you, sir, could you?” “No,” he said very quickly; and then, turning on his heel with a laugh, “You seem quite afraid of the youngsters, Elizabeth.” “Dearie me! and so I be, sir! There never was such a set of madcaps on this earth before, sir, never! It’s patch and mend, patch and mend from morning to

night, and yet they're nought but beggars to look at after all! And as for broken heads and broken knees, why, it's plaster and bind from year's end to year's end! What the lads'll come to one of these days I don't know, that I don't." And, shaking her head very gravely, the old woman went off to comfort herself in her kitchen.

Very rough fellows the farmer's three boys were, in truth. Ever since their mother's death, long ago, they had been left to run wild. Eddie and Edwy were twins of ten years old, Edgar was two years younger. They were all just of one height, and were said to be never apart. Their father sent them to the school three miles off in the village, but I am afraid they were not often there. Yet they did not venture in their father's sight in school hours, for his hand was



rough and heavy, and they did not care to feel it. Folks said they were mostly to be found playing in the woods, or dabbling in the brook, when they ought to have been at their books. The master would come and talk to the farmer sometimes, but the boys were sure to find out that he was there, and then they took good care to avoid their father until he had had time to forget it all.

At this time the harvest was going on, so the school was shut up for a week or more. This poor Elizabeth knew to her cost.

An old, rambling place was Earlwood Farm; many a long, low room and dark passage might you pass through from the front door and porch to the kitchen garden. There was the farmer's business-room, and

the farmer's dining-hall, where he sat and smoked with his friends ; there was the great brick-floored kitchen where the farming-men came in to dinner ; there was Elizabeth's own kitchen, and store-rooms, and empty rooms many and large. But go where you would, she would say, there were always those boys, with their muddy feet, their birds'-nests, their whips, and their rubbish ! And this was why the good woman got up on this particular Friday morning with a very long sigh and a very long face. To have the young ones at home, and the master away, and to be actually told to keep an eye on them too !

Well, the farmer went off on his horse. The boys came down to their breakfast, and they ate as boys will eat of all the good things on that true farmer's table. Then they

ran about, in and out, up and down, shouting at the geese outside, teasing the sober old tom-cat inside, till Elizabeth turned them all out and locked all the doors. And afterwards, when she did venture to look after them, where should she find them but leaning head-foremost over the roof of the house, hunting for nests under the eaves ! How could such children escape broken heads ?

Well, the morning past, the three young Turks came in with torn clothes, rough heads, and dirty hands, and sat down to eat a huge dinner of eggs and bacon. They had not been so engaged very long when something was said about some new eel-baskets which had just been put into the river by a certain old fisherman, commonly called Daddy Enfield. "I vote

we go and see them !” cried Eddie, starting up, and in a minute the eager, untamed boys had flung away knives and forks and were off. “Mind ye are back to tea,” called Elizabeth after them, knowing that they had two or three miles to go. “Never fear,” shouted Edwy, and away they went.

They reached the river, and amused themselves for some time with their old friend and his eel-baskets. Then they wandered about, took off shoes and socks and jackets and paddled about in the water, pretending to catch the tempting little fish that swam about round their feet. Suddenly they caught sight of some horses belonging to an outlying farm of their father’s. These horses had been ploughing all day, and now their work was done. They had just been brought down to the

river to drink. The boys instantly resolved that they would ride them back to their stable. This they did. And while the horseman gave the animals their hay and fastened them up for the night, Eddie, Edwy, and Edgar were climbing about in the top of the barn. The old man, who was very deaf and dull, never thought of them again, but having done his work, went out and fastened the stable-door. "Heigh ho, here's a joke!" cried Eddie, when he discovered it. "What's to be done now?" They shouted, shook the heavy door, and tried to discover some way of escape, but in vain. Then they made up their minds to make the best of it, and amuse themselves till some one came to look for them.

All this time Elizabeth had been en-

joying the quiet time at home. Except for the cawing of the rooks, the cackling of the fowls and the ducks, and other pleasant farm-sounds, everything was still. But at last the day began to get cool and shady, the kettle was singing on the fire, the toast was made, the cows had long been milked,—in short, it was past tea-time. Many a look did the old woman take down the road and up the road, but time went on, the sun set, the moon rose, and the boys did not come. At last, trot, trot, trot, came the sound of the farmer's returning horse. How Elizabeth feared to tell him all she began to think about his children! But he met her fears with a laugh, and sat down to supper and a pipe before setting out to seek the run-aways. What a hunt he had! Even *his* merry face began to look grave as he turned

away from Daddy Enfield's, where he had made sure of finding them, and looked doubtfully up and down the river's banks. It was as he was coming thoughtfully home by way of the distant farm, that, passing the horses' shed, he heard a certain well-known boyish laugh. Stopping and looking in at the little window, he saw them—how? Just as you see them, little reader. Very happy, very merry, very snug they looked. And as their father let them out and drove them home before him, it was with many a laugh at the idea of "his young ponies," as he called them, being so nicely locked up out of mischief, just when he could not look after them.

FREDDY AND FANNY.

FAR from the city, from its fun and frolic,
Lived little Freddy in the pleasant farm,
In the quiet fields lived in happy freedom,
Free and merry laughter filling all the calm.

Far from the city, from its fret and flurry,
Lived busy Fanny in the pleasant farm,
Baking and brewing, keeping house for father,
Willing-hearted Fanny with her firm, strong arm.

Fondly they lived, the sister and the brother ;
See them together, working at the farm,
Filling the cider-trough, crushing the apples,
Happy and careless, and fearing no alarm.

Fondly they lived, the sister and the brother,
Fondest of friends in the pleasant farm,
Fred helping Fanny, Fan watching Freddy,
Firmly and kindly fencing him from harm.



FEAR, AND WHAT FOLLOWED

“FUNNY little Freddy, what a boy he is for his sister! One would almost fancy he would like to be tied to her apron-string!” That is what the neighbours used to say when they saw the two together,—the two solitary children at the Fairleigh Farm. And when you came to look at the little fellow, you could well understand it all. Such a small child for his age, such little white hands, fair skin, fair hair, and such deep, loving, pitiful, blue eyes, you could not by any means fancy him among rough boys. Fanny was very fond of him, too, her little motherless brother! In fact,

those great dark eyes of hers never looked so bright and happy as when she had time to feast them on him.

Time? Yes, Fanny had not much time to spare. Young as she was, she ruled her father's house, saw to the bread-making, cheese-making, cider-making, and all. And wherever she went, he was with her,—in the dairy, the farm-yard, at the cider-press. Her strong arms would lift him on to the tall horse, that he might guide him as he went round and round, turning the great round stone that crushed the apples for the cider. In the dairy she would not forget to fill his little hands with the parings off the new-made cheese, nor his little cup with the fresh, new milk he liked so much. In the farm-yard she would throw a large handful of seed to his pretty fan-tail pigeons,

even if the other birds had to go without. When the cider was making, he had many a taste of the nice juice crushed out of the apples. Ah yes, there could be no doubt that Fanny loved Freddy if she loved nobody else! But then she could never forget how nearly she had been called to forfeit that dear little brother, and how fearful the prospect had seemed at the time. And this was how it all happened.

Freddy had always been a shy, timid child. He feared his father because of his loud voice and bearded face. He feared the farm-men because of their rough ways. But more than all, Freddy feared a lie. He could not and would not utter a falsehood. His firmness in this had nearly cost him his life.

There was a village-green near Fairleigh

Farm, on which the children had all their Saturday afternoon fun. Now, among the boys who played there, there was a tall, merry fellow called Frank Freeman. He had, as they say, a thoughtless head on his shoulders, and he had not been as well taught as little Freddy. So when it happened one afternoon that his foot-ball went bouncing up too high and too far and broke the school window, he thought of a foolish, naughty plan for getting out of the scrape.

“I say, you young Freddy!” he called, and the boy went to him. “Here’s a sweetie for you, my boy, and I’ll give you four or five more if you’ll do me a favour.”

“What do you want?” asked the child.

“Why, don’t you see I’ve broken that stupid old fan-light over there, and I shall

get into a horrid scrape. Now, you're a favourite with the master, you know, and I'm not. I shall get into a nice mess, and a hundred to one I shall be flogged if you won't help me."

"Oh, I'll help you if I can, Frank," said Freddy; "I'll go and beg ever so hard for you."

"No, no, my fine fellow!" said Frank, "I've begged off once or twice too often for that! You must go and say you're very sorry, but *you* broke the window. He'll let you off, a little chap like you, and you'll have saved a fellow a flogging."

"Oh! I can't tell a story, Frank—I can't indeed!"

"You can't, my lad, you can't! What if I say you shall? What if I make you?"

“You shall not make me,” said the child, drawing himself up. “I’ll speak for you if you like, but you shall not turn me into a liar—no, nor anybody else.”

“Ho, ho! that’s it, is it? A very nice fellow is Mister Frederick, forsooth! Suppose I flog you now, instead of the master flogging me? But stay, here’s Farmer Firth’s dog running like a mad thing; he’ll just do for me. At him, Fury, at him!”

Little, indeed, did the foolish boy know the mischief his idle threat would do. Freddy had once seen a mad dog, and he had dreamt of him many a time since. What if Frank were really setting such a beast upon him! The frightful idea seized him. Away he flew like an arrow in his fear. On he rushed, never doubting that

the fierce animal was upon him, far down the road, through the open turnpike, away, away! Terror and fright gave wings to his feet; it was downhill, there was nothing to stop him. On, on, on he flew, farther and farther from home and shelter. One by one the houses were left behind him. Still he fled in an agony of fear. At last a gate appeared before him. Hoping to escape his supposed foe, he sprang at it, missed his footing at the top, fell, and lay senseless on the stones beyond. Poor little fellow! fright and the fearful race had well-nigh killed him. Who was it that came, out of breath, panting and terrified, to raise him up and lift him in his arms? It was the angry boy who had been so carelessly the cause of all. Gently, tenderly he carried him home, longing in vain for one word from the little

pale lips, one look from under the white eyelids that had fallen so heavily over the blue eyes. Frightened indeed was poor Fanny, as they brought him home and laid him in his little bed. Very fond and tender was her nursing through the long, doubtful illness that followed, the long fever, and the weary time of "getting better" afterwards. Yet scarcely less fond a nurse was the young fellow so often watching by the bedside. Poor Frank seemed as if he could never do enough to make up for the mischief his anger had done.

It was many a long, long week before the little feet were heard in the farm-yard again, or the merry laugh sounded from the horse's back at the cider press. And when he could run about again, and seemed fairly well, was it any wonder that he loved to follow dear,

watchful Fanny wherever she went, caring not to join the rough village boys, but rather finding his fun and frolic where she could find it with him ?

GATHERING STICKS.

Go, gather sticks, the mother said:
The broken heard away they sped.
The ground was white, the wind unkind,
And broken branches hard to find:
The day grew late, the axe they seized
To cut what brittle boughs they pleased,
When all at once, with gun in hand,
They saw the forest-keeper stand!
No time for flight or vain excuse,
He speaks no word, deals no abuse,
Yet will not grudge one strong, green bough,
To give them what they merit now.



GASPARD AND GUILLOT.

“Go, Gaspard, go with your brother, and mind you get me a great bundle of wood before I see you again!” This was said by a good, hearty-looking Frenchwoman as she called her boys from their play to do her errand. Gaspard and Guillot were her eldest boys. The eldest of seven children, they were taught to share the work for the little ones with their mother. Merry active Guillot, nothing came amiss to him! Minding Baby, washing little faces and hands, sweeping the room, going messages, all was good fun to him. But Gaspard—he was always dreaming. He

wanted to be a great man, he *meant* to be a great man, he wished to get on in the world. And this took a great deal of thinking about. And so it was that he would sit for hours, if you let him, merely thinking. His elbows on his knees and his chin in his hands, he sat now on a stool just before the fire. Guillot was there, cap in hand, waiting. "Go, Gaspard," repeated his mother, and in a few minutes they were gone.

They went quickly, for the air was sharp and the snow hard on the ground. Gaspard told his brother, as he always did when alone with him, all the strange thoughts in his head. How he meant to get on at school. He was at the top of the second class already. How he meant to work and work till he made himself a great man.

And Guillot thought it all very grand, and never doubted that it would come true. All this time they were walking towards the forest. It was a large one, and belonged to a rich gentleman, M. Grégoire. The boys had leave to pick up as much wood as they could find. But Gaspard had, as Guillot said, "talked away the time," and before they could gather a bundle it would be dark. So after a little search, when no big sticks would show themselves, they began to get tired and cross. "I say, Gaspard, this won't do," said Guillot; "Mother wants the sticks, and to-morrow's Christmas Day and we must have a fire, and a good one too. Nobody will ever see if we chop off a bough or two." Now Gaspard knew this was not right, but just then his thoughts were out "wool-gathering," as Guillot

would say ; so he did not stop to think, but lent a hand, as Guillot wished, to hold the tree. Guillot's hatchet was in the air. In a moment it had sounded through the wood, when a voice was heard : " Ha ! young good-for-noughts, I have caught you, have I ? " It was Gustave, the new keeper, a young man with great ideas of his duty. Guillot cleared the bank at a bound, and was off like a young gazelle. Gaspard was not so fleet of foot, and the man's rough hand was soon on his collar. Very quietly he lifted him to the level ground, and picking up a stout stick, gave him four or five smart cuts on the back. Then taking up his gun again from the snowy grass where it lay, he said, " Now, young gentleman, you may go, and do not let me see you at that game again. "

Gaspard went. Was this the end of all his grand dreams? To be flogged by a keeper indeed! He ground his teeth with rage. Was not his father head-gardener at the château? Shouldn't Gustave pay for it, that was all! So he went home, coming in with a look that made the young ones suddenly silent, and Guillot stop in the middle of his story. The grave, grim look of "our gentleman," as the little toddling boys had learnt to call their elder brother, kept them all in awe that evening. The next day was Christmas Day.

A good, honest, right-thinking man was Gervais the gardener. He had heard of his boy's trouble, and could see well enough his galling sense of it. He did not fail to notice how he passed the keeper at the church gate that glorious Christmas morning,

with a proud scorn of his friendly greeting. Yet he said nothing. Dinner was over, the smoking soup was gone, the sweets and fruits were gone, the orange-peel was sending out a pleasant smell from among the burning wood on the hearth ;—it was “all gone !” as little Toto said, lifting up his chubby hands with a sigh. The short daylight was gone too, and they were sitting chatting round the fire. “Grandfather,” as Guillot was playfully called from his love for the little ones, was lying on the rug with them all on the top of him. Father was in his own arm-chair, and Mother rocking Baby—the one girl—in her cradle. Gaspard sat a little apart, looking gloomily into the fire. It had not been a very happy Christmas to him. That feeling of wounded pride was hard to bear—harder than the

stiffness that that heavy stick had left upon him. He knew, too, that he was not doing right when he helped to cut the wood. Guilt made the pain greater. He was wrong to be angry now, wrong every way.

Just as he was thinking thus his father spoke. "Christmas time is a grand time," he said; "giving and forgiving all the world over! Do ye know, wife, it would go hard with me now if I were not at peace with everybody. It would be right grievous to me if I thought I'd a grudge against any of my neighbours this blessed night when we mind us of the best of all gifts sent down from heaven."

There wasn't much in the good man's words, but they sank down into one young heart.

Supper was over, and Mother and Guillot

were gone upstairs to get the little ones to bed, when Gaspard, getting his cap, went softly out into the snowy night. Half an hour after Gervais was quietly smoking his pipe at his fireside, when a small hand was laid on his shoulder and a boyish voice said in his ear : “ I’ve just been over to speak to Mr. Gustave, father ! ” The father turned quickly round with a very bright, kind look, and said heartily, “ Glad to hear it, Gaspard, my boy, right glad to hear it, that I am ! Depend upon it, lad, it’s a true word that says it’s better to rule one’s own spirit than to take a city ! Go on this way and you’ll be a great man some of these days, never you fear ! ”

And Gaspard went up to bed that night with real Christmas gladness in his young heart.

