

ST. NICHOLAS.

VOL. II.

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No. 5.

THE TWO FRIENDS.

BY PAUL FORT.

THERE was once a bear who was very lonely (La Fontaine tells about him in one of his fables), and as he grew older he began to feel that his solitary lot was too much for him to bear. He had no wife, no children, no parents. The larger animals generally avoided him, and as for the smaller creatures, such as rabbits and little pigs, they would have nothing whatever to do with him, if they could help it. He had

No one to love, none to caress,

and he grew sadder day by day.

Not many miles from the mountain on which this bear lived, was the house of a man who was in very much the same condition. He had a comfortable home, with gardens and shade-trees, and pillars and alcoves, with statues of Saturn and Jupiter and the rest of the heathen gods, and lakes on which swans glided about.

In all this the man was ever so much better off than the bear, who had almost nothing at all; but he was not happy. He, too, had no wife, or child, or parents. He longed for companionship—some one into whose ear he could pour his sorrows and his joys, some one on whose heart he could lovingly lean.

One day, when he was out walking, he met the bear. At the same instant the same idea struck each of these individuals. Each said to himself: "Perhaps I have at last met my friend!"

After a few words of ordinary salutation, they became quite at their ease, and soon struck up a very pleasant acquaintance as they walked together through the wood.

The bear was a good honest sort of fellow, and the man took such a liking to him, that when they

reached his house he invited the bear to stay all night.

The bear staid all night, and also the next day, and the two new friends got along so well together that they made an arrangement by which the bear came to live with the man.

They were both very well satisfied with this plan. The bear had a good house to live in, plenty to eat, and delightful grounds in which he might rove about. The man, who was very fond of gardening, and did not care much for hunting or anything of that kind, found the bear extremely useful in getting an occasional deer or wild pig for the family table.

Besides, when warm and tired after working in the garden, he was not afraid to lie down and go to sleep under the shade of one of his great trees, if the bear were near. He knew very well that no wild beast or wicked man would dare to harm him when that true friend stood guard.

And thus they lived pleasantly during a great part of the Summer. They confided in each other, they never quarreled, and they seemed to suit each other admirably.

But one was a man and the other was a bear.

The bear was very strong and good-natured, but he did not know much. Of course he was not to blame for that; but his extreme ignorance did not have a good effect upon his companion. It is very seldom that we are benefited by intimate association with ignorant people.

One day the man was asleep under a tree, and the bear was watching him. There was nothing to molest the sleeper but flies and gnats, and these the bear carefully brushed away so that his dear friend might rest at ease.

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There was, however, one pertinacious gnat, who would not be brushed away. He buzzed about the man's head and alighted on his nose. He whisked himself here, and he whisked himself there; the more the bear brushed him away, the more he came back again, buzzing and humming like a little winged demon.

The bear lost all patience.

"My good friend can't get a decent nap for that wretched gnat! I'll kill the malicious little insect. It's the only way to do with such stupid creatures."

So he took up a big stone and hurled it at the gnat, which had just settled on the nose of the sleeping man.

The bear killed the bothersome gnat, but he also crushed the head of his dear friend.

Two or three days afterward, the bear was sitting under a tree in the forest, thinking about all this.

"The trouble was," he said to himself, "that the man ought to have been careful to choose a friend with more sense than I've got." Which proves that the bear was not altogether an idiot.

EIGHT COUSINS.

BY LOUISA M. ALCOTT.

CHAPTER V.

A BELT AND A BOX.



WHEN Rose came out of her chamber, cup in hand, next morning, the first person she saw was Uncle Alec standing on the threshold of the room opposite, which he appeared to be examining with care. When he heard her step, he turned about and began to sing:

"Where are you going, my pretty maid?"

"I'm going a-milking, sir, she said," answered Rose, waving the cup; and then they finished the verse together in fine style.

Before either spoke, a head, in a nightcap so large and beruffled that it looked like a cabbage, popped out of a room farther down the hall, and an astonished voice exclaimed:

"What in the world are you about so early?"

"Clearing our pipes for the day, ma'am. Look here, auntie, can I have this room?" said Dr. Alec, making her a sailor's bow.

"Any room you like, except sister's."

"Thanks. And may I go rummaging round in the garrets and glory-holes to furnish it as I like?"

"My dear boy, you may turn the house upside down if you will only stay in it."

"That's a handsome offer, I'm sure. I'll stay, ma'am; here's my little anchor, so you will get more than you want of me this time."

"That's impossible! Put on your jacket, Rose. Don't tire her out with antics, Alec. Yes, sister, I'm coming!" and the cabbage vanished suddenly.

The first milking lesson was a droll one; but after several scares and many vain attempts Rose at last managed to fill her cup, while Ben held Clover's tail so that it could not flap, and Dr. Alec kept her from turning to stare at the new milk-maid, who objected to both these proceedings very much.

"You look chilly in spite of all this laughing. Take a smart run round the garden and get up a glow," said the doctor, as they left the barn.

"I'm too old for running, uncle; Miss Powers said it was not lady-like for girls in their teens," answered Rose, primly.

"I take the liberty of differing from Madame Prunes and Prisms, and, as your physician, I order you to run. Off with you!" said Uncle Alec, with a look and a gesture that made Rose scurry away as fast as she could go.

Anxious to please him, she raced round the beds till she came back to the porch where he stood, and dropping down upon the steps, she sat panting with cheeks as rosy as the rigolette on her shoulders.

"Very well done, child; I see you have not lost the use of your limbs though you *are* in your teens. That belt is too tight; unfasten it, then you can take a long breath without panting so."

"It is n't tight, sir; I can breathe perfectly well," began Rose, trying to compose herself.

Her uncle's only answer was to lift her up and unhook the new belt of which she was so proud. The moment the clasp was open the belt flew apart several inches, for it was impossible to restrain the involuntary sigh of relief that flatly contradicted her words.

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so a bit. Of course it would open if I puff like this, but I never do, because I hardly ever run," explained Rose, rather discomfited by this discovery.

"I see you don't half fill your lungs, and so you can wear this absurd thing without feeling it. The idea of cramping a tender little waist in a stiff band of leather and steel just when it ought to be growing," said Dr. Alec, surveying the belt with great disfavor as he put the clasp forward several holes, to Rose's secret dismay, for she was proud of her slender figure, and daily rejoiced that she was n't as stout as Luly Miller, a former schoolmate, who vainly tried to repress her plumpness.

"It will fall off if it is so loose," she said anxiously, as she stood watching him pull her precious belt about.

"Not if you keep taking long breaths to hold it on. That is what I want you to do, and when you have filled this out we will go on enlarging it till your waist is more like that of Hebe, goddess of health, and less like that of a fashion-plate,—the ugliest thing imaginable."

"How it does look!" and Rose gave a glance of scorn at the loose belt hanging round her trim little waist. "It will be lost, and then I shall feel badly, for it cost ever so much, and is real steel and Russia leather. Just smell how nice."

