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The Sawing Match.

In one corner of the old academy playground a group had gathered about two boys, Sandy Jardine and Max Guerny. Sandy was a tall, strong, large-featured chap, as opposite as the poles to the little, lithe, dark youth who stood near him, looking up in his face with laughing black eyes.

They were leaders, these two, each of his particular clan; and respecting their popularity the school was nearly equally divided. A strong rivalry existed between them, good-natured enough, for the most part, though sometimes verging toward unfriendliness. Just now Sandy was evidently excited, almost angry. In a foot race the preceding Saturday, Max had beaten him, gaining a supremacy which he possibly might hold.

"Yes, you did whip me, fast enough," Sandy was saying, while a dull red mounted to his cheek. "But, all the same, I'll whip you to pay for it, and any day you've a mind to set."

"The track was too short," cried one of Sandy's champions. "That's what's the matter. By the time Sandy got under headway, he had to turn. The walk was laid out for little fellows."

Considerable laughter followed this sally; and the "little fellow," Max joined in it heartily.

"Come, I'll match you in any way you like!" continued Sandy. "Come now,—rowing, riding, running, wrestling,—which shall it be? Come! I dare you, Max Guerny!" A little murmur of approval ran around the group, and the boys waited for Max's reply. Well they knew he would never refuse a dare. "I, as the challenged party, have a right to choose the weapons?" interrogated Max, with a side glance from his laughing black eyes. "Well, then, I'll neither ride, nor row, nor run, nor wrestle. But I'll saw wood with you, Sandy; and you may beat me, if you can."

"I'll tell you." Max's voice rose clear above the tumult. "I'm in earnest enough. There's old Uncle Nathan Blines and his wife, poorer than double distilled poverty; and nobody to do a hand's turn for 'em since 'Siah died. I saw Uncle Nathan out chewing at his woodpile. You know they hauled him some cord-wood last winter,—your father, Sandy, and mine. There's pretty near five cords of wood, I guess; and we'll have somebody divide and measure it for us. Then we'll saw to win; and, if you whip me in it, Sandy, the next Saturday I'll match you in splitting and housing it for him. What do you say?"

Sandy joined in the cheers and laughter with the utmost good nature.

"Done!" nodded he. "I'll do it." Up spoke a slim, wiry little fellow at his elbow. "You shant do the whole of it. Say, Charlie Bugbee, I'll split for Sandy, and you for Max."

"Agreed!" said Charlie. "And we'll wheel in for you too, Art Humphrey and I," declared Sandy's brother Jack. "Won't we, Art?"

"Whew! What a fine thing we are going to make out of it!" laughed Max. "I'll tell you, boys, we might have the match in Uncle Nathan's back yard. Charge fifteen cents or so admission, and give Uncle Nathan the money."

"Hooray!" shouted Reub Story, "My brother Bob works in the Clarendon Star office, and I'll get him to print our handbills. He owes me ten cents, anyway."

"Good for you, Reub!" cried Max. "Grand sawing match! Fifteen cents admission. Children full price. Gate open from 10 a. m. to 5 p. m."

Next day the prospective sawing match was noised about the town, and a day or two later the handbills were out. It made a great deal of talk, both sportive and serious, in the little village.

"It's a good idee,—a fust rate idee!" That was Captain Winty Coolidge, you might know. "It larus the boys that mixin' kindness to other folks with their fun don't hurt nothin'. It's wuth a quarter, and I'm a-goin' to pay it."

There was every indication that the sawing match would be a success financially.

"I don't believe the back yard will hold 'em all," laughed Max to the half dozen boys who with him were taking their homeward way after school Friday night. "Have you got the tickets, Reub?"

"Yes, a hundred and fifty of 'em."

"Good! Now all we want is a fair day. Hazy clouds veiled the burning face of the sun, and there was a cool breeze blowing. The sawing was to begin at nine o'clock, and before that time the board benches ranged along the back yard fence was filled with merry looker-on.

At precisely the same instant the first two logs across the saw-horses fell in twain.

How everybody cheered, sending little tingles of excitement thrilling along every boyish nerve!

