

that old grandmother for a feather, and it feels like it was full of silver bricks."

Fred was glad of the darkness, for he knew that his face told tales, though his tongue was silent.

"Oh, books are always heavy, you know," said a voice at his elbow. Fred recognized his friendly mentor. "Your passenger looks just like a medical student, Meyrick, hot-foot for the college. I know that kind; they always sit out their baggage as if they were hatching the eggs of wisdom."

At this half-an-truth, Fred in his anxiety was pleased; though ordinarily he would not have approved of the man's attempt at deception.

"Then it isn't a coach we are going in?" he asked.

"Better'n a coach," said Meyrick. "Free circulation of air. Aint afraid of chills, are you, Doc?" with a laugh.

"Perhaps I'd better telegraph my friends, in case I should find the night air fatal," said Fred, entering into the joke of the moment.

He had not thought of this before, but it now seemed to him an imperative duty to let the Heygoods in Baybridge know definitely that they might expect him in the morning. As it turned out, it was most fortunate for him that he did so.

At eleven o'clock, Mr Lewis Heygood received this message:

Arrive at 3 a.m. Stop at Hotel. Breakfast with you. FRED LEWIS WITHEREDGE, JR.

"Why did he come that way?" was the wondering comment of Mr Heygood's family. The A. & C. would have brought him all the way by rail.

"Well, you can't expect those Habershams to know everything about Southshire," said Mr Heygood. Wishing to do signal honour to his cousin Dorina's representative, he went down to Baybridge's cheerless 'hotel,' and lay on the sofa in the stuffy little parlour, in order to be on hand to welcome Fred the moment he should arrive.

Fred, meanwhile, was on his way, seated on the little hair trunk, with his overcoat closely buttoned. He was the only passenger, and it was a lonely road, with never a house in sight, and never a word from Meyrick, who sat with his head bent down—meditating villainy. Fred thought, suddenly, as the road turned into a sombre wood where hardly a star twinkled through the intermingling boughs.

On the instant he remembered the remark about the silver bricks, and his heart came into his throat. What if this Meyrick was the villain he appeared? He could easily murder him, and hide his crime in this wood.

Fred reflected that he had nothing but a pocket-knife with which to defend himself. He opened this, and held it ready in his hand, keeping his eyes fixed on Meyrick's rigid back.

"He is trying to make up his mind to the attack," Fred said to himself. "We are going more slowly; before we are out of this wood—"

Just then the waggon came to a sudden standstill. Fred sprang to his feet. The waggon started again, with such force as to throw him violently against Meyrick, who rose, but did not turn as he muttered something inaudible, and got out of the waggon.

Fred got out also. He thought, wisely, that he would be at a disadvantage in the waggon. They were close upon the edge of the wood, at the corner of an old field grown up in saplings, and separated from the road by a ditch and a steep bank. Meyrick jumped the ditch and climbed the bank, still without looking back.

Fred stood in the road and watched him. He saw him feel in all his pockets, and heard him mutter, "Confound such luck! I've lost my knife." When Meyrick said this, he turned round, and seeing Fred in the road, exclaimed:

"Hello! Didn't know you'd lighted. Snatched a snooze and dropped my whip. I thought I'd cut a saplin'. Have you got a knife?"

"Yes, sir," shouted Fred. "I've got a knife for you! If you come a step nearer you shall have it!"

Meyrick, as he stood on the bank above him, seemed for an instant to hesitate; then he gave a vigorous leap across the ditch, and in doing so, stumbled and fell full upon Fred.

Fred made a lunge with his knife blindly, but with frantic force.

Meyrick uttered a scream, and called for help, but then clutched Fred fiercely.

"Coward!" panted the young fellow. "But I shall sell my life dear!"

Again he struck with his knife.

"I've dealt with such as you before now," muttered Meyrick.

Fred, struggling vainly, went down under his antagonist's superior weight. His head struck the gnarled and rugged roots of an oak that grappled the roadside, and he knew no more.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

AUSTRALIAN TURKEY.