"If it is lost I'll give you a better one. A soft silken sash is much fitter for a pretty child like you than a plated harness like this; and I've got no end of Italian scarfs and Turkish sashes among my traps. Ah! that makes you feel better, does n't it?" and he pinched the cheek that had suddenly dimpled with a smile.

"It is very silly of me, but I can't help liking to know that"—here she stopped and blushed and held down her head, ashamed to add, "you think I am pretty."

Dr. Alec's eyes twinkled, but he said, very soberly:

"Rose, are you vain?"

"I'm afraid I am," answered a very meek voice from behind the veil of hair that hid the red face.

"That is a sad fault." And he sighed as if grieved at the confession.

"I know it is, and I try not to be; but people praise me, and I can't help liking it, for I really don't think I am repulsive, uncle."

The last word, and the funny tone in which it was uttered, were too much for Dr. Alec, and he laughed in spite of himself, to Rose's great relief.

"I quite agree with you; and in order that you may be still less repulsive, I want you to grow as fine a girl as Phebe."

"Phebe!" and Rose looked so amazed that her uncle nearly went off again.

"Yes, Phebe; for she has what you need—

health. If you dear little girls would only learn what real beauty is, and not pinch and starve and bleach yourselves out so, you'd save an immense deal of time and money and pain. A happy soul in a healthy body makes the best sort of beauty for man or woman. Do you understand that, my dear?"

"Yes, sir," answered Rose, much taken down by this comparison with the girl from the poorhouse. It nettled her sadly, and she showed that it did by saying quickly:

"I suppose you would like to have me sweep and scrub and wear an old brown dress, and go round with my sleeves rolled up as Phebe does?"

"I should very much, if you could work as well as she does, and show as strong a pair of arms as she can. I have n't seen a prettier picture for some time than she made of herself this morning, up to the elbows in suds, singing like a blackbird while she scrubbed on the back stoop."

"Well, I do think you are the queerest man that ever lived!" was all Rose could find to say after this display of bad taste.

"I haven't begun to show my oddities yet, so you must make up your mind to worse shocks than this," he said, with such a whimsical look that she was glad the sound of a bell prevented her showing more plainly what a blow her little vanities had already received.

"You will find your box all open up in auntie's room, and there you can amuse her and yourself by rummaging to your heart's content; I've got to be cruising round all the morning getting my room to rights," said Dr. Alec, as they rose from breakfast.

"Can't I help you, uncle?" asked Rose, quite burning to be useful.

"No, thank you. I'm going to borrow Phebe for awhile, if Aunt Plenty can spare her."

"Anybody—anything, Alec. You will want me, I know, so I'll give orders about dinner and be all ready to lend a hand;" and the old lady bustled away full of interest and good-will.

"Uncle will find that I can do some things that Phebe can't; so now!" thought Rose, with a toss of the head as she flew to Aunt Peace and the long-desired box.

Every little girl can easily imagine what an extra good time she had diving into a sea of treasures and fishing up one pretty thing after another, till the air was full of the mingled odors of musk and sandal-wood, the room gay with bright colors, and Rose in a rapture of delight. She began to forgive Dr. Alec for the oatmeal diet when she saw a lovely ivory work-box; became resigned to the state of her belt when she found a pile of rainbow-colored sashes; and when she came to some distractingly

pretty bottles of attar of rose, she felt that they almost atoned for the great sin of thinking Phebe the finer girl of the two.

Dr. Alec meanwhile had apparently taken Aunt Plenty at her word, and *was* turning the house upside down. A general revolution was evidently going on in the green room, for the dark damask curtains were seen bundling away in Phebe's arms; the air-tight stove retiring to the cellar on Ben's shoulder, and the great bedstead going up garret in a fragmentary state, escorted by three bearers. Aunt Plenty was constantly on the trot among her store-rooms, camphor-chests and linen-closets, looking as if the new order of things both amazed and amused her.

Half the peculiar performances of Dr. Alec cannot be revealed, but as Rose glanced up from her box now and then she caught glimpses of him striding by, bearing a bamboo chair, a pair of ancient andirons, a queer Japanese screen, a rug or two, and finally a large bathing-pan upon his head.

"What a curious room it will be," she said, as she sat resting and refreshing herself with "Lumps of Delight," all the way from Cairo.

"I fancy *you* will like it, deary," answered Aunt Peace, looking up with a smile from some pretty trifle she was making with blue silk and white muslin.

Rose did not see the smile, for just at that moment her uncle paused at the door, and she sprang up to dance before him, saying, with a face full of childish happiness:

"Look at me! look at me! I'm so splendid I don't know myself. I have n't put these things on right, I dare say, but I do like them *so* much!"

"You look as gay as a parrot in your fez and cabaja, and it does my heart good to see the little black shadow turned into a rainbow," said Uncle Alec, surveying the bright figure before him with great approbation.

He did not say it, but he thought she made a much prettier picture than Phebe at the wash-tub, for she had stuck a purple fez on her blond head, tied several brilliant scarfs about her waist, and put on a truly gorgeous scarlet jacket with a golden sun embroidered on the back, a silver moon on the front, and stars of all sizes on the sleeves. A pair of Turkish slippers adorned her feet, and necklaces of amber, coral and filigree hung about her neck, while one hand held a smelling-bottle, and the other the spicy box of oriental sweetmeats.

"I feel like a girl in the 'Arabian Nights,' and expect to find a magic carpet or a wonderful talisman somewhere. Only I don't see how I ever *can* thank you for all these lovely things," she said, stopping her dance, as if suddenly oppressed with gratitude.

"I'll tell you how—by leaving off the black clothes, that never should have been kept so long on such a child, and wearing the gay ones I've brought. It will do your spirits good, and cheer up this sober old house. Wont it, Auntie?"

"I think you are right, Alec, and it is fortunate that we have not begun on her spring clothes yet, for Myra thought she ought not to wear anything brighter than violet, and she is too pale for that."

"You just let me direct Miss Hemming how to make some of these things. You will be surprised to see how much I know about piping hems and gathering arm-holes and shirring biases," began Dr. Alec, patting a pile of muslin, cloth and silk with a knowing air.

Aunt Peace and Rose laughed so that he could not display his knowledge any farther till they stopped, when he said good-naturedly:

"That will go a great way toward filling out the belt, so laugh away, Morgiana, and I'll go back to my work, or I never shall be done."

"I could n't help it, 'shirred biases' were so very funny!" Rose said, as she turned to her box after the splendid laugh. "But really, auntie," she added soberly, "I feel as if I ought not to have so many nice things. I suppose it would n't do to give Phebe some of them? Uncle might not like it."

"He would not mind; but they are not suitable for Phebe. Some of the dresses you are done with would be more useful, if they can be made over to fit her," answered Aunt Peace in the prudent, moderate tone which is so trying to our feelings when we indulge in little fits of charitable enthusiasm.

