

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

STOP HIM.

'He didn't have time to get to your good points. Perhaps if you had stayed he might have brought in something about the poetry,' said Ted.

Phebe was afraid he was going to recite that rhyme again, but he refrained, and on the whole she felt that his behaviour was very good.

He kept his promise and said not a word of the affair to Aunt Eunice, but he reserved the right to make a private allusion to it himself now and then.

If his sister appeared with a hole in her glove he was apt to remark, in an oracular manner, 'Order is Heaven's first law,' and the glove was sure to be mended. If she showed signs of a gathering temper, he was certain to draw down his face, extend his hand, and observe solemnly, 'Our young friend is liable—,' at which point Phebe usually bit her lip and kept silence.

Really, though not in the way she expected, perhaps the queer little phrenological examination was not without its benefits.

CHARLOTTE M. VAILE.

STAMPS.

A STAMP which is worth considerably more than its weight in gold is a curiosity which is certainly worthy of comment and description. It will be news to most people that such a stamp is in existence, and we have no doubt that our readers will be interested to know that a very rare specimen, valued at £250, and dear to the heart of any enthusiastic stamp collector, is now in the possession of Mr J. W. Palmer, the famous dealer in stamps, of 231, Strand. It is an American 'used' stamp, Brattleboro', 1846, and Mr Palmer claims for it that it is the rarest specimen in the world. Those of our readers who interest themselves in stamp-collecting should make a point of seeing a useful little monthly publication, entitled *Brie-a-Brac*, edited and published by Mr Palmer, and sent post free for sixteen pence per annum to any address in the Postal Union.



KIND-HEARTED LADY: 'What's the matter, little boy?'
 Boy: 'How would you like to wear your long-legged brother's pants cut down so the bag of the knees came out at your ankle.'

'SOMEBODY PAYS.'

A DRUGGIST in one of our large cities said lately, 'If I am prompt and careful in my business, I owe it to a lesson which I learned when I was an errand boy in the house of which I am now master. I was sent one day to deliver a vial of medicine just at noon, but being hungry, stopped to eat my luncheon.'

'The patient, for lack of the medicine, sank rapidly, and for some days was thought to be dying.'

'I felt myself his murderer. The agony of that long suspense made a man of me. I learned then that for every one of our acts of carelessness or misdoing, however petty, some one pays in suffering. The law is the more terrible to me because it is not always the misdoer himself who suffers.'

This law is usually ignored by young people. The act of carelessness or selfishness is so trifling, what harm can it do? No harm, apparently, to the actor, who goes happily on his way; but somebody pays.

A young girl, to make conversation, thoughtlessly repeats a bit of gossip which she forgets the next moment; but long afterward the woman whom she has maligned finds her good name tainted by the poisonous whisper.

A lad, accustomed to take wine, persuades a chance comrade to drink with him, partly out of a good-humoured wish to be hospitable, partly, it may be, out of contempt for 'fanatical reformers.'

He goes on his way, and never knows that his chance guest, having inherited the disease of alcoholism, continues to drink, and becomes a hopeless victim.

Our grandfathers expressed this truth in a way of their own.

'For the lack of a nail the shoe was lost,
 For the lack of the shoe the rider was lost,
 For the lack of the rider the message was lost,
 For the lack of the message the battle was lost.'

Our blindness to the consequences of our shortcomings is a marvellous provision of God. Who could look compassedly upon the rank outgrowth of all his vice and folly from childhood to middle age?

But though we do not see it, we do well to remember that it is there; and to remind ourselves at the beginning of every day, that each careless act, each unkind word in it, will be paid for, not by us, perhaps, but in the want or pain of some one.

OLD COLONISTS, MERCHANTS, AND OTHERS INTERESTED.—Old Postage Stamps from letters dated from 1850 to 1865 are of value, some being worth from 1s per doz. to 30s each. We are cash purchasers of all Old Australian and New Zealand Stamps each sent by return. STAMP COLLECTORS. The Improved Stamp Album No. 9, best and cheapest ever made, and notwithstanding which we will give with each album sold 50 stamps enclosed in pocket inside cover. Price 2s 3d post free. Collectors send for Approval Sheets.—A. E. LAKE & CO., 207, High-street, Christ church.

ONLY a rush and scamper
 Through the busy street,
 And men are calling after
 A runaway horse so fleet.

Only a stupid lamp-post,
 Not wanted in the day,
 And parts of a bright new sulky
 Are scattered by the way.

Only a brave young laddie,
 Who springs out to its head,
 And runaway horse much panting,
 So quietly now is led.

