

## Sunday Reading.

### JAKEY'S AUNT.

'Hi there, Jake! Wot yer dreamin' fur in broad daylight?' called a jeering voice, and a handful of mud-spattered against his face.

This was not an unusual attention in the alley, where mud was easily found in the vicinity of gutters and there were times when Jakey would have accepted it with unconcern, but now he said sullenly: 'Lem me lone can't yer?'

'S'posin' I don't? Wot yer goin' ter do 'bout it?' questioned the tormentor. 'Wouldn't knock me down, would yer. Oh I'm afraid! See me tremble.' He swayed with knees smiting each other as in terror. A laugh went up from some boys playing at jack stones with pebbles. 'Oh, me! oh, me! I'm afeared of baby Jake.'

The veins stood out on Jakey's forehead, his hands clenched. He sprang down the steps and planted his head in the stomach of the offender. Both boys fell together, but Jakey was up first and off down the alley followed by applause of spectators and threats of the enraged bully who ran after. His bare feet carried him swiftly around the corner, where he dodged into a sheltering doorway to watch his larger pursuer pant by. Tommy Magee had vowed to 'wipe the street' with him, and would fulfil that vow were the object of it again within his reach.

'I'll light out. No use livin' here with all them furriners, anyhow,' thought Jakey disdainfully. And with that he shook the dust of Turkey alley from his feet and pattered down a side street, through another, up another, and on until the huddle of dingy buildings and dingy humanity was left behind and he found himself on one of New York's stately avenues.

Falling in with a benevolent driver, he was allowed to ride on his wagon to the Grand Central Railroad station, on condition of helping him on their arrival. It were idle to give time and space to narrate how a New York street boy scraped acquaintance with a wagon driver. Suffice it to say that the boy did it, and that it led to results that changed the whole current of his life. On one or two of the packages that he helped his chance friend to dispose of was the name, "Miss Letitia Prendergast" and the address Greenfield, Conn. The boy could read. Greenfield had a pleasant rural sound, and he pictured to himself Miss Letitia Prendergast as an aunt endowed with much worldly wealth.

'Why hasn't I got an aunt in Greenfield?' he humorously questioned of himself. 'Course I has—come to think of it. Won't she be orful glad to see me though? Bet she will. Good-bye New York. 'Rah Greenfield.' Then he was saying aloud: Here leddy, you've dropped yer handkerchief?'

She was an elderly lady with a sweet face under white hair, and she smiled down at him.

'Thank you. But, oh, dear! I've lost my ticket. Didn't you find a ticket for Greenfield in the handkerchief?'

How wide and innocent were Jakey's eyes.

'Don't see no ticket at all, 'm.' 'How careless of me,' she murmured, then let herself be carried on by crowding passengers.

Chuckling to himself Jakey took a paste board slip from under his foot.

'Blest if I ain't in luck! Ticket ter Greenfield, she said—an' here 'tis. Jakey, me boy, yer won't need ter steal no ride in the baggage car! Thet comes o' knowin' how.' He winked at the woman through the car door. Now I'll be ridin' like the president with money in me pocket.'

Never did railroad king loll with more lordly air upon velvet cushioned seat than did Jakey of Turkey alley, as the train rushed away from crowding walls and stir of traffic and hurry of humanity which go to make up a great city—away out where spaces were ample, and houses hid from each other and woods where russet and yellow any red, and the sunny October air was untainted by vile gases. Jakey's heart swelled high with wonder and delight, that the world should be so large and that he really had started out to seek his fortune in it. The conductor glanced keenly at the dirty, ragged little fellow as he punched his ticket, but Jakey was used to keen glances.

'How long 'fore we gets ter Greenfield?'

'Next station but one. Due there in half an hour.' It was spoken shortly, for a conductor is only a human being and this one was working over time. Jakey heard him speaking almost as shortly to the passenger behind. 'I'm not to blame if you lost your ticket, madam. Fare if you please.'

'I haven't the money. I thought I had

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EMERSON, MAN., April 2nd, 1898.

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change enough, but I've only this. If you'll take it I'll send you the rest.'

'Can't do it you must get off at the next station.'

He passed down the aisle, only Jakey hearing above the rattle of the flying train the distressed protest.

'Five miles from Greenfield! I can't walk it and I don't know a soul there.'