"I'd rather give her new ones, for I think she is a little bit proud and might not like old things. If she was my sister it would do, because sisters don't mind, but she is n't, and that makes it bad, you see. I know how I can manage beautifully; I'll adopt her!" and Rose looked quite radiant with this new idea.

"I'm afraid you could not do it legally till you are older, but you might see if she likes the plan, and at any rate you can be very kind to her, for in one sense we are all sisters, and should help one another."

The sweet old face looked at her so kindly that Rose was fired with a desire to settle the matter at once, and rushed away to the kitchen just as she was. Phebe was there, polishing up the queer old andirons so busily that she started when a voice cried out: "Smell that, taste this, and look at me!"

Phebe sniffed attar of rose, crunched the Lump of Delight tucked into her mouth, and stared with all her eyes at little Morgiana prancing about the room like a brilliant parouquet.

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"My stars, aint you splendid!" was all she could say, holding up two dusty hands.

"I've got heaps of lovely things upstairs, and I'll show them all to you, and I'd go halves, only auntie thinks they would n't be useful, so I shall give you something else; and you wont mind, will you? because I want to adopt you as Arabella was in the story. Wont that be nice?"

"Why, Miss Rose, have you lost your wits?"

No wonder Phebe asked, for Rose talked very fast, and looked so odd in her new costume, and

what to do," thought Rose, much discouraged by this reception of her offer.

"Please, forgive me; I did n't mean to hurt your feelings, and hope you wont think ——" she faltered presently, feeling that she must undo the mischief if possible.

But Phebe gave her another surprise, by dropping the apron and showing a face all smiles, in spite of tears in the eyes, as she put both arms round Rose, and said, with a laugh and sob:

"I think you are the dearest girl in the world, and I'll let you do anything you like with me."

"Then you do like the plan? You did n't cry because I seemed to be kind of patronizing? I truly did n't mean to be," cried Rose, delighted.

"I guess I do like it! and cried because no one was ever so good to me before, and I could n't help it. As for patronizing, you may walk on me if you want to, and I wont mind," said Phebe, in a burst of gratitude, for the words, "we are all sisters," went straight to her lonely heart and nestled there.

"Well, now, we can play I'm a good sprite out of the box, or, what is better, a fairy godmother come down the chimney, and you are Cinderella, and must say what you want," said Rose, trying to put the question delicately.

Phebe understood that, for she had a good deal of natural refinement, though she did come from the poor-house.

"I don't feel as if I wanted anything now, Miss Rose, but to find some way of thanking you for all you've done," she said, rubbing off a tear that went rolling down

the bridge of her nose in the most unromantic way.

"Why, I have n't done anything but given you a bit of candy! Here, have some more, and eat 'em while you work and think what I *can* do. I must go and clear up, so good-by, and don't forget I've adopted you."

"You've given me sweeter things than candy, and I'm not likely to forget it." And carefully wiping off the brick-dust, Phebe pressed the little hand Rose offered warmly in both her hard ones, while the black eyes followed the departing visitor with a grateful look that made them very soft and bright.



ROSE AND PHEBE.

was so eager she could not stop to explain. Seeing Phebe's bewilderment, she quieted down and said, with a pretty air of earnestness:

"It is n't fair that I should have so much and you so little, and I want to be as good to you as if you were my sister, for Aunt Peace says we are all sisters really. I thought if I adopted you as much as I can now, it would be nicer. Will you let me, please?"

To Rose's great surprise Phebe sat down on the floor and hid her face in her apron for a minute without answering a word.

"Oh dear, now she's offended, and I don't know

CHAPTER VI.

UNCLE ALEC'S ROOM.

SOON after dinner, and before she had got acquainted with half her new possessions, Dr. Alec proposed a drive, to carry round the first installment of gifts to the aunts and cousins. Rose was quite ready to go, being anxious to try a certain soft bur-noose from the box, which not only possessed a most engaging little hood, but had fuzzy tassels bobbing in all directions.

The big carriage was full of parcels, and even Ben's seat was loaded with Indian war-clubs, a Chinese kite of immense size, and a pair of polished ox-horns from Africa. Uncle Alec, very blue as to his clothes, and very brown as to his face, sat bolt upright, surveying well-known places with interest, while Rose, feeling unusually elegant and comfortable, leaned back folded in her soft mantle, and played she was an Eastern princess making a royal progress among her subjects.

At three of the places their calls were brief, for Aunt Myra's catarrh was unusually bad; Aunt Clara had a room full of company, and Aunt Jane showed such a tendency to discuss the population, productions and politics of Europe, Asia, and Africa, that even Dr. Alec was dismayed, and got away as soon as possible.

"Now we will have a good time! I do hope the boys will be at home," said Rose, with a sigh of relief, as they wound yet higher up the hill to Aunt Jessie's.

"I left this for the last call, so that we might find the lads just in from school. Yes, there is Jamie on the gate watching for us; now you'll see the clan gather; they are always swarming about together."

The instant Jamie saw the approaching guests he gave a shrill whistle, which was answered by echoes from meadow, house and barn, as the cousins came running from all directions, shouting, "Hooray for Uncle Alec!" They went at the carriage like highwaymen, robbed it of every parcel, took the occupants prisoner, and marched them into the house with great exultation.

"Little Mum! little Mum! here they are with lots of goodies! Come down and see the fun right away; quick!" bawled Will and Geordie amidst a general ripping off of papers and a reckless cutting of strings that soon turned the tidy room into a chaos.

Down came Aunt Jessie with her pretty cap half on, but such a beaming face below it that one rather thought the fly-away head-gear an improvement than otherwise. She had hardly time to greet Rose and the Doctor before the boys were about her, each clamoring for her to see his gift and rejoice over it with him, for "little Mum" went

halves in everything. The great horns skirmished about her as if to toss her to the ceiling; the war-clubs hurtled over her head as if to annihilate her; an amazing medley from the four quarters of the globe filled her lap, and seven excited boys all talked to her at once.

But she liked it; oh dear, yes! and sat smiling, admiring and explaining, quite untroubled by the din, which made Rose cover up her ears and Dr. Alec threaten instant flight if the riot was not quelled. That threat produced a lull, and while the uncle received thanks in one corner, the aunt had some little confidences made to her in the other.

"Well, dear, and how are things going with you now? Better, I hope, than they were a week ago."

"Aunt Jessie, I think I'm going to be very happy, now uncle has come. He does the queerest things, but he is *so* good to me I can't help loving him;" and nestling closer to little Mum, Rose told all that had happened, ending with a rapturous account of the splendid box.

"I am very glad, dear. But, Rose, I must warn you of one thing; don't let uncle spoil you."

"But I like to be spoilt, auntie."

"I don't doubt it; but if you turn out badly when the year is over he will be blamed, and his experiment prove a failure. That would be a pity, would n't it? when he wants to do so much for you, and can do it if his kind heart does not get in the way of his good judgment."

"I never thought of that, and I'll try not to be spoilt. But how *can* I help it?" asked Rose anxiously.

"By not complaining of the wholesome things he wants you to do; by giving him cheerful obedience as well as love; and even making some small sacrifices for his sake."

