

Our Boys and Girls.

IF! IF!

If every boy and every girl,
Arising with the sun,
Should plan this day to do alone
The good deeds to be done—

Should scatter smiles and kindly words,
Strong, helpful hands should lend,
And to each other's wants and cries,
Attentive ears should lend.

If every man and woman, too,
Should join those workers small—
Oh, what a flood of happiness
Upon our earth would fall!

How many homes would sunny be,
Which now are filled with care!
And joyous, smiling faces, too,
Would greet us everywhere.

I do believe the very sun
Would shine more clear and bright
And every little twinkling star
Would shed a softer light.

But we, instead, must watch to see
If other folks are true,
And thus neglect so much that God
Intends for us to do.
—Sarah E. Eastman, in *Golden Days*.

SAVING A REPUTATION.

BY MILDRED NORMAN.

Ralph had mowed almost to the end of his swathe, when the whistle from the near-by town told him that it was noon. He dropped his scythe, took off his hat, and wiped the thick drops of perspiration from his forehead, the while he glanced with affected unconcern across the swathe to see how his neighbor fared. "Pretty stiff piece," he said and then stopped abruptly. He stood alone in the field. "Gone for the water jug," thought Ralph; and he improved the opportunity to take a good look at his neighbor's swathe. "Wide as mine, and—yes, confound it!—all of two feet ahead of mine!"

A look of dismay came into Ralph's face. He had been so sure of outdoing his neighbor and winning the prize pledged by the owner of the field to the mower who levelled the widest swathe in the shortest time. "I'll have that calf," said Ralph, setting his jaws and clutching the scythe handle. "I promised that calf to Emmy."

The lad sent a swift glance over the field. There was no one in sight. "Queer how he disappeared so suddenly. Wish I had not said so much about it, but I was so sure. He's the first fellow that ever beat me."

"Confound it!" he said again, and hesitated, half hoping to catch a glimpse of his rival or someone coming across the lot. Then he sent the scythe through the tall grass, and again and again.

"Two good feet ahead," he said, and walked over to the big apple-tree close to the wall, swung his scythe over to a convenient limb, fished out a tin pail from under the bushes, and began his noon-day repast.

Between the mouthfuls Ralph took more time than usual. The bread and cheese had lost its flavor, and seemed to stick in his throat. "Wish I hadn't bragged so much about it, he mused; "but I couldn't afford to lose my reputation, nohow," he concluded.

Still the bread and cheese refused to go down, and Ralph fished around under

the bushes again, and brought out the water jug. It was empty, and he sprang over the wall and ran down to the spring. "Halloa!" he exclaimed, as he was starting back, and then he shouted, "Halloa!" and setting the jug down in a shady spot, began to make his way through the blueberry bushes toward a big nut-tree where a lad about his own age sat, his head bent down and his hands working at something Ralph could not see plainly.

"Got a board across his knee," said Ralph, as he drew nearer. "Writing I swan." Then he shouted again, "Halloa, Jo, scratching for a prize composition."

The boy under the tree looked up. His face was glowing with the joy of victory. "Writing home," he said. And then, as he saw who his questioner was, he tried to moderate his feelings a little out of deference to the vanquished. "I promised the calf to Sue," he said, as if apologizing for his haste.

"And I promised it to Emmy. Sorry you will have to disappoint Sue, but both of us couldn't have it, you know." "What!" cried Jo, springing to his feet, while the board, pencil, and letter tumbled into the grass.

"Did you think you beat?" asked Ralph, regarding Jo with an incredulous smile. "You ought to know better than that, Joe. No man this side the Rockies can beat Ralph Horn."

Jo was fairer and of a more slender build than his rival. He took a long look at the thick-set figure and the knotted muscles. "I was a good two feet ahead," he said firmly.

"Go 'way," said Ralph, indulgently. "You were too excited. Your eyes deceived you. It is I that am two feet ahead. Come right out to the field and settle it," he said, as Jo began to speak again.

Jo looked puzzled, but unconvinced, as he followed Ralph back to the hay field. "There!" said Ralph, with a flourish of his arm. "Rub the cobwebs out of your eyes, and take a good look."

Jo was speechless. He took one good look and another, and then rubbed his eyes and looked again. All at once his knees grew weak, and he realized how tired he was. He sank down on a stack of hay, leaned his chin in his hand, and tried to smile, while he looked, not at his companion, but out across the field. "I was so sure I was ahead," he said at last, in an unsteady voice.

"Oh, well! don't take it so hard; it's no great shakes, anyhow."

"I wouldn't mind so much if it was not for Sue," he said.

