

## \* \* The Story Page \* \*

### A Peacemaker.

BY SALLY CAMPBELL.

Fred Gould had been bound out to Mr. Hartwell for two years, and in all that time there had been nothing like a doll anywhere on the farm. But about a week before a little granddaughter had appeared from the city, with her arms full of them, and since then they were always cropping up, first in one place and then in another. With his lack of experience, it was hardly to be wondered that Fred, when he came in for dinner one day, should have flung his strap of books on the sofa and snapped off the entire foot of Melissa Eugenia, who lay there, smiling in her sleep.

Alice, the granddaughter, snatched her baby to her heart and grieved sadly, while Fred stood looking on, feeling like a murderer.

Late in the afternoon, as he was creeping back to the house, he came upon Alice sitting on the side porch.

"Don't make any noise, please, Fred," she whispered, lifting a warning finger. "Melissa Eugenia has just got to sleep, at last."

"I say," blurted out Fred, determined to be over with the speech he had been diligently preparing during the day, "I'm awfully sorry I broke your doll. I didn't mean to do it."

"Oh, well, never mind. It was just accidental. She's been in the hospital ever since, and taken all kinds of different medicines, and now she feels easier."

Fred felt easier, too. He ventured to sit down on the edge of the porch. "I thought you'd be mad," he said. "I thought girls always got mad every chance they had."

"They do not," said Alice, with dignity. Then, her round face flushing, she confessed: "I guess maybe I was a little mad just at first, but I didn't say so."

"Why?"

"Because I knew it wasn't your fault; you didn't mean to do it. Crossness is a horrid feeling, I think; don't you? Anyway, it's generally silly."

"Silly?"

"Yes; grandmother says it is, because there's generally a mistake about it. She says that the real things to be cross with are only a few, and she thinks everybody ought to be patient even with those. Grandmother believes in a lot of patience."

When supper was over and the chores were done, and Alice had gone to bed, Fred came back to the side porch and sat there by himself. He looked doubtfully across the tree tops to the chimneys of the next farmhouse.

"Of course," he said to himself, "grandmothers believe in patience, but boys don't, very much. Perhaps if they did, they wouldn't be in so many scrapes," he acknowledged, with a sigh.

For some minutes longer Fred sat with his chin propped on his hands, staring at the chimneys. Then he jumped up and started through the garden gate and along the narrow path to the Hartwell farmhouse. In the yard was a boy of about Fred's age. When this boy saw Fred he lifted his head, straightened himself, and began to whistle carelessly, as though to prove to all the world that he had nothing on his mind.

Fred opened the gate and went straight in as though afraid to stop. "I say, Jack," he began—making his second speech of the day—"I guess perhaps you didn't mean to tip up my boat that time, did you?"

Jack's face changed. "No, I didn't—honest," he said eagerly. "I was just in fun, and somebody pushed me or something, and she went all the way over. It—it was too bad!"

"Oh, that's all right! I say, let's go nutting, Saturday."

It was starlight when Fred went back through the meadow. "I'll know enough not to look for mistakes sooner, another time," he was thinking. "It saves trouble. Even if he had upset the old boat on purpose it wasn't worth making a fuss about. I guess grandmothers know more about such things than boys do."—Morning Star.

### The Crowd and the Adjective.

Being in an educational mood the other evening, I inquired of my cousin Augustina, whether she considered that Mr. So-and-So had written the great American novel.

"No," said Augustina; "he has simply written a book of which his publishers, if they can be trusted, have sold some 200,000 copies."

I waited in silence.

"I wish the people of these United States," said Augustina, "would learn to distinguish between quality and quantity. The trouble is, there are too many of us that know how to read."

"Go on, Augustina," I said.