"I will, I truly will! and when I get in a worry about things may I come to you? Uncle told me to, and I feel as if I should n't be afraid."

"You may, darling; this is the place where little troubles are best cured, and this is what mothers are for I fancy;" and Aunt Jessie drew the curly head to her shoulder with a tender look that proved how well she knew what medicine the child most needed.

It was so sweet and comfortable that Rose sat still enjoying it till a little voice said:

"Mamma, don't you think Pokey would like some of my shells? Rose gave Phebe some of her nice things, and it was very good of her. Can I?"

"Who is Pokey?" asked Rose, popping up her head, attracted by the odd name.

"My dolly; do you want to see her?" asked Jamie, who had been much impressed by the tale of adoption he had overheard.

"Yes; I'm fond of dollies, only don't tell the boys, or they will laugh at me."

"They don't laugh at me, and they play with my dolly a great deal; but she likes me best;" and Jamie ran away to produce his pet.

"I brought my old doll, but I keep her hidden because I am too big to play with her, and yet I can't bear to throw her away, I'm so fond of her," said Rose, continuing her confidences in a whisper.

"You can come and play with Jamie's whenever you like, for we believe in dollies up here," began Aunt Jessie, smiling to herself as if something amused her.

Just then Jamie came back, and Rose understood the smile, for his dolly proved to be a pretty four-year-old little girl, who trotted in as fast as her fat legs would carry her, and making straight for the shells scrambled up an armful, saying with a laugh that showed her little white teeth:

"All for Dimmy and me, for Dimmy and me!"

"That's my dolly; is n't she a nice one?" asked Jamie, proudly surveying his pet with his hands behind him and his short legs rather far apart,—a manly attitude copied from his brothers.

"She is a dear dolly. But why call her Pokey?" asked Rose, charmed with the new plaything.

"She is such an inquisitive little body she is always poking that mite of a nose into everything; and as Paul Pry did not suit, the boys fell to calling her Pokey. Not a pretty name, but very expressive."

It certainly was, for, having examined the shells, the busy tot laid hold of everything she could find, and continued her researches till Archie caught her sucking his carved ivory chess men to see if they were not barley-sugar. Rice-paper pictures were also discovered crumpled up in her tiny pocket, and she nearly smashed Will's ostrich-egg by trying to sit upon it.

"Here, Jim, take her away; she's worse than the puppies, and we can't have her round," commanded the elder brother, picking her up and handing her over to the little fellow, who received her with open arms and the warning remark:

"You'd better mind what you do, for I'm going to dopt Pokey like Rose did Phebe, and then you'll have to be very good to her, you big fellows."

"Dopt away, Baby, and I'll give you a cage to keep her in, or you wont have her long, for she is getting worse than a monkey;" and Archie went back to his mates, while Aunt Jessie, foreseeing a crisis, proposed that Jamie should take his dolly home, as she was borrowed and it was time her visit ended.

"My dolly is better than yours, is n't she? 'cause she can walk and talk and sing and dance, and



JAMIE AND HIS DOLLY.

yours can't do anything, can she?" asked Jamie with pride, as he regarded his Pokey, who just then had been moved to execute a funny little jig and warble the well-known couplet:

"Puss-tat, puss-tat, where you been?"
"I been Lunnin, to saw a Tween."

After which superb display she retired, escorted by Jamie, both making a fearful din blowing on conch shells.

"We must tear ourselves away, Rose, because I want to get you home before sunset. Will you come for a drive, Jessie?" said Dr. Alec, as the music died away in the distance.

"No, thank you; but I see the boys want a scamper, so if you don't mind, they may escort you home, but not go in. That is only allowed on holidays."

The words were hardly out of Aunt Jessie's mouth when Archie said in a tone of command:

"Pass the word, lads. Boot and saddle, and be quick about it."

"All right!" And in a moment not a vestige of a boy remained but the litter on the floor.

The cavalcade went down the hill at a pace that made Rose cling to her uncle's arm, for the fat

old horses got excited by the antics of the ponies careering all about them, and went as fast as they could pelt, with the gay dog-cart rattling in front, for Archie and Charlie scorned Shelties since this magnificent equipage had been set up. Ben enjoyed the fun, and the lads cut up capers till Rose declared that "circus" was the proper name for them after all.

When they reached the house they dismounted, and stood, three on each side the steps, in martial attitudes, while her ladyship was handed out with great elegance by Uncle Alec. Then the clan saluted, mounted at word of command, and with a wild whoop tore down the avenue in what they considered the true Arab style.

"That was splendid, now it is safely ended," said Rose, skipping up the steps with her head over her shoulder to watch the dear tassels bob about.

"I shall get you a pony as soon as you are a little stronger," said Dr. Alec, watching her with a smile.

"Oh, I could n't ride one of those horrid, frisky little beasts! They roll their eyes and bounce about so, I should die of fright," cried Rose, clasp- ing her hands tragically.

"Are you a coward?"

"About horses I am."

"Never mind, then; come and see my new room;" and he led the way upstairs without another word.

As Rose followed she remembered her promise to Aunt Jessie, and was sorry she had objected so decidedly. She was a great deal more sorry five minutes later, and well she might be.

"Now take a good look, and tell me what you think of it," said Dr. Alec, opening the door and letting her enter before him, while Phebe was seen whisking down the back stairs with a dust-pan.

Rose walked to the middle of the room, stood still, and gazed about her with eyes that brightened as they looked, for all was changed.

This chamber had been built out over the library to suit some fancy, and had been unused for years, except at Christmas times, when the old house overflowed. It had three windows: one to the east, that overlooked the bay; one to the south, where the horse-chestnuts waved their green fans; and one to the west, toward the hills and the evening sky. A ruddy sunset burned there now, filling the room with an enchanted glow; the soft murmur of the sea was heard, and a robin chirped "Good night!" among the budding trees.

Rose saw and heard these things first, and felt their beauty with a child's quick instinct; then her eye took in the altered aspect of the room, once so shrouded, still and solitary, now so full of light and warmth and simple luxury.

India matting covered the floor, with a gay rug here and there; the antique andirons shone on the wide hearth, where a cheery blaze dispelled the dampness of the long-closed room. Bamboo lounges and chairs stood about, and quaint little tables in cosy corners; one bearing a pretty basket, one a desk, and on a third lay several familiar-looking books. In a recess stood a narrow white bed, with a lovely Madonna hanging over it. The Japanese screen half folded back showed a delicate toilet service of blue and white set forth on a marble slab, and near by was the great bath-pan, with Turkish towels and a sponge as big as Rose's head.

"Uncle must love cold water like a duck," she thought, with a shiver.

Then her eye went on to the tall cabinet, where a half-open door revealed a tempting array of the drawers, shelves and "cubby holes," which so delighted the hearts of children.

"What a grand place for my new things," she thought, wondering what her uncle kept in that cedar retreat.