The year that followed that Christmas Day found Gustave and young Gaspard becoming great friends. The boy was often at the side of the keeper as he went his rounds through the forest, carrying his gun or telling him all his wonderful hopes for the future. In fact, one might suppose that their little quarrel on Christmas Eve had been the very means of bringing them to know each other.

HAPPY BIRDS.

HAPPILY, happily, twitter and fly!
Beautiful swallow-bird, hovering nigh :
 Ha! never fear,
 Nobody here
Will harm thee, or hurt thee, my birdie so shy!

Happily, happily, twitter and sing!
Hither and thither and still on the wing,
 Building a nest!
 Seeking a rest!
A home for the homeless, wee fluttering thing!



HARRY'S HOME.

HOME! what a strange, unknown word that seems to little Harry Hill! All his life long he has been a lonely, hapless boy, wandering about the great city all day, and sleeping at night under some archway, with no one to think about him or to care for him. And now there has suddenly come to him a kind old man, who calls himself his grandfather, and has taken him to his home! Sad as it seems to say so, it was indeed a happy thing for Harry when his wretched father died and left his little boy to one who would take real care of him. It was strange to the child to leave all his haunts, all the courts and streets he knew so well, and to set off on the long

coach-journey. Soon the houses were left behind, and Harry's eyes had enough to do to take in all the new things he saw. The high hills, the trees, even the green fields, were all strange and funny to him. He would have laughed and talked with all his heart, but that he had a kind of dread of the white-headed, grave old man by his side.

It was not till it was getting quite dark that the coach rattled over the stones of the little village where they were to stop. Harry was tired and sleepy as they led him into his grandfather's cottage. But he felt that there was something home-like and pleasant about it that he had never known before.

It did not take him long to get at home with his cousins. He had soon taken the measure of Hugh, and found that he had more than his match in him. The girls,

Hannah and Hatty, he did not take much account of.

The next morning he awoke, feeling strange in a real bed—a thing he hardly remembered to have seen before. He heard the children's voices under the window, and, jumping into his few ragged clothes, he was soon among them. There was Hugh kneeling by the well, with something in his hands that they were all looking at. It was a baby-swallow that had fallen out of the nest under the roof. Hannah was saying, as Harry threw himself down on the bank to look, "Grandfather says it's a good sign the swallows coming back to our house. I think it shows that they know what's good, that's all!"

"Ho, ho!" cried Hugh, "so you think everybody that comes to our house must feel

at home there, do you? What do you say to that, youngster?"

Hatty left Harry no time to answer, for she cried, clapping her hands, "Yes, yes! Harry and the little swallow have come just both at once, and we'll take care of them both, won't we, Grandfather, and make them both so happy they'll always want to come back here!" And the little maiden ran indoors very pleased at her own thought.

Harry followed slowly, feeling hot and red all over. He did not like the idea of being compared to the little outcast bird, nor could he see why Hugh was to call him "youngster." In fact, he was just going to double up his fists and declare aloud that he wouldn't stay there, he hated them all, that he did!—when he caught sound of some words which soothed him. "Hannah," said

little Hatty under her breath, "Harry isn't much like our little pet swallow, is he? He is so rough and untidy. But, Hannah, what pretty eyes he's got! Do you know, I think I shall like him if he likes me!"

It is funny what a little praise will do, especially when it takes us by surprise. Nobody had ever told Harry his eyes were pretty, nobody had ever offered to like him. It was quite a new idea, and rather nice, Harry thought. After that day he was so kind as to "like" Hatty, and they became great friends.

Hugh and he did not get on so well. Hugh was a tease. He would laugh at Harry, and call him a little "cockney," till Harry got into a great heat and hit him very hard. Then Hugh would catch him by the wrists and twist them round till tears came

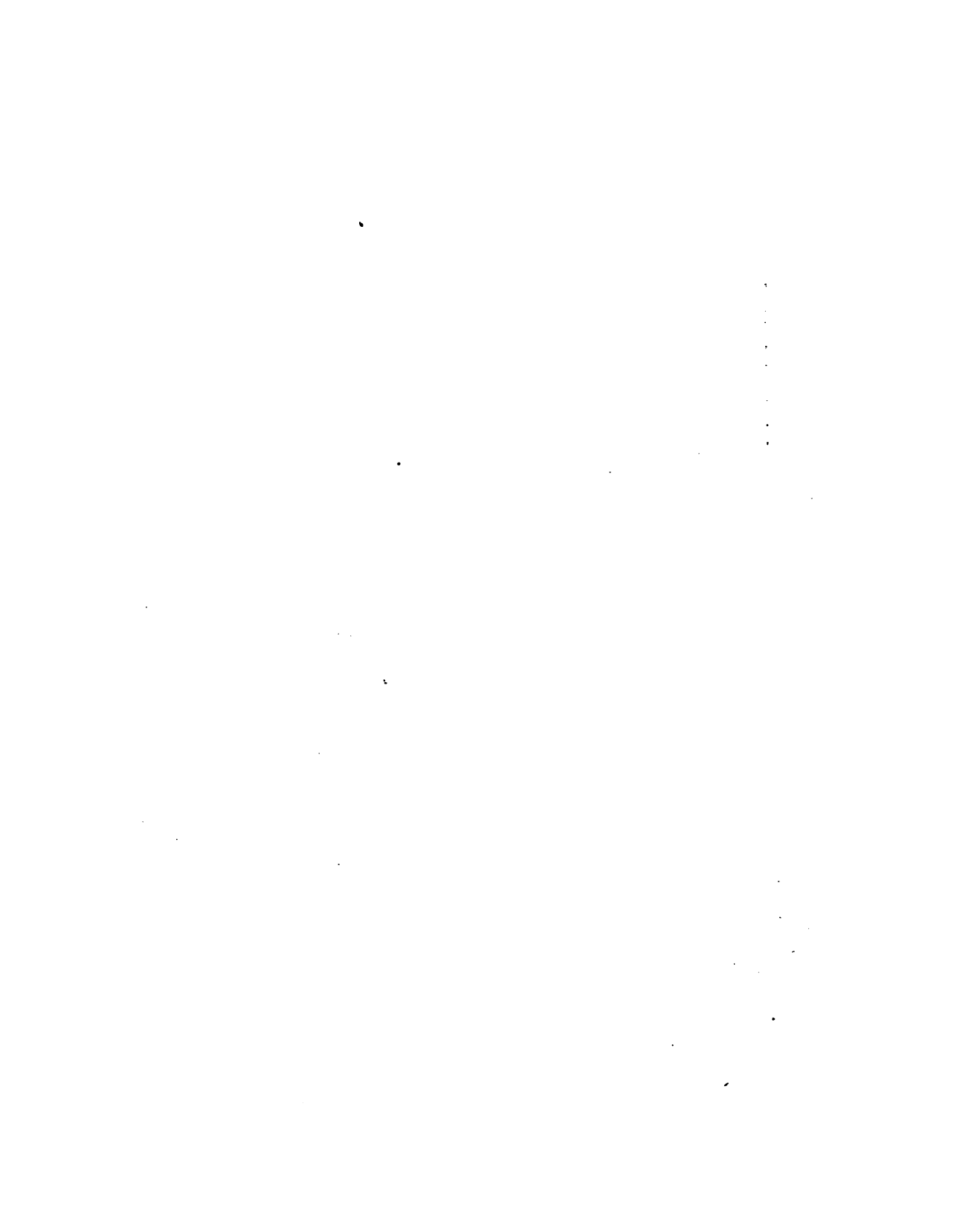
into the dark, angry eyes. At last, however, Hugh went away to be a sailor-boy on the sea.

By this time Harry had become quite at home, and as happy as could be. To his own delight his cheeks had got quite round and red, so that nobody would ever guess that he was not a country-boy. And before Hugh left them, his mother had found out that his little town cousin had many handy ways that her village lad had not. As Harry grew bigger and bigger it was a great pleasure to him to be a help to "the mother," as he always called her. Indeed, her own children used to say they thought he had more than his share of her. They did not know quite what had so bound him to her : how she had helped him at first in the hard fight to break off the bad habits and wicked words which his homeless, wretched infancy

had taught him. So he lived happily among them until, like Hugh, he too went off to make his way in the world.

Years passed away. Many changes had taken place. The old house, however, looked much the same, and the swallows twittered about, building their nests under the thatch as they used to do. Hatty, a fine, healthy young woman, was watching them, when she caught sight of a tall, handsome soldier coming up the hill. It was Harry back from the wars! How they all welcomed him, and how happy they all were!

It was Harry who reminded Hatty that spring evening of how she had proposed years ago to make the swallows and a certain little houseless boy so happy in their home that they should always want to come back again!



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It did not take him long to get at home with his cousins. He had soon taken the measure of Hugh, and found that he had more than his match in him. The girls,

Hannah and Hatty, he did not take much account of.

The next morning he awoke, feeling strange in a real bed—a thing he hardly remembered to have seen before. He heard the children's voices under the window, and, jumping into his few ragged clothes, he was soon among them. There was Hugh kneeling by the well, with something in his hands that they were all looking at. It was a baby-swallow that had fallen out of the nest under the roof. Hannah was saying, as Harry threw himself down on the bank to look, "Grandfather says it's a good sign the swallows coming back to our house. I think it shows that they know what's good, that's all!"

"Ho, ho!" cried Hugh, "so you think everybody that comes to our house must feel

at home there, do you? What do you say to that, youngster?"

Hatty left Harry no time to answer, for she cried, clapping her hands, "Yes, yes! Harry and the little swallow have come just both at once, and we'll take care of them both, won't we, Grandfather, and make them both so happy they'll always want to come back here!" And the little maiden ran indoors very pleased at her own thought.

Harry followed slowly, feeling hot and red all over. He did not like the idea of being compared to the little outcast bird, nor could he see why Hugh was to call him "youngster." In fact, he was just going to double up his fists and declare aloud that he wouldn't stay there, he hated them all, that he did!—when he caught sound of some words which soothed him. "Hannah," said

little Hatty under her breath, "Harry isn't much like our little pet swallow, is he? He is so rough and untidy. But, Hannah, what pretty eyes he's got! Do you know, I think I shall like him if he likes me!"

It is funny what a little praise will do, especially when it takes us by surprise. Nobody had ever told Harry his eyes were pretty, nobody had ever offered to like him. It was quite a new idea, and rather nice, Harry thought. After that day he was so kind as to "like" Hatty, and they became great friends.

Hugh and he did not get on so well. Hugh was a tease. He would laugh at Harry, and call him a little "cockney," till Harry got into a great heat and hit him very hard. Then Hugh would catch him by the wrists and twist them round till tears came

into the dark, angry eyes. At last, however, Hugh went away to be a sailor-boy on the sea.

By this time Harry had become quite at home, and as happy as could be. To his own delight his cheeks had got quite round and red, so that nobody would ever guess that he was not a country-boy. And before Hugh left them, his mother had found out that his little town cousin had many handy ways that her village lad had not. As Harry grew bigger and bigger it was a great pleasure to him to be a help to "the mother," as he always called her. Indeed, her own children used to say they thought he had more than his share of her. They did not know quite what had so bound him to her: how she had helped him at first in the hard fight to break off the bad habits and wicked words which his homeless, wretched infancy

had taught him. So he lived happily among them until, like Hugh, he too went off to make his way in the world.

Years passed away. Many changes had taken place. The old house, however, looked much the same, and the swallows twittered about, building their nests under the thatch as they used to do. Hatty, a fine, healthy young woman, was watching them, when she caught sight of a tall, handsome soldier coming up the hill. It was Harry back from the wars! How they all welcomed him, and how happy they all were!

It was Harry who reminded Hatty that spring evening of how she had proposed years ago to make the swallows and a certain little houseless boy so happy in their home that they should always want to come back again!

ISABEL AND IDA.

IDA, prying Ida,
Peeping, spying there,
On the ladder standing,
Silly child, beware !

Isabel and Ida
Leaving all their play,
Tempted, lightly tempted,
By the steps away !

Idle girls and foolish,
What is there to see ?
Trust me, some one finds them
Peeping curiously !



IDLE WORDS AND IDLE WISHES.

“IDA, Ida, what are you doing? Aunt Ingram said you were to be quick. We haven't half filled our basket, and we must get plenty of flowers, and it's ever so late! Oh, Ida, do be quick!”

“I can't, Isabel; I like to lie here and look up through the trees and be comfortable. Never mind the flowers—come and have a talk. I want to ask you something.”

Isabel went slowly and unwillingly to the great cedar-tree under which Ida was lying. She was the elder of the two sisters, yet she was always the one to give way. On their voyage from India, Ida had been

very ill, and, in consequence, very much indulged. The three weeks in their grandfather's house had not been long enough to wear off the ill effects of this spoiling.

"Well, Ida, what do you want?" asked Isabel.

"Why, really I forget now," said Ida, yawning; "my ideas never stay in my head very long. I was going to ask you something, though. Oh, I know! I want to know what Grandpapa meant by what he said at breakfast this morning. You remember he told Aunt Ingram to notice that every sentence I uttered began with the same letter. You laughed, and I am sure you saw what he meant, so you are to tell me, Isabel."

"Why didn't you ask him himself?" said Isabel, with a laugh.

“I did; I teased him ever so long, but he only looked at me with that horrid twinkle in his eye, and told me to find out myself. I can’t find out; it’s too much trouble to try. You must tell me, Isa?”

“Who is it you think most about, Ida?”

“What a question, Isabel! I don’t know; I don’t think much at all, it’s too much trouble.”

“Who is it you try to please? Whom are you pleasing now, Ida?”

“Just now, Isabel? Oh, myself of course; I’m lying here on the grass to make myself comfortable. The flowers may pick themselves for all I care, and walk up into Auntie’s room too, if they feel inclined. So Grandpapa meant that I always begin by thinking about myself, did he? He would

say that every sentence I utter begins with the letter 'I,' would he? I suppose he thinks that I have no ideas beyond my own ease. Indeed, he is very unkind to think so. Oh dear me, I wish I was back in India!"

"That's an idle wish, Ida dear."

"Idle? Yes, of course it is! Everything I do is idle, and everything I don't do shows that I am idle. That's what you all say. As for Nurse, let me do what I will, I am always the 'idlest young lady she ever did see,' just because I don't like sewing and stitching from morning to night."

"Ida, Ida, how can you talk so?" said Isabel. "What has put you out to-day?"

"I don't know, I am sure; I am in an ill-temper, I do think. Here," she added, springing to her feet, "let's have some fun

to forget it ; I'm a very bad girl, I do believe, and perhaps people are right to call me idle and selfish, after all."

They ran about on the grass for a little while picking flowers for the vases, and watching the blackbirds and thrushes digging up the worms with their beaks. Suddenly Ida cried out: "Oh, Isabel, only look! There are the steps put up against the window of that room on purpose, I do declare! I do so want to see into that room, because I know it is full of old playthings of Aunt Ingram's that she is going to show us. I have tried the door ever so many times, but it's always locked. It makes me so impatient, and Aunt is always putting off. Now we'll have a peep!"

"Oh, Ida, you oughtn't to!" said Isabel; but as usual she gave way and

followed her sister, even climbing the steps at the same time.

They were both peeping in, holding on by the ivy and each other, when a voice underneath startled them. "Ida and Isabel," called their grandfather. Oh, how ashamed they felt! But he was a funny, kind old man, and when they came down all red and confused, he only pretended that he was going to beat them with his great walking-stick.

"What were you doing up there?" he asked.

"I wanted to see what was inside," said Ida, her pretty face getting fretful and cross, "and the door is always locked."

"So you thought you would get in like a thief, and steal the pleasure you could not get fairly?"

“ But I wanted so to see in ! ”

“ *I* wanted to ! Oh, little Ida, what a hard master is self ! And what a lot of trouble he will bring upon you, if you don't break off his chains ! I—I—I ; that's the way we go on ! *I* want, *I must* have, *I will* take ; that is the way all the thieves in the world are made. Give it up, little woman, forget this wretched self and be happy,—happy in working and loving and thinking of others ! ” And the kind old man, seeing the blue eyes look very moist, added quickly : “ But no more lecturing now ! Here we go ! Off for a game of hide-and-seek in the shrubbery ! And the little girl that finds Grandpapa first may turn out his pockets and see what little bits of silver are hidden away in the corners of them ! ”

JOSEPH'S WOOD-SLEDGE.

