

Sunday Reading.

Her Embarrassing Caller.

He was waiting at the front door when she went to open it, her curiosity having been roused by a volley of small raps.

'Hello!' he said.

'Hello!' she answered, kindly, recognizing him as one of the three small children of the new neighbor who had just moved into the house across the street. He might have been about six years old.

'I've come to see you.'

'You don't say so! Walk in, sir.'

'My mamma said I might come,' he announced, as he followed her through the hall.

'That was very kind of your mamma,' she said, trying hard to feel elated.

'Yes,' he admitted with condescension. 'She said you were lonely, and hadn't no little boys to play with!'

'Perhaps I like little girls better,' she answered, evasively.

Standing on the hearth-rug, he considered this statement, and then glanced round the room.

'Where's your little girls?' he questioned.

She explained weakly that she hadn't any at present, but that there was a whole orphan asylum near by on which she was at liberty to draw largely. In an unguarded moment, she ended by boasting that she might have a dozen assorted orphans if she so desired.

'Get them now!' he demanded, in a tone of suspicion.

'Why, I have company!' she expostulated. 'Suppose you take off your coat, and sit down in this chair. I used to sit in this chair.'

He regarded her and the chair with such terrible eyes that she explained quickly. 'When I was little, I mean, just as big as you are.'

He accepted the amendment, and rocked for a time with an air of much dignity. 'My mamma said I could stay an hour. Is it an hour now?' he finally inquired.

'Oh, dear, no! We must have some cake first. Do you like cake?'

'Yes,' he answered, frankly.

He was greatly taken with the cake when it was brought, and praised it in warm terms.

'It's good cake!' he declared, when he had eaten the last slice and chased the crumbs around the plate. 'I don't think it will make me sick. Some cake does, and then I have to have the doctor. This cake won't.'

She became perceptibly more pale.

'Is it an hour now?' he asked, after a silence.

'Not yet. Perhaps you had better go, though. Your mamma might be worried.'

'She said an hour,' he returned, with a look of astonishment at the palpable inhospitality.

There was no hope of abridging the call, and if spasms arrived, produced by excessive cake eating, she must bear the responsibility with fortitude.

'We're awfully poor,' he announced, after a pause, during which she had racked her brains for the suitable subject for discourse. 'There wasn't enough for the butcher this month.'

'No!' she answered, rather startled.

'But my grandma's got lots of money. She's going to give the butcher some,' he added, in a tone of triumph.

His hostess got up quickly from her seat and brought two picture-books to stop further disclosures. He looked them through in a perfunctory manner, and it was evident that he preferred conversation.

'Did you see my new coat?' he asked, looking up from the last picture. 'My mamma made it. She made it out of grandma's old dress. My mamma can make anything.'

'I don't doubt it,' his hostess answered.

For the first time in her life she fully realized the magnitude of a mother's power. She bowed down in spirit before the little woman who was able to control three such atoms, and exact of them implicit obedience.

'I suppose you're a very good boy?' she ventured.

'Not very,' he admitted, candidly. 'I ain't going to heaven.'

'No!' she exclaimed in horror.

'No,' he replied with a cheerful smile. 'Bridget says I'm a deal too bad. She's going to purgatory, and papa and mamma are going to heaven, and Davie and baby. Are you going there, too?'

'I hope so.'

'I shouldn't think you could,' he declared, with a critical expression. 'Angels can't wear glasses.'

But your grandma wears glasses.'

'She ain't real sure where she's going. I guess I'll go along with her.'

What are you going to be when you grow up?' she demanded, briskly. She had been told that this was the correct thing to ask little boys.

'A man, he returned with some contempt. 'Oh, I know that; but what will you do?'

'Work,' loftily.

'Of course, but at what?'

He got up in the interest of the moment and stood before her.

'I'm going to be a big policeman, and when a bad man comes, won't I club him, though?'

She sat in silence after this, while he roamed round the room and examined the furniture. He sauntered back in a tired sort of way and gazed at the inscrutable face of the clock.

'Ain't it 'most an hour?'

'So nearly an hour that when you get your coat on the time will be up. Gently! Why, I believe you are glad to go!'

Truth and diplomacy strove for the mastery, but it ended by his casting up his cap and declaring, 'Ain't I, though!'

He was very polite at the front door and promised to come again, and then his legs bore him swiftly away.

The Wonderful Star.

The lamp with the big pink shade was shining softly in one corner of the nursery. Over by the fireplace Mary and Duncan were curled up on the big tur rug, watching the shooting flames and toasting their rosy toes before jumping into their little white beds.