"Oh me, what a sweet toilet-table!" was her next mental exclamation, as she approached this inviting spot.

A round old-fashioned mirror hung over it, with a gilt eagle a-top, holding in his beak the knot of blue ribbon that tied up a curtain of muslin falling on either side of the table, where appeared little ivory-handled brushes, two slender silver candle-sticks, a porcelain match-box, several pretty trays for small matters, and, most imposing of all, a plump blue silk cushion, coquettishly trimmed with lace and pink rose-buds at the corners.

That cushion rather astonished Rose, in fact the whole table did, and she was just thinking with a sly smile:

"Uncle is a dandy, but I never should have guessed it," when he opened the door of a large closet, saying, with a careless wave of the hand:

"Men like plenty of room for their rattle traps; don't you think that ought to satisfy me?"

Rose peeped in and gave a start, though all she saw was what one usually finds in closets,—clothes and boots, boxes and bags. Ah, but you see these clothes were small black and white frocks; the row of little boots that stood below had never been on Dr. Alec's feet; the green bandbox had a gray veil straying out of it, and—yes! the bag hanging on the door was certainly her own piece-bag, with a hole in one corner. She gave a quick look round the room and understood now why it had seemed too dainty for a man, why *her* Testament and Prayer-Book were on the table by the bed, and what those rose-buds meant on the blue cushion. It came upon her in one delicious

burst that this little paradise was all for her, and, not knowing how else to express her gratitude, she caught Dr. Alec round the neck, saying impetuously:

"Oh, uncle, you are *too* good to me! I'll do anything you ask me; ride wild horses and take freezing baths and eat bad-tasting messes, and let my clothes hang on me, to show how much I thank you for this dear, sweet, lovely room!"

"You like it, then? But why do you think it is yours, my lass?" asked Dr. Alec, as he sat down looking well pleased, and drew his excited little niece to his knee.

"I don't *think*, I *know* it is for me; I see it in your face, and I feel as if I did n't half deserve it. Aunt Jessie said you would spoil me, and I must not let you. I'm afraid this looks like it, and perhaps—oh me!—perhaps I ought not to have this beautiful room after all!" and Rose tried to look as if she could be heroic enough to give it up if it was best.

"I owe Mrs. Jessie one for that," said Dr. Alec, trying to frown, though in his secret soul he felt that she was quite right. Then he smiled that cordial smile, which was like sunshine on his brown face, as he said:

"This is part of the cure, Rose, and I put you here that you might take my three great remedies in the best and easiest way. Plenty of sun, fresh air and cold water; also cheerful surroundings and some work; for Phebe is to show you how to take care of this room and be your little maid as well as friend and teacher. Does that sound hard and disagreeable to you, dear?"

"No, sir; very, very pleasant, and I'll do my best to be a good patient. But I really don't think any one *could* be sick in this delightful room," she said, with a long sigh of happiness as her eye went from one pleasant object to another.

"Then you like my sort of medicine better than Aunt Myra's, and don't want to throw it out of the window, hey?"

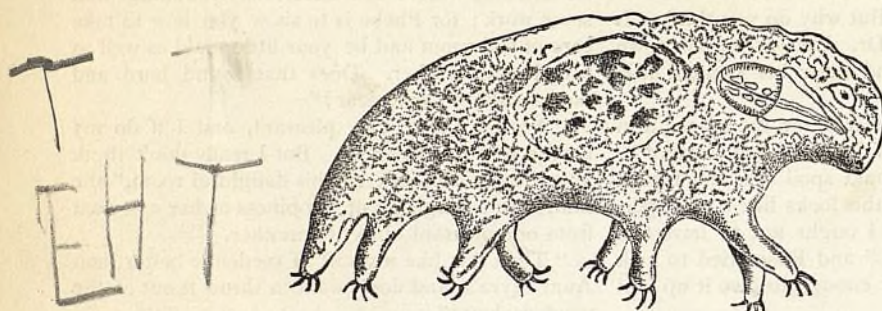
(To be continued.)



"LITTLE BOY BLUE, COME BLOW YOUR HORN,
THE SHEEP'S IN THE MEADOW, THE COW'S IN THE CORN!"

THE WATER-BEAR.

BY MARY TREAT.



THE WATER-BEAR.

THE water-bear is a comical-looking little animal. His home is in fresh-water shallow ponds, and he is so small that only the practiced eye can detect him without the aid of the microscope. Being less in size than an ordinary pin-head, it is not necessary to take guns and dogs to go in search of our "bear." All that the successful hunter needs is a stout stick (a forked one is best), to pull the plants that harbor him from the pond, and a supply of vials to hold the water and plants.

An experienced hunter knows pretty well from the look of the water and plants whether he has hit upon good "hunting grounds." Satisfied with his captures, he returns home, takes a tiny spray of plant from one of the vials, spreads it on a glass slide hollowed out on one side for the purpose, and adds a little water from one of the vials to fill the cavity. It is now ready for the microscope. With a very strong magnifying power, the water in the glass slide appears like a deep pond, and the little spray of plant like a great branch; and here are myriads of strange creatures swimming about and frolicking with each other. But the "bear" is the main object of our search, and here he is. He looks very much like his larger namesake, only he has eight legs instead of four.

The portrait does not look quite natural; he would not keep still long enough to have his portrait taken, and so had to be held fast between two glasses, and this flattened him somewhat.

He goes slowly grubbing about among the plants, eating as he goes, and food is so abundant where he lives that we never find a poor, half-starved specimen. Water-bears always are fat and plump,

from the tiny cub up to full-grown, grave-looking fellows.

I have a family of these bears in a little glass cage upon my study table. The cage is supplied with pond-water and plants; and as often as I find a bear I cage him; and when I become tired and cross, I take a look at this happy family, and the bears' droll maneuvers never fail to restore me to good humor. The cage is so constructed that I can conveniently place it under the microscope.

Sometimes I find a bear sitting on his haunches, entrapped and held in this position by the plants. He strikes about with his fore paws, but still eats away as if his very life depended upon his devouring a certain amount of food, before he can stop to extricate himself.

He changes his skin, I don't know how many times, but as often as the old dress becomes too tight and uncomfortable, I suppose; and he slips out of it so nicely, leaving it all whole even to the little claws, and there it stands, not thrown down in a heap nor mused at all! For a time I was completely puzzled on seeing these old dresses standing about as if inflated, and thought they must be skeletons—that the body had decomposed and left only the skin; but after awhile I caught one slipping out of his dress, and the mystery was explained.

