

'Sold, isn't it?' snapped Henry, as abruptly as Mr Pepper himself.

'Yes, sold?' sighed Cummings, with the sadness and hesitation of a man losing heavily by the transaction, instead of getting four times what the crazy old trap was worth.

He was pocketing the proceeds of the sale, when Browning said:

'Want to sell your horse and wagon, driver?'

'They're sold!' interposed Henry, jubilantly. 'They belong to me now.'

'What? Belong to you?'

'Yes, sir, I've just bought them. And, excuse me, sir, but I rather prefer riding alone.'

Browning was beginning a series of violent remarks, when Cutter broke in.

'I say, driver, did he buy the horse, too?'

Henry was aghast. Before he could speak, Cummings replied, 'No, nothin' but the carriage.'

'We'll buy your horse then! How much will you take for him?'

'What'll ye give?' asked Cummings, grinning with pleasure at this promised accession of more wealth.

'Twelve pounds! Do you take it?' Sold!' spluttered Cutter.

The driver had ducked his head, more from astonishment than anything else.

'I'll give fifteen!' exclaimed Henry, alarmed.

'Too late!' Browning's a witness to the sale. You're held to your word, driver,' retorted the brisk Cutter, who saw that Cummings would like nothing better than to make the two parties bid against each other.

But Cummings had plainly, if unwittingly, nodded to Cutter's inquiry, and could not draw back from his bargain.

'Now, young man,' remarked Browning, while he and his companion unharnessed the horse from the shafts, 'we'll leave you in undisturbed possession of your wagon—and much good may it do you!'

With this the victorious couple mounted double on their unwilling steed and trotted off, waving their hats and giving three cheers as they vanished over a hill.

Henry, sitting in stupid despair upon the front seat of his horseless, useless vehicle, was desolate as Marius among the ruins of Carthage, but, unluckily, not solitary like Marius, for Elmer Cummings was still there, and with really magnificent impudence offered to buy back the wagon for five pounds!

'Ye see,' giggled he, 'it's not wuth so much to me as 'twas to you, and besides, I've got to hire a horse to get it home with.'

Convinced that he was in the company of one of the greatest rascals he had ever met, Henry had a strong desire to tell Cummings exactly what he thought of him, but soon saw that he must not offend a man who might still be of some assistance. So, with a gulp, he swallowed his feelings, and asked:

'How far is it to Mosher's Mills?'

'About three miles—yes, strong three.'

'How am I to get there?'

'Don't know.'

'Can't you?'

But he broke off what he intended to say, for he saw a man in a light wagon driving up in the direction he wished to go.

'Hullo!' he cried, running to the wagon. 'Will you take me to the Mills? I'll pay you well for it.'

'Guess so,' replied the man, a substantial-looking person of a far more intelligent, respectable appearance than Cummings. 'Won't take any pay, though. Jump up! I'm going straight there.'

Henry mounted the wagon, bursting with joy. He turned to fling a denunciation or two at his late driver, but was arrested by the singular expression of combined bewilderment, surprise and amusement upon that estimable person's honest face.

'Good-bye, young sir!' Cummings called out. 'I'll tell ye naow what I was a-goin' to tell ye before. There's only one constable to Mosher's Mills!'

Off drove the wagon. Henry was considerably puzzled at the parting speech of Cummings, which seemed to contain some important meaning, although on the surface it was but a very commonplace remark.

One constable was amply sufficient for his purpose, and he felt sure that the fine horse which drew him would reach the Mills long before the overweighted beast ridden by Browning and Cutter.

Indeed, the pair were overtaken within a few minutes. Henry, being only a boy, could not resist the temptation of taunting them.

'Good-bye, gentlemen!' he exclaimed, bowing politely as he passed. 'I'm sorry I can't wait for you; I have business ahead!'

Browning and Cutter did not answer. They stared with amazed eyes, not at Henry, but at the man with him, and then laughed until they nearly fell off their horse. Until out of sight they continued this inexplicable merriment, which appeared to grow more uproarious the longer it lasted.

Henry turned to examine his new acquaintance, in order to discover what there might be in his aspect to produce such a remarkable effect upon all who saw him. He found the man already keenly examining him.

'Who are you, anyway?' asked the man. 'What's up?'

Henry told his errand, described his adventures, and ended by inquiring:

'Can you tell me who the constable is?'

The man smiled rather oddly.

'Well, I'm the constable.'

'You?' shouted Henry, delighted. 'Then you will please take me to Tarliberry's and serve this attachment.'

'Can't do it.'

'Can't? Why not?'

'Nothing—only—well, I'm Tarliberry myself!'

The whole journey had been a succession of disagreeable happenings for Henry, but this was the worst of all. He merely stared, unable to speak.

'Yes,' continued Tarliberry. 'I'm Jonas Tarliberry, store-keeper—also constable. So, you see, I can't very well put an attachment on my own goods, now can I?'

Henry still said nothing. Even beyond his disappointment and vexation, he felt truly sorry for this kindly, good-natured man, whom he was endeavouring to deprive of his property, although to secure the payment of a just debt. He finally managed to stammer something to this effect.