The heavy curtains were softly drawn aside, and mamma came into the room. 'Oh, my naughty little chickens. I expected to find you fast asleep!' she said.

'Dear mamma, look happy! Be thankful that you have me!' cried Duncan, jumping up and into mamma's arms.

The family insisted that somehow, in the course of his infantile career, Duncan had managed to kiss the Blarney Stone. But however that may be, his little pink tongue was certainly very smooth, and sweet things to say came very naturally to Duncan.

'Bless your little heart!' said mamma as she clasped the curly head very close. 'Mamma is thankful she has her baby!'

'Come, own up, Duncan, we are waiting for a story,' said Mary, who was studying the blue and white picture tiles that framed the grate. Every tile had a story, and although they had all been told fifty times, I'm sure, still, every night, each was as fresh and as new as ever.

'Well, just now,' said mamma, very firmly. 'Which shall it be to-night?'

Mary put a dimpled finger on the tile in the upper left hand corner. There, on the snowy plain, were the three wise men, and up in the clear blue sky shone the star.

'The one about the star, mamma,' whispered Duncan, with an ecstatic hug; and so mamma told that story that is oldest of all, and yet always new, how the wise men travelled across the desert, following the guiding star until it came and stood over where the young child was, and the children listened as if they were hearing the fascinating story for the first time.

'And the star—what became of the star?' Mary whispered, breathlessly.

'Mamma! mamma!' cried Harry, tearing into the room and putting the window-shade up with a buzz. 'Come look at the biggest star you ever saw in your life!'

Mary and Duncan flew to the window, and mamma after them.

The full moon smiled down, and cast a silvery light over the great Norway spruces on the lawn and over the range of snow-covered mountains. There, apparently a hundred feet above the crest of the highest hill, not two miles away, shone what looked like a very wonderful star indeed! Bright and large, as if Venus and Jupiter and a dozen more like them had blended into one great star.

Mary's eyes grew very big as she stood and watched it breathlessly.

'Mamma,' whispered Duncan, 'is it the star of Bethlehem?'

'I have been watching it from the dining room window, and I think it's either a beacon-light or an air ship,' said Harry, with a very superior air.

'But it's pretty cold weather for airships, and what would a beacon-light be doing? Oh, look! Mary squealed. 'Perhaps it's witches. It's all going to pieces!'

And sure enough, instead of one great star, there were now fifteen or twenty smaller ones, that ranged themselves into line and began slowly moving to the right, and gradually descending, until they seemed to rest on the very top of the trees, one light a little above the other, in a straight line down the mountain, at the speed of a railway train; down, down, until they reached the broad meadow at the bottom, where they scattered and slowly moved along, until in five minutes the last light had disappeared around the curve of the next hill.

Just then a sleigh came dashing up the driveway. Papa jumped out, and throwing off his fur coat in the hall, called up, 'Hallo! Has anybody seen the snow-shoe party on Round Top? The W. A.'s went up to the very top, above the tree line, for an observation, coasting down the wood road in a torchlight procession, and snow-shoed home again.'

'Well,' said mamma, 'our wonderful star must have been an enormous pine torch, and it never occurred to me until this moment that the tree line is at least a hundred feet below the crest of the hill, which is so white with snow that at this distance and in the moonlight it is indistinguishable from the sky.'

And Mary and Duncan were hustled into their little white beds, wondering if they would dream of torchlight processions and shooting stars.—Annie Douglas Severance, in Youth's Companion.

As One That Serveth.

'What most impressed you at Ober-Ammergau?' was asked of a returned tourist recently.

'It was none of the things that the magazines tell about,' replied the tourist. 'It was the conduct of the young woman who waited on our table where we lodged.'

'Tell me about it,' said his friend.

'It was Anna Flunger, who took the part of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The only remarkable thing about it was that she was just as simple and unaffected as we might have expected any young woman of the village to be, though hers was the part which the young woman of Ober-Ammergau count worthy a life's ambition, and the greatest honor that can come to one of them in ten years, and but once to one.'

Saturday night she served us at table and Sunday morning she served our simple breakfast, all as if unconscious that in an hour she would be the heroine in that sublime drama. I could not help wondering how many American girls would have done so even on so much smaller an occasion as their graduation.'

'And did it seem inappropriate?' asked his friend.

'Not at all. Indeed, that was the most interesting thing about it. It was more than interesting; it was a sort of revelation of the spirit of Christian service. Would not Mary, the mother of Jesus, have done the same? I could not help thinking that she would, and in much the same way. And then I could not help reflecting that Christ Himself was among us as one that serveth.'

