

"High-Top Sweeting" Tree

They all cried—every one of the Bells from Peggy, who was sixteen, down to Ritus (who was four and despised a cry-baby), when old Mr. Pigeon moved away. He was such a tried and trusty friend, and, it he was sixty, such a congenial companion. He was always ready to go fishing or coasting with the boys or to take the girls to drive; although he was a bachelor and lived alone, he had a double carriage and the largest sleigh on Pippin Hill—because he had as large a heart, Peggy said. He knew so much about the wild things in the woods as "The Hunter's Own Book," and on a rainy day or when one had the mumps or measles he would tell stories by the dozen—stories that were worth telling, too, for he had been "round the world and home again," and knew all there was to know about cannibals and buccaners and wild men, and all such distinguished and interesting people.

It happened that the only houses on the tip top of Pippin Hill were the Belfry (I suppose the Bells' house may have received that name because Papa Bell always spoke of his children as his "small fry," anyway, that is what everyone in Bloomsboro' called it) and the Pigeon house, which had belonged to Mr. Pigeon's grandfather. The houses backed up to each other, and there was a mutual backyard fence, so, of course, it was very desirable that the neighbors should be friendly and congenial; more than this there was a mutual apple tree. The gnarled, old "high-top sweeting" was directly on the boundary line between the two estates, and the mutual fence had been cut in two to make space for it. Its branches were low and spreading, in spite of its high top, and they spread very impartially over the Bells' smooth lawn and over Mr. Pigeon's orchard, and dropped their delicious fruit—early, the first sweet apples that there were—almost as evenly as it measured on each of their owner's land. The only difference was that the August sunshine lay longer upon Mr. Pigeon's side, so the first red and yellow, mellow and juicy apples dropped upon his orchard grass—and he tossed them up to Christine in her seat in the low crotch of the tree, the seat that he made for her.

It was Christine who thought the most of Mr. Pigeon and he of her, because they both had a twist, Christine said. She could always speak of her trouble cheerfully, even jokingly. You would scarcely have thought that she minded it at all; it was a spinal weakness which had bowed her shoulders and twisted her head to one side. The others didn't mind much when Christine was left out of things; they were a rough, merry set, but Mr. Pigeon had always remembered her. His twist was in one of his legs; he had to wear an uncomfortable iron boot, and walked with a queer, sideways motion.

When Becky, who was eleven and was called the Bloomsboro' Budget because she carried all the news, came home with the terrible intelligence that Mr. Pigeon was going to move away, no one would believe it.

"In the first place it's too dreadful to be true, and in the next place he would have told us," said Peggy.

But it really proved to be true. Mr. Pigeon's sister—his own sister!—had gone to law to obtain a share of her grandfather's estate, which he had failed to bequeath to her because she had gone contrary to his wishes in some way, and the only share she would have was that old estate on Pippin Hill. Perhaps the law might force her to take something else as her share since he had held possession there so long; but she was Hitty, and he should give it up to her. That was what Mr. Pigeon said in answer to the indignant remonstrances of the Bells. She was Hitty; that was all he would say; perhaps it wasn't much of a reason, but the Bells understood. We all know what it is to give up things to people just because they are lily or polly or Joann.

So it happened that the Bells dear Mr. Pigeon went away to a little house that he owned down at Pequanket Mills and Miss Melitab. Pigeon came to live at the old place on Pippin Hill and owned half of the high-top sweeting tree.

And the very first thing she did—it was September when she came—was to threaten to have Tommy Bell arrested, because when he shook their side of the tree her side shook too, and she said the top of the tree leaned toward their side and more apples fell there, so when the apples were picked and divided she must have an extra bushel. She threatened to have their yellow kitten drowned because he scampered after the flying leaves in her garden and, she did have their cross gobbler killed because he ran after her red morning gown, and she did have their dog killed because he barked at her. He wasn't much loss and she sent him home plucked and dressed, with the message that she should have eaten him if she had not feared he would be tough!

She complained that Becky's peacock squawked and Dicky's Guinea pig squeaked, and the vane on their stable had a rusty squeak that kept her awake nights; and it one of the little Bells mounted the fence she came out and "shooed" him off as if he were a chicken.