JUST when the sun is setting,
Setting in crimson glow,
I hear the young children playing
Joyously to and fro !

Just when the day is over,
The hours of labour done,
There cometh the sound of laughter,
Jesting and mirth and fun !

Just when the brave wood-cutter
Hath stored his logs away,
Round and about the wood-sledge
Methinketh I hear them play.

Just till the darkness falleth,
Just till the stars appear ;
Then in the vast calm silence
Fade their young voices clear.



JEANNETTE AND JEANNOT.

“JUST to sit and think of all the happy time Jeannot and I had of it when we were young ones like these ! Why, the very going over it in one’s mind seems to do one good,” old Jeannette used to say as she sat in the warm corner in the wood-cutter’s cottage.

And the little ones catching the smile on the dear wrinkled face, would cluster round her, asking, “What was it, Grandmother ? what did you and Father Jeannot do ? Tell us all about it.”

“Father Jeannot ! Yes, you call him Father Jeannot now, and his hair’s a deal whiter than mine, but then he’s eighty-three, and I’m only just turned eighty come St.

John's Day. Yet it does not seem long, my dears, since he was a curly-headed laddie like little Jacques there. Ah, then, how the time goes, to be sure !”

And so the young ones would coax and coax till they got the story they liked to hear ; of how, in the days of long ago, Jeannette and Jeannot played and rambled about among the great mountains and dark woods, just as their grandchildren did now-a-days.

It was a pretty home in which that boy and girl lived those many years ago ; a home among the high hills, with the woods of oak, and fir and pine creeping down to the edge of the noisy, rushing mountain-stream that ran past their cottage-door. A tumble-down place was this old cottage. From a very broken chimney did the wreath of

smoke go up among the tall trees, and the keen mountain blasts found it very easy to get through the walls and doors and windows of the little house. But what did all this matter to the hardy wood-cutter's boy and his little sister.

"Jeannette," said he one early morning, "I'm off to the woods to help Joseph Franz with his sledge of logs down the mountain. Are you coming too?"

"Ay, to be sure," was the answer; and the scanty breakfast over, away they went. Their little curly dog, Joujou, was at their heels, of course, as they journeyed along up the banks of the stream.

It was a long, long trudge, in many places hard and stony. Far beyond and above them stretched away the blue line of mountains. But the sky was clear and the

air fresh. The brave mountain-boy with his rosy cheeks seemed not to know what it was to tire, and his sister was not far behind him. Many a hard climb they had, holding on to the roots and brushwood where they could not find the path; many a slip and stumble they got. Then came the fresh, glad feeling when one high point was gained, and they could look down on the valley below with a joyous feeling of victory.

With all her heart Jeannette loved the mountains, and often did she cry out, as she looked at the wide plains beneath, "Oh, Jeannot, how could one ever live in those flat, low places! Only look at those people down there in the fields, how small they look, and how slowly they move! Would you ever leave our grand old rocks, or that snug little cottage of ours, tucked away by

the brook, half-way up, for the poor wretched life down there?"

But Jeannot shook his head. "It's all very grand and fine up here," he said, "but you'll not find me wasting my life perched up like a bird in a tree. I'll be down in the great city one of these days, trust me, and I'll come back and tell all the folks here what I see. I shall have fine stories to tell you then!"

But Jeannette hoped that time would be far enough off. While her brother sat throwing great stones down the mountain-side, she was dreaming of the joyless life it would be on the hills without him. But he started up, and bade her join him in the farther climb. And so, between playing and resting, and climbing and talking, the great pine forest was reached at last.

They soon heard the wood-cutter's axe. Jougou set up a shrill bark and darted off. They followed more slowly, and were soon beside Franz and his boy.

Joseph was a bigger boy than Jeannot, and more used to hard work. His sledge was half full already, and when they had all rested a little, had drunk of the quiet, mossy streamlet that ran under the dark trees, and eaten heartily of what rough fare they had, the young ones started down the descent. There were many clumsily hewn steps in the steep path, and the sledge of wood was cleverly guided by the young wood-cutter, holding the curved handles and letting it slip down behind him. On they jogged, a merry, happy party. Many a shout of laughter sounded through the mountain air. And when at last level ground was reached, and

the logs disposed of, they went into the cottage, and did full justice to the good hot soup that Jeannot's mother had prepared for them.

Then came the game in the open air. The empty sledge was turned on end, was tumbled about, climbed over, and in every way made to serve as a plaything. Jeannette had many a ride in it, and the boys' strong arms were always ready to help her. Was it any wonder that the mountain maiden found her free life a happy one, with few troubles and many joys to look back upon? And then at the end of her long life she could tell the little grandchildren around her that she too had been merry with the merriest, happy with the happiest.

KASPER KELLER.

KASPER KELLER, Kasper Keller,
Toiling hard from dawn till night,
Clear Kirschwasser, cherry water,
He is making, pure and bright.

Kasper Keller, Kasper Keller,
Kind and hearty, brave and strong,
He is working night and morning,
He is working all day long.

Kasper Keller, Kasper Keller,
In the mountains far away
Lies his home all dark and lonely,
Where the shadows ever play.



KATHCHEN'S KITTEN.

KASPER KELLER's home was at the edge of a dark wood among mountains. Wouldn't you like to have seen it? It was in a strange place; dark rocks and deep black-looking chasms were all around. The heavy thick forest ran along the mountain side, stretching upwards to the bleak heights that were at last capped with snow.

The light of that dark home was little Kathchen—a wee, black-eyed child of merry, clinging nature. How her father delighted in her! He used to call her his “Katze,” his “pussy-cat;” and when evening came and he could leave his work, he would sit and

watch her and listen to her prattle and never weary. Kathchen loved her father. She had no mother, and the brisk, scolding Karoline, who was so active and clever in the little hut, was no companion to the merry child. So Kasper could go nowhere without his little one. Whether he were roaming the warm hill-sides and bright valleys in the summer in search of the wild black cherry for his work, or whether he were at home in his dark still-room making the strong Kirschwasser, or cherry-water as you would call it,—wherever he was, those little pattering feet were sure to be close behind him.

But I must tell you of Kathchen's other friends, for she had others besides her father. First after him in her heart came Karl, the kind brother whose hand helped her so

cleverly over the rocks and through the thickets. How Kathchen delighted in the very sight of that rough-looking mountain boy, with his ragged coat, his long whip, and his horn hanging at his side. But Karl was not often at home. For months together he was away on the mountains far out of reach with his cattle. Lonely enough would the little sister have been then if it had not been for her other friend.

That darling, precious kitten! How shall I make you understand what a sweet little friend that pussy was to Kathchen? That soft grey tabby coat, that dear little pink nose, and the two loving eyes that looked up into Kathchen's face and almost seemed to laugh at the funny stories she was telling him! Pretty kitten, he was indeed dear to his little loving mistress.

One day a great trouble came to the little girl. She had gone a long way up the mountain-path to meet Karl. She had been away many hours, and came racing back into the kitchen calling eagerly for her kitty. But no kitty was to be seen. In vain she hunted and called with a great many tears in her voice. Karoline could not or would not tell her anything. Her father was out; gone out on business, they said. Poor Kathchen! very sadly she sat down by the door on a tiny stool of her own, to keep watch for the "king of cats," as she called him. Sadly she remembered her last talk with pussy. She had been feeling very angry with Karoline, who had scolded her for letting the kettle boil over, and she told puss that she thought she should run away, and go to live up in the hills with Karl. Had pussy taken her

at her word and gone to look for her? No, no, little Kathchen; the father Keller knows better than that, and that is why he is gone out of the way of his little girl. He cannot bear to tell her that her pet, in his play, has jumped into the tub of the still and been drowned.

I am afraid there was something of a kind deceit in the way Kasper told his daughter that night that the dear kitten had been playing quite happily with him not long ago, and never told her how he and Karoline had found him dead at the bottom of the tub. Only he listened gravely as she talked sadly about pussy's wanderings among the hills, and wondered if Karl would find him and be kind and good to him. There was something almost like a tear in the brave man's eye many a time in the days that fol-

lowed, as he watched the child's quiet ways and frequent sighs. Poor little Kathchen ! She was very lonely at first. Often and often did she creep round the house calling gently. Sometimes she would wander into the dark wood, and, peeping about among the trees, murmur to herself: "I'm almost sure he'll come back soon; he won't forget me, I know, and Karl will send him back if he sees him. I hope he won't fall down the great deep places. I hope he isn't hungry. Oh, I hope; I hope, he'll come back soon !" But the "king of cats" never came back any more; of course he didn't ! And little Kathchen got merry again, and though she didn't forget him—you don't think she did, surely—yet she had great fun with her father watching him at work and helping him all she could.

One day as she was standing at the door, she heard the sound of Karl's horn outside. She ran eagerly out to meet him, half hoping he had come to bring her kitten back. Ah, no, nothing so happy as that. Yet, funnily enough, Karl seemed to know all about her trouble, and kind brother that he was, had found out a way to comfort her.

There in his strong arms was the prettiest little white kid that ever you did see. A little blue collar was round his neck, and his soft eyes almost reminded Kathchen of the "king of cats" himself. How she danced about for joy, how she kissed and thanked good Karl, how she loved her kid the first moment she saw him, we mustn't stop to tell you. You can fancy it all for yourselves.

LOVING AND LAUGHING.

LITTLE laughing lassie,
Full of fun and glee,
Look at mother toiling,
Toiling hard for thee!

Little laughing lassie,
If thy life be bright,
'Tis because she toileth,
Toileth day and night.

Little laughing lassie,
Light of heart and gay,
Love thy mother toiling,
Love her night and day!



LOUIE AND LUCIE.

“LITTLE one, little one, why those grave looks?” said a gentle-looking lady to her little girl one bright, sunny afternoon.

The child was sitting on a low stool by her mother's side, her chubby face resting on her hands, her large eyes fixed gravely on the beautiful landscape beyond the open window. A very pretty sight it was indeed, those lovely hills, and the high blue mountains beyond them; but little Louie had found a week among the mountains long enough. The little English girl had begun to think that to be at home in Papa's nice rectory was much

better than to be even in such a beautiful village among the French hills. She started at her mother's question, and at the tap of the loving fingers on her curly head. "Oh, I don't know, Mamma! Only I wish we could go home again. I wish Papa hadn't been ill, Mamma, for I shall not ever like to stay here, I know."

"Not ever, Louie? Then you won't be much like Mamma. Mamma likes to be here very much indeed."

"Oh, Mamma, do you? Don't you want to see our dear Longlake again? I think it is a much prettier village than this old French place. And the people, Mamma, and the flowers in our garden, and Lion, dear old dog, and the church, and all the school-children, and—and—all the rest, Mamma?" And little Louie's eyes almost

filled with tears at the thought of "all the rest." Mamma smiled at the funny mixture.

"Why, Louie, what's the matter? Papa's little bright Lu-lu is quite dull to-day!"

"Oh, Mamma, the people here are so stupid! When I was out to-day, I tried to talk to some of the village children, just as I should have at home. There is a little girl who lives down the road, whose mother is always washing in the brook close to the little bridge. She has got such rough hair, but her eyes look nice. Directly I asked her what her name was she began to laugh, and chattered that French stuff so fast I couldn't make her out a bit. Mamma, why don't any of the children talk English? I did so wish I could just meet Lucy Smith or Lottie

Lewin, or even Sally Collins. It would be so nice to see some of them again."

"Well, Louie dear, it will be nice when we see them all again. But you and I must try if we can't make friends with some of the little French girls and boys. I know the little girl you mean. Her mother works very hard indeed, and she and I are great friends and have done a great lot of talking together. I think I will ask the two children to come here some afternoon, and we will see if we can give them a little hot soup; they don't often get a good meal at home. I believe there were some kind English people here before in this house who took notice of them. So you will find that Lucie can understand a word or two of English."

"Oh, Mamma, that will be fun!

Ask her to come to-morrow, won't you, dear Mamma?"

So it was all settled. The poor mother was working hard, washing away at the little brook, while Lucie—that funny, laughing, chattering girl—played see-saw on the plank over the bridge, when the message came, summoning the children up to the English pastor's house.

It was funny to see the two children together. As Mrs. Langley said, Lucie could speak a word or two of English, but little Louie knew nothing at all of the "French stuff," as she called it. She was a quiet little pussy herself, and she could not at all understand Lucie's peals of laughter, and lively, quick way of moving about. Lucie seemed to be always making jokes, and playing funny tricks. Louie thought she should

like little Lili much better—a pale, sickly-looking child in a large hood. They both ate their soup, as Louie said, “as if they liked it.” Louie and her nurse walked home with them afterwards; and the little French girl showed them many fine flowers on the way. Louie ran in, on her return, crying out to her Mamma to look what she had got.

Mrs. Langley looked up and admired as much as ever little Louie wished. “So you got on very well with Lucie?”

“Oh yes, Mamma, she is so funny! I like her very much. Only she says ‘dis’ and ‘dat’ so oddly, and every now and then out comes a lot of French stuff.”

“Well, Louie, I think she is a good little maiden, and they are such nice respectable people, I hear, that you may go and talk to her just as you would to the little Lewins at the glebe at home.”

And so it came to pass that the French peasant-child was constantly seen following the little lady about, bringing her beautiful flowers, and learning, I fancy, many an easy Bible story from the English pastor's child. And when the time came for Louie to say good-bye to the blue mountains, it was with a heavy sigh she said, "Well, it will be very nice to see dear Longlake again, and the flowers at home, and Lion, and the rest, but I do wish Lucie could come too. I can understand all she says now, Mamma, and she does love me very much, she says. I shall come back some day, I know, if it isn't till I'm a grown-up lady. And I shall not ever forget you, Lucie, not ever, ever at all!"

MERRY AND BUSY.

MERRY it is in this sunny bright weather,
Thus knitting and chatting and laughing away,
While sweet overhead sing the blackbirds and thrushes,
Bidding farewell to the warm, merry day.

Merry it is, as the needles fly sparkling,
To laugh and to chatter beneath the green trees,
Making bright plans for the morn and the morrow,
While to-day's task is finished in comfort and ease:





MAMMA AND HER LITTLE MAIDS.

“MAKING plans, Mother mine; that’s what we’re doing,” said Maggie Miller to her Mother, in answer to the question what May and she could find so much to talk about out at the gate. “Yes, we’re making lots of plans, and they’re all about you; but you must have a nap now like a good, dear Mother, or you will be knocked up before Martin comes home to-night.”

“Yes,” added May, “and then Dr. Macdougall won’t pay us that pretty compliment again. You know he said we were your good little maids, and had all the credit of getting you well. So you must really try and rest a little now, and not think of any-

thing till you hear me pouring out tea an hour hence." This was said lovingly as she settled the pillow in the easy-chair and spread the shawl gently, kissing the pale brow, and stroking the soft smooth hair. There was a very loving, tearful smile in the Mother's eyes as she looked at the merry face, and promised to go to sleep if she could. Then May went back to her place at the gate, took up her knitting, and the talk began again in a low tone.

"Isn't it a comfort to see the dear Mother so much better, Maggie?" said May; "I really think she looks quite bonny this afternoon."

"Yes, she does indeed," answered Maggie, counting her stitches as she spoke; "only I wish we could get her out of the mopes."

“Mopes! O Maggie, Mamma is never mopey; you don’t find her fretting like old Margery down the street.”

“Well, I don’t mean that, of course; you know what I mean. I don’t like to see her eyes getting full of tears so often. O May, I’m sure my plan would do her good. We’ll ask Martin if he doesn’t think so. He could easily borrow the pony carriage from the Manse, and we could drive so easily and comfortably to Mary’s house away past the Mill. Mamma could rest so nicely in her little shady room at the back of the cottage, and watch us pic-nicking on the hill that runs down to the burn. We should get home quite early, and it would do us all good, and take away the Mother’s thoughts from Martin’s leaving us the day after to-morrow.”