The hours wore on. The crowd came and went, surging in and out of the back yard with jolly chat and laughter. The saws shrieked, the axes flashed in air, the

wheelbarrows trundled from woodpile to woodshed. Peleg, who had been engaged to make music for the occasion, fiddled through and through his repertory of tunes, from "Yankee Doodle" to "Money Musk;" and at length came high noon, with twenty minutes for refreshments.

In the afternoon the excitement waxed stronger. The boys sawed steadily on, with scarcely any symptoms of fatigue.

Everybody was laughing and talking of the sport. Even Mrs. Colonel Grosvenor, the great lady of the village, drove up to the back yard gate in her carriage, bringing a demijohn of delicious iced lemonade for the young sawyers and their friends. Captain Winty Coolidge walked around, rubbing his pudgy hands together, and sprinkling in encouraging remarks between the shrieks of the saws and the squeaks of the fiddle.

"It's a good thing to strengthen the muscles—the muscles. A long chalk sensibler than walking ten hours to the stretch,—so 'tis, so 'tis! Good boys! Doing well, all on ye!"

And how earnest every one became, to be sure, when the sticks in each woodpile might be counted!

"You never saw anything like it," said Max to his mother, between huge mouthfuls of bread and jam, at the tea-table that night. "Everybody who had a handkerchief shook it, I know; and Aunt Nabby waved her big checked apron. They were all singing out, 'Go it!' and 'Good!' till a fellow couldn't hear himself think. Uncle Nathan sat in the door, trotting his foot and wiping his eyes, though what for I can't imagine. Oh, 'twas great! And when we counted up the money, there were \$27.60 clean cash for Uncle Nathan."

"Oh, yes'm, Sandy beat by twenty-four seconds; and Sandy's cap'n again at the school. And, of course, Dicky Bird beat Charlie, because Charlie couldn't split my last stick till I sawed it; for they kept right on our heels the whole time. But Art Humphrey beat Jack Jardine, for Art caught up the wood in his arms, quick as Charlie split it, and ran into the shed with it and out, while Jack was unloading his wheelbarrow. It gives a fellow an appetite," concluded Max, with a sidelong glance from his laughing eyes, as he reached for his third helping of jam. "But it's a little hard on the arms."—Boston Traveller.

Aunt Letty.

"I don't feel in a trading mood to-day; you'll have to stop when you come along some other time," said Mrs. Churchill to a peddler who stood in the doorway.

At that moment a feeble-looking old woman leaning on a crutch came to the door.

"Do let him come in, Mis' Churchill; maybe he's got something I want."

The peddler seized his opportunity and followed the woman into the sitting room.

"I wish Aunt Letty would stay where she belongs," said Mrs. Churchill, as she went back to the churning. "The idea of her calling the peddler in when she hasn't got a cent in the world to buy anything with. She'll make that man take everything he's got out of his pack to show her and litter the whole sitting room up, and then after all she won't buy anything."

"Aunt Letty never goes anywhere, you know, Mrs. Churchill, and I suppose she takes lots of comfort looking at the different things he has in his pack."

The young girl who spoke was pressing out a white muslin dress on the ironing board.

"It is a sort of diverting, I know, to see the notions and all the other sorts of things that peddlers carries; but I wish he had come some other day, when I wasn't so driven with work. Having that new milch cow has brought around the churning and the baking and ironing all on one day. Aunt Letty will hinder him so long that he won't get to tying his pack till noon, and then he'll have to stay to dinner, and I don't want any extra folks to wait on to-day."

The young school teacher of the Dewey District finished pressing her dress and went into the sitting room—she was Mrs. Churchill's boarder. It was just as that lady had said: Aunt Letty had encouraged the peddler to open his pack and the contents were scattered all over the carpet. The old lady was handling a piece of bright pink ribbon. When she saw the school teacher, a sort of apologetic look came over her face, and she said:

"I wasn't goin' to buy any of this ribbon, but I thought I'd like to hold it in my hand a spell. You see, I used to wear pink; the folks all said it was my color."

"Cut off a yard of that ribbon, please," the young woman said.

"I should think blue would become you better, Miss Culver."

"This is for you, Aunt Letty. Put it in your bureau drawer and look at it when you're thinking of old times. Is there anything else you would like?"