'Bless you,' said Tarliberry, serenely. 'I don't blame you a bit! I've been unfortunate, and can't pay my bills, so your firm's perfectly right to protect itself; and as for you, why, you're a good boy, and only doing your duty. To be honest, I'd rather your horse should have the first chance.'

'Then would you—'

Henry stopped short. The proposal he had in mind was too impudent for utterance. He didn't believe that even Elmer Cummings could have made it!

'Why, yes,' answered Tarliberry, still serenely and without changing countenance. 'Somebody's going to attach, whether or no, and I'd as lief it should be you as those other fellows—in fact, I'd a little rather, for I've taken a fancy to you, and I never admired either of them overmuch.'

He calmly turned the horse around and began driving back.

'What! Are you really?' cried Henry, 'really going to—'

'Yes, really going to hunt up another constable,' answered the good Tarliberry.

They again passed Browning and Cutter, who laughed even harder than before.

'They're laughing a little too soon,' commented Tarliberry. 'They think I'm playing some trick to get you out of the way, whereas—'

'Whereas,' interjected grateful Henry, 'you're actually helping me to ruin you!'

'Not quite that, however.' The constable was obtained and driven to Mosher's Mills, where Browning and Cutter were rushing about, trying to devise some means of procuring assistance. They distrusted their senses when they saw Tarliberry escort Henry and the constable into his own store, and there receive service of the little strip of paper which had cost our young friend so much tribulation.

They could do nothing but go home, completely defeated and too angry to speak.

Henry parted with genuine sorrow from his generous debtor, whom, before he went, he had cause to employ in his other capacity of an officer of the law, for he chanced to see Elmer Cummings sneaking along with that identical cart sold at such an exorbitant price.

Mr Cummings was instantly arrested on a charge of theft, and so terrified that he gladly compromised by paying back the purchase-money, less the five pounds which he had offered for the old machine.

'I was too smart that time,' muttered the humbled Cummings, 'but I was gettin' rich so fast I lost my head, like a good many other folks in the same box.'

Mr Pepper said little to Henry, good or bad, on receiving his report, but Henry became the firm's collector the very next day, to the great disgust of bookkeeper Briery.

Nor did Tarliberry suffer for his magnanimity, for Henry's account of it touched even business-like Mr Pepper, and the country merchant was treated so leniently that he soon got upon his feet again, and, happily, has remained standing upon them ever since.

MANLEY PIKE

## THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

### LITTLE PEOPLE'S LETTERS

#### SOLUTIONS OF PUZZLE STORY—'THE NAUGHTY BOY.'

DEAR COUSIN KATE.—One day Mr Jones went out to water the street. He had got the horse ready, but the water would not come out. Just then he heard a laugh, and he turned around and saw a boy standing on the hose. (No. 2) 'Get off,' he shouted, shaking his fist at the boy, but the boy only laughed at him. (No. 3) Just then Mr Jones saw a policeman coming along, but the boy did not see him. (No. 4) The policeman caught the boy by the collar and lifted him off the hose, and the water went into the policeman's face and knocked him down and knocked his teeth out. Then Mr Jones turned it off in another direction. — BELLE ALLEN, aged nine years.

[I am so glad, Belle, you tried to answer the puzzle. Your idea is very nearly right. — COUSIN KATE.]

DEAR COUSIN KATE.—I am going to try and answer those four pictures you put in the GRAPHIC. A naughty little boy one day went outside, and seeing a man watering his garden, he stood on the hose unobserved. When the man went to water his garden he could not get any water out. When he turned round and saw the boy standing on the hose he shook his hand at him, and the boy jumped off again. When the man started to water the garden again the boy got on the hose again, and a policeman, who had been watching him, came and caught hold of his shoulder, and the man turned round to see what was the matter, and poured the water all on to the policeman's face. I think this is all, so I will say good-bye. I am eleven years old. — NINA, Ashburton.

[Yours is a very nicely-written letter, Nina, only it is not the garden which is being watered. The rest is good. — COUSIN KATE.]

#### THE JINGLE-LESSON.

KITTY sat out under the sweet apple-tree in the golden autumn noon-time, crying real salt tears into her Primary Arithmetic.

'Now what's the matter, Kitty?' asked big brother Tom, coming out with his Greek Grammar under his arm. 'I supposed you were eating sweet apples and studying, and I came out to do so, too, and here you are crying.'

'It's—this—dreadful—multiplication-table!' sobbed Kitty. 'I can't never learn it, never!'

'Hard' asked Tom. 'Oh, it's awful! Harder than anything in your college books, I know. It's the eights this afternoon, and I can't learn 'em anyhow.'

'Don't you know how much eight times one is?' asked Tom, picking up a sweet apple and beginning to eat it.

'Yes, of course. Eight times one is eight. I can say up to five times eight all right.'

'Can you? Well that's encouraging, I'm sure. Let's hear you.' Kitty rattled it off like a book, 'Five times eight is forty—and there she stopped.