'The best thing I got at Ober-Ammergau was not anything that I saw on the stage. It was that simple exhibition of unaffected Christian service, and it helped me toward a truer interpretation of the true Christian spirit.'

'Fraid of Prayers.'

The late Rev. H. L. Hastings related this incident of the September camp-meeting in 1899, at Fairhaven, Vermont:

An aged lady, the widow of a clergyman, lost her money—nearly two hundred dollars. The place where she lodged, a house near the camp-grounds, was entered by some thievish person or persons, and the principal booty carried away was her property.

All efforts failed to trace the theft, and the distressed woman was helpless. Ill able to afford the loss, the only thing she could do was to pray about it; and she prayed through a sleepless night, and all the next day—in heart, it not in words. She thought it could not be God's will that she should be so wronged.

The following night, as she passed out of the evening meeting, a woman, or some one in woman's clothes, slipped a small packet into her hand and disappeared in the crowd. There was nothing surprising in the act, for the dropping of samples and parcels of circulars among the people was an every day occurrence. She carried the packet to her room, and on opening it found all her lost money, one hundred and seventy five dollars. Around it was a strip of paper scrawled over with these words: 'Can't reb widders—said of prayers. The boys—pray for us.'

The incident is not so remarkable as those who are not looking for such things would suppose; but there is no reason why it should not be improved in Mr. Hastings's own way. It is several thousand years since the supreme Lawgiver proclaimed: 'Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry.'

And centuries of time do not alter a truth—save only that it is truer and stronger for being old.

Indians' Honor, White Men's Shame.

In 'Reminiscences of Old Times in Tennessee,' a story is told of the good faith and honor of a party of Chickasaw Indians. While hunting one fall they shot a donkey, mistaking the creature for a wild animal.

They sold the hide, and it finally came to the hands of John Barnes in Lipton.

When the Chickasaws returned to the region of Lipton for their annual hunt the next fall, Barnes invited them to a shooting match, the prize to be the skin of a very rare animal.

Thirty braves appeared at the contest, and one of them won the prize. When he saw the skin, he turned it over, and said, 'Ha, ha, me kill him! Me shoot him! See!' and he pointed to the fatal bullet hole.

Then Barnes told them that they had killed a donkey, a very useful animal, but he was sure that they had done it by mistake, believing it a wild animal.

The Indians listened attentively to the white man's words, and then consulted together a few minutes. Finally they separated, each brave going to his pony, unhitching him and leading him to a spot where a group of white men stood, Barnes in the midst of them. Then one of the Indians spoke:

'We sorry we kill donkey. We think be belong to the woods. We find him in cane. We think him wild. We sorry; now we pay. We take no white man's boss, pony, nothing of white man. We honest. We have ponies; that's all. Take pay,' and he motioned to the long line of ponies, held by their owners.

'How many?' asked Barnes.

'White man say,' returned the Indian. 'Take plenty.'

The honor of the red men was not equaled by the white men's, for, be it recorded to their shame, they took from the Chickasaws thirty-five ponies to pay for the accidental killing of one donkey.

A RACKING COUGH AFFLICTED THE SUFFERER FOR TWENTY YEARS.

Often Sat up in Bed Coughing the Whole Night Long—Doctors Ultimately Told Him the Trouble was Developing into Consumption—How Relief was Obtained.

From the Times, Picton, Ont.

Nothing racks the body more than a severe cough. If it is allowed to run for any length of time, it is very hard to get rid of, and often leads to that most dreaded of all diseases—consumption. Such a sufferer was Mr. Thomas Jinks of Prince Edward county. Mr. Jinks relates the following facts to a Picton Times reporter:—'I am sixty-seven years of age, and for the last twenty years I have had a bad cough. I was troubled with catarrh, which started in my head but later spread to my stomach leaving me dyspeptic. For two years I was troubled with pains in the stomach, and was not able to raise my arms above my head without experiencing severe pains about my short ribs and stomach. Then my kidneys began to trouble me and at times I could not get out of a chair without help. My limbs and feet were so swollen that I was unable to lace my boots, but as soon as the swelling went down I was but a mere shadow. My wrists and arms were so shrunken that I could span them with ease. My cough racked my whole body. I have sat up in bed and coughed the night long. I tried several doctors without success. They finally told me I was in the first stages of consumption. In the spring of 1889, a little pamphlet was thrown in the hall door telling about Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and I decided to try them. Before finishing the second box, I noted a change and after using them for a couple of months, I was completely cured and the cough had left me. At present my health is as good as I can wish for, and I can truly say through all my suffering, I never got any permanent relief until I took Dr. Williams' Pink Pills.'