"Well, Miss Culver, I'm all out of needles, and I haven't a spool of thread to my name, and these skeins

of worsted—red, yellow, green and blue—they are pretty, now ain't they?"

The young woman gave the old woman the money to hand to the peddler in payment for the articles she had picked out. "Just as if I'd bought 'em all with my own money," she whispered to the thoughtful benefactress, as the peddler tied up his pack and went out of the door. He had gotten over the long bit of road to the house in the hollow before Mrs. Churchill blew the dinner horn.

"Well, I never did! To think you bought all those things for Aunt Letty, Miss Culver," Mrs. Churchill said when Aunt Letty had gone to her room to hide the pink ribbon away. "Didn't you see her hands all crippled up with rheumatism? She can't use one of those things!"

All afternoon Aunt Letty sat with a smile on her face, putting one needle after another into the flannel leaves of her needle book, and the skeins of red, yellow, blue and green worsted laying on the work basket with the new spools of thread, looked, as she told Miss Culver, "as if she were alive and doing something in the world once more."

As she sat in the twilight that night she kept handling that yard of pink ribbon; she rolled it up and unrolled it, she tied it in a bow knot and held it up to her throat. She was a young girl again, singing in the old meeting-house choir, and right behind her stood Jonas Lambert, playing on the bass viol; and she was walking home from church again through the shower of apple blossoms that fell from over their pretty tree-lined path. Then came the day of the wedding, and the beginning of the life in the little white house Jonas had built for them himself.

And later the coming of the little birdies to the warm loving nest. All that time she was wearing pink—pink muslin dress for Sunday in the beautiful summer time, pink flowers in her bonnets and pink ribbons in her hair. But the twilight deepened into darkness, and she could not see the bright bit of color of the ribbon any more; and then came the black robes, the crape veil and the pall that had enveloped her life for many a year. Mrs. Churchill brought a candle in and set it upon the stand. Somehow, when she saw the work-basket so attractive in its appointments lying on the three-legged stand, she felt in a softer mood, and sat down to talk to Aunt Letty.

"I suppose you feel clear beat out to-night, Mrs. Churchill," Aunt Letty said.

"Well, I have had a crowding sort of day; everything seemed to come together, and to-night I found five hens wanting to set. Fijz of them at once, and here, two weeks ago, when I had plenty of eggs to put under them, I couldn't get one of them to stay on the nest. I had to run up to Mrs. White's to get two settings, tired as I was."

"Hens are the contrariest kind of critters, Mis' Churchill. I wish I was as I used to be, and I'd given you a lift; I tell you, Mis' Churchill, it's hard to see folks goin' round spry and strong and turning off a heap of work, and you can't do nothing but jest look on and set quiet. Sometimes I think it takes more of God's grace to keep patient a-sittin' than it does to do a lot of stirrin'."

Mrs. Churchill wondered as she went out and said "good-night" to Aunt Letty, if she should show as much Christian grace as that poor old woman did if she was in her place. The town of Wilton had never built a poorhouse or started a poorfarm—those who had to be cared for were boarded around among the townspeople—and "Aunt Letty," as everybody called her, had been taken by Mrs. Churchill. It was a much more human and Christian way of caring for the poor, the townspeople said. The unfortunate ones were not advertised to the world as belonging to the town's poor. It gave them more respect for themselves, and made the community have more respect for them.

"Got to bed, Aunt Letty?"

It was the pleasant voice of the young school teacher speaking.

"Yes, I'm in, Miss Culver, but I couldn't read a word in the scriptures to-night—my glasses ain't good for nothing any more—but I learned so many verses when I was a child that I can repeat them now, and I am so glad."

Miss Culver lighted the candle that had just been blown out, and took the well-thumbed Bible up and read the Seventy-first Psalm. When she came to the verse, "Now when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not until I have showed thy strength unto this generation and thy power to every one that is to come," the good old saint said:

"Oh, if I could only be so blessed in the Lord's work as to really show unto this generation the wonderful strength and the power of the Lord in his dealings with his children."

The young woman stooped down over the bed and kissed the wrinkled face that looked up into hers.

"Dear Aunt Letty," she said, "you have done more to influence me to live for the glory of the Lord, and the

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