Only a crowd of people,
 Who tell you o'er and o'er,
 That runaway horse has promised
 He will never do so any more.

Masterton. M.A.P.

SNOW-FLAKE FAIRIES, OR HOW THEY FOUND THE RED CAP.



IT was a stormy day, toward the middle of July and Nellie Field was sitting in an arm chair by the window, watching the snow fall. She was wishing she had not such a cold, so that she could be out with some of her friends, when an unusually large snow-flake came on the window, and Nellie almost fell off her seat in astonishment, for there beside the snow-flake was a tiny man, no taller than your little finger-nail, dressed all in snow. Indeed, he himself seemed to be made of snow, and in one hand he held a little icicle.

'Why,' cried Nellie, 'who are you? Where did you come from?'

'My name is Lightfoot, and I am one of the messengers sent by the King of the Snow-flakes to find his little red cap, which he lost in a very unaccountable manner the other day,' said the little man. 'He has promised to give his daughter in marriage to anyone who can find it, and the Princess is very beautiful I can tell you, so I guess there is not one in the whole kingdom who is not out searching for it to-day. I loved the Princess even before the King said this, and I am bound to have her.' Lightfoot nodded his head emphatically. 'But I must be going, for I haven't any time to spare. Good-bye.'

'Oh, wait, please,' cried Nellie, eagerly; 'take me with you. Perhaps I can help you to find the little red cap.'

'All right,' said Lightfoot, good-naturedly. 'But you can't go like this. You could never fly through the air as I do in this shape. Wait a bit and I will change you.'

So saying, he waved his wand, and Nellie found herself outside of the window. She felt very cold, and, looking down, she saw she was just the height of the little white man, and was wrapped in a soft, snowy cloak just like his.

'There you are,' said the little man, merrily, 'and now we will have to wait here till my friend, Mr Snowbird, comes along, for we snow fairies cannot fly upward. It is my opinion (confidentially) that the King's red cap is not where he supposes it to be, so we are going to get on Snowbird's tail together, and he will carry us away toward the Ice King's Palace. The Ice King has a spite against our King for some reason, and, as I said before, it is my opinion that he has the cap. Our King prized it more than he would have had it not been red, for everything in the Snow World, which is in the clouds, you know, is white. But here is Mr Snowbird, and we must go.'

So Nellie and Lightfoot jumped on his tail, and Nellie wanted to cuddle down among his soft feathers, but Lightfoot would not let her, 'because,' he said, 'if you did, you would get warm and melt, and then where would you be?'

'We are ready now, Mr Snowbird,' said he, 'and we haven't any too much time, so please hurry up.'

So Mr Snowbird, who was very kind and good-natured, shook his feathers (which, by the way, nearly knocked Nellie off), and away they went, up, up through the air.

Nellie caught her breath. It was delightful, and yet it seemed so queer to be no larger than the snow-flakes, and to be riding on a bird. She noticed now that on each snow-flake was a little man exactly like Lightfoot, and she wondered that she had not seen them in other snowstorms.

Up, up they went. The air was white with the falling snow, and Nellie felt very little, as indeed she was. Up, up, and on, Nellie and Lightfoot chattering merrily all the time, till they saw in the distance the Ice King's palace.

'I must put you down here,' said Snowbird, 'for if I should go any nearer I would be frozen to death.'

So he flew down to the ground (which was not ground at all, but only a cloud), and Lightfoot and Nellie got off. Nellie was sorry, for she thought it was a great deal better than a sleigh-ride.

'Here we are!' said Lightfoot, merrily. 'Now we will wait for a Breeze I know to pass, and he will blow us to the castle over yonder. Then I will go in, demand the cap, carry it to the King, and get the Princess. Do you see? said the jolly elf, with a flourish.

'But perhaps the cap isn't there, after all, and if it is, I don't think it's likely he'll give it to you,' said Nellie.

'Perhaps so,' said the little man, cheerfully, 'but there's nothing like trying, you know. Oh, here comes Breeze. Well, my friend, will you carry us to the Ice King's palace?'

'With pleasure,' replied Breeze, politely.

Nellie found herself being carried through the air with a gentle, swaying motion. In they went till they came to the palace, and Breeze, bidding them good-bye, went his way.

They were standing at the door of a magnificent castle, built of ice. The sun shining on it made it look so dazzling that Nellie could hardly bear the glare, but it was very beautiful for all that. Around the door were men in armour of ice, who, when they saw Nellie and Lightfoot, and learned that they wanted to see the Ice King, told them in cold, stiff voices to enter.