Christine, who was inclined to look on the bright side and to think well of every one, said that she would probably grow better when they got better acquainted, and she gave Tommy and little Rufus five cents each not to use their bean slingers over the fence or make faces through the knothole.

But instead of growing better their new neighbor grew worse. She had the mutual fence built up ten feet high, she had the branches of the sweeting tree lopped off where they interfered with the fence, and Christine's seat thrown down to the ground so roughly that it was broken. She said she had let people impose upon her all her life, and she wasn't going to any more.

Papa Bell, who was an easy man and so absorbed in his business, said he supposed that so many children and speaking things did make them troublesome neighbors; but he thought they should have to remonstrate with Miss Pigeon about the fence, because it took away so much of their sunshine. Christine begged him to wait; she always would believe that people were going to be better, and she knew there must be something good about Miss Pigeon because she looked like her brother—only the twist seemed to be in her mind, poor thing!

It was November when Christine's seat was thrown out of the tree, so she could not have used it any more that season anyway; and when anyone asked her how she was going to do without it in the spring, she always answered: "Perhaps Miss Hitty will be good by that time." But that transformation didn't seem in the least likely to any one else. She never forgot that Mr. Pigeon had said she was Hitty, thought how she could ever be Hitty to anybody was more than the other young Bells could understand.

Christine would bow to her, too, and smile, shyly, although Miss Pigeon only scowled or sadly in response. Far more difficult to forgive than their own wrongs was the injury that she had inflicted upon her brother. He wrote to them of old letters which showed plainly how homesick he was for the good air and the good fellowship of Pippin Hill. One of the neighbors who saw him at Pequanket said one would hardly know him he had "pined away" so.

Christine turned a little pale when she heard this about Mr. Pigeon, and she put on her thinking-cap. She couldn't go to school like the others, she couldn't go skating; in fact, there were so many things she couldn't do that it would have been very discouraging to one who believed less firmly than Christine did that things as well as people were going to be better; but that gave her all the more time to wear her thinking-cap. And Christine's thoughts were pretty apt to blossom into deeds some day.

Christine had made the Christmas wreaths of evergreen and holly from their own Pippin Hill woods, and she had sent two beauties to Miss Pigeon, who had promptly returned them with the message that she didn't want such rubbish littering up her house. Now when they heard that she had news from Mr. Pigeon she was making valentines. She had a very dainty knack with both pencil and brush, for a fourteen-year-old girl, and her valentines were more beautiful than any that could be bought in the shops, or so Bloomsboro' young people all thought.

The fashion of sending valentines might have elsewhere, but always flourished in Bloomsboro', perhaps because Christine Bell kept it up. She sent them to the very last people who expected to have a valentine—to neglected old people and forlorn sick people, to Biddy Maguire just from the old country, and "kitt" with home-sickness, and to Antony Burke, the old miser, for whom no one had a civil word and who, perhaps, didn't deserve one. And for every valentine that was disregarded or thrown impatiently aside, a dozen made a little warmth and comfort in a sad heart; for nobody has yet begun to understand how great is the day of small things.

Christine was more mysterious than usual this year about her valentines; she colored when Peggy said she would better send one to Miss Pigeon, but they never thought she would; they thought she was only sensitive about her Christmas wreath. When Mr. Pigeon went away he gave Christine an old desk that he had had since he was a boy. It had initials and hearts and anchors cut into it and was whitened at every corner; you would have known if you'd seen it anywhere that it had belonged to a boy. But Christine would have it in her own room; she thought it was beautiful. It had his boy-letters and diaries in it, and she had laugh and cried over them. And now she had found in that old desk material for the very queerest

valentine she had ever made; and although she liked to share the fun of making her valentines with the others, she was a little secretive about that.