The scrub turkey of Australia seems to differ almost as widely from the bird of the poultry-yard as do the Cape Cod and sage varieties. Some of its strange habits are described by the author of "My Wife and I in Queensland." Its habitat is in the thickest scrubs, where it is hard to get at. In appearance it much resembles the English hen-turkey, though considerably smaller.

The most extraordinary thing about these birds is their nest, which is a circular mound of earth from three to four feet in height, and ten or fifteen feet in diameter. This must be the headquarters of a whole colony, for large as it seems, the mound is at certain seasons full of eggs.

These are of an enormous size compared with that of the bird. They are covered carefully with sand, and hatched, as I suppose, by heat; although in the dense scrubs in Northern Queensland, where I have found the nests, not one ray of sun could penetrate to them.

However hatched, it is impossible, without netting the whole mound, to catch the young ones, for the moment they burst the egg they scrape their way out of the sand and disappear in the scrub like a flash of lightning.

I think little is known of their habits, for I believe they do not breed in confinement; but I was lucky in stumbling on a nest once, whilst wandering through the scrub in search of a particular butterfly.

Having nothing better to do, I sat down and watched it, and saw four or five of the little things come wriggling out and dive into the scrub, being lost to sight in an instant. Although I remained there at least three hours, and perfectly motionless, I saw no sign of the old birds, so that I imagine the little things must have instinct enough to cater for themselves.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

THE CHILDREN'S RICHES.

RALPH has a castle, gloomy and grand,
Battled, and moated, and gray,
And over the drawbridge a belted knight
Is galloping hard away.

Beth has a playhouse with lovely dolls,
And sets for dinner and tea.
How strange! its roof is the castle's moat,
And the castle itself, a tree.

And Ernest, our artist, thoughtful and wise—
What wealth is in his stronghold!
See a rocky pasture where flocks of sheep
Are hurrying to their fold.

Maude has but a gipsy within her tent.
With turban and cloak so gay,
But the old wife tells her a fortune rare,
That our darling shall have some day.

O wondrous riches! O happy hearts!
A marvel I now declare,
For castle, and gipsy, and sheep all lie
On an area one foot square.

Alas for the castle, gloomy and grand
Alas for the gipsy gay!
For the sun shone bright on the frosted pane
And melted them all away.

KATE LAWRENCE.



MAKING GAME OF HIM.

DREADFUL!

If Daisy is afraid of anything in this world, it is a mouse, and one night after she was put to bed she thought she heard one.

"Oh! mamma," she called, "come in quick! I hear a mouse."

"No, Daisy," her mother said, going in, "it's only the rain pattering on the window."

"But I heard him a nibblin' behind the trunk."

"My dear child, there are no mice about the house."

"But there was one, sure," persisted Daisy. "I heard his little feet a-trampin' and his tail a-draggin'!"

BETH'S FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL.

IN she ran a little after noon, eager to tell mamma all about it.

"I should think I wouldn't ever have to learn another single thing," she cried, all out of breath, "for I learned so much to-day! I like my teacher pretty well; she isn't very cross, but she isn't nearly so nice as you are, mamma."

"I sat next to Flossy, which is a comfort, 'cause we live next door to each other, and are pretty good bosom friends, and I saw a lot of little girls and boys I didn't know at all; and whenever I looked at them, I felt a funny feeling in my throat, and I wanted to come home, and see if you were lonesome without me."

"So I reached across and squeezed Flossy's hand, and I told her I was glad that she lived near me, even if she did make me cross sometimes. Then the teacher came by, and said, "Don't whisper, dear," and that's all I didn't like her for."

"By and by we were all hot and tired, and was thinking how nice it would be if you could cuddle and rock me in your lap awhile. And the teacher said, "Now, let everyone of you put your heads down on your desks, and shut your eyes tight, till I tell you to open them." So we did, and pretty soon she clapped her hands and said, "Wake up, little folks," and she had drawn a picture on the blackboard, of a dog with a stove-pipe hat on, sitting on a chair, with a curly tail."

"I'm dreadful hungry, though, and I won't go any more, if you don't mind, 'cause it's so prickly to sit still."

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THE VIOLET'S MISSION.



THEY are the finest violets I have seen this winter," said the gardener, as he looked into the frame where the beautiful sweet flowers showed their purple petals against the dark shiny green leaves, and as he spoke he shut down the top of the frame.