Prudent May was doubtful, but she promised to talk it over with Martin. And so she did that evening by starlight in the garden. Tall, sunburnt Martin, how proud his Mother and sisters were of him! Merry middy as he was with his brass buttons, active ways, and funny sayings, care and anxiety had made him a man long before his time. Martin was of Maggie's way of thinking; and when he looked at May's face, pale with long nursing, he was doubly sure that a day's pleasuring would be a good thing. It was only his merry, loving words that persuaded Mrs. Miller to consent to it. It was his arm that helped her so well to the carriage, and his laughter and jokes made the drive short and pleasant to the invalid.

It was early afternoon when they drove

past the Mill, under the great sails that went round and round, cutting the air with a whizzing sound. Mrs. Miller was led into the neat little cottage where her old servant had lived ever since her marriage. What with cushions and shawls, the old arm-chair was made almost like the sofa at home, and May looked charmed to see her mother's face brighter and less weary than ever since her long, terrible illness.

Martin and Maggie, rejecting the offer of the round wooden table, were soon spreading out the good things they had brought on the grassy hill-side. The two made little journeys backwards and forwards to the window to wait on those inside. Mary protested much at this; she couldn't see that "the more the trouble the better was the fun." Then came a long merry ramble

along the burn, all three young ones together; while Mary was only too pleased to have a long talk with her mistress, hearing all about the dear young ladies and their clever nursing, and the fine young master grown so manly, and yet every bit as merry as when he ran about in the nursery and floated ships in the old bath.

And after that, the very identical nursery tea-tray was brought out of the cupboard, and the whole party made merry over Mary's best tea and whitest sugar. The sun was only just getting low when the pony was put in and seats taken again in the carriage for the home drive.

And so in the end Mrs. Miller gets back to her own easy-chair, Martin half lying on the ground beside her. He is having his last evening chat with her before leaving her

again for the winds and the waves. Fain would his mother keep that merry face always in sight ; it does her more good than many Dr. Macdougals and all their medicine. Yet there is a brave, hearty manliness about the boy that makes her trust him anywhere ; he has made up his mind, humbly, earnestly, what Master he will serve, and she feels that he is going the right way.

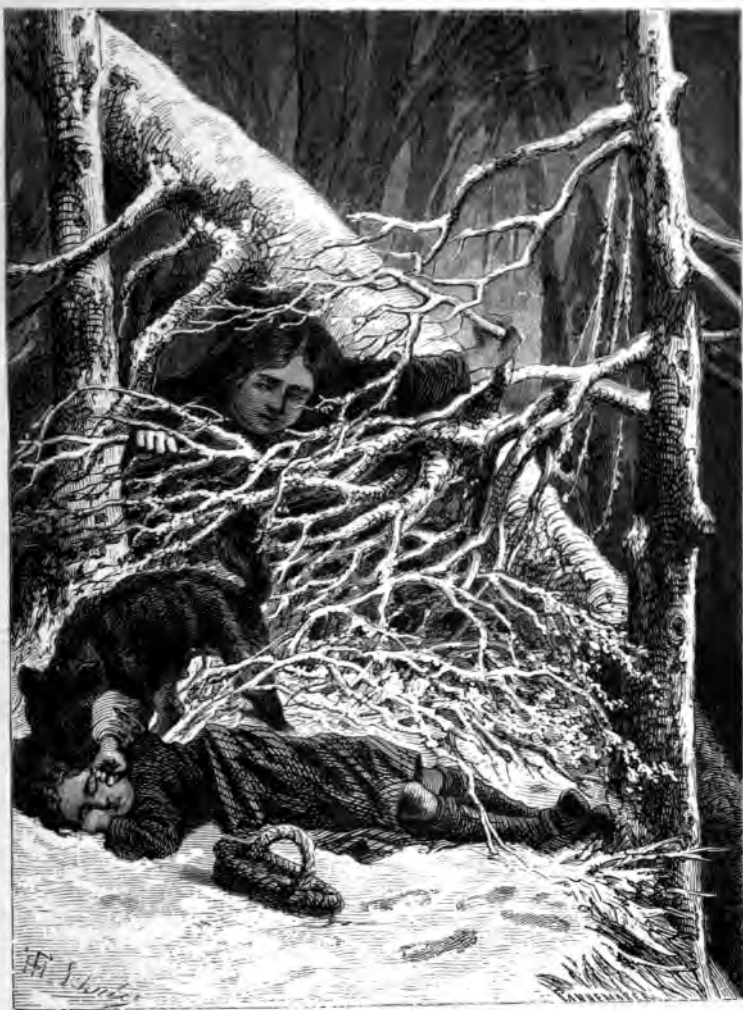
Maggie and May have left them together, and are again in their favourite place at the garden-gate. Martin's socks must be finished to-night, and they must make up for lost time. And as their fingers go, so do their tongues, and thus their task gets finished just as the moon, rising over the trees, sends her first cold ray on the branches above them.

NEDDY IN THE SNOW.

NAUGHTY little Neddy,
He has lost his way
Loitering on his errand,
Stopping still to play.

Nobody to help him,
Tell him where to go,
Tired out they find him,
Sleeping in the snow.

Nero, he has found him,
Licks his face for joy,
Sister Nanny wakes him,
Little wandering boy!





NANNY NORTON.

“NEVER mind, Neddy, you will soon be there, and then you must come straight back as fast as you can, and you will be home again before dark.”

It was Nanny Norton speaking to her young brother as he stood fastening his plaid round him, looking gloomily out at the snowy weather.

Now Nanny and her brother lived a very long time ago, when little children, ay, and big ones too, were kept very strictly, and had not half the playthings and pleasures that they expect nowadays. They lived in a lonely house at the end of a narrow lane,

and behind the house were several fields and a few out-houses and barns; in fact, a small farm. The owner of this farm was their aunt, Mistress Norton, a prim, upright, severe old lady, who had a great idea that all children needed to be kept well in their place. She never called the children by any name but "niece" and "nephew," and they never thought of her but with the greatest awe.

Beside these three, there lived in the house the farm-man, old Nathan, who had grown grey in the mistress' service, and his wife, who was still strong and hearty, but as deaf as a post. You would have called it a dull home for a merry boy of nine years old if you could have peeped through the lattice window on one of the long winter nights.

There at the table of plain deal, but

clean as much scrubbing could make it, sat the mistress, straight as possible, with her high cap, white neckerchief, and tight sleeves, her lace-pillow before her, for she was never idle, and none in the country could make such lace as hers. At her side, busy with her knitting, from which she scarcely dared to look up, sat Nanny, several years older than her brother. Behind them, hidden away in the immense chimney-corner, which looked as if it were made to hold the whole family, sat Nathan in his large, rough beaver-hat, smoking his pipe, and now and then kicking with his heel the logs in the fire on the ground at his feet. If all the work were done, his wife would probably be at his side, nodding her head in a doze.

On this particular afternoon Neddy had been told by his aunt to carry a basket of

new-laid eggs to a poor neighbour. Now, neighbour, in that part of the world, meant any one living within a few miles of one's house. So when Neddy set forth on his errand, he knew that he had a long walk in the wind and snow before him. He did not like the job, and, like many a naughty boy both before and since, he loitered and played in the wood till the twilight began to fall. A blinding snow-storm came on, and young Ned, who had not often been that way before, stood still and began to wonder where he was. Then, getting frightened he began to run wildly among the trees, beating off the snow and rubbing his eyes. Heated and tired with his run, he stood still at length, put his basket down, stretched himself, and, in the end, lay down on the snow and fell fast asleep.

All this time a kind sister at home was thinking of the little heedless boy. Nanny watched the falling flakes anxiously, and counted the minutes till Neddy's return. And when the time came and passed, and the snow ceased to fall, and the sky grew clear, and still he did not come, she slipped out of the kitchen, called Nero, his dog, to follow her, and set out. Springing over the stile, she was soon in the dark wood, calling gently his name. No answer came, and Nanny stooped to the dog, patted him, and whispered, "Good dog, good dog, where's thy master?" Away went Nero, sniffing and peering about; then, with a short bark, he set off at a fast trot. Nanny followed as well as she could, till she saw him spring through a mass of broken branches close to a fallen tree, and knew by his whine that he

had found the boy. There lay the child, sound asleep, the basket of eggs at his side, his plaid lying loosely over him. Nanny called him and shook him before she could rouse him. It was too late now to finish his errand; besides, Nanny feared he would catch cold in his snowy clothes. So she made him run quickly home at her side while she carried the basket.

Reaching the lane, the good sister went forward to explain all to her aunt. Mistress Norton was strict and precise indeed, but she was not unreasonable, and she was *never* angry. So when the boy came shyly up to her, she only took hold of his two hands, looked gravely at him, and said very slowly: "Nephew, if thou hadst not loitered, thy poor neighbour had had her eggs this night; by thy fault she must now suffer." Then

she sent him to change his clothes, and, with her own hands, got him some hot elder-wine to warm him after his sleep in the snow. And Neddy, sitting in old Nathan's corner, swung his feet backwards and forwards, sipping the nice hot stuff, and thinking that he wouldn't ever be such a silly boy again. I wonder whether he kept his good resolution or not!

OCTOBER GALES.

OH, how the wind is blowing,
Blowing the clouds along,
Breaking the willow branches
Singing its own wild song

Oh, how the gale is driving
Over the wild, wild shore,
Over the fallen osiers,
Fallen to rise no more!

Over the low bridge blowing,
A wild October gale,
Now in a fury raging,
Now dying away in a wail.



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OSCAR O'BRIEN AND HIS SISTER.

“OCH, thin, and it's we that'll niver get home the night, I'm thinking!” shouted Aileen O'Brien to her brother, as they struggled against the storm that swept over the wild Irish bog that autumn night. It was only now and then, at a lull in the storm, that it seemed of any use to speak. A raging, outrageous storm it was, bending and breaking great boughs from the strongest trees. Aileen had wrapt her cloak round her, and over her head. Stout and strong as she was, it was almost too much for her, and she thought of the mile or two before her with a sinking heart. But Oscar's cheery voice made itself heard above the tempest.

often asking each other where he had picked up all his wisdom with so few pence ever in his pockets. His wife was proud of him, and so were his boys, much as they feared him. Yet his pride often came unpleasantly in their way. He was waiting, he used to say, for the time when he should find a "position," as he called it. In the meantime his wife and boys were poor, very poor. Once the good Pasteur of the village had sent Madame Pascal a coat nearly new to cut up for Paul and Philippe, but the same evening the poor woman brought it back with many thanks and apologies; the schoolmaster could not receive charity! The poor little fellows looked longingly at the coat as it was being done up.

But if good clothes and good food could not be theirs, they made up for their loss by

“Och, now,” said the boy again, for wild as the storm was, it was not much in his nature to be silent; “och, now, it be a wonder, ben’t it, how these cratures are wise-like and understandin’, and if it was as many pigs I was a-drivin’, I’d have a pretty work of it this night, I’m thinking. There’s the Masther, thin, he’s for ever miscallin’ me a goose. I’d like niver a worse name than that same! Och, thin, me darlint, do ye see how the bastes follow one after t’other, niver swerving a bit, niver at all?”

Aileen was too busy struggling with the wind to answer, and if she heard half he said it was a wonder, so high every moment grew the tempest. When at last “the House” came in sight, it was all she could do to get round to the little back-

door. When Mrs O'Neil, the good-natured cook, opened the door, she found that the poor girl had fallen against it utterly overdone. Then there was a bustle and hurrying to and fro, bringing hot flannels, chafing Aileen's hands; till at last she opened her eyes to find herself in the old arm-chair by the blazing kitchen-fire that she had so longed for out in the windy bog.

There stood Oscar, just come in from housing his geese, talking away in his Irish warmth, and behind him was Miss Olivia, the lady of the house. In Aileen's eyes there was nobody in the world like Miss Olivia. She had been very kind to the orphans, and both Oscar and Aileen loved her with true devotion. Once a week she gave up an evening to teach them what, but for her, they would never have learned, to

read, to write, and to cypher. This was the evening. But Aileen was much too weary for the books or slates to-night. So she lay back in Cook's comfortable chair, dreamily watching Oscar as he bent his back nearly double over his slate.

As she lay there she thought, as she had never thought before, how much she owed to the gentle lady who was so patiently teaching her rough, blundering brother. Goose was the word at the top of his slate, in remembrance of his evening's work. Poor Oscar! those two round O's that would persist in turning out pointed or square, how they did try his temper! Many a hot word was bursting from his lips, but Miss Olivia's kind smile stopped them all. At last the slate was full, and Oscar's rough hand ached so,—he had clutched the pencil

with such a grasp,—that he was sent to a warm seat opposite Aileen's chair, while the lady sat down to tell them a story. This was always the treat of the evening. Aileen thought there was nothing in the world like Miss Olivia's stories. Yet while Oscar could always afterwards tell all about Jack or Pat, and their doings and sayings, it was Aileen who remembered all the week after the little odds and ends of good advice that came in here and there.

The one word that she carried home that night to their poor little cabin was the word "Ought." Let there be this reason for all you do every day, "I ought to do it." That was what Miss Olivia's story was about that night; "and sure I won't forget it, niver a bit," was Aileen's promise as she lay down to sleep.

And all through the next day, from the moment of getting up in the dark fog, to the time when, tired out with rough work, she lay down on her hard bed, that one word was in her mind. "I ought to work hard," she said to herself; "it's my duty, an' sure Miss Olivia would be tellin' me so too!" And the scrubbing and cleaning seemed to get done in double quick time, because it was done as it ought to be done.

PLAYING AT THE SMITHY.

PLAY, little schoolboys,
School-time is done ;
Play away, play away !
Plenty of fun !

Poor little schoolboys,
Ragged and rough,
Poorly clad, poorly fed,
Hungry enough !

Poor though the jackets be,
All the feet bare,
Play away, play away !
What do ye care ?



PRIDE AND THE PASCALS.

PROUD! Yes, that was what all the world said of M. Pascal, the poor schoolmaster. He is proud, they said, and they would sometimes add, too proud to prosper. He had not prospered as yet, that was certain. There in a little out-of-the-way village among the mountains he lived, in his own poor house, with his poor wife, patient in her poverty, and his two poor boys in their rags. There was a good deal of pride in the family, I am afraid. M. Pascal had something to be proud of, perhaps, in his hard-won learning, and his head full of deep thoughts. People wondered at him,

often asking each other where he had picked up all his wisdom with so few pence ever in his pockets. His wife was proud of him, and so were his boys, much as they feared him. Yet his pride often came unpleasantly in their way. He was waiting, he used to say, for the time when he should find a "position," as he called it. In the meantime his wife and boys were poor, very poor. Once the good Pasteur of the village had sent Madame Pascal a coat nearly new to cut up for Paul and Philippe, but the same evening the poor woman brought it back with many thanks and apologies; the schoolmaster could not receive charity! The poor little fellows looked longingly at the coat as it was being done up.

But if good clothes and good food could not be theirs, they made up for their loss by

plenty of play. No sooner did they see their father lock the school-house door, pocket the key, and disappear into his own house, than they were off to their games. They were very sure that he would never stir from his own arm-chair till supper. If now and then they peeped in at the little window, there he was, spectacles on nose, pen in hand, the old yellow-looking books before him, his whole heart and soul plunged in some wonderful dream.

So away they went to the blacksmith's forge, where their friend Pierrot was sure to be hard at work with his father, hammering out sparks in the most delightful way. Palotte, the blacksmith, was that jolly, hearty sort of man that all youngsters delight in. His laugh was known everywhere, and his jokes went the round of the village.

“Now, Piérrot, my boy,” he would say as he saw the young Pascals running down the road, “down with your hammer, and off to your play!” All three boys were equally fond of the brave man; all three thought it an honour to hold a horse for him, or to fetch him a draught of water from the pump when he was hotter than usual.

