

* * The Story Page. * *

Sadie's Conquest.

(Sara Virginia du Bois, in the "Christian Intelligencer.")

It was a strange and mysterious looking box that the expressman left at the door that morning, addressed in a clear, distinct hand to Miss Sadie Allen, No. 4 Township Line. "There's a quarter to pay on it, madam," the expressman said as he handed her his official book.

"I hope it's worth a quarter," said Sadie, laughingly, as the door closed and the family gathered about the box, wondering what it could contain.

"I'll soon show you," said Walter, who was the family mechanic on all occasions. "Wait till I get my tool chest, and I'll have the lid off in less than no time."

"The box is comparatively light. I do not see why it should have been nailed so securely," said Bess. "Perhaps it's filled with greenbacks, Sadie, or railway bonds."

"My hopes are not soaring very high," answered Sadie, although her looks belied her words.

"Well, here it is, Sis," said Walter a moment later, "and there's a letter; if I'm not mistaken it's Aunt Jane's crabbed handwriting."

"Oh, Walter, hush!" said Mrs. Allen, sternly, "I do not want you to forget that however forbidding Aunt Jane may seem to you, yet still she is your father's eldest sister, and was once young like yourself."

"She forgets it now," laughed Walter. "But what does she have to say Sadie?" They gathered about her eagerly as she read.

"My dear Sadie:—I happen to remember that to-morrow is your birthday, and send you a little gift upon conditions. I remember you were not particularly industrious when I visited your home last winter, and spent most of your time over books, some of which I did not approve. The hands need to be trained as well as the intellect developed. This great ball of yarn I want you to work up into a winter shawl for my own use, and when it is finished I shall reward you as I see fit. As I am very susceptible to climatic changes, I shall want the shawl finished by September. With regards,

"Your Aunt Jane."

Walter laughed and whistled a'most in one breath, and Bess's face was full of suppressed mirth as she took the great ball in her hands.

"If it were only a prettier shade of yarn, said Sadie. "What color would you call it, mother?"

"Drab, I think," she said smiling, "although I am not sure, I never saw anything like it before."

"It makes me think of the near approach of a funeral," said Walter. "Say, Sis, are going to work it up?"

Sadie looked at her mother and then at the great ball of yarn. "It's the first time I ever remember Aunt Jane making a request of me, and I dare not refuse her even if I would." Then meeting her mother's eyes, she hastily added: "Do you misunderstand me, little mother, I mean that every stitch shall be woven with love and good wishes."

"But I thought you wanted all your spare time this summer to prepare for college," said Bess. Sadie weighed the ball carefully in her hands before she answered: "Well, yes, I did, but then it is doubtful if I can go, father may not be able to send me."

"I do not see why she need impose this task on Sadie," said Walter.

It was Sadie that answered now, and as she did so there was a new light in her eyes as she spoke. "Father was speaking to me about Aunt Jane only last evening," she said. "You know how tenderly they love each other. He told me that she was not always as she is now, a great sorrow came into her life, and instead of living above it, she yielded to its depressing influences."

"Then for the sake of old times, do it," said Walter as he put away his tools and gathered up his cap.

It was surprising how slowly the ball lessened in size, but Sadie did not despair, and worked at her task with such pluck that mother often gave her a loving kiss and father a smile of approval. One day father gathered up the ball from the corner where it had rolled, and where Carratunk, the beautiful little angora kitten, had been playing a game with it. "Getting near the end dear, can you finish it to-day?" "I shall finish it this evening, and to-morrow when you go to town, you will please deliver it for me."

At ten o'clock that evening, as they were gathered about the library lamp, Sadie gave an exclamation which caused them all to turn in her direction.

"It's finished," she said, "and here at the very heart of the ball is another letter from Aunt Jane."

"Let's hear it," said Walter, folding his hands and smiling grimly. "There's nothing like one of Aunt Jane's letters to cheer one up."

"My dear Sadie: Open this little envelope, it contains your reward."

"It's a lock of her hair, I know," said Bess.

"Hush, children," said father. "Wait until she sees."

Sadie gasped, then held out toward her father a tiny slip of paper.

"It's a check for a thousand dollars," said father, "to defray college expenses. My dear sister, may God bless her. Sadie's voice was beyond control, but tears of joy were falling upon the shawl."

"How can I ever thank her," she finally said.

"I am glad," said father, "that this labor was one of love and not of duty alone. If we would only show thought and tenderness for the eccentricities of others, we would often find that however much they may differ from us, they usually have a warm side to their natures."

Too Late.

The old farmer died suddenly; so when Judge Gilroy, his only son, received the telegram, he could do nothing but go to the farm for the funeral. It was difficult to do even that, for the judge was the leading lawyer in X—, and every hour was worth many dollars to him.

As he sat with bent head in the grimy little train which lumbered through the farms, he could not keep the details of his cases out of his mind.

He had never given his father a heartache, and the old man died full of years and virtues, a shock of corn fully ripe. The phrase pleased him.

"I wish to tell you," said the doctor gravely, that your father's thoughts were all of you. He was ill but an hour, but his cry was for John! John! unceasingly."

"If I could have been with him!" said the judge.

"He was greatly disappointed that you missed your half yearly visit last spring. Your visits were the events of his life," said the doctor.

"Last spring? Oh, yes; I took my family then to California."

"I urged him to run down and see you on your return, but he would not go."

"No he never felt at home in the city."

The judge remembered that he had not asked his father to come down. Ted was ashamed of his grandfather's wide collars, and Jessie, who was fine musician, scowled when she was asked to sing the "Portuguese hymn" every night. The judge humored his children, and had ceased to ask his father into his house.