The violets heard, and one among them felt moved with vanity. "Did you see," she said to her neighbour, "how pleased the gardener was with us? I wonder why he keeps us shut in here?" "For some good purpose, no doubt," said her sister violet.

"You are always saying that sort of thing," replied the first speaker. "What I want to know is, what are we going to do? I heard a lady say yesterday, she should want all the violets, so we are evidently thought much of."

Scarcely had she spoken when the gardener again lifted the light and began plucking the flowers, and among others he gathered the one who was so anxious to know what she was to do. He made them into a bunch, and took them to the house where a lady lived who desired to wear them in her dress.

"Ah!" said the violet, "this is charming. What a lovely place, how light it is, and what a lovely thing they have put me in."

Very beautiful the violets looked. They were the sort called Marie Louise, and of a most delicate colour and perfume. The lady took them from the water, and fastened them in the white lace in front of her dress, admiring them as she did so, and our foolish violet felt quite elated with pride.

"Now I know what I am to do," she cried, "I am to lend my beauty to this grand lady, and go where she goes that everyone may admire me." So saying she tried to thrust herself forward.

The lady was just walking from her hall door to her carriage, and the violet fell from the bunch upon the pavement.

Fortunately, it fell on the edge of the kerb, and as but few people were passing it did not get trodden on. Very miserable the violet felt as it lay in the darkness during the night, and bitterly it regretted the pride which had caused its fall. "I see, after all," it said, "that I was not meant for high estate. How I wish I could once more nestle among the green leaves I so longed to leave!"

Towards morning a few drops of rain fell and refreshed the violet; and, as the first rays of the rising sun fell on the wet pavement, a young woman passed. Stopping down, she picked up the flower. "What a lovely violet," she said.

"Where could it have come from at this time of year? It is just like those father used to grow in the old pit at home." The thought of the violets at home seemed to touch her, and a few large tears fell from her eyes.

She took the violet home and carefully placed it in water, and every now and then she would come and look at it. When the violet was plucked it was not fully opened, and now, aided by the fresh water and warm air of the room, it spread out its petals, and sent forth its sweet perfume. The young woman at last seemed as though she could not leave it, and presently laid her head down by the side of the glass and cried bitterly. When she rose up she looked very determined, and, wiping away her tears, said, "I will go to father, and if he forgives me I shall tell him this violet brought me."

So saying she very carefully pinned the flower in her dress, and, locking the door, started off down the street.

For a long time the violet was pinned in the dress, and was drooping and faded when in the evening the young woman entered a garden gate, and walked towards a spot the flower at once knew. There was the gardener leaning over the frame gathering some violets. The young woman walked up to him and said, "Father, forgive me. Oh! how pleased the man looked. He dropped his flowers and took the violet in his arms, and for a short time neither could speak for joy."

"So you have come back to me, Joyce," he said at last. "Yes, father," she said, "the violet brought me here, and she showed him the faded blossom in her dress."

The man took it in his hand. "Why," said he, "I could declare this was one of the violets I gathered yesterday."

For a long time they talked, and the violet learnt that Joyce had left her home in anger, and the gardener had mourned for her deeply, and given her up as lost; but the sight of the violet which she recognised as the kind grown at her old home had touched her heart, and made her long for the loving father she had left.

She laid the flower between the leaves of the old family Bible, and it remained there for a long time thinking itself forgotten. But one day the book was opened, and a voice said: "See, John, this is the violet to which we owe all our happiness, and a young man answered, "You could not have put it in a better place." Joyce kissed the flower, now quite dry, but still sweet, and for many, many years it remained in the Bible, and sometimes little faces looked at it and called it mother's violet, and kissed it, and the violet knew that its mission had been to bring repentance and love to an erring heart, and was content in the happiness it had been the instrument used to accomplish.

LEENA.

A FACT.

FIRST BOY: "I say, Bill, my father told me to tell you to tell you father to hurry up and finish our house, or else we'll all be in our coffins soon, 'cause—"

Second Boy (hastily): "I shan't tell him then, so there, 'cause then he'll get the coffins to make too."

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