Nellie was a little frightened, but Lightfoot soon reassured her, and they went together into the palace. It was very cold, and even Lightfoot shivered. They found themselves in an immense room, at the end of which was a throne built of ice, on which sat the Ice King. He was surrounded by courtiers and guards, who all looked very fierce, but the King himself did not seem at all formidable, and Nellie soon lost her fear. Indeed, he reminded her a little of her grandfather, with his white hair and beard, and he had a very pleasant smile upon his face. He and his subjects seemed to be discussing something of very great interest, and sure enough he held in his hand the little red cap.

Lightfoot advanced boldly, with Nellie close beside him, and the King seeing them, held up his hand for silence, and asked them what they wanted.

'The King of the Snow-flakes has lost his red cap,' said Lightfoot, bowing, 'and so I made bold to come and ask your Gracious Majesty if you had it, and finding you have, I most humbly entreat you to give it to me.'

The King smiled. 'Well, my fine little fellow,' said he, 'I cannot readily give up such a valuable treasure as I find this to be, for it is a magic cap; yet as you have been so brave, I will give it to you if you will bring me a yellow rose from any part of the mortal world as quickly as you can.'

'But your Majesty knows that no roses grow in the mortal world in winter-time,' said Lightfoot sadly disappointed, 'Nevertheless, I will do my best,' and he and Nellie left the castle very much downhearted.

When they were outside of the gates Nellie's face brightened, and she said:

'Never mind, Lightfoot, I know where we can get a rose in the winter-time—in some hot-house.'

'You do!' cried the little man, eagerly. 'You do! Good! We will go there at once. Here comes a bird. Mr Bird, won't you take us to the mortal world, to some hot-house? If you do I will grant anything you wish.'

'Certainly,' said the bird, and in a very short time they were there.

Having granted the favour which the bird wished for, Lightfoot said: 'Now the next question is, how to get in there and out again without being seen or melted.'

'I know,' said Nellie. 'You can change me into my own shape again, and give me something to pay for the flower, and I will get it for you.'

'A good idea,' said Lightfoot, and giving her a little magic thimble, he waved his wand, and, hey—presto! Nellie was herself again, standing inside the hot-house.

She was made invisible, of course, or she would have been seen. She picked the flower and put the thimble in its place. The fairy waved his wand, and she was outside of the window again, but with the flower beside her.

'Good!' cried Lightfoot. 'Here is a sister of our old friend Breeze. She will take us to the Ice King.'

Breeze's sister was very obliging, and in less time than it takes to tell it they were at the palace again. She waited outside for them, and when they came out, proud and happy, with the red cap between them, she was just starting off with them when they heard a great noise, and turning, saw the Ice King and all his courtiers watching them, and cheering with all their might for the brave little fairy.

Lightfoot was very merry, and so was Nellie, and she was very sorry when she found herself on her own window again.

'Good-bye,' said she; 'I hope you will get the Princess.'

'So do I,' said Lightfoot.

Then he waved his wand, and Nellie found herself in her chair inside the window, just as she was before. She rubbed her eyes and found it was all a dream.

A SUCCESSION.

SHE had lingered long by the window pane,
 And watched with her childish, impatient eyes,
 The countless drops of the beating rain,
 And the leaden, relentless skies.

At length, when the dreary day was done,
 She told her thoughts in the twilight grey:
 'You know there's a bureau in Wellington,
 Where weather is stowed away.

'And when it's so stormy and cold and wet,
 So I wonder what they are thinking about,
 Not to open some other drawer and get
 A different weather out!'

HATTIE LUMMIS.

THE NEW HORSE.

JACK was the new horse, whose coming into the stable was the talk of the day, for within a week Jack had gotten away from his master, run several miles, and smashed a carriage into a kindling-wood.

Harry always led the horses from their stalls down to the water trough, saw that they drank all they wanted, and led them back again. Harry was big enough to do such tasks, but not big enough to understand what a fiery-tempered horse might do.

Harry went to Jack's stall, took the halter strap in his hands, and started for the water trough. Jack was in high glee. He reared up on his hind legs, lay down and rolled, and got up and kicked as high as the barn-yard fence.

Just as his hind feet went up he seemed to see little Harry trembling violently at the end of his halter strap. He stopped suddenly, walked quietly to the trough, drank, and let Harry lead him back to his stall without another antic.

And then Harry's father, his brother Tom, and Jim, the groom, breathed more easily.

SURE CUR.—'What are we going to do with baby?' asked a mother of her little four-year-old daughter, as they were chiding the younger one for getting into the sugar-bowl. 'I don't know,' said the four-year-old, 'unless you put her in the bag when you drown the cat.'