They were in the height of fun and enjoyment one afternoon. Palotte was shoeing a horse,—a wild, half-tamed animal. The boys had helped to fasten him into one of the strong wooden frames or racks in front of the forge, and now they were at play on the other. It was a grand place for climbing, and many a loud laugh from the blacksmith saluted each youngster as he came rolling on his back on the grassy road.

Just as the fun was greatest, and the

roars of laughter merriest, there appeared in sight a man on horseback. Stopping at the forge, he called to Palotte to ask the way to the house of "a M. Pascal." Open-mouthed the boys looked at the stranger; and when, adding that he had "a packet of importance for that gentleman," he rode off, a perfect storm of exclamations burst from them. But it was of no use wondering, and certainly no one could venture to follow. After a time the game began again, and it was getting dark before the boys set off running home to supper.

Hungry boys are said to have no eyes for anything but food, yet Paul and Philippe could see between each mouthful of their soup that something had come over their father. His bony, pale face was flushed, his hand trembled as it brushed back the thin,

long hair from his broad, furrowed brow, and his tight lips were nervously compressed ; all told his secret. By and by, out it all came. M. Pascal had found a position in the world ! A position of trust had been offered him at Paris ! Thither they must all go in a few weeks' time. Everything had been settled that afternoon, and it only remained to prepare. Hard work, then, was in store for the mother. Mending, making, cutting out and patching went on from morning to night. And when at last the day came, and hand-in-hand the boys stood by their parents, waiting for the coach, or "diligence" as they called it, you would hardly have known them. People held up their hands in wonder at the two little gentlemen, and could scarcely believe that they were the poor schoolmaster's once ragged boys.

Greatly excited indeed they were, overjoyed at the idea of seeing Paris—Paris the great, splendid city! Yet there had been one hard struggle in leaving home. There was the terrible parting from their little friend Pierrot and his father. Ah, they had hugged and kissed and cried; and then poured out torrents of farewell words, as only little French boys know how. It was hard, too, to leave the forge and the horse-racks and all their old haunts.

But it was over at last; they took their places in the rattling “diligence,” and away they went, one great idea shutting out everything else, that one idea being “Paris!”

you, then ; after all, I daresay bare feet do best for paddling in the brook. Bring me a good basket of fish when you catch them."

Quintin was shuffling out of the room, glad enough to get his dirty feet safely off the beautiful carpet, when the old lady called him gently back. How Quintin liked to look at her, that quiet, loving old lady, in her soft grey silk dress and white cap ! He seemed to think more of her kind smile and gentle words than even of the large slices of cake, one for himself, and one for his little Queen at home, which she gave him. Then with many an awkward bow, and "thank'ee, ma'am ; please, ma'am," he backed out of the room, glad enough to escape the master's questions.

You may be quite sure that her little Majesty was made very happy by the cake

full of plums; indeed, I rather think she had more than her share of the nice stuff. And Quintin did not forget to tell his mother that the master said, "as how he guessed bare feet 'd do best for fishing in the brook."

ROGUISH GRINDERS.

ROUND and round, round and round!
Turn the handle round,
Hold it firmly, hold it well,
Till the edge is ground!

Round and round, round and round!
Pour the water fast!
Hear it hissing, see it shine!
'Twill be sharp at last!

Round and round, round and round!
Stop!—I hear a noise!
'Tis the master!—run, oh, run!
He will catch you, boys!



QUINTIN AND HIS FISHING.

QUIETLY, quietly,
Watching, they wait
For a pull at the line
And a bite at the bait.

Quietly, quietly,
Swimming away,
The bright little fish
Do frolic and play.

Quietly, quietly,
Patience and time,
For "Try again, try again,"
Saith the old rhyme.



"I don't understand; explain yourself, Quintin."

"Please, sir, I sits 'stride the pipe, sir,—by the bridge, sir,—feet hanging, sir,—boots fall off, sir,—can't wear boots, sir, nohow."

"Quintin, you are the queerest fellow I ever saw," said Mr. Quin, laughing. "What's your mother going to do with the boots if you won't wear them?"

"Please, sir, Mother'll keep 'em,—Queen'll wear 'em some day, sir, please, sir."

"The Queen wear them! What can you mean?"

"Please, sir, our little Anne, sir,—we calls her Queen Anne, sir."

"Oh, that's it, is it! Well, she has a queer set to reign over, Quintin, if you are one of her subjects. A pity she does not look after you better, my lad."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

“QUEER, very queer, very queer indeed,” repeated Mr. Quin to himself as he walked up and down his large dining-room. Mr. Quin was an old gentleman with a bald head, and white hair falling on his neck, large white whiskers, a very wrinkled brow, and keen eyes under heavy eyebrows. He was a rich old man, the owner of a large park, and of the grand house in the middle of it. His wife, the gentle old lady sitting in the easy-chair by the fire, had once been a Quaker, and even now she had much in her dress, and in her calm, quiet manner, to remind you of the Friends.

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A RUNAWAY RAMBLE.

RÉNÉ, Robert, and Raoul were three little boys whose home was in one of the narrowest and dirtiest streets of the town of Rouen. Their father was a rough sort of man whose work was at one of the great sugar refineries of the city. Their own mother had died six or seven years ago when little Raoul was only a wee baby, and the new mother whom their father had lately brought home to them thought more of her fine ribbons and flowers than of the three little fellows left to her care. Sometimes she would be kind and loving to them, especially to the baby, as she called him; but at other times

she was cross and angry without much cause.

Réné and Robert could easily keep out of her way at such times, but Raoul was often in trouble. He was rather a spoilt baby, I fear; and when he got a rough box on the ear from his stepmother, he made much more noise about it than he should have made. Réné and Robert would generally laugh at his crying, and call it one of “Raoul’s roarings;” but one day a very foolish, naughty plan came into their heads. They were sitting at the door-step, their heads very close together, when Raoul came out with red eyes and pouting lips. They called him to them, made room for him between them, and began eagerly to tell him their scheme. What do you think it was? Why, foolish fellows, they were planning to

do what little English boys call “playing Robinson Crusoe” in the country far away ! Of course little Raoul had no objection to make. To get away from “the mother, so cruel,” was all he wanted, never thinking, little silly boy, that he would be very ready for her help when supper-time came !

Well, it was no sooner said than done ! Off they set on their rambles, out of the town, through the green grass by the river-side, and along the dusty road. Just before they left the streets, some kind ladies in a carriage, taking them for little beggar boys, threw them a paper-bag of cakes. These they picked up and carried with them, and by and by, when they got tired, they threw themselves down under a tree and ate them.

It was hot summer weather, and many a drink did the boys take whenever they

came to a pond or running stream. The sun went down just as they came in sight of a farm, standing nearly alone in the open country.

Rene soon made up his mind what to do. Taking off his cap, he went before his little brothers to the back-door, and in a very humble voice begged for something to eat. There was a kind, motherly woman in the kitchen, and she was pleased with the boy's face and manner. She was just getting supper ready, and she handed him a large bowl of soup and a great big spoon, telling him to eat it outside and bring back the bowl. What a nice supper the three boys made ! Then they found a snug corner of an empty shed, where they could lie down on the straw for the night.

Réne was the first to awake next morn-

ing. Before any one was moving on the farm, he was peering and peeping about. No sooner were his brothers at his side than he told them his plans for the day. There was a great dark wood before them on the side of a high hill. That was the way they must go. Probably, somewhere near the top of the hill, they would find some cave where they could make their home. Very likely they would meet robbers or wolves, or even lions and tigers, René said, but he was prepared for that. He had found outside the shed a great stick with an iron point; perhaps it had been used on the farm, but they would take it now to fight with.

The only thing was that it might not be quite sharp enough; it would do to make holes in the ground for the seed, but not

quite so well to make holes in the lions and tigers. But clever René had a thought. There was a whet-stone near the shed ; they could sharpen it. Away they went to work, little Raoul holding the stick, René turning the handle, and Robert pouring quantities of water out of an old can that stood there handy, to keep the stone wet. Just as they were very busy, the farm-door opened ! What if they were caught ? Away went stick, can, handle, and all, and off ran the three boys.

Nobody followed them, so they went straight on to the wood, and then came to a full stop. How were they to get on without their spear to fight with ? Well, there was nothing like courage, René said, so on they trudged. They had a weary time of it that day. Tired, hungry, with nothing

to eat but berries, and a crust of bread found in the grass, thrown away by some passer-by, Raoul's cries were soon heard through the trees. His brothers laughed at him and soothed him and scolded him by turns, but in vain.

At last he fell asleep on the grass, and the boys watched him gloomily enough. When he awoke he began to cry to go home, and very sadly they wandered in and out among the trees. At last, to their surprise, they heard the sound of cart-wheels, and, peeping through the brushwood, they discovered that they were close to a high-road, and that a heavy country cart was passing.

In a moment René had scrambled out into the road, and in his pretty, winning way was begging leave to climb into the cart and to bring his little brothers. It chanced

that the carter was on his way to Rouen. Right glad were the children now to find themselves going home. Two days' ramble had been enough to tire them all, and there was no wish now to play Robinson Crusoe in the wood.

It was getting quite dark as they crept in at their own door, but there was a pleasant sound even in the rough greeting of the mother, though she did call them rogues and runaways. They could see through it all that it was a relief to her to have them safe back again, even if she did not quite confess to having been uneasy about them.

She soon brought them some hot soup, and some brown bread; and when they had finished their supper, she sent them off to their beds at once. Next morning they had

almost forgotten their hunger and weariness ;
but they never forgot how lonely they had
felt when they were all alone in the woods ;
and though they often had to put up with
rough words from their stepmother, they
never set off again on a runaway ramble.

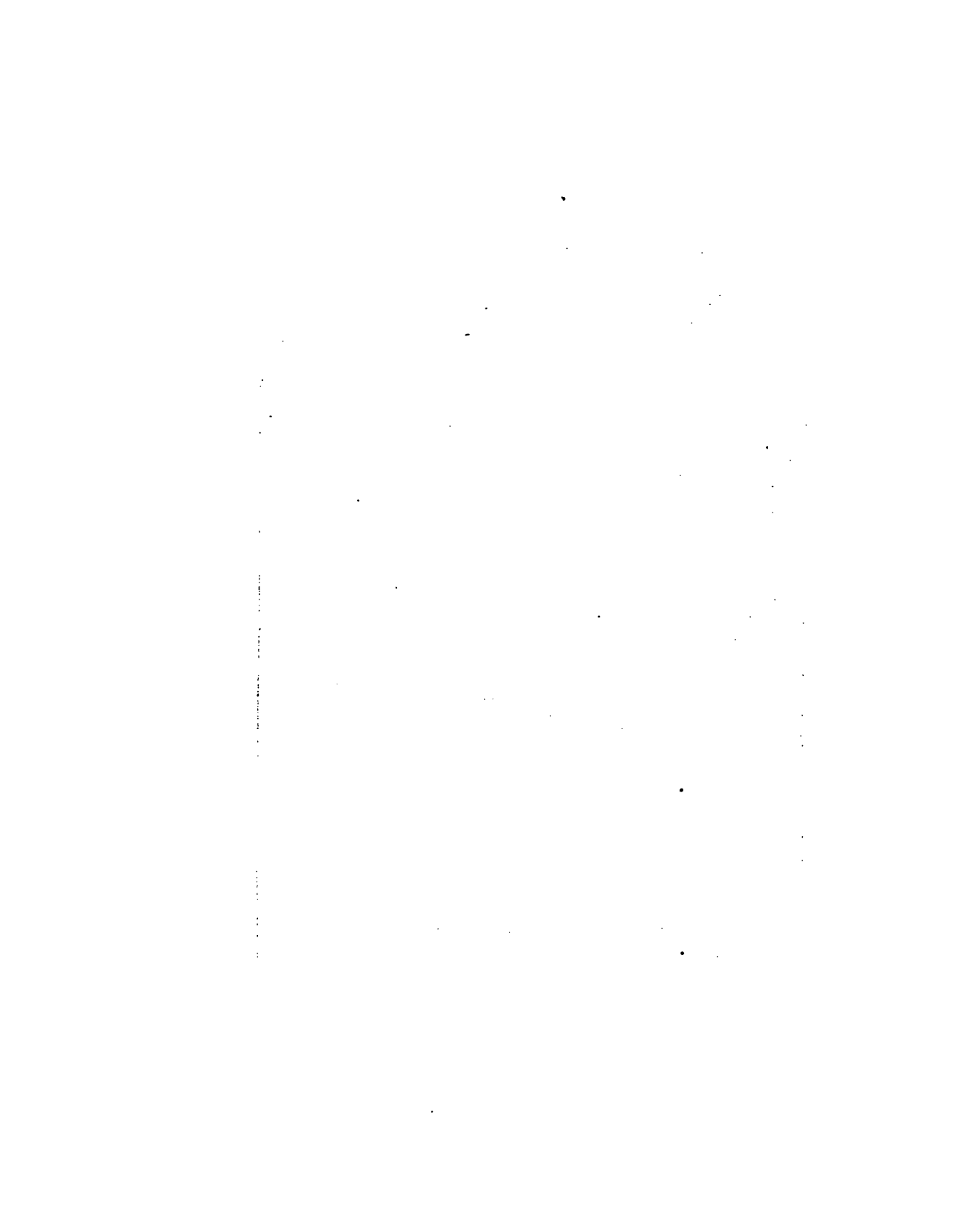
SUSY'S LETTER.

S, crooked S,
Sweetly-scented letter,
Have you seen on printed page
A fairer or a better ?

S, crooked S,
Softly, sweetly blending
Rose and rosebud, bud and bloom,
Each its beauty lending.

S, crooked S,
Susy's hands have twined thee ;
Mingled blossom, bud and leaf,
Susy's hand shall bind thee.





THE SCHOOL TREAT.

“Sissy, come and tell me if my flowers will do,” shouted little Susie Sinclair to her sister as she saw her crossing the lawn. Miss Sinclair stopped and came towards the side of the house, where the child was busy making a large “S” in all kinds of flowers with the help of the servant, who was at this moment tying a difficult knot in the bend of the letter.

“Yes, Susie dear, you have done it beautifully. Papa will be so pleased, and so will the children when they come.”

“When will they come, Sis? You have not told me what time you fixed.”

“Directly after dinner; so you must be

ready by that time. Look, there is a piece of convolvulus gone astray there at the top," and Miss Sinclair went round to set it right.

"And now I must go in, Susie; there is the cake to be cut, and everything to be got ready. Don't you keep Papa waiting for dinner."

You will have guessed by this time what was going to happen. It was the grand day of all the year for the children of Seawood village. It was the school treat, and little Miss Susie's birthday into the bargain; when frocks must be very clean, and hair very tidy, and little girls and boys very steady and good. There was to be a grand romp in the Rectory garden, Mr. Sinclair himself in the thick of it all. Then there was to be the cake, and plenty of tea, as many mugfuls as they could drink. And after that, there


was to be the march down to school, and the examination there, and the singing, and the Rector's merry jokes, and the Rector's easy teaching, and last, but not least, the Rector's beautiful prizes!

But, do you know, after thinking it over, I don't believe there was any one there that enjoyed all the fun half so much as the Rectory people themselves. There was lots of work to be done, to be sure, but then the good servants liked to do such work as this. And as for Miss Sinclair, the tall, grave, kind young lady, with that sweet smile and those gentle, loving ways, why, she was just in her element with all her dear school-children round her. And Susie, little merry-hearted Susie, what could be better for her than running and jumping and swinging and racing with her little friends? Didn't she

take her place among them every Sunday, learning the same lessons? and was she not going to be one of them that evening, in question and answer and song? Oh, she would not have missed that day for all the world!

And so it came to pass that Susie made the great "S" to be put high up in the school-room. Some people wondered what the "S" was to stand for; whether it meant Susie, or Sinclair, or Sunday, or School, or what. But, if you don't mind, I think we will say that it meant them all.