What should the paper be but a leaf from one of the old diaries, one side all written over in an unformed, boyish hand; and this is what was written on it, the ink faded by time:

"I cant bare to rite becos hity has the Feever and i cant bare knot to rite becos it seems like teting sombody. she held mi hand tite when she did knot now enybody last nite and i did knot let them send me to bed the tellers say if she does di i hav other sisters but they are knot hity the flless do not understand wen enybody sais she will ever hav a b; like our agusta hity sais the Tom Tinker verse and that means me as is rote on the 1st leaf of this Diry mi name is Thomas Tinkham Pigeon hity has got a Temper but so hav a Good Many People and she is Good way inside and she is hity and she and i will always liv together but i cant bare to rite eny more for i want to now what the dokter sais, they say a feller must be A Man but wen it is hity i cant bare—"

Here the words became illegible on the old yellow paper; there were blots and smudges as of tears. Though valentines are supposed to be dainty, Christine didn't try to clean it a bit! And on the unwritten side, instead of painting any of her pretty flowers or drawing hearts or cupids, she only wrote "the Tom Tinker verse" which Hitty had lovingly quoted to her brother:

"Tom Tinker's my true love, and I am his dear, 'I'll gang a'ong wi' him his budget to bear."

It certainly was a very queer valentine. Christine thought it would probably be returned, even more scornfully than the Christmas wreath—it Miss Pigeon should guess who sent it—and she would be likely to guess that it came from the Belfry; for she knew that her brother had given them many of his belongings.

She sent it with fear and trembling, and she told none of the others, for the older ones seemed, in their hearts, to share the feeling of Tom and little Rufus, that the only proper form of approach to Miss Pigeon was bean-slinging in hand.

The valentine wasn't returned; but nothing seemed to come of it. The Bells' Jane heard from Miss Pigeon's Jane that her mistress had neuralgia. One day after March had come, and a bluebird had been seen to alight upon the high top sweeting tree, as Christine came along the garden path there came a shrill, imperative voice through the knothole in the fence.

"If you have any more of those leaves, stuff them through the keyhole; if you have the whole dairy throw it over the fence."

Of course Christine wasn't going to do that with the dairy that seemed so precious; but she did send it around to Miss Pigeon's door by old Jeremy, the gardener, for none of the boys would go.

It was about a week after that a man came, under Miss Pigeon's direction, a new seat in the crotch of the apple tree—a seat that was delightfully comfortable for a back that was not straight. Miss Pigeon seemed to know just how. When it was finished she went up and examined it and tried it. Then she called Christine, who was sitting on the porch.

"I'm a cankerous old woman. I was born cankerous," she said. "But there's your seat!"

No one at the Belfry knew what to think of Miss Pigeon; it was little Rufus's opinion that a good fairy had tapped her with her wand and turned her into something else, and he was much disappointed to find, on peeping through the knothole, that she looked just the same.

"It's delightful," Christine said, slowly. "But it isn't exactly what I meant by the valentine," she added, to herself.

But a few days after, what Christine had meant by the valentine really did happen! Some-time things that seem too good to be true do come to pass in this world. Miss Pigeon mounted the high buggy in which she drove herself and went down to Pequanket; when she came back Mr. Pigeon was with her! Tommy discovered it first as they drove into the yard and raised a shout. All the young Bells rushed pell mell into the apple tree and dropped from its branches into Miss Pigeon's orchard—even Peggy who was sixteen—shouting and laughing and crying all together. They quite forgot Miss Pigeon until her harsh voice broke into the whirlwind of greetings; with all its harshness there was a queer little quaver in it!

"He's come back and he's going to stay," she said. It is to be that belongs here and not I. If you're born with a cross-grained disposition you've got to get over it when your young or you'll have to have more'n a ten-foot fence between you and other people! I'm going back to nursing people in a hospital—yes, I can, though you wouldn't think it; and they like me!

SYRUP OF FIGS



ONE ENJOYS

Both the method and results when Syrup of Figs is taken; it is pleasant and refreshing to the taste, and acts gently yet promptly on the Kidneys, Liver and Bowels, cleanses the system effectually, dispels colds, headaches and fevers and cures habitual constipation. Syrup of Figs is the only remedy of its kind ever produced, pleasing to the taste and acceptable to the stomach, prompt in its action and truly beneficial in its effects, prepared only from the most healthy and agreeable substances, its many excellent qualities commend it to all and have made it the most popular remedy known.