"Yes," said Augustina, calmly, "we are the victims of compulsory and indiscriminate education. We know

how to read, but the majority of us would rather lie down and die than think. So we followed the crowd. The crowd," said Augustina, "is only the old mob with a cleaner face and more buttons to its wearing apparel. The crowd, in its youth, happened to fall upon the twenty-six letters of the alphabet, and by this means wrestled through a primer and six or seven graded school readers, and then it provided itself with a ticket to some public library. And now it has delivered itself into the hands of the enterprising publisher."

"Well?" I said.

"The publisher has just sent out from his press a naturally told, wholesome, mediocre novel, which some good-natured critic reads, and commends in words far too high for its deserts. The critic smells in each page of the book the vanished pine trees of his youth. So he says, and the crowd, believing him, buys the book, and goes sniffing through it, in the hope of getting its olfactory nerves treated as pleasantly as those of the good-natured critic. Now, to speak the truth," said Augustina, "the crowd cannot tell the difference between a plain New England pine and a cedar of Lebanon."

She plunged ahead: "And the crowd passes the book around, and helps to swell the chorus started by the publisher, and the good-natured critic; and at last even those people who do know and love literature begin to have doubts in regard to the matter. And yet Mr. So-and-So's work is not art and not literature, and I protest against the false position it holds in the estimation of the public. So, I repeat, there are too many of us that know how to read."

"And who is to blame in the matter?" I inquired.

"The good-natured critic," answered Augustina, promptly. "He should come out and say: 'My dear people, here is a new book, which in regard to style is without form and void. It contains no character that is vital enough to last. But it is a good book, a natural book, a perfectly harmless book. Read it and you will still be able to sleep the sleep of the just.'"

"And what good would that do?" I asked. "Well, the critic would tell the truth, and that is good for his soul. It might help to preserve the artistic balance. As it is, the crowd seems to be trying to perpetuate its amateur, lawless opinions. For the crowd," said Augustina, fixing a solemn eye upon me, "in spite of all the boards of education in this world or the next, will never know a piece of literature, even if it should live under the same roof with it."

"Well?" I said, helplessly.

"This may be the land of the free," said Augustina, resuming the attack, "but it is not the home of the brave. Witness the general tone of criticism. What we need is some rude old Dr. Johnson to roar out to the good-natured critic, after some particularly genial effusion: 'Traah, sir, trash, and you know it! Is this your method of serving the ends of literature? Are you not aware sir, that every author needs at first a good sound licking?'"

"Go on, Augustina," I cried from my corner.

"I am thinking of organizing a society for the preservation of the adjective," said Augustina. "Between the publisher and the critic, and the critic and the crowd, it bids fair to decline into a state of chronic invalidism. I have a sentimental attachment for the adjective; a good, virile one has many a time prevented me from the shedding of blood."

"Go on."

"The publisher and the critic and the crowd together have so twisted and wrenched and hammered and beaten the adjective that it is fast going its way to the ambulance and the hospital. The national government should be called on to insist upon all writers abstaining from the use of this important little part of speech until it has recovered its old-time vitality and health."

"Well?"

"Now, listen," and she rattled off a long list of words, and stopped for breath. "Cohesive is the last, a brand-new one, but it is already showing signs of senile decay. Suppose Fielding or Thackeray were to come back from the tomb, with what word could we hail him? Or suppose some one should actually write the great American novel?"

And this was the last word I could get out of her.—Atlantic Monthly.

### Mrs. Pulsifer's Featherbed.

BY GRACE JEWETT AUSTIN.

"Sakes alive, girls, me make something for a fancy fair! Why, I never did such a thing in all my born days!"

"Yes, certain I used to knit years ago; but my old fingers are stiff now-a-days. Going to have an old ladies' table, and Granny Wood will make a dozen holders! Did I ever! And Aunt Mari knits mittens and Mrs. Cutter crochets lamp mats. Well, well! Don't seem as

if I ought to be left out. We're the oldest women in Medfield and mebbe the smartest, for all I know.