The farmhouse was in order and scrupulously clean, but its bareness gave a chill to the judge, whose own home was luxurious. The old deaf servant sat grim and tearless by the side of the coffin.

"Martha was faithful," whispered the doctor, "but she's deaf. His life was very solitary. The neighbors are young. He belonged to another generation."

He reverently uncovered the coffin, and then with Martha went out and closed the door. The judge was alone with the dead.

Strangely enough, his thought was still of the bareness of the room. Those hacked wooden chairs were there when he was a boy. It would have been so easy for him to have made the home comfortable—to have hung some pictures on the wall! How his father had delighted in his engravings and pored over them.

Looking now into the kind old face, with the white hair lying motionless on it, he found something in it which he had never taken time to notice—a sagacity, a fine nature and sensitive. He was the friend, the comrade, he needed so often! He had left him with deaf old Martha for his sole companion.

There hung upon the wall the photograph of a young man with an eager, strong face, looking proudly at a chubby boy on his knee. The judge saw the strength in the face.

"My father should have played a high part in life," he thought.

"There is more promise in his face than in mine."

In the desk was a bundle of old account books with records of years of hard drudgery on the farm; of working winter and summer and often late at night, to pay John's school bills and to send him to Harvard. One patch of ground after another was sold while he waited for practice, to give him clothes and luxuries which other young men in town had, until but a meagre portion of the farm was left.

John Gilroy suddenly closed the book. "And this is the end!" he said. "The boy for whom he lived and worked won fortune and position—and how did he repay him?"

The man knelt on the bare floor and shed bitter tears on the quiet old face. "O father! father!" he cried. But there was no smile on the quiet face. He was too late.—Youth's Companion.

Jamie's Serenade.

"Mamma, what are serenades?" asked Jamie.

"It's a song," said mamma. "But why do you want to know?"

"A song!" said Jamie. "Why, I heard Uncle Jim say that he went out to give a serenade on Tuesday night. I thought it was something to give some one."

"Why you give them a song, you see. When you are very fond of some one, you go at night and sing a song

under her windows. That is to show the person that you love her."

"Must you do it at night?"

"Yes, I think so."

"But s'pose your mother won't let you sit up late at night, or s'pose you fall asleep and can't wake yourself up."

"Oh, the people that give serenades do it secretly, and they commonly have no trouble in keeping awake at nights."

"Oh!" said Jamie, as if he were perfectly enlightened about the matter.

Then mamma forgot all about the matter, but Jamie pondered long and earnestly.

Two nights later grandma was just settling herself for her first nap, when she heard a sound that made her raise her night-capped head from her pillow in haste.

"Father, that's Jamie," she exclaimed.

"Nonsense! Jamie was in dreamland an hour ago," said grandpa.

Then a shrill boyish voice arose on the night air.

"My kitty has gone from her basket,

My kitty has gone up a tree;

Oh, who will go up in the branches

And bring back my kitty to me.

Bring back, oh, bring back,

Oh, bring back my kitty to me to me!"

"Jamie Carrol, what do you mean? Come right in out of that damp night-air."

"Wait till I finish my song, grandma," said an aggrieved voice. "You oughtn't interrupt it, 'cause it's a serenade."

"Does your mother know you're here?"

"Of course not. Serenades are secret."

"Let the boy finish his song," said grandpa, with a chuckle.

"Have you got all your clothes on?" demanded grandma.

"Why, of course."

"Well, put this scarf around your neck and finish your song. Then come to the kitchen door and I will give you some refreshments."

"Oh, do you get refreshments for serenades?"

"Yes, indeed! Now hurry."

The shrill refrain was taken up again and the music finished in double-quick time. When he finished he found grandma at the door waiting for him with a plate of the little chocolate cakes that Jamie thought were the very best things in the world to eat. Grandpa was there, too, and when the refreshments were disposed of, he escorted the small serenade home.

"Good-by, dear," said grandma. "I enjoyed your music very much."

But mamma collapsed with a string of incoherent exclamations when she opened the door to the runaway.

"Why didn't you tell me about it?" she demanded.

"Why, mamma, you said yourself that they were secret. And I love grandma best after you and I wanted to surprise her. She liked it very much and I had refreshments and lots of fun."

"But you'll tell me about it next time, won't you? Because people can always tell secrets to their mother."

"All right," said Jamie, I will"—Christian Standard.

The Little Boy Who Fished.

The little boy lived a long, long time ago. He went to school in a rough log school house, and sat on a high board bench, without any back to lean against. And the bench was so very high that his small feet could not touch the floor. And, too, he had no desk on which his teacher could put pretty pictures and bright blocks and sticks for him to play with. He never sang pretty motion songs nor marched to sweet music.

So this little boy used to get very tired sitting still and doing nothing but swing his feet, hour after hour. Once in the forenoon and once in the afternoon he went out on the floor and stood by his teacher, and learned his A. B. C's, and how to spell "a-b-a-b."

Don't you suppose he often thought of the shady woods where the birds were singing and the squirrels scampering about? or of the silvery little brook that ran through the meadow in which the tiny minnows were darting around?

One day, while he was twisting about on his high seat, he spied a little gray mouse peeping out from a hole in the floor in the corner near him. He almost laughed out loud. Then he quietly pulled a piece of line out of his pocket, and tied on a bit of cheese from his dinner-basket. Then he threw the line out as far as he could toward the mouse's door in the old floor.

It was not long before the teacher saw him. "Jimmy," said she, "what are you doing?"

"Fishing, ma'am," the little Jimmy answered, frightened.

"What are you fishing for?"

"For a mouse, ma'am."

The children all laughed; but the little Jimmy didn't for he saw that the teacher looked very sober.

"Very well," she said. "I will give you just five minutes to catch that mouse. If you don't get him in that time, I'll