So the afternoon came and went, and the evening came and went too, and the children said, or rather they sang, "Good night, dear friends, good night," and went home to sleep off all their excitement. And the last thing Susie did before she left the schoolroom was



this. Great big girl as she was, ten years old that very day, she climbed on her father's shoulder and pulled out the large, beautiful rose from the middle of the great S and carried it home; and there it was in a glass, close to her bed, when her father came and kissed her as she lay fast asleep, a couple of hours after.

TURNING THE WINE-PRESS.

TURN away, turn away!
Toiling all together,
Pleasant work is pleasant play,
In the bright, warm weather!

Turning still, turning still!
See the grape-juice flowing,
In a tiny, dropping rill,
Ever bigger growing!

Toil away, toil away!
Turning all together,
Pleasant work is pleasant play,
In the sunny weather!



TRYING TO HELP.

THERESE, little thoughtful Therese, what a useful child she was! Father lying ill in bed, Mother overworked and anxious, what would the house have done without Therese?

Only think of all she had to do! There was the house to keep in order, to begin with. There were the boys' clothes to wash and mend—and dirty and ragged enough they often were; there was Father to wait upon, his broth to make, his calls to answer, and the many little things to fetch that he was always wanting; and there was Mother to cheer up and to help all day long.

They were helpful children, all of them, from little Toto, still in petticoats, to rough-head Tobie; but as Mother used to say, "Boys will be boys all the world over, and it's only a girl that can be of any real use in the house."

It was a beautiful evening; the poor father was sitting at the door of his house, looking pale and ill. He had a heavy coat flung loosely over his shoulders, the sleeves hanging down, a thick blanket over his legs, his felt hat on the back of his head, his pipe in his mouth. As his little daughter looked at his sunken eyes, and hollow, unshaven cheeks, she thought he seemed worse than when lying on his pillow. She slipped down on a stool at his side, and laid her little head against him. It was a piece of the prettiest French scenery that lay before

boys, at his last wish, were sent off to his wife's brother in the little fishing town. They were strange playmates for Una. With an unbounded admiration for their fair cousin, they could not understand her, nor in the least comprehend her frequent tears and little fretful ways. They delighted in her, and cared for nothing better, after a long tramp in the wet sand and rocks after shrimps and crabs, than to take her for a walk or a game on the shore. They had been doing this now, when in their rough fun this terrible disaster had occurred!

Tommy Utterworth understood little Una; she had been his playfellow long before the boys came to their uncle. He led her to a nice place under the cliffs, where they could sit down on the shingle and throw stones into the sea.

But in a few minutes he was grave again. Then he laid his hand on the child's head, his long, thin hand, and said, "God bless ye all, for the most thoughtful children man ever had! But go and call the lads in here, and bring little Toto to his poor dada."

And very happy was the curly-headed boy as he nestled down among the coats and blankets, and heard his father thank him, just as if he were a man, for his work at the wine-press, and promise him a good taste of the sweet stuff by and by. And so they all talked of the dear father soon getting well again, and the old bright days coming back for them all.

Yet there was one of their number who didn't join much in the merry talk, and that one was Tobie. He had been very much

offended when Therese had told him how the good Father laughed when he heard of the wine-press, and his work at it. Talienne saw his black looks, but he took no notice at first. He went on talking about the good times coming, adding, "You younger ones will have to do without Tobie when the vintage comes; he will have to lend his strong arms to Father then, and work hard all day, I can tell you!"

It was funny to see how the boy's eyes sparkled then. To be a man and help Father, and do really hard work, as hard as turning the wine-press, all day long,—what a grand idea! I wonder whether the little fellow liked it as well when it came to the point. To be a man is so nice in prospect; is it as nice in reality, do you think?

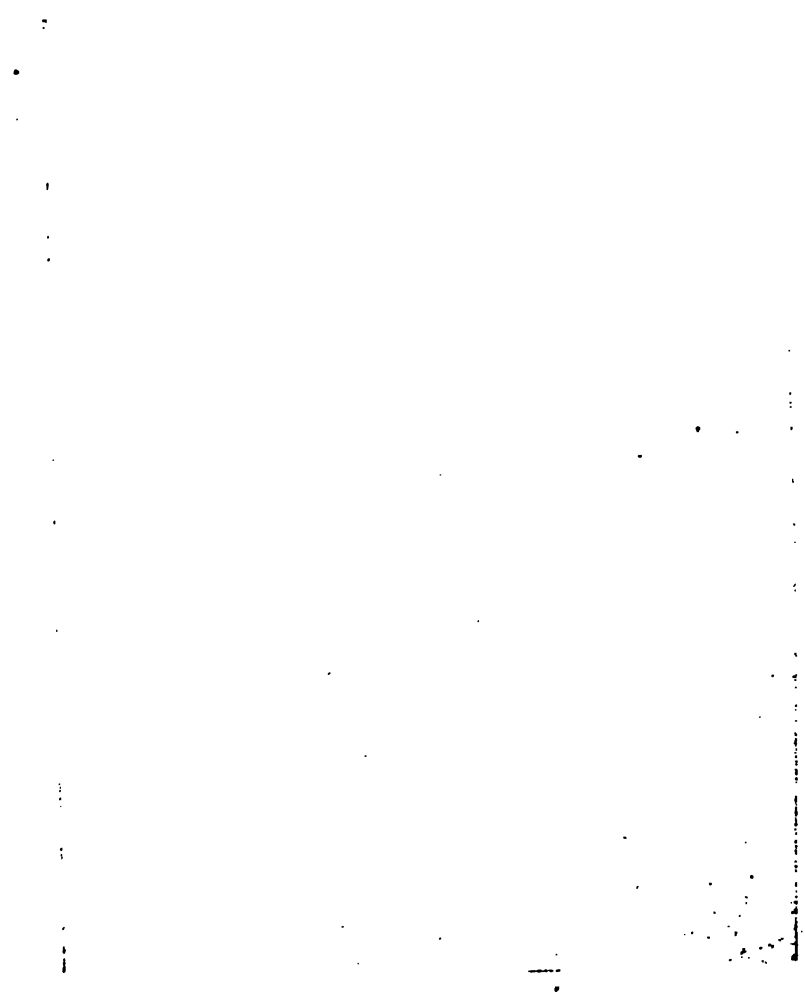
UNA'S HOOD.

UNDERNEATH, the water rushing,
Well may make his senses swim ;
If he lose his hold or balance,
What would then become of him ?

Underneath, far underneath them,
See the little snow-white hood ;
Will they get it, can they reach it,
Clinging to the slippery wood ?

Utterly unmoved by danger,
They are nearer and more near ;
Straining, reaching, clinging, climbing,
They will have it, never fear !





UNKINDNESS.

“UNKIND! he is so dreadfully unkind to me, he always is!” muttered little Una Unwin to her friend young Utterworth on the bridge. “Urban is trying every minute to tease me and make me cry, he knows he is! It’s all his fault that my hood fell over there; he knocked it off himself, and the wind took it all away; it’ll go right down into the water, and then get carried into the sea, I know it will, and I shall never get it any more! Oh, oh, oh dear, dear, dear!” and tears and sobs came thick and fast. Utterworth bent his head and listened very kindly. It did not seem to him quite so

sad a matter, and he was afraid he should laugh if he looked into the little sorrowful face. Urban and Ulrich, the child's two cousins, were somewhere far down over the bridge, fishing with a great stick for the lost hood. Perhaps they would get it soon; so Utterworth persuaded the little girl to let him tie his handkerchief over her head, and then he led her away down to the beach to wait for them.

Little fair-haired Una was the only child of an honest fisherman who had petted and spoiled her ever since her mother, dying, had left the pretty baby to his care. It was only of late that the two rough boys, Urban and Ulrich, had come to share the cottage on the beach with the old man and his little plaything. Their father, a German soldier, had been killed in the wars, and his

boys, at his last wish, were sent off to his wife's brother in the little fishing town. They were strange playmates for Una. With an unbounded admiration for their fair cousin, they could not understand her, nor in the least comprehend her frequent tears and little fretful ways. They delighted in her, and cared for nothing better, after a long tramp in the wet sand and rocks after shrimps and crabs, than to take her for a walk or a game on the shore. They had been doing this now, when in their rough fun this terrible disaster had occurred !

Tommy Utterworth understood little Una ; she had been his playfellow long before the boys came to their uncle. He led her to a nice place under the cliffs, where they could sit down on the shingle and throw stones into the sea.

“Una,” said he when the sobs had died away, and a little, quick laugh every now and then took their place, “you’re a fortunate little woman to have such great, strong fellows breaking their necks for you over that bridge.”

“They’re unkind to me,” said the child, half pouting; “they knocked my hood off, they did!”

“Oh, come, Una, I expect it was the wind did that!”

“They do always hurt me,” said Una; “they do be so rude every day, they do!”

“Not just now, it strikes me,” said the boy; “why, Una, just look back there at Urban! he’s hanging head downwards. I shouldn’t wonder one bit if he fell, and then he’d break his head all to little pieces. And

that would be all for you, Una! I'd not be so ungrateful, I wouldn't!"

"Oh, Tommy, go and stop them," cried little Una, her lips quivering again. "I'm not ungrateful, I don't want them to be killed dead all for me,—stop them, Tommy, do!"

Utterworth got up slowly, but before he had gone many steps the boys were over the bridge, running down the beach, with loud "hurrahs." The hood was on the end of the stick, and Urban placed it triumphantly on the child's head, and catching her hand roughly set off for a race. Utterworth saw that the uproar had nearly upset the little one again, but he said nothing. "It's no use meddling," he said to himself; "they'll have to get used to each other, one of these days." So he turned on

his heel and went home. Only once, as he looked back, he was glad to see Una perched on Ulrich's shoulders, beating his head merrily with her two hands. "Unkind," he murmured, with a laugh; "who's unkind now, I wonder!"

When he saw Una the next day, she was sitting at the doorway of their little hut singing merrily to herself, and swinging her white hood backwards and forwards by the string.

"What's that you're singing, Una?" asked he, for he couldn't understand her.

"I don't know," said the child. "Urban likes it, and says it's what his father did sing when he was at the wars. He taught me, but I don't know what it means. Daddy says it's foreign stuff. I like it 'cause Urban do."

“ Oh, then you’ve forgiven him for losing your hood ? ”

“ He did not lose it one bit ; he picked it out of the water for me. I like Urban ; what for do you laugh ? ”

“ Oh, nothing, only you’re a little turn-about, Una, that’s all. But all the better if you’ve found out that they’re not as unkind as you thought. Good-bye.”

VENTURESOME TRAVELLERS.

VERY rough was the wind, very stormy the weather,
When they carried the baby away ;
Vainly they folded the shawl and the wrapper,
For trembling and panting he lay.

Very rough was the wind, very stormy the weather,
And it shivered full many a bough
Of the trees that were bending around them, above them,
They resting on yonder lone plough.

Very rough was the wind, very stormy the weather,
As onward, still onward they went,
Vexed with the tempest, and vainly contending,
Their strength and their energy spent.



VINCENT VIVIAN.

VINCENT VIVIAN,—the little, fair-haired boy in black velvet, standing at the window of the great house in Vivian Park,—how came he there? He was not born there, was he? Oh, no; his father's house was many miles away, not far from one of the large towns in Ireland. But little Vincent was born in dark times, when, instead of loving each other, the Irish people were vexing each other, and even fighting and killing one another. And so it happened that one windy night in the autumn, a great number of very naughty men came to Captain Vivian's house, broke the doors and windows, and did

a great deal of mischief. But they were not content even then, for they got some strong cords and tied the Captain's arms together and carried him and his wife away from their home. And what became of their little baby boy? you ask. Ah, that's the best part of the story; that's what Vincent himself is so fond of hearing over and over again.

"Grandmamma," says the little fellow as he leans on her knee by the drawing-room window, "I'm tired of playing; won't you tell me a story?"

"What story shall I tell you, my pet?" answers the kind old lady. "About the monkeys and the red caps?"

"No, not that, Grandmamma; tell about when I was a tiny mite, and Nanny Vernon had to bring me here, you know. Was it *very* stormy then, do you think?"

“Very stormy indeed, Vincent, quite a tempest. Nurse had to take you out of your cot, all fast asleep as you were, and bring you out into the wind. She waited to see your dear Papa and Mamma taken away, and till all the naughty men had gone, and then she wrapped you up in a warm cloak and carried you all through the house, full of broken glass, and broken tables and chairs, and out into the howling, howling wind.”

“Vic came too, didn’t he, Grandma?”

“Yes, good Vic wouldn’t leave his master’s baby, so they made two bundles of things, and away they came. They had to walk many, many miles, and they didn’t know how to get any food, for fear of meeting the bad men. Only when they could get into a house where they were known, they rested a little.”

“And didn’t I cry very much indeed?”

“Yes, dearie, Vernon thought you would get ill. She was afraid you would catch cold. Once when she was very tired, ready to drop, they found a plough in the ground for her to sit upon; but the wind seemed as if it would blow down the trees over their heads, and in spite of all Vernon could do, the wind got in to your little neck and made you shake all over.”

“I think it’s a wonder I ever got here, Grandmamma.”

“It is, darling; but there were many people thinking about you and praying for you. So you were brought safely to me, you see.”

“Weren’t you surprised to see me first?”

“Not very much, Vencie; I had to

them to send you to me in case of trouble, and I was quite ready to love my own dear boy's baby."

"And did you love me then, just as much as you do now, dear Grandmamma?" and the little arm goes round the old lady's neck.

"Not quite as much, my treasure. I loved you a great deal then, and a great deal more every day since. And when Papa and Mamma come back to see the little baby they left behind them six years ago, and want to take him away to England,—what will Grandmamma do then?"

"Oh, we won't go away, Grandmamma! We'll all live together, and you shall tell them all about it, just as you tell me. And they will love you as much as I do,—a very large, large piece, dear Grandmamma!" And then come a number of kisses.

“And now, my darling, you must run away to Vernon, for I am going to be very busy.”

So the small feet go pattering up the broad stone staircase, and along the gallery to the large, light nursery, where Vernon sits at her sewing.

“Nursie, Grandmamma has been telling me all over again about my coming here long, long, long ago, and how you and Vic brought me all through the wind, and I’ve been thinking—O Nursie, I’ve been thinking such lots of things, about what I will do when I am a man. You shall never go away from me, Nursie—not when I am as old as Grandmamma; you shall stay and be so happy here, and I will take care of you when you are quite old, and make you comfortable, and give you all my sugar-plums. And I shall tell all the little boys about the way you to

care of me in the storm when I was a tiny mite !”

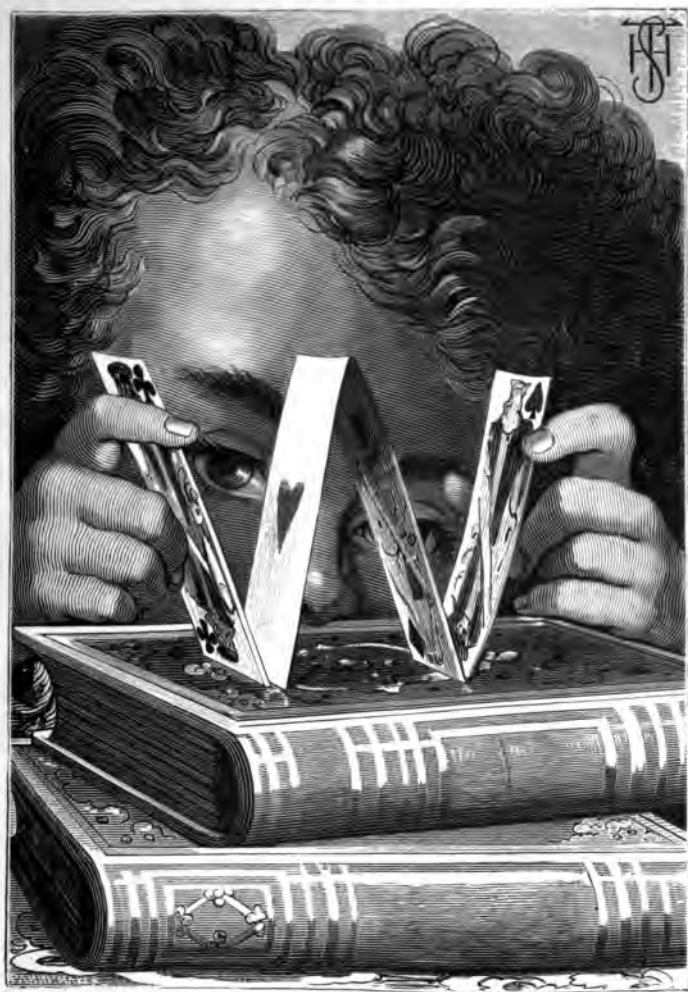
“ Master Vincent, how you do run on, to be sure !” says Vernon ; but for all that she looks at him as if she loved to hear her little chatterbox and to watch his bright sparkling eyes.

