

Our Boys and Girls.

THE WINNING OF JIM.

BY MISS MAY EVERETT GLOVER.

"I just think it is too mean!" Ethel Cameron exclaimed, coming hastily into her brother's office and leaning against the desk where he was writing.

"Why, Pussy, what is wrong?" he asked, looking up. "Did the taffy burn or have the people not gotten through with the last lot of all-day suckers?" he asked teasingly.

The Sunshine society had been working hard for two months to raise money to send little crippled Bessie Haines away to a great doctor who it was thought could cure her. It was a large sum of money for them to attempt to earn; but as Frank Lane said, when they had decided to undertake it, "that all they needed was Git up and elbow grease," they had gone to work. Frank had set the example by starting the next day to peddling vegetables out of school hours, with a book tucked down in the corner of the cart so that he could peep at his lesson in odd moments. Some of the boys had regular customers for whom they cut kindling, carried water and ran errands. The girls tended babies—made fancy work and anything they could get to do—and at each meeting they were delighted to find how the money was growing. Ethel and Susie Winters had been making taffy and sugar candy and selling, and the twelve dollars they had represented a good many arm aches and burnt fingers.

"Come, Pussy, don't worry. I will see that you do not have any left on your hands," her brother said, after waiting a few moments for Ethel to tell the cause of the trouble. He liked to tease, but he always helped her all he could—even to taking a lot of the taffy and selling to every one who came into his office.

"We don't have any to sell," Ethel said at last; "Susie and I had the finest taffy that we have ever made, and we had made more than we usually do. We wrapped it in tissue paper and set it out on the big stones to get real cold, just as we always do before selling it, and when we went to get it, basket and all was gone. That Jim Fargo and his breaker gang had slipped in and stolen it. It was too late to make more; and we haven't as much money as we had this morning, for we spent for the materials. We wouldn't have had a bit of trouble to have sold every bit of it to-day. We had over twelve dollars worth."

"And you are sure that Jim Fargo took it. Might it not have been someone else? I never knew Jim to steal."

Her brother had a class in the Sunday-school composed of boys who picked slate at the mines, and he had considerable trouble to get Jim Fargo to attend; he was interested in the boy, as he much much brighter than the usual breaker boys, and was the recognized leader among them.

"Oh, he took it! We went down street to see if we could find out anything about it; and there was Jim and several others sitting on the grass outside of old Mr. Gordon's eating it. They denied taking it, even when they had their mouths so full that they could scarcely talk. I wish they had choked so badly that they would never want to steal any more taffy. They said that they thought that taffy must be growing

on trees, and that it was time for it to be ripe, as theirs had fallen to them, and a lot more of such nonsense. Then I got cross and told them what I thought of them. Jim Fargo got up, he had his month empty by that time, and straightened himself up, and brushed the dust from his old ragged coat sleeve—you know he says he is going to be a lawyer like you, that is his whole aim—well, he straightened himself up and said in what he thought was a very dignified tone:

"I will admit, Miss Cameron, that the evidence against us is rather strong." Ethel's tone was such a good imitation of Jim's that her brother, leaned back and laughed. "But every one is entitled to a doubt, and is not guilty until proven so. We did not steal your taffy; and as it seemed to be growing on the trees and falling to the ground, we saw no harm in eating it, as we do not often get a chance to taste things of this kind. Allow me to congratulate you on your ability to make excellent taffy. And if what we have been receiving is a sample of the Sunshine your society scatter around—why beg pardon, Miss Cameron, I don't think that I would want any of your thunder storms. You may tell your brother that I will not be at Sunday-school to-morrow."

"He tipped his old ragged hat and turned down the street as if he had been President of the United States instead of ragged Jim Fargo. Then the rest of his gang got up, tipped their hats just like him, and followed him down the street, looking the picture of injured innocence. I couldn't help getting cross after the way we had worked and all the money we lost."

Ethel looked in her brother's face, "Oh, Rob, do you really think he will stop Sunday-school? It will just about break up your class, for the others do just as he says. I am so sorry, and you have worked so hard to get these boys," she said anxiously.

"I think that I can get them back. It does look suspicious, but I never caught Jim in an untruth. Don't worry, Pussy, it can't be helped." Ethel knew what he cared more than he wanted her to know.