The mother-bear makes good use of her old dress. She converts it into a nursery. In slipping out of her skin, she manages to leave four or five eggs inside of it; for the water-bear, unlike its great namesake, lays eggs, and the little ones

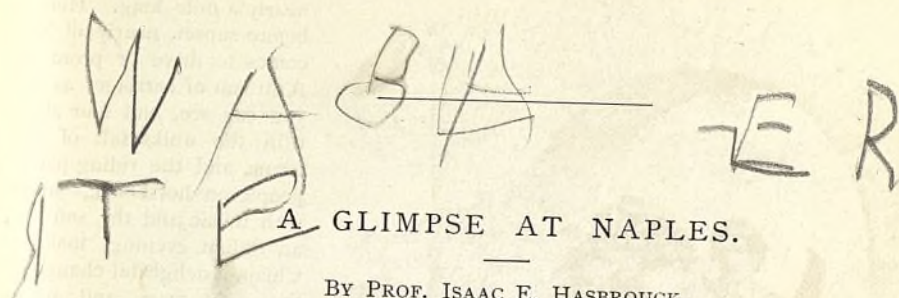
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must take care of themselves as best they may. The egg is covered with a membrane, so transparent that we can see through it, and in a few days after the eggs are left, we can see the outline of the little bear all coiled up, with its tiny paws close to its mouth. It soon bursts the membrane,

and goes slowly plodding about, sometimes within the nursery walls for a day or so, until at last it makes its exit through a slit or opening in the back, and is fairly launched into the great world of water and plants, where it at once becomes as much at home as the oldest inhabitant.



BY PROF. ISAAC E. HASBROUCK.

"*Vedi Napoli e poi mori*," say the Neapolitans; and all strangers say so too; only the American and the Englishman say it in English: "See Naples and die." A very foolish thing to say, you think. Well, you know people often say more than they mean. This saying simply means that Naples is so beautiful that a man cannot find a more lovely place; and that having seen this city, he might die contented. We, sober-minded boys and girls, who see so much that is beautiful and lovely in life; who find so many reasons why we wish to live,—we should not be ready to die just because we had seen Naples or any other beautiful city.

But let me tell you a little of this old city. Look on your maps, on the front of what we used to call the "boot" of Italy,—just above the "instep." You see how the sea goes a little way into the land and forms a bay, and on that bay is our city—"Napoli;" or, as we call it, "Naples."

Imagine, then, that we are on a steamer going into this Bay of Naples. First, a narrow place where the shores come out into the sea, as if they intended to meet each other, with three beautiful islands resting like stepping-stones between. And here we look over a broad surface of water, spreading in front of us and at the sides like a very large, nearly round, basin, and about twenty miles across. But the air is very clear, and we can see the shores and the houses on them quite as easily as we could see half that distance in New York Bay or Long Island Sound. The scene is so beautiful that an old poet of Naples called it "a piece of heaven fallen upon the earth." The shores generally slope up and back from the water with level country in some places.

On our right we see Vesuvius, the wonderful and

dreadful volcano, rising like a black sugar-loaf a few miles away, but seeming very near. About half-way up from the level of the sea, its sides become very steep and precipitous, covered everywhere with the hard, black *lava*, and the *scoria* which have been thrown from the inside of the mountain through the large *crater* or hole in the top. There is nothing very beautiful about Vesuvius; yet it is to be seen from every place near Naples, always black, and sometimes with smoke or steam coming out of its sides, or forming a cloud and floating away from the top. At the bottom of the mountain, and in the valley toward Naples, the eye sees with relief the bright and rich green of trees and fields. Then we see houses scattered along the curved line of the shore,—Resina built over where Herculaneum once stood, and then the city, with its numerous white houses, looking, as some one has said, like a crowd of pilgrims going up the hill, while further on, around this circular shore, we see the celebrated San Elmo, the great fort, on a higher part of the hill-side.

The steamer soon touches the dock. Now look out! Beggars without number are there; they know exactly when the steamers will come. How they pester us! If we have taken a hotel omnibus, we shall get through easily; but if we attempt to walk, we must prepare for a siege. Every man there looks darker and uglier than his neighbor; you feel almost sure that they are not to be trusted, and yet they all want to carry your satchel or show you where you do not wish to go. So much for being a foreigner and a stranger.

We reach the hotel in time and soon set out to see the city. The hotel is not very different from those in New York—only almost nobody speaks English.

But the city does not remind us of New York. At first we pass along a wide street with the bay at our right, but when we turn off to "see the city," we can easily believe that Naples is more than two

a home may be, there is generally some one there who coaxes a plant or two into bloom.

I said there were a few exceptions to the narrow streets. Around on the west side of the bay, near the shore, is the *Chiaja* (chee-ä-yah), a fine wide drive, with a garden, bright with flowers, nearly a mile long. Here, just before sunset, nearly all Naples comes to drive or promenade. A stream of carriages as far as you can see, and four abreast, with the walks full of pedestrians, and the riding-paths of people on horseback,—all this, with music and the soft air of an Italian evening, makes the Chiaja a delightful change from the ugly faces and whining voices of the beggars who beset you in the streets. There is another wide street called the Toledo, and one end of it, near the Royal Palace, seems always full of people. That "country cousin," who thought all the people on Broadway must be just coming from church, would think that *two* churches must have "let out" at once on the Toledo.

Here comes a fruit and vegetable dealer with his donkey, here are dark-eyed toddlers offering flowers for almost nothing,

and here stand boys who try to sell you canes. If you are willing to buy one, all the boys rush up at once and make such a clatter that you feel like running away. Two francs is the price asked; but do not pay it. These urchins intend to sell you one for half that price before they let you go. It is just so in the stores; the price is twice or three times as much as they expect to get. A "shopper" would find a capital opportunity to "beat down" the prices if she should go to Naples; but even if she bought anything for half-price, she would pay more than some one else had given for a much better article of the same kind.

But here comes a procession. Stand at one side. A man with a bell, followed by priests in long black gowns, and carrying candles; also boys with lights. They are going to the house of a man who is dying; many of the crowd go along; all are quiet. Perhaps it is a funeral procession with the bier; then the people remove their hats—a beautiful custom—and make a sign of the cross on their



BRINGING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES INTO NAPLES.

thousand years old. There is a story—not in the histories—that it was founded by a Siren called Parthenope, and at first called by her name. The story is true as to the name, but we must disbelieve the first part, for a Siren—who tries to attract people—would certainly have planned and built a different city. The houses are high and dingy, the streets, with a few exceptions, very narrow, so that they seem more like cracks than like thoroughfares.

But every picture has a bright spot somewhere. These streets are paved all over as nicely as a New York sidewalk with large blocks of lava that, when it poured out of the crater of Vesuvius, was soft as mud and hotter than the red iron from a blacksmith's forge. Then this pavement is generally quite clean, and, since the high buildings keep the street shady, and the sidewalks are not much wider than a plank, the people walk in the middle of the streets, which gives it a lively appearance. The balconies and roofs of the houses are often turned into little flower gardens; for however poor and wretched

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breasts. Now let us go to the "*Duomo*," or Cathedral, to see the worship. The Cathedral of Naples was begun in the year 1272, or six hundred years ago. At the sides, as we enter, there are little rooms, something like large, dark bay-windows, without any window. These are called "chapels." In one we may see a marriage ceremony; in another, a baptism; in another, a funeral service. The Roman Catholic churches are always open for any service or worship.