Syrup of Figs is for sale in 50 cent bottles by all leading druggists. Any reliable druggist who may not have it on hand will procure it promptly for any one who wishes to try it. Do not accept any substitute.

CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP CO.
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Beauty
without
Health
is impossible.

LAXA-LIVER PILLS

Bring Health, then Beauty follows. They clear the muddy complexion, chase away Sick Headaches and Bilious Spells, cure Dyspepsia and remove all poisonous matter from the System. Mrs. Addie Theriault, 216 Brussels Street, St. John, N.B., says: "Laxa-Liver Pills cured me of Constipation, Indigestion and Bilious Headaches. They have corrected the irregularities of Liver and Stomach, and restored my entire system to healthy natural action."



How did it happen

that the old-fashioned, laborious way of washing was ever given to woman as her particular work? It's an imposition on her. She ought to have had only the easiest things to do—and men, strong, healthy men, ought to have taken up this washing business. Now, here is a suggestion. In those families that still stick to soap and make their washing needlessly hard and unpleasant, let the men do that work. They're better fitted for it. In the families that use Pearlina^(use with- out soap) and make washing easy, let the women do it. They won't mind it, will they?

Millions NOW USE Pearlina

There's a doctor I know who has invented a new contrivance for—making backs straight!—her voice really broke now, but she recovered herself instantly; 'they're easier to straighten than crooked dispositions! I'm going to send one here, an I want her to try it. She nodded toward Christine, and then she turned away suddenly. Little Rufus ran after her—practically keeping his hand on the bean-slinger in his pocket. (They had discovered at an early stage of the acquaintance that if Miss Pigeon had a weakness it was a terror of the bean-slingers.) 'Are you really just the same? Didn't a good fairy turn you into something else?' he demanded, breathlessly.

Miss Pigeon turned and looked down upon him, her strong features working.

'Yes, she did!' she answered, gruffly. 'Did she tap you with her wand?' pursued little Rufus eagerly, delighted with this confirmation of beliefs that were scorned in his home circle.

'She didn't tap me with a wand,' said Miss Pigeon; 'she sent me a valentine!' The Independent.

THE CURES GROW NUMEROUS SICKNESS OVERCOME BY MORIN'S WINE CRESO-PHATES

All the neighborhood of Mrs. Chas. Faguy, living in Quebec, knows that she was sick for a long time, and in spite of all care and medicines taken, nothing would give her any relief. Sometimes she seemed to feel relief, but immediately afterwards the pains in the stomach and sides came back and made her suffer again. A severe cough changed into acute bronchitis, gave her much uneasiness, and she was thinking that perhaps before long she would not be able to find any medicine to relieve or cure her, when she read accidentally an advertisement of Morin's Creso-Phates Wine. Although she had already spent much money bying medicines, she decided to take some more to save her life. She bought one bottle of this medicine and after using it for some days Mrs. Faguy found with pleasure that her cough was diminishing and that it was not so severe as before using Morin's Wine. She did not feel so many pains and her breathing was much easier, her appetite got better every day. She was very encouraged and decided to continue this medicine until complete recovery. She got another bottle and had the best results from it; the expectoration came freely and without fatigue, her strength came back rapidly and a few days afterwards she was able to work as formerly.

To day Mrs. Faguy is in perfect health and she has no doubt that without Morin's Creso-Phates Wine she would not be alive now.

Puzzled.

Bill—There's just one thing I can't understand.

Jill—Let's have it. 'They say a man works like lightning.' 'That's correct.' 'And when they speak of lightning they always say it plays.'

THE AWFUL STING.

The Unbearable Itching Irritations caused by troublesome Skin Diseases—Eczema, Scald Head, Salt Rheum, Tetter, are allayed by one application of Dr. Agnew's Ointment. Blind and bleeding Piles cured in from one to six nights. Its a magical reliever and a power to cure quickly and effectively. Here's a sentence from a recent testimony: 'I thought my flesh was on fire, but Dr. Agnew's Ointment cooled, helped and healed me.' 35 cents.

Captain Dave.