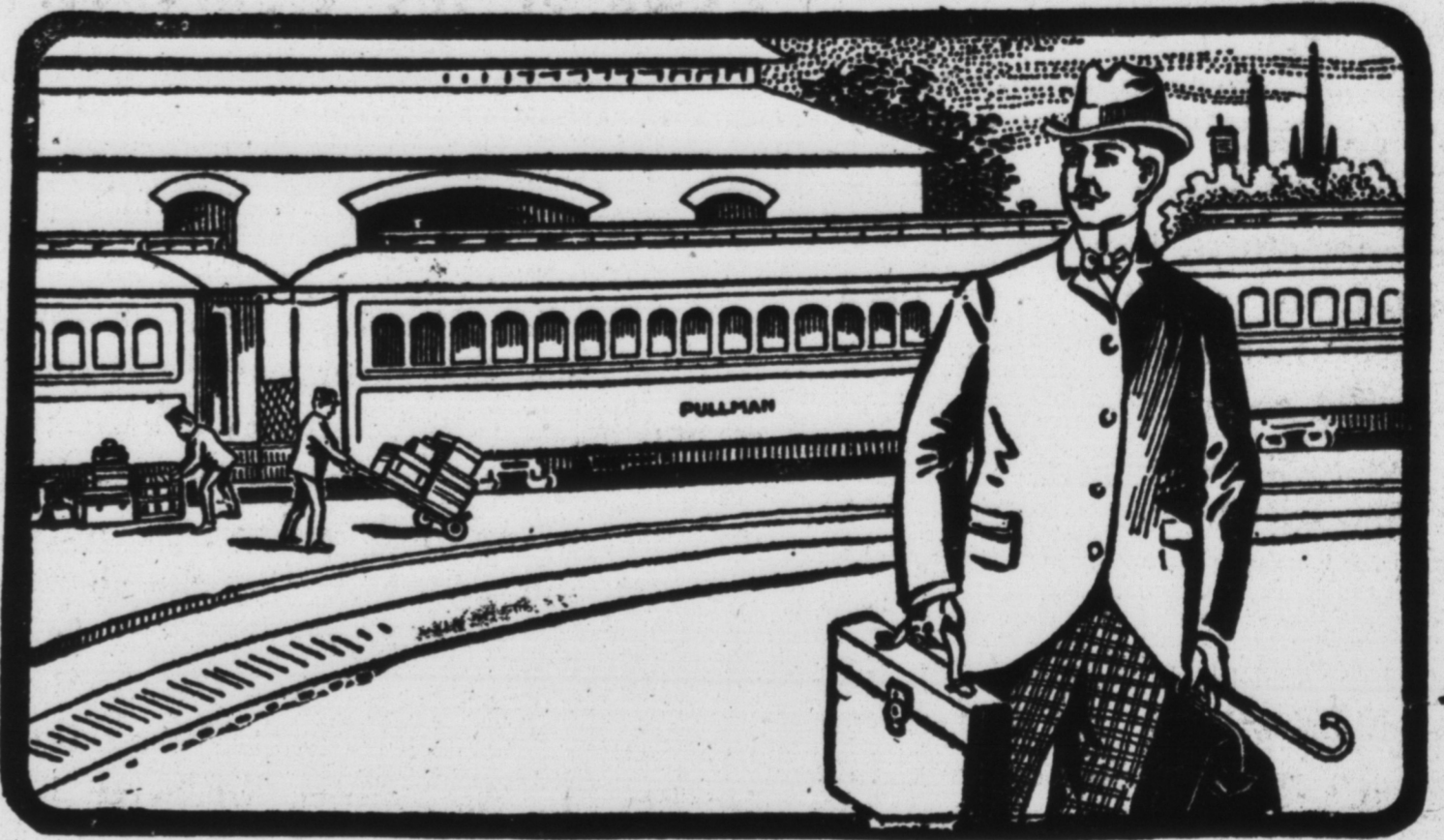
It was quite late that evening that Ethel was startled by a long ring at the bell, and she heard some one inquiring for Miss Ethel Cameron, and a very large old man came hustling into the room. It was old Mr. Gordon, who lived in a fine old place with his housekeeper, and a very large monkey, which seemed to be the only thing he cared for, and it was known that he did not like children or young people.

"Miss Ethel Cameron," he said, gruffly, stopping at the centre of the room, "I want to know what you put into that trash that you made this afternoon. I believe you call it taffy, it ain't fit for anyone to eat, let alone a monkey; but I didn't come to discuss that."

"Your monkey!" Ethel exclaimed, "Did he steal our taffy. Then Jim Fargo didn't take it after all."

"Excuse me, Miss Cameron, my monkey does not steal. I presume that he saw the taffy as he got loose this afternoon, and being of an inquisitive turn of mind, wanted to investigate it; and so took the basket that you had carelessly left out of doors, as I learnt from some boys, as he threw a lot of the taffy to them, and seeing them eating it, got to eating it himself, and now he is very sick, as he ate too much, or there may be something poisonous in it."

"Oh, there is nothing in it to hurt



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him." It is just sugar, a little vinegar and soda. There was over two dollars worth in the basket, and we thought the boys took it."

"Two dollars! Hump! It would be worth ten dollars to me if he was not sick. Made of sugar—a little vinegar and soda. I'll tell the doctor; no wonder he is sick after such a mess," and the old man hobbled out of the room muttering half aloud, "Sugar, a little vinegar and soda. Trash—trash!"

Half an hour afterward Ethel stood in the poorly furnished little house which Jim Fargo called home; for she had declared to her brother that she could not sleep a wink until she had told Jim Fargo that she was mistaken. Jim was surprised when she entered; he listened quietly to her apology, for her angry accusations had hurt him more than she ever dreamed—then he suddenly looked up, the tears were in his eyes, and his voice trembled for a moment, then he was his old self again.

"Of course I do not blame you, Miss Ethel, it is all right now. I know that it did look as if we had taken it, and I should have told you where we had gotten it, but—you must excuse me, but you took it so for granted that we had stolen it, that it made me angry, and I thought it did not matter what you did believe. I am sorry now, and I hope you will forgive me for speaking to you the way I did. It was not a gentlemanly thing to do—and not many would have bothered to come and—explained it to me as you have. I will never forget it," and he took the hand

extended to him in a warm boyish clasp.

"You will see me to-morrow at Sunday-school, and I will have the other boys there," he said meeting Rob's eyes with a new expression in his own. "You can depend on me now, Mr. Cameron." —N. Y. Observer.

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