"Now, draw up to the fire, and tell me all you can. For the benefit of the Orphans' Home, you said? 'Widders and orphans,' the Scripture says, and I guess it's expected we old widders will help the orphans all we can. I jes' would like to go; but I hain't left this room in five years except that Old People's Sunday, when they totted me to church, chair and all. Seems as if I lived over that Sunday ever since.

"My sakes, ten tables! Say 'em slow, so I can remember. Now, I'll say them. Cornball, candy, cake and cocoa tables—where folks eat. Then doll, apron and cap, flower and cushion tables, and old folks', children's and remnant tables. What a sight it will be!

"Brings to mind a fair for the soldiers we had in Civil War time at the town hall. My Mary was jes' eighteen, and pretty as a robin. Sarah, my eldest girl, had a big flower table, and made up lots of wonderful crosses and stars, besides bouquets. Folks bought 'em to put in the graveyard. She wanted Mary to help her, but la, no; Mary said 'twould make her dream of tombstones. Then what did the watch do but fix a little table all her own, and nobody knew what she'd have on it till the night the fair opened. Then I found she'd cut all up a good red satin petticoat her great-aunt willed her, and made little fat pin cushions in the shape o' hearts! I could 'a' shook her.

"A company from our town was going to join their regiment next day, and start straight for the front, so all the boys came out to the fair in uniform. Bless the boys, how grand they looked! My Mary had on a red dress, and red flowers in her hair, so she 'n' her little red table looked all of a piece. The soldier boys jes' swarmed round her table, and bought every one of the little hearts.

"You've all got a piece of my heart, boys, you see," Mary said, and there were tears in her eyes. They were mostly schoolmates, every one. When her red hearts were gone, she went, as sober as could be, and helped Sarah sell her flowers; but her little hearts had earned twenty dollars for sick soldiers, and that was doing well.

"I guess you'd be tired out if I tried to tell all the story of those hearts—how they were found in poor dying boys' pockets, how sick boys clung to them in hospitals, how one saved brave Sam Marsten's life by helping stay a spent bullet, and how one, all worn and frayed, was brought back to Mary by a lad who wanted her own heart as well. 'Twas a captain brought it back, and Mary obeyed his orders all her life long after that, till they died together in an accident way out West.

"There, there, what a rambling old woman I am, wearing out your time and patience! But it stirs me up as I haven't been for years to talk of fairs and Mary. Seems as if she'd like to have me take some part in this one, wouldn't she?"

"Do you suppose 'twould do any good to give you a featherbed? 'Twas mother's spare bed, and nobody ever has scarcely slept on it, nor ever will now, I suppose; for mine will last me through, and everybody is for mattresses now-a-days. And there's some old silk skirts of Mary's and Sarah's up in the garret—real full ones, too. Mebbe they would make soft cushions, with the featherbed feathers inside.

"Why, girls, you're squeezing the breath out o' me! Loveliest things you've had given yet?—oh, that can't be! One of you can help me get the sizes right, and fix ruffles to them; but they'll be my cushions and Mary's jes' the same."

When the night of the bazar came, many gathered around that corner of the Old People's Table, where a sign announced: "Pillows made by Mrs. Pulsifer, aged eighty-eight." They not only admired, but purchased, so that the next day one of the girls ran into the Pulsifer house to say:

"We sold every single pillow for five dollars apiece. Just think—fifty dollars from you and Mary!"

Mrs. Pulsifer nodded gently.

"Yes, from Mary and me. Widders ought to help the orphans."—Advocate.

### Andrew Carnegie—A Boy Who Did.

When Andrew Carnegie was ten years old he left his native Scotch town of Dumferline and came alone to America. Reaching New York with one sovereign in his pockets he walked the streets for days trying to get work, and at last went to Pittsburg where he found a chance to fire a small stationary engine in a factory cellar.

What do you suppose he thought about, down in that cellar? About the libraries he was going to give away or the gifts to universities he intended to make one of these fine days? My idea is that he thought about firing that engine and did it with all his might until working hours were over. Then he went out and studied the