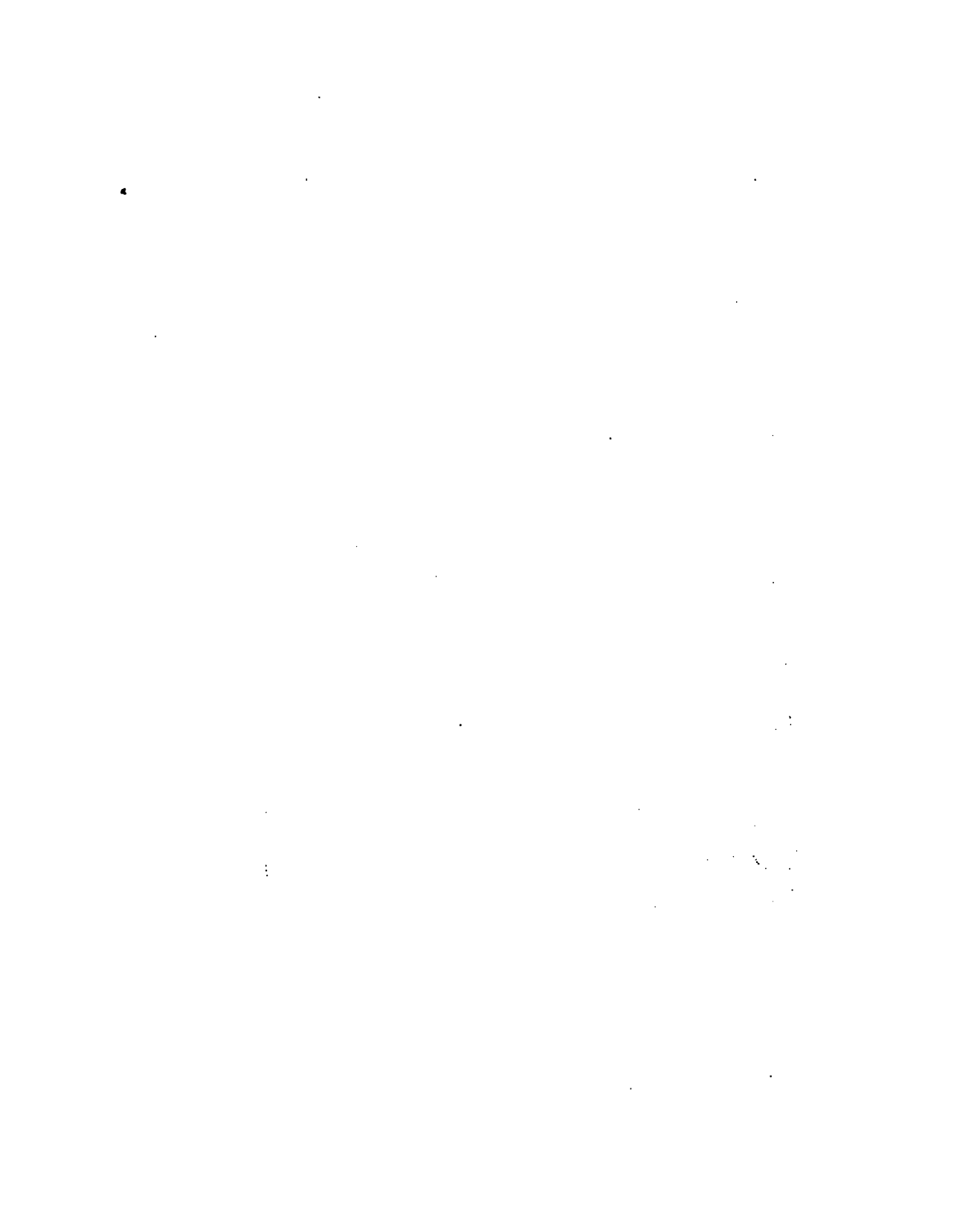
WILLIE'S CARDS.

Will not stay! they will not stay
When I take my hands away;
Down they fall
One and all!

Only see how well they do!
'Tis a first-rate W;
So,—just so!—
Down they go!

Well, well, well, they will not stand
When I move away my hand!
Put them by,
I shall not try!





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“Willie, the first bell has rung, you will never be ready,” cried Winnie.

“Oh yes, I shall, Win. But look here, don’t you wish these stupid cards would stay like that of themselves? I should see the W, and then I should remember not to say the ‘what for’ that you and Mamma hate so. They would stand for ‘Will’s wicked words,’ don’t you see?”

“You could remember without that, if you only would. But really, Willie, you must be quick.”

“Well, well, away with the things then. Here goes;” and in a wonderful way the books and playthings and cards were huddled into their places, and with a loud bang of the door the boy ran off.

“Oh, Master Willie, if you would but shut those doors quietly!” cried Nurse, as

the boy came rushing upstairs three steps at a time. "Here's baby awake again, and when he'll stop crying, I can't say, I'm sure."

"Oh, give him to me, I'll quiet him, trust me."

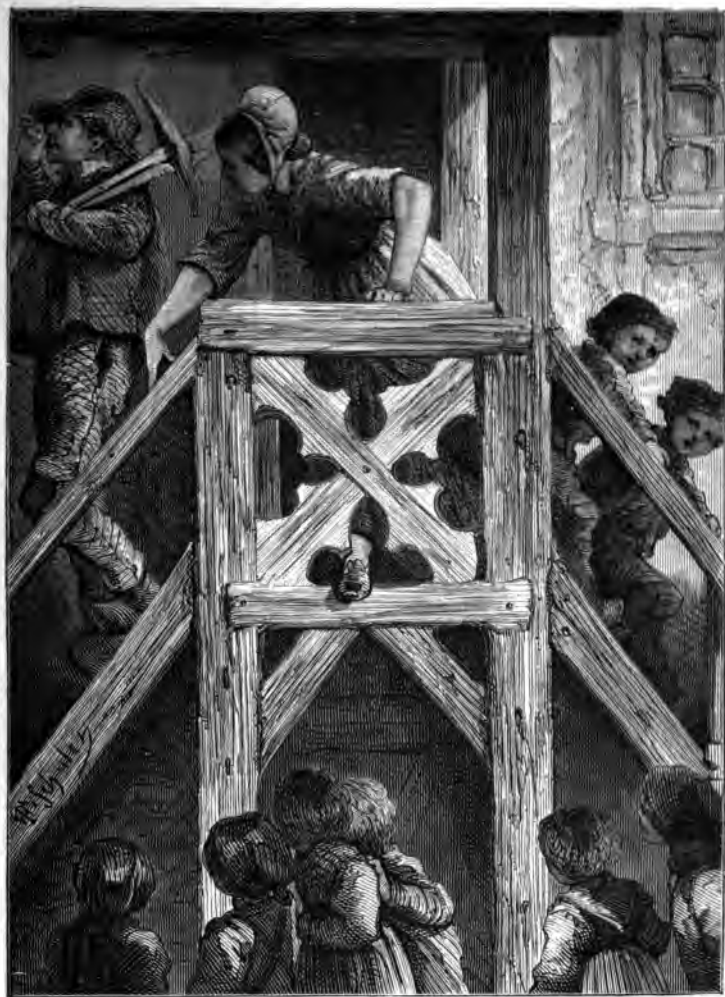
And Nurse let him have his way as usual, and the merry brother soon turned the child's tears to smiles with his funny ways. After that, I am sadly afraid he went unwashed to dinner.

XANTHIPPE THE SCOLD.

XANTHIPPE, the famous scold,
Lived in far-off days of old,
Yet, I think, I see her still
In the cottage on the hill!

Xanthippe! why, only hear!
Little children flee in fear,
And her husband, timid man,
Makes his exit as he can!

Xanthippe! ay, listen, pray!
You can hear her far away!
Storming, scolding, screaming still
From the cottage on the hill.



XANTHIPPE, OR LONG WORDS.

“XANTHIPPE! oh, Auntie, what does Xanthippe mean? I do wish Herbert wouldn’t say such words, just ’xactly what I can’t understand! He never used to, but now he always does talk so that I can’t make out what he says!”

“Why, Edie, what’s the trouble now? You were so glad yesterday to have brother Herbert home again, and now you seem quite hot and angry with him.”

“Yes, Auntie, he does vex me so. When he was going round the garden, and I was showing him all my flowers, and I thought he was looking and listening, he

burst out all of a sudden with a lot of hard words, and what he called Greek hexam—hexam . . . something, I don't know what he called them. And just now, when we were laughing at the way that Mrs. Dix scolds her husband, he said, 'Why, Edie, she's a regular Xanthippe.' Oh, Auntie, tell me what he means!"

"Xanthippe was the wife of a very wise man, Edie, who lived a long time ago. She had a bad temper, and used to scold her wise husband very often. That is why Herbert called Mrs. Dix after her."

"Well, I don't like Mrs. Dix a bit; she is so cross, and all the children run away from her; and little Dicky Dix told me the other day that his daddy said, 'Mother's voice was enough to frighten a cat.' I don't know what that meant, Auntie?"

how, I wish he wouldn't use long words. Why does he, Auntie, do you know?"

"Well, Edie, I expect this is it. Brother Herbert is growing up to be a man now. In a few months he will go to college, and wear a cap and gown, and have to read a great many hard books for a great many hours every day. And, you see, he is getting ready for this beforehand, by reading books with long words and Greek verses in them. And his head is so full of these things that he can't help talking about them."

"But, Auntie, Papa doesn't talk Latin and Greek, and yet he is a great deal wiser than Herbert, though Herbert is a college boy!"

"Yes, pussy, Papa has outgrown this habit. When he was a young man, he used

to be just as fond of making speeches to himself as Herbert is. And I used to try to say his Latin proverbs, too, because I could understand them. But when we both got older and wiser, we saw that it was more sensible to talk short words that even little girls could understand."

"Oh, then Herbert will forget the long hard words some day, won't he? I'm so glad! Then I shall understand him again. That'll be nice!"

"There he is; go and ask him, Edie!"

"Herbie, oh Herbie, where are you going? Stop for me, oh do stop!"

"Well, young one, what is it?"

"Catch me, Herbert, I want to get on your shoulder. There, that's nice. Now, Herbert, Auntie says when you are quite a man, quite like Papa you know, you won't

call Mrs. Dix, Xanthippe, but just a short name that I can understand. So won't you grow up very quick, Herbert? because, you see, I do like to know quite 'xactly what you mean. You do use such hard words now, Herbie dear!"

"Do I, little oddity? And so you have been vexing your little pate to make out what Xanthippe could mean! Come along with me and I'll read you a capital story about her, and the shameful way they treated her grand old husband!"

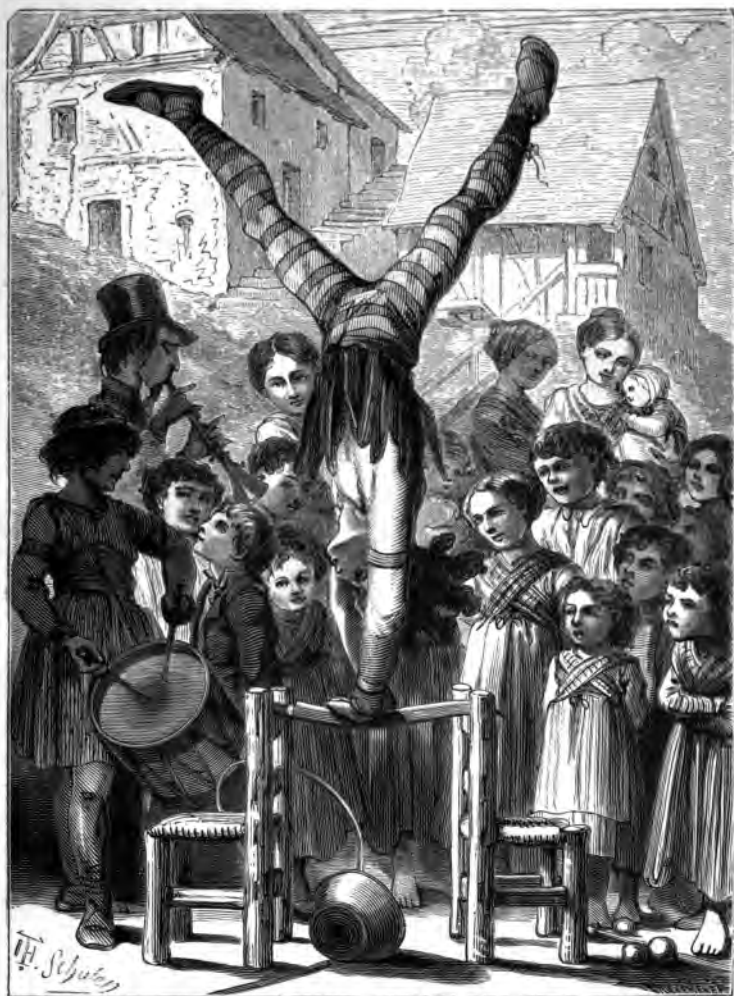
"Oh do, Herbert! and put it into little easy words just for me, won't you? Good-bye, Auntie; here we go!"

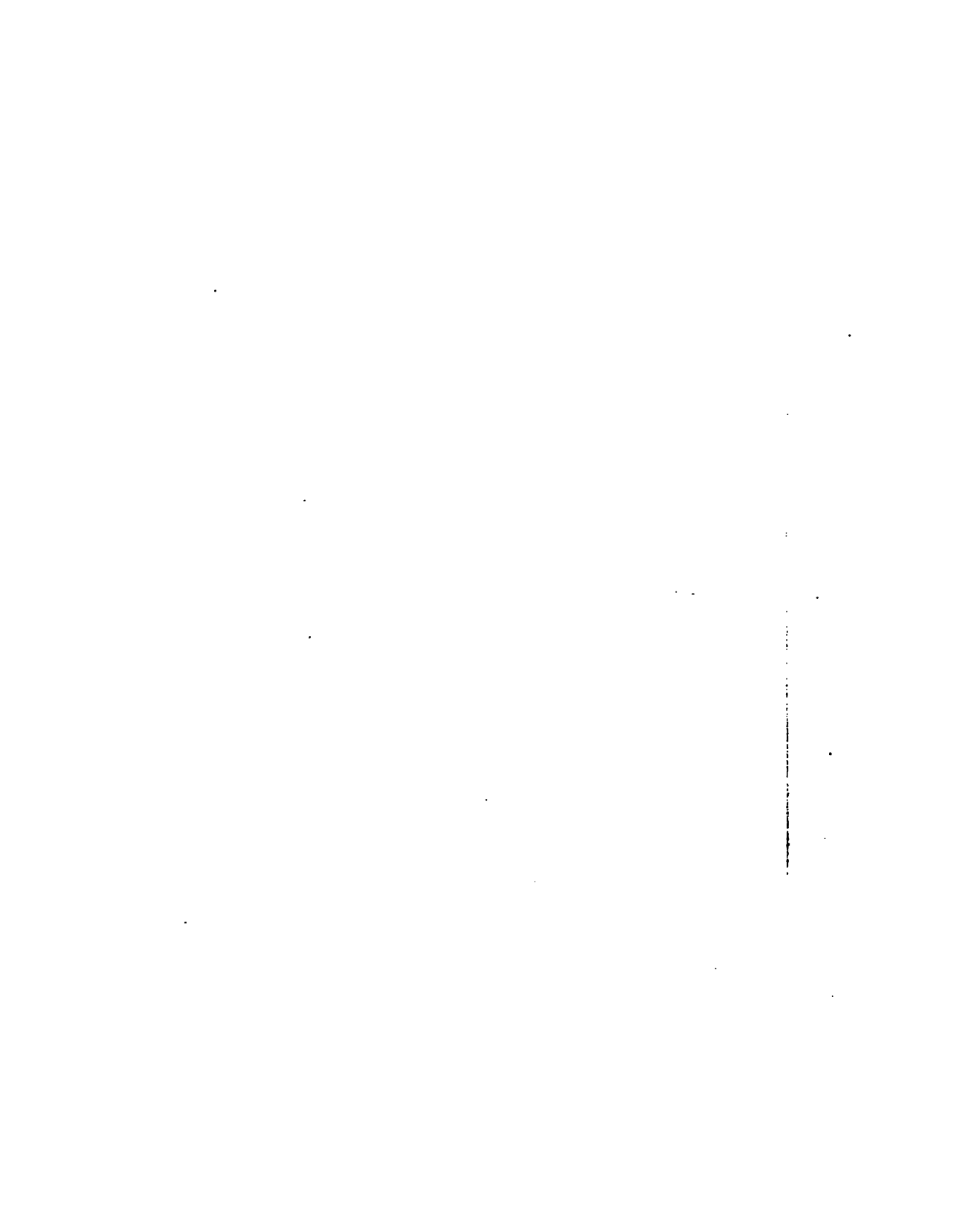
YOUNG FOLKS AND THE JUGGLER.