Mr. Jinks added that it was not in his own case alone that Dr. Williams' Pink Pills had proved of advantage in his family. Her daughter, Miss Mildred, was in very poor health, and scarcely able to go around. In fact, her friends feared her trouble was developing into dropsy. She used five boxes of the pills and is now enjoying the very best of health.

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills cure such apparently hopeless cases as Mr. Jinks', because they make new, rich, red blood, and thus reach the root of the trouble. These pills are the only medicine offered the public that can show a record of such marvellous cures after doctors had failed. If you are at all unwell, this medicine will restore you to health, but be sure you get the genuine with the full name "Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People," on the wrapper around each box.

What a Woman Sees.

Did you see a man and a woman driving past here in a buggy about an hour ago?' asked a detective known to the Chicago Tribune.

'Yes,' answered Mrs. Blank.

'Ah,' said the detective, 'now we are getting on the right track! What kind of a horse was it?'

'They were driving so fast I didn't notice that,' replied Mrs. Blank. 'But the woman had on a Scotch mohair and wool jacket of turquoise blue, last year's style, with stitched seams, a white pique shirt with deep circular flounce, a satin straw hat, tilted and rather flat, trimmed with hydrangeas and loops of pale blue surah,

and her hair was done up pompadour. That's all I had time to see.'

A NANTUCKET WEDDING TRIP.

Experiment of a Newly Married Preacher Led to Sermons About Job.

One of the clergymen on the island of Nantucket is now preaching a series of sermons about Job, the man who had patience. Here are some of the things that happened to him and his bride before he chose the subject of the sermons.

He sailed over to the main land the other day and married an off island girl. For their wedding journey the minister and his bride started to go back to the island parish. The members of the congregation were informed of the day of their expected arrival and arranged a reception at the church in honor of the bride.

On the day of sailing there was a stiff breeze blowing. Buzzard's Bay was choppy. The minister was no sailor, so when the boat touched at Martha's Vineyard he walked down the gang plank just to get a minute's relief from a pitching deck. The bride stayed aboard. The husband walked too far up the wharf and the boat went off without. He had twenty-four hours to wait before the next boat. That is when he thought of Job.

The bride had a four hours' sail, half an hour of it out of sight of land, over a stormy sea to look forward to and at the end of the journey a reception from 200 women with nobody by her side to introduce her. She was sick of the sail, but didn't want to reach the strange place alone and the nearer she got to the island the more she dreaded going ashore. The tide was in her favor. It was dead low and the boat went aground on the bar and stuck there till it was altogether too late for any reception. The bride got ashore after dark, hunted up one of the church members of whom she had heard her husband speak and was sheltered for the night.

The bridegroom arrived the next day with the skeleton of his first sermon on Job well under way. The postponed reception was announced for that night. But it had to be postponed again—the bride had developed an attack of the measles.

Time's Franks.

Every one notes that the passage of time seems now swift and now slow; but it is not given to every one to express his cognizance of this fact in Mrs. Herlihy's bewildering language. 'Sure, an' yesterday the hours was dragging at me heels as if they'd stoned tied to them,' remarked the good woman as she bent over the scrubbing-board, wrestling with Mr. Herlihy's one white shirt: 'an' here's today they're galloping that fast it's meself can't even catch the tails av them.'

'Yesterday at this time,' she continued, after one fearful glance at the clock in the corner, 'yesterday at this time it was nowhere near half past ten, an' to-day it's all but twelve!'

Aggravating the Offense.

The absurdity of many of the common forms of speech comes upon us at times with something like a shock.

A man who was making his way into a crowded omnibus with considerably more haste than was necessary trod roughly upon the toes of a woman passenger.

She uttered an exclamation of pain, and he stopped long enough to say: 'I beg a thousand pardons, ma'am.'

'The original offense was bad enough,' she replied, 'without asking me to issue a thousand pardons for it. I will grant you just one pardon, sir.'

There was a general titter as he sat down and he did not step on anybody's toes when he went out.

Discussion of the Supernatural.

'Mamma,' said Pickenanny Jim, who had maintained a long and thoughtful silence 'is dar any seefing as cullud folks' hante?'

'You means ghoues,' rejoined Aunt Maris, as she turned from the ironing board.

'Yes'm.'

'Well, sonny, you has hit on a subject dat's been givin' science a heap o' trouble. Maybe dar is cullud folks' ghoues an' may be dar ain't. De difficulty of ascertain- lies in de fact dat it was a cullud folks' ghos' his complexion would be so dahk dat you couldn't notice 'im.'

Their Advantage.

'I asked Professor Dubbs if he knew all the big people in town.'

'What did he say?'

'He said he didn't but that they all knew him.'

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