"I'd give you the calf if it was not for disappointing Emmy," said Ralph.

Jo shook his head. "Wouldn't do, anyway," he said. "I could not tell her I won it."

"I'll do it all over again this afternoon if you say so," said Ralph. He knew he was safe in making the offer, for it was evident enough that Jo was thoroughly exhausted. "It's just fine exercise."

"You're a tough chap, Ralph," said Jo, with a faint smile. He was silent after that, and appeared to be lost in thought. Ralph lounged lazily, and chewed a straw while he watched Jo out of the corners of his eyes.

"Davy thought so, too," said Jo, suddenly springing up and sending a swift glance over the field. "Where's Davy?"

"Gone to dinner, of course. He won't be back until the whistle blows."

This remark of Jo's made Ralph uneasy, and in a moment later he stretched himself, and said he guessed he would go down to the spring and get his jug

of water. He would meet Davy, and make things all right with him. But Jo sprang up and joined him. "I'll go, too," he said, "and we will meet Davy, and ask him before he gets to the field."

But, instead of Davy, they met another boy with a message for Ralph. While he was detained, Jo hurried on, eager to have the first word. He spied him half way through the pasture, picking his dessert from the blackberry bushes.

Ralph watched the meeting with jealous eyes the while he listened to his friend's talk. No, he could not go fishing. Yes, he had promised the whole day to Malcolm. Yes, he was earning some money for his outing. Yes, he hated compositions. He was glad next week was the last of the term, and he wished there was some way to get rid of next week's composition.

"I'll do it for you—for a consideration," said his companion; and then, as Ralph scornfully waved him off, "Lots of the fellows do it."

"I've got a reputation to look out for," said Ralph.

"Well, don't fret about your reputation: it won't suffer. No one will know it. Fact, your reputation will most likely be much improved."

Ralph smiled. He knew his compositions were pretty near zero, but he felt disgusted with his friend for making him the proposition. Just then he saw Jo meet Davy, and he suddenly turned scarlet under his dark skin. His companion looked at him curiously. "Well, all right," he said, "if you have such strong objections: I don't want to demoralize you. Just thought I'd help you out."

But Ralph was not listening. He saw Davy talking and gesticulating, and vigorously shaking his head. The thought of Davy made him feel uneasy; but he remembered that, after the whistle blew at noon and he had dropped his scythe, taken off his broad-brimmed hat and wiped his face and then turned to look across at his rival, there was no one in sight. He could see that Jo, was talking very earnestly, and Davy grew quieter. As they came up, Davy fixed his beady black eyes on Ralph, and said vehemently, "I am just as sure as Jo that he was ahead when the whistle blew."

"It's easy enough proved," said Ralph with an unconcerned air. He saw at once that what he had half feared was not going to take place. He took leave of his companion, and they all made their way to the field. Having viewed the work of the contestants, there was nothing more to be said; but the look Davy fixed upon Ralph haunted him after he left the field.

Monday, after the morning recess, the schoolmaster wrote the subject for the week's composition on the blackboard. It was "Character and Reputation."

That night Ralph asked his father, "What is the difference between character and reputation?"

"Reputation," said his father, "is what people think you are. "Character" is what you really are.

Ralph did not sleep well that night. The next morning Davy overtook him on his way to the school. "Jo's pegged out," he said. "Saturday was too much for him. He ought to have known better than to have tried it."

"Of course he ought to have known better," said Ralph. "Teach him a lesson. To himself he said, "It is all the same. I could have beat him easy. Did not suppose he was in a mile of me."



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"And Sue cried herself into a fever. She's pindling, you know; been out of kilter all the spring. Halloa! there's Mr. Malcolm now; he's motioning."

"Which one of you fellows is coming after that calf?" he called out.

Ralph stopped and seemed confused. "Me, of course," shouted Davy with a grin.

"I'll call around to-night and see about it," said Ralph.

"I thought so," said the man.

Ralph lingered after school until all his mates had gone. He told them not to wait for him. He had "a tough problem to tackle."

When the road was clear, he packed up his books, and went direct to Mr. Malcolm's. Mr. Malcolm was at the barn door, waiting for him.

Ralph was there twenty minutes, and then he came out, leading the calf. Mr. Malcolm stood at the door and watched him. He did not go toward home. "That's the kind of a fellow I want for a superintendent one of these days," he said. "I'm getting lazy."

Ralph hurried the calf along, and did not slacken his pace until he reached the door of Jo's home. He whistled. Jo's face appeared at the window, looking very pale and thin. He came to the

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