YOUNG ones, blithe and merry,
Hark to the rolling drum!
Hear the music playing!
See the juggler come!

Yonder, see him yonder,
All so strangely drest,
See his feet above you
Pointing east and west!

Yes, you laugh; yet listen:
He would shake his head,
Saying, hard the labour,
Thus to earn his bread.





YES OR NO?

“YES or No, youngster? Quick, make up your mind and have done with it! Will you go, or won't you?”

“Oh, I don't know, Yorke, I can't settle a bit. You know what a scrape we got into yesterday. They are sure to catch us out of bounds, and then we shall suffer for it!”

“Well, well, you're a coward, that's clear; however, decide one way or the other. Yes or No?”

“Is that the question, young masters, the great question of Yes or No?” said a voice behind them. The two boys were standing leaning over the low stile leading

into a kind of common by the side of the dusty country highway, and they had not noticed the strange-looking figure crouching on the ground behind them. It was a sallow, hollow-cheeked man; a long cloak was over his shoulders, half covering the peculiar dress which showed him to be a juggler or strolling player. At the sound of his voice the lads turned round. Yorke, the elder, with a half laugh, played with his blue cricket-cap as he eyed the strange man; the younger boy listened in earnest as he went on.

“Ay, but, young sirs, that same question was put to me once, and if I had only had the courage to say ‘Yes’ to the right, and ‘No’ to the wrong, I might have been a happier man now, that I might! It was a fair bit of schooling I had before I went as

errand-boy to Dr. Yelling down at our place in Yorkshire. He was a hard man, so he was, but he meant right, and it wasn't likely he'd put up with my idle ways. I was as wild a young scamp as you would soon see, oftener on my head than my heels, never sick of climbing, tumbling, and that sort of thing. And so it happened that I came across the old juggler, Youngman, and he asked me, offhand, would I come and make my fortune, as he called it, with him,—‘Yes or No?’ And wasn't it that same night my master caught me hanging by my feet from the hand-rail outside his house, and my medicine-basket all out in the road? Ah, I mind me even now of his face when he asked me, cane in hand, if I would mend my ways, be honest and active, or go on idling and cheating him,—‘Yes or No?’ I wasn't man

enough, nor brave enough, to give him a hearty 'Yes;' and while I stammered, the thing was done, my wages paid, and I turned off. And that same night I went straight off to Youngman, and a weary life I've had of it since! Trust me, young gentlemen, it's well enough to play in playtime, and to have your juggling when you like it. But play in earnest is hard work. I've stood on my hands on the bar across the chairs, the young ones round, laughing and joking and wondering, and all the while I've longed and longed to change places with the wretchedest stone-breaker on the road! Anything, anywhere, to get away from the drumming and the piping and the tumbling! Mark my words, put the 'Yes' in its place, and the 'No' in its place, and the better for you in the end."

And here the man crouched down again and munched away at his bread and cheese ; and Yorke, with a laugh, vaulted over the stile, calling to his schoolfellow to follow him. But Sydney's look was grave, and with a few words he turned into his own home. When his little sisters asked their usually idle brother that evening if he would play, or must he work, they were surprised at the decided answer, "Yes, work!" And at school next morning, Yorke's question, "Well, what about this nutting? are you going?" got such a strong, short "No," that the young fellow felt, in spite of his laugh, that there was no chance of yielding there, and he turned away without a word.

It was some few days after this, that Sydney's little sister came running into the drawing-room with the eager question,

“Mamma, who is that funny man in the kitchen?”

“It is a poor juggler, dear ; he is very tired, and he has such a cough that I told him to come and rest a little and have a cup of tea.”

“The juggler that has been playing tricks on the green?” asked Sydney, raising his head from his lesson book. “He’s a very good sort of fellow, I believe.”

“You, Sydney, what *can* you know about the man?” asked his mother in surprise.

“Oh, he began to speechify to me the other day, and, somehow or other, he prevented my doing a thing that would have earned me a flogging at school. So you see I owe him a good word, that’s all!”

It was carelessly said, but the mother saw that much was meant. When they

were next alone she and her boy had a talk about the matter, and about that saying of the man's concerning "Yes and No," which Sydney declared "bothered him all day long when he wanted to be after fun instead of work."

"Well, Sydney," said the lady at last, "I think, as you say, we must see if we can't do something for the poor fellow. For if his story has the effect of giving you a little more 'back-bone,' as your father calls it, in your daily work, we shall both of us owe him many thanks. He must be changed enough from what he was when he first took to his trade, if what he says is true. I am inclined to think the hospital would be the best place for him now, but we shall see."

ZOE IN THE *ZEPHYR*.

ZOE, wee Zoe, the bright little prattler,
Hugging her sister and hushing her fears,
Closely together they watch and they whisper,
Noting each turn as the moonbeam appears !

Zephyr, good *Zephyr*, float well on the river,
Cutting thy passage through rush and through reed,
Carry them safely, the bairns and the mother,
For lonely their voyage and sore is their need.



ZACHARY'S WEE BAIRNS.

“ ZOE, darling, Mother’s bairnie, wake up !
Look, Mother’s waiting, and wanting to dress
you both, and then we’ll go down the river
to Father. Wake up, my birdie ! ”

Little Zoe rubbed her eyes, stretched her
little arms and legs, and looked up from her
warm pillow. It helped her more than any-
thing to get those eyes open, to see that it
was still dark night. What could Mother
mean by getting them up before the bright
daylight came ? And to go on the river,
too ! Yet Zoe’s questions did not get much
answer, and there was a look in her mother’s
eyes that stopped them almost before they

were spoken. As for the little fat rosy sister, her baby cries at being so roughly roused were soon hushed by the promise of "going quick to dear Daddy." So the two children were warmly wrapped and hurried out of their home almost before they knew where they were.

Poor dame Zachary, it was with a very heavy heart that she left her dear, pretty home that summer night! Would she ever see it again? Who could tell?

There was a fierce, cruel war raging in the land. Zachary, the once comfortable farmer, had left his fields unploughed to go and help to man the walls of the great city, eight or nine miles farther down the river. And now, after weeks of anxiety, the news came to the good wife that the soldiers were marching down upon her home, and she must escape

in haste. Where could she go ? There was but one thought in her mind. The river ran through the farm ; there was the good strong boat : she would take it, unfurl the sail, and trust herself and her little ones to the quiet stream and the soft summer winds. There was no time to lose ; she must wake her pretty babies and carry them away before they knew it. Tears rose one after another as she watched the sweet moonlight falling on the old walls and windows and creeping ivy and vines of her dear home, slowly left behind her. But there was the rudder to guide, and the sail to manage, and there was no time for vain sorrow. The mother's eye, too, rested on the little sisters, clinging to one another in timid wonder at this their strange journey.

Pretty little Zoe, her bright deep eyes

and little budding mouth so gently cheering the half-frightened baby! Surely Father would be glad to clasp his little pets again, even if it must be in the din of war, amid the smoke and hurry of a crowded city.

All this time the children were getting more at home in the boat. By degrees they ventured to let go each other's hands and to look about them. How cool and quiet the water looked! How pretty were the reeds and rushes as they passed through them, the drooping grasses close to the bank, the lily peeping up from among its leaves into the moonlight, and now and then the boughs of a weeping willow "washing itself," as Zoe said, in the cool dark water! Then there were pleasant, distant sounds sometimes breaking on the quiet night,—the "ba, ba," of some wakeful mother-sheep that had lo

sight of her woolly baby, or the bark of a watch-dog at some farm on the hilly shores.

Dear little Zoe prattled of these things to her baby sister, to keep her from thinking of her warm bed at home, for the child was tired and fretful.

“Hark, don’t ’ee hear that dear dicky-bird? Only listen,” said Zoe, as they passed under a thick wood merry with the song of nightingales.

“What for he sing all night?” said the little one; “he be very tired, I sure!”

“Oh no, he isn’t: he’s singing his babies to sleep! Don’t you wish you were a little birdie up in the warm nest?”

“De bough break, de cradle will fall,” said the child; “no, me stay with ’ou, dat best!”

Then came a lot of kisses, till little Zoe’s

eyes caught sight of a moor-hen very close to the boat, and in a minute or two more of a white, big swan sleepily swimming about under a clump of tall reeds.

Then there was a talk of pulling out his white feathers to make a feather-bed, and after that, of catching one of the bats that kept flying over their heads.

But, by and by, came a whine and a whimper of "I so s'eeepy, so very s'eeepy, Zoe!" which Mother hearing, a plan was found for the two to cuddle down in the bottom of the boat, with Mother's shawl to wrap them in, and there in each other's arms to go fast asleep till morning.

And when they awoke it was to see the bright sun shining down on a broad, swift river, and Mother working very hard to keep the boat straight, other boats being near, and

the banks dotted over with houses, and the great city just coming in sight.

I mustn't stop to tell you how they met Father, nor anything at all about their life for the next twelve months; Father's great sword that frightened his baby so; Father's getting a cut in his shoulder and being ill for ever so long; all Mother's watching and weeping and fears; no, I certainly mustn't tell you all that. Only one more peep at them, and then we have done.

They are in a boat again, the good old boat the *Zephyr*, only Father is managing her and not Mother, and they are going against the stream this time and not with it.

Father has left his sword behind him, he won't want it any more; and both he and Mother are looking very happy as they watch their little ones asleep again on the old shawl.

ZOE IN THE *ZEPHYR*.

ZOE, wee Zoe, the bright little prattler,
Hugging her sister and hushing her fears,
Closely together they watch and they whisper,
Noting each turn as the moonbeam appears !

Zephyr, good *Zephyr*, float well on the river,
Cutting thy passage through rush and through reed,
Carry them safely, the bairns and the mother,
For lonely their voyage and sore is their need.



ZACHARY'S WEE BAIRNS.

“ ZOE, darling, Mother’s bairnie, wake up !
Look, Mother’s waiting, and wanting to dress
you both, and then we’ll go down the river
to Father. Wake up, my birdie ! ”

Little Zoe rubbed her eyes, stretched her
little arms and legs, and looked up from her
warm pillow. It helped her more than any-
thing to get those eyes open, to see that it
was still dark night. What could Mother
mean by getting them up before the bright
daylight came ? And to go on the river,
too ! Yet Zoe’s questions did not get much
answer, and there was a look in her mother’s
eyes that stopped them almost before they

were spoken. As for the little fat rosy sister, her baby cries at being so roughly roused were soon hushed by the promise of "going quick to dear Daddy." So the two children were warmly wrapped and hurried out of their home almost before they knew where they were.

Poor dame Zachary, it was with a very heavy heart that she left her dear, pretty home that summer night! Would she ever see it again? Who could tell?

There was a fierce, cruel war raging in the land. Zachary, the once comfortable farmer, had left his fields unploughed to go and help to man the walls of the great city, eight or nine miles farther down the river. And now, after weeks of anxiety, the news came to the good wife that the soldiers were marching down upon her home, and she must escape

in haste. Where could she go ? There was but one thought in her mind. The river ran through the farm ; there was the good strong boat : she would take it, unfurl the sail, and trust herself and her little ones to the quiet stream and the soft summer winds. There was no time to lose ; she must wake her pretty babies and carry them away before they knew it. Tears rose one after another as she watched the sweet moonlight falling on the old walls and windows and creeping ivy and vines of her dear home, slowly left behind her. But there was the rudder to guide, and the sail to manage, and there was no time for vain sorrow. The mother's eye, too, rested on the little sisters, clinging to one another in timid wonder at this their strange journey.

Pretty little Zoe, her bright deep eyes

her face with his black moustache, the more she crowed and laughed ! It was very odd !

Papa was wonderfully fond of his Baby ! Was *that* very odd ? He looked fierce enough sometimes, Major Percy did, but not at his little Allie ! He was her horse, her dog, her plaything ; she could make him mew, and bark, and do whatever she liked. And even now, as they went under the low porch of the pretty house by the sea, that was at present their home, the little lady was perched on his shoulder, so that he had to stoop ever so much to get in.

How happy they looked at tea that evening, the red sun shining in over the sea, through the window ! Papa lounging back in his chair, Baby nestled up in his arms, helping herself to his spoon to make noisy music on the tray.

“You will make the child sick, you know you will, Harry,” said the young mother, as another lump was stolen from the sugar-basin.

“Nonsense, Alice ; all children thrive on sweets, don’t they, wee one ? There, don’t bite my finger off with those little white grinders of yours !”

Her little ladyship was in a very good temper that evening ; she did nothing but laugh and chatter all the while, interrupting all serious talk with her funny ways. “Baby tea, Baby have ’poon,—more,—more !” So it went on all the time.

“Now, Baby, you and I’ll have some music. Come, Mamma, go and sing to us while we stretch our legs on the sofa.”

No sooner said than done. There lay the tall soldier, his Baby’s face close to his

own, her white frock and blue ribbons sadly crumpled by his heavy coat-sleeve. Sometimes Baby seemed to listen to the singing, and her large eyes wandered from her father to her mother. But she soon wearied of that, and began to amuse herself by stuffing handfuls of beard into her mouth, or putting her little fist into her father's eyes.

At last the little rogue was carried off to bed, and Papa and Mamma, left to themselves, stood together by the window looking out at the beautiful quiet sea in the soft twilight, and thinking how very soon it would be rolling between them. Now, I am not going to tell you all the sad, loving things they said to each other, so you needn't expect it. They had not been talking long when the Major turned round sharply :

“Hark, that’s Baby crying, I declare !
What’s the matter, I wonder ?”

“Oh nothing, Harry; stop !” but he was gone. Another minute and he appeared, the child, half undressed, in his arms. He tumbled her down all among the cushions, and the crying was changed to merry crowing in a moment.

“How you spoil her, Harry ; it’s shocking !”

“Do I? Well, she won’t have Papa to spoil her much longer anyway, so never mind ! There, you see, she puts out her arms to you at once, little rogue ; she knows who can manage her best !”

And so they played with her till sober old Nurse came down to see if Miss Baby was ever to go to bed at all !

I fancy Major Percy thought often enough

of those pleasant hours with his baby in the midst of all his fighting and suffering in that far-off Russia. And at last, when it was all over, and the good ship was bringing him every hour nearer to old England again, there was nothing much brighter or sweeter in his mind, than the picture of the fat, rosy face of his little 'Allie, grown older indeed as he tried to fancy her, but the same little Allie for all that, waiting for him at home !

THE END.

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