Captain Dave, of the Piute tribe of Indians, is a character in his way, and has achieved considerable reputation as a wit. Civilization has done much for Captain Dave; among other things it has taught him the Yankee way of replying to one question by asking another. This is well illustrated in the story which the Evening Chronicle of Virginia City, Nevada, tells: Some white men were joking Captain Dave the other day about his claim that he could tell all the various tribes of Indians. But as usual, when one attempts to get ahead of Captain Dave, they came out second best. One question put to him was as follows:

'Captain Dave, doesn't Shoshone look pretty much same as Piute?'

'Yep.'

'Doesn't Shoshone dress all same as Piute?'

'Yep.'

'Then when Shoshone talks Piute how you tell him?'

'When Dutchman talk English, how you

tell him?' came the laconic but pertinent reply, in faultless pronunciation.

THE SUN BURNED OUT!

Ever the Sun will burn himself out, and one day be as dark and cold as the Moon. Everything has its day. Sometimes the rich dress of a lady has a very short day. You get it smeared or stained or the color is absorbed by the Sun. That is the end where TURKISH DYES have not been heard of. But use these incomparable dyes and the garment is new again with a lovely color (and surely 72 shades leave room for the free play of taste!) which you cannot wash out! which will resist rain; and which will remain lustrous and beautiful while a thread of the dress remains. When a lady has a rich dress to dye she does not ask for the common dyes whose shades "Run in" miserable little murky rivulets. Oh no! She will have nothing but TURKISH DYES, which have the latest improvements, slavishly copied by the interior dyes. They are bright and beautiful. They are of the best quality. They are prepared with the greatest care, and they will dye any color or kind of garment. Don't take common dyes. They promise to the eye; and break it to the experience.

Send postal for 'How to Dye well' and Sample Card to 481 St. Paul Street, Montreal.

Kafir Simplicity.

The London Telegraph tells a good story of Kafir simplicity, which shows that although customs may differ, human nature is much the same the world over. In civilized countries presents may or may not follow a wedding invitation. But the shrewd Kafir takes no chances. A lady writing from Johannesburg says:

A friend of mine has just received this letter from a young Kafir.

"PORT ELIZABETH, Sept. 10, 1897.

"DEAR SIR—I hereby let you know that I am going to get married in November month, in which therefore am expecting presents from you, sir, as being the great friend I have. Wish you these few lines reach you in good health as they are leaving me in good condition. May end there. With best regards, your faithfully servant,

"JOHN MSHWELA."

This epistle was evidently dictated by John, and is a good sample of English as it is occasionally written in those parts. It is unnecessary to add that John received his present.

The Serbian Drum.

The men who play the big drums in the different regiments of the Serbian army must have an easier lot than the drummers of other lands, for they do not have to carry their own drums. In nearly all cases, instead of being slung in front of the man who plays it, the instrument is put on a small two-wheel cart drawn by a large dog. Of course the drummer must play as he marches, but the dog is so well trained that there is no difficulty in doing this. The animal keeps his place even through the longest marches, and the drummer walks behind the cart, performing on his instrument as it goes along. Each regiment is provided with two or three big drums, but very few regiments have a band.

Equal to Leap Year.

Miss Autumn—I'm going down to that auction sale.

Miss Young—What do you want to buy?

Miss Autumn—Oh, I don't know that I will purchase anything; just going to satisfy my curiosity I've heard that a nice looking man gets up on a platform every day and says:—'Wont someone make me an offer?'

CANADA'S NEW MINISTER OF JUSTICE

Sir Oliver Mowat's Successor in the Laurier Cabinet, Hon. David Mills, With Fifty Members of Parliament, Praise the Virtues of Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder.

No one suffers the inconveniences of Catarrh more than the public speaker. Hon. David Mills, the coming Minister of Justice, says over his own signature that Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder gave him immediate relief. People everywhere use it. John McInnis, Washa Bridge, N. S., says: 'Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder did wonders for me.' It relieves in ten minutes and permanently cures catarrh, cold in the head, sore throat and tonsillitis.

And Then She Weped.

Mrs. Peck—Have you forgotten Henry, that you used to say before we were married, that you would be willing to die for me?

H. Peck (in a fit of desperation)—Oh, Maria, how I wish you had taken me at my word and put me to the test!