'Oh, go right on,' said Tom. 'Six times eight is forty-eight.'

'I can't,' said Kitty. 'I can't learn the rest. I've tried and tried, and it's no use.'

'Do you learn so hard?' asked Tom. 'Now hear this, and then repeat it after me as well as you can:—'

'When I go out on promenade I look so fine and gay. I have to take a dog along. To keep the girls away.'

Kitty laughed, and repeated the nonsense word for word. 'Why, you can learn!'

'But that has a jingle to it. It isn't like the dry multiplication-table.'

'Let's put a jingle into that, then.'

'Six times eight was always into, Hurried up, and was forty-eight. Seven times eight was cross as two sticks, Had a nap and was fifty-six. Eight times eight fell on to the floor, I picked it up and 'twas sixty-four. Nine times eight it wouldn't do, I turned it over and 'twas seventy-two.'

'Did you make that all up now?' asked Kitty, in wonderment.

'Why, yes,' laughed Tom. 'Oh, it's splendid! Let's see, how is it?' and she went straight through it with very little help. 'Ten times eight is eighty. That one's easy enough to remember.'

'And now,' said Tom, when she had the jingle well learned, 'say the table aloud and the jingle in your mind as you go along.'

Kitty tried that, and a very few times made it a success. With the ringing of the first bell she was ready to start for school with those 'dreadful eights' all perfect.

'You're the best Tom in the whole world!' she said, with a good-bye kiss. 'And I don't believe there's another boy in college that could make such nice poetry.'

Tom laughed as he opened his Greek Grammar.

#### BLOWING BUBBLES AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

LITTLE Peter and Prudie and Lyddie Sprague were keeping house while mamma and papa went to town. To be sure there was Grandpapa Sprague, but he was taking his afternoon nap in his room, so he did not count. They had played 'hide the thimble,' 'ring-around-a-rosy,' and Lyddie and Prudie had danced till their little toes ached, to the *hum-a-hum hum* of Peter's jews-harp. Then Lyddie had said:

'Let's blow bubbles!'

'Oh, yes, let's!' cried Prudie.

So Lyddie got the long, new clay pipes and Prudie a bowl of soapsuds and set it on the hearth of the broad, low chimney so they need not wet the floor, for the little girls had learned not to make water.

But it was found, after one or two trials, that the bubbles were too thin, and Prudie had to make another journey to the soap cask. Then they began blowing bubbles in good earnest—such big, strong ones! They would soar like tiny balloons, now up, now down, as Peter and Prudie and Lyddie puffed and chased them about the room.

By and bye one dived into the black chimney and disappeared. Then there was more fun, sending them off up its broad, sooty throat, and watching them sail out at the patch of blue at the top and rushing out to see them float off.

Then Peter proposed sucking into the bubbles, as grandpapa did once for them. Grandpapa's pipe lay on the mantel all 'charged' and ready to light when he should get up. Prudie wanted to do this part of it.

'Huh! girls don't smoke!' cried Peter, loftily.

'Mrs Potter smokes! I've seen her! And she was a girl once, anyway,' retorted Prudie.

'Well, it's squinched her all up,' insisted Peter.

'Prudie didn't want to be squinched like Mrs Potter, neither did Lyddie, so Peter put a live coal from the stove into the top of the pipe and puffed away manfully. The stem was very short and he burned the tip of his freckled nose once so that a tiny blister came upon it.

For a time they had great sport, watching the milky-looking bubbles float gracefully off, to the consternation of whole nestfuls of chimney-swallows, some of them tumbling out of their nests in a fright, down on to the children's heads.

However, pretty soon Peter laid up the pipe, plucked his fat, brown fists deep into his pockets and scowled dreadfully. Then his face turned very white and he began to whine dimly. Lyddie and Prudie, very much frightened, brought him parsley leaves to chew. But poor Peter was too sick to chew them.

Just then grandpapa came out and Lyddie ran to him with the doleful tale.

'Tut! It's grandpapa's pipe! Naughty thing for little boys—and big ones, too, I suspect!'

'But does it make you feel like Peter?' queried Lyddie.

'Oh, it did once,' laughed grandpapa.

'What made you want to do it again, then?' asked the little girl.

'The land knows, I don't!' groaned grandpapa, looking with pity at Peter's distress.

'Will Peter want to do so any more?' persisted Prudie, pinching a mint leaf and holding it to his pale nose.

'Oh, dear me, I hope not,' cried grandpapa, sternly, throwing his pipe against the sooty chimney and breaking it all to pieces. 'There, now, Peter, you and grandpapa will take the pledge not to smoke any more as long as we live. Shall we, sonny?'

'Ye-es, s-sir!' gasped little Peter, between his qualms. When mamma came home and saw grandpapa's old pipe lying in the chimney and grandpapa himself trudging over the hill into the pines, she said he had gone off to fight a battle.

Prudie and Lyddie and Peter could not believe that dear old grandpapa wanted to fight anybody. They wondered what mamma meant.

Do you understand?