One of these chapels is called the "Chapel of St. Januarius." It ought to be elegant if not grand, for it cost 2,000,000 dollars. In this chapel are kept two vials, which are said to contain the blood of St. Januarius. Three times each year, in May, September, and December, the blood is said to become liquid. Of course this is a great event, since the saint was beheaded more than 1500 years ago, and his blood ought to be pretty hard by this time. Nevertheless, many of the people believe that the blood does become liquid, and they have these three days as festivals, or gala days. They go to the Cathedral, and if they think they see the "miracle" accomplished, they are satisfied that St. Januarius can still hear them and protect their city from pestilence and the eruptions of

ago, notwithstanding that the saint's blood had become liquid a few months before.)

Festivals, begging, dining, and doing nothing are the favorite occupations of these people. This is one of the countries where even a beggar rides if possible. They cannot understand how any one should walk from choice. A person on foot, unless he shows too plainly that he is a stranger (all foreign pedestrians get the name "*Inglesi*"—English), may go his way without much fear of beggars; he soon has the reputation of being a *pittore*, or beggar himself; not an enviable reputation, perhaps, but one which, about Naples, saves the unending torment of being followed and called after by every second man, woman or child you meet, asking for a few *centessimi*. The picture on this page shows how they ride—or, if you please, how they do not walk—at Naples. It is no jest. On one of the holidays a dozen or twenty people of all kinds—priests, monks, porters, women—get a sort of cart, a *calesso*, or calesh, and piling in, from the patriarch to the infant in arms, away they go for a picnic. The artist has given this party a better-looking horse than they usually have, the *horse* frequently being a little *donkey* no larger than some of the men in the calesso. This party have left the city and



A NEAPOLITAN PICNIC PARTY.

Mount Vesuvius. (I am sorry to have to add in this parenthesis that Vesuvius had an eruption, with great destruction of property, only two years ago, notwithstanding that the saint's blood had become liquid a few months before.)

are going on a delightful excursion through the *Chiaja*, probably to Virgil's tomb or some favorite place in the country.

You have seen on page 276 a picture of a donkey loaded with fruit and vegetables. In this way the country people every morning bring their loads to market. Very often you scarcely notice the donkey, but all you can see is a huge pile of hay or onions, carrots, &c., moving along very deliberately with four little black feet under the pile. Sometimes a pair of long ears stick out in front, or if it is fly-time, a tail appears at the other end, switched in a way which is a warning to the flies. A donkey thus bearing his two *panniers*, or



"YOU SCARCELY NOTICE THE DONKEY."

large baskets, suspended over his back, heaped up with bright turnips, yellow carrots, shining onions and long squash pumpkins, is often seen in the streets of Naples.

But, of course, there is some business done in so large a city as Naples; the people do not all ride and walk and look at each other. The shopkeepers know that the foreigners who visit their city are fond of beautiful things, and they fill their shops accordingly. There are many jewelry stores, and very beautiful ornaments of coral, most delicately tinted with pink, and of lava from Vesuvius, and of tortoise-shell. The girls who read this sketch would be delighted to go into one of the large manufactories where they make these beautiful articles. And there, too, these things are very cheap, for the coral and tortoise-shell, and lava, are obtained close by Naples, and the workmen receive small wages, and the merchants are anxious to get your money. Then there are handsome boxes, fans, &c., made from wood, beautifully carved, and brought from Sorrento, a city near by. Beautiful silk goods are made here; the girls who read ST. NICHOLAS all know of the "Gros de Naples." Violins, too, are among the things which these people can make better than almost any others, and we need not wonder how so many little Italian

boys about our streets, as ragged as they are little, yet play so easily on this instrument; they come from the land of violins. There is another article in the manufacture of which you would be interested, and that is macaroni. As you ride along the west shore toward Vesuvius, you see building after building in which, and before which, the long white macaroni, or vermicelli, is hung up on poles to dry. Inside is the machine which kneads the flour into a paste, and the iron cylinder into which this stiff dough is placed, when a big pounder shoves it down tight until the little stems come through the holes in the bottom of the cylinder, and are pulled off every few minutes and hung up to dry. The Italians can eat macaroni almost as fast as they can make it—in fact, during their meal it seems that there is one unbroken string of it passing from their dishes into their mouths.

One thing a stranger notices in Naples, that the people seem to live in the streets. Indeed there are about forty thousand of them—called *Lazzaroni*, from the Church of St. Lazarus, where many go at night—who have no homes. They are certainly to be pitied and to be feared too, for about twenty-five years ago they took it into their heads that so many of them could do as they pleased and could have what they wanted; and, before they could be taught better, sixteen hundred of them were killed in the fight which followed. But it is not only the beggars who live about the streets. You know about the "Chiaja" and their picnics; also, there are a great many little stands on the streets where you can buy almost any thing—wonderful fruits, and such luscious grapes at five or six cents a pound! The *cafés*, a kind of restaurant, have their half of the street filled with little iron tables and chairs, where people sit and chat and laugh as only contented Italians can. The shoemaker and tinker, and women with their work for the large stores—for there are few large factories where the work-people are collected together—all sit before their doors and hammer or sew.

Another feature of the out-of-door trade of Naples is the basket-seller, with his top-heavy, swaying pyramid of wares. The illustration on the next page describes him better than words can do it.

Baskets of all sorts, sizes, shapes and colors, the pile topped out with a bouquet or sprig of some tree of flower. See, too, his plan for obtaining a light—the lantern carried over his head from the beak of a large bird—a good labor-saving idea.

But you wonder what there is in Naples to attract so many travelers. Well, you know there are very many people who travel because they think it is fashionable, or *the thing* to do, or to be able to say: "Oh! yes; I know; I was there in such or such

a year." Genuine travelers do not remain in Naples, but go on to visit the beautiful and wonderful scenery about the city. No one tires of looking at the bay or at Vesuvius. Then there are the two cities long ago buried by Vesuvius—Herculaneum, which is still under the ground, and Pompeii, which has been partly uncovered. And the country, hardly a day's travel from the city, is superb. Artists come here from every land to sketch and paint the beautiful nooks and landscapes which nature has scattered here.