One glance showed Jakey the sweet old face that had smiled upon him when he returned a handkerchief.

Something of a sob sounded quite close. He looked again. The white hair rested against the back of the seat, and—yes she was crying!

'Laddy,' spoken almost too softly and timidly for one whose wits had been sharpened by rough contact with the world's elbows until his voice had acquired the shrill assertiveness of the gamin. 'I say, leddy, won't you take this quarter? It's all I've got, but p'raps it will yer piece out so yer kin get through.'

She looked at the money in the smutty hand, and smiled.

'But I shall have no chance to repay you.'

'I'm going to Greenfield, too,' he said quickly.

'Then I will take it, and thank you for a kind hearted lad. Have you friends in Greenfield?'

'Goin' to see me aunt.' The humorous fiction came easily to his lips.

'Perhaps I know her.' The woman looked doubtfully at the ragged little fellow as though it was possible but not probable. What Greenfield person could claim this child as nephew!

'Perhaps I know your aunt,' she repeated. 'What is her name?'

Now did Jakey the Shrewd repent of his glibness. He answered reservedly. 'Miss Tisha Prendergast.'

'Miss Letitia Prendergast?' Her eyes widened with astonishment, then narrowed quizzically. 'Have you ever seen her?'

'Naw'm,' and he turned his attention wholly to the flying landscape, while she leaned back glancing in a puzzled way at the stubby head visible above the seat in front. Her interest in this neglected-looking boy, who tendered her his only piece of money, was increased by learning of his aunt.

Carelessness in signaling at the junction where it was to pass the express; on the part of the train itself oversped to make up lost time—like an upheaval of the world it came; the shriek of engines as the express rounded the curve; a blinding crash and shock; the spit of escaping steam; the roll and slide of cars down steep embankment. The white-haired woman tried to rise from the corner where

she was flung, but a broken seat held her down. Outside someone was calling: 'Water! water! for God's sake, water! The cars are on fire!' Must they be burned together then—the dead, the dying and those struggling in frantic terror for the life that still seemed so sweet?

'Shove, leddy, shove!' said a voice at her elbow. 'I'm littin' too. Shove an' you'll be up.'

How they got out of the car neither the lady nor Jakey could have told. The former knew only that without Jakey's aid she would have been among those that perished in the crushed car ere help could reach them, and when she found that his arm was broken and that he was swooning at her side with pain, it was she who took charge of him, and had him conveyed to her mansion at Greenfield, for now she was among her own neighbors, she could command assistance instead of imploring it.

Jakey's convalescence progressed rapidly, and his appearance, thanks to the lady's generous purse, improved at the same rate. But one day, after a fortnight's sojourn he came to her with this remark:

'Laddy I guess as how I'll soon be goin' some-eres else!'

'Why Jakey, are you tired of staying here?'

'Tired!' He did not know how much his intonation revealed to his benefactress. 'I jus' guess as how yer won't want me no more when I let on.'

'What?'

'I kept your ticket that day. I picked it up with yer handkerchief.' He was a handsome boy now that he was properly washed and combed and dressed, yet how pathetically little and forlorn he looked standing there with his hand in a sling. She understood how much harder for him was this confession than his bearing during the accident, of which she could not think without a shudder. 'An' I tole yer a whopper 'bout me aunt in Greenfield. Ain't got no aunt.'

'Yes you have,' she said 'Miss Letitia Prendergast.'

He colored to thing of having given his

imaginary relative a name. It seemed such barefaced impudence now from the new standpoint to which he had grown.

'I saw the name on the 'spress box an' it stuck in me hoad. I kin here 'cause Greenfield sounded like grass without a sign onto it. When yer asked me I said Miss Tisha Prendergast 'cause t'was easy—an' somehow I didn't mind telling whoppers then.'

He sighed a sigh that seemed to come from the very depths of his heart. 'Now, leddy, I'll be goin'.'

She took his resolute face between her hands.

'Do you think I shall let you go?' No indeed! You shall live here and call me 'Auntie,' as Tisha does. I am Miss Letitia Prendergast.—The working boy.

#### Finding Blessings.

If one should give me a dash of sand and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes, and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them; but let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and how would it draw to itself the invisible particles by the mere power of attraction. The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find in every hour some heavenly blessing; only the iron in God's sand is gold.

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