There are, however, a few places of interest in the city. The churches, though dull enough outside, are richly decorated within. The historian and antiquary find some ancient landmarks of interest to themselves. But the only place we shall care to visit is the "Museum." This is a very large building, very full of curious and interesting articles; indeed the collection is, in some respects, the finest in the world. We shall only notice a few things. A large part of the objects preserved here with so much care are from 2,000 to 5,000 years old, or even older, and have been found in the ruins of Pompeii and other cities. They show, then, how people used to live and dress in that old, old time. We often think that those people, who lived so far back, did not know how to make themselves comfortable. But in this Museum are the funniest arrangements for stoves, as well as jewelry of gold, earrings, bracelets, ankle-bands, and other articles. A snake, with his tail in his mouth, was a favorite form of ornament, being to them a symbol of eternity. Their lamps were cunningly shaped in bronze, and there are numerous mantel and table ornaments also in bronze. Their statuettes and groups show that the artists and workmen 2,000 years ago were not less skillful than those who fill the show windows of New York with elegant workmanship. Another curious collection contains pieces of walls taken from the houses of Pompeii when the ground was dug out 1,800 years after the city had been covered up by one of the eruptions of Vesuvius. The Pompeians had the walls of their rooms frescoed, and so well did their painters understand the mixing of paints, that the colors of the frescoes are brighter, better, to-day, after being under ground so long, than anything our fresco-painters can do. These frescoes were not simply colors, but the representation of some person or scene in history or mythology, so that even the walls suggested some subject for conversation or thought. But the most wonderful relics of Pompeii, which

have been preserved in this collection, are those which show just what people were doing when the



A BASKET-SELLER.

storm of ashes from the mountain overwhelmed them. Especially interesting are the articles taken

from the ovens of the bakeries. Among others are loaves of bread, bearing the name of the baker—Q. Cranivs—the *v* being for a *u*. Then there are

eggs that were boiled in the kitchen, and then baked in the great oven into which all Pompeii was turned in the year 79—nearly 1,800 years ago.

LITTLE CHRISTIE.

BY AMALIE LA FORGE.

"WELL, Jackson, I'm sorry you're going to leave Burnshope."

"Well, Miss, I wunno say I beant, but it's best for the lad yon."

Miss Eldred spoke quickly: "You mean this miserable business about the Rectory fruit?"

"Ay, Miss."

"I can't understand it at all. What does my brother say?"

"Well, Miss, I wunno say nought agin Parson; but he thinks more nor he ought o' what old John says. It's hard on the lad."

"Of course it is, poor boy," with a quick glance out at the little figure lying on the grass, his brown eyes fixed on the arching sky, visible in peeps through the leaves of the apple-tree. "I have but just got home; tell me how it all happened."

"Well, Miss, the fruit was gone, and old John wanted it for the show; and my lad 'd been there that day, and it was all taken from low down, like my lad could reach, and old John he said it was Christie; and he come down to the school, and the master beat my lad, and I was that angered, Miss, I could ha' twisted their necks, to call my Christie a thief! And this man in Lunnon, he liked my work, and so we're to go—Christie and me. It's hard leavin' the old place and the forge, an' my lad he feels it."

"I will go out to him." And Miss Eldred passed swiftly down the little walk, bordered with wall-flowers and southernwood, and so over the grass in the orchard.

"Christie!" she said, softly.

Christie sprang to his feet at the familiar voice, his cheeks flushed with pleasure; then his eyes drooped, the color grew deeper, and then faded, and he drew back shyly.

"Why, Christie!"

That was all; but he understood, and as Miss Eldred sat down on the grass, he flung himself beside her, and, burying his face in his hands, sobbed passionately.

"Why, Christie! did you think I don't know?"

He lifted his head presently. "I thought they would tell you, Miss, and —"

"Well, and if they did, I think I know my little Christie better than they do."

His face brightened. "Then, Miss, you don't believe —"

"Don't be foolish, Christie."

"Thank you, Miss."

Miss Eldred smiled. "And now tell me how your back has been since I saw you?"

"Pretty bad, Miss; it hurts me to sit in church now. I can't mind what Parson says, sometimes, for the ache."

"My poor Christie."

They sat quiet a few minutes; then Miss Eldred spoke again:

"Where is your father going to work, Christie?"

"I don't rightly know, Miss; only it's some big works. Father's pleased, and says he'll have money soon, and I'll see some great doctor about my back. But I'll never be well, Miss; only father—he likes to talk about it, Miss; but I know." And Christie's eyes wandered off to the sky again—a trick they had.

Miss Eldred looked at him sadly. The white little face, with its pleading brown eyes and look of patient suffering, was one to attract even a stranger's compassion. A fall having injured his spine, he was forced to use crutches, and could then only walk with difficulty. But here in Burnshope, there were few that did not love the little lame Christie; and, with a thrill of pity, she thought of his loneliness in the great city to which he was going.

Christie himself broke the silence. "I wonder if Master Harry would take my rabbit, Miss; he said once it matched one of his?"

"Has Master Harry been to see you lately, Christie?"

"No, Miss," he spoke quietly; but a flush crept into his cheek.

Miss Eldred understood, and said nothing more about it till she was going away; then she said, holding the wan little hand: "I will speak about the rabbit, and Christie, remember, if we are patient and trust in God, light *will* be brought out of darkness yet." And Christie smiled up at her trustfully.

The next Sunday, many eyes were turned to the place where the little lame boy sat for the last time. He had a peculiarly sweet soprano voice, and for some months had led the choir of boys.

"Here endeth the second lesson."

There was a hush, then clear and sweet sounded the plaintive notes of the *Nunc Dimittis*: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word."

Christie forgot himself in his singing, his form

drooped heavily on her shoulder—Christie* had fainted.

* * * * *

A large old house in London, grimy and dirty. Up the long, weary stair a little figure is slowly toiling, clinging to the railing with one hand; he manages to carry a basket and help himself by his crutch with the other.

"Lame duck! lame duck!"

Christie pauses and looks down. Through the door-way peers an elfish face, surrounded by tangled black hair. Christie sighs softly, and, as the ungainly figure thrusts itself into sight, he sits down on the step—he is too unsteady to risk an encounter standing. The face grins derisively, and then the owner thereof limps across the hall with a well-executed copy of Christie's halting step.

The thin cheeks flush, and the brown eyes fill with tears.

The boy stops at the foot of the stair. "Wot's it got in its basket, eh?"

"Apples," said Christie, gently. "Would you like one?"

A text had crossed his mind: "Do good to them that despitefully use you, and persecute you."

The boy stared at this offer. Christie opened his basket and took out one, red and shining.

"Can you catch?" The boy opened his hands mechanically. "There!" and Christie smiled.

Then, as the boy made no further move, he went slowly on again. As he neared the top, he heard quick steps after him. He sat down immediately, from habit.

"I aint goin' to touch you," said his tormentor, half-angrily; "here's your apple."

"It is n't my apple now," and Christie put back his hand. "It's yours, and I wish you'd keep it."

"Here! I'll take your basket."

Christie gave it up quietly. He mistrusted his companion, but resistance was useless. At his own door he paused; the boy stopped also.

"Will you come in?" asked Christie, hesitatingly.

Greatly to his astonishment, and not a little to his disturbance, his invitation was accepted. Pointing to a chair, Christie dropped exhausted into his own.



"I AINT GOIN' TO TOUCH YOU; HERE'S YOUR APPLE."

straightened, the sun shining through the west window tinged his face with its glory, his eyes were raised, and full and clear the notes rang out.

"'T was like an angel singing," whispered one to another.

That was the last they heard him sing. His face grew paler and paler. As Miss Eldred left the organ, she touched him softly.

"Are you in pain, Christie?"

"Yes, Miss."

"I think you would better go home, would n't you?" She slipped her arm round him; his head