

Childhood's Song.

The fire upon the hearth is low,
And there is stillness everywhere;
Like troubled spirits, here and there,
The firelight shadows fluttering go.
And as the shadows round me creep
A childish treble breaks the gloom,
And softly from a further room
Comes: "Now I lay me down to sleep."

And, somehow, with that little prayer,
And that sweet treble in my ears,
My thought goes back to distant years
And lingers with a dear one there;
And, as I hear the child's amen,
My mother's faith comes back to me,
Couched at her side I seem to be,
And mother holds my hands again.

O! for an hour in that dear place!
O! for the peace of that dear time!
O! for that childish trust sublime!
O! for a glimpse of mother's face!
Yet as the shadows round me creep,
I do not seem to be alone—
Sweet magic of that treble tone—
And "Now I lay me down to sleep."

That Equinoctial Gale.

"How are the drains getting on, Jack?"

"Two more days will see them where a storm cannot do much damage, but if one should blow up inside that time—well, I'd have all my work to do over again, that's all."

"I don't believe we'll have one before the equinox, and that isn't due for a week yet," said his sister Molly, as she began to gather up the breakfast dishes.

"I hope not, I'm sure," said Jack, "I'm counting on an hour or so to myself afternoons after this work is finished, and I should most awfully hate to give them up, besides doing the job over again."

"You are doing it, beautifully, and I am proud of you," his mother said, smiling up at him as he went for his hat.

"That work suits my taste, ma'am; just you wait, mother, and if I live I'll show you something first class in that line." And then he went off, smiling back at her as he shouldered.

"Dear child," said his mother, with a sigh, "I hope and pray that he will have his desire." It was the purpose and ambition of Jack's life to become an engineer; his tastes all pointed in that direction, and every cent that he could earn went to buy books on the beloved subject. He was a faithful student at the academy in the village, or had been, for the master had told him at the end of the last term that it was useless for him to return in the fall, he having far outstripped the highest class. Jack knew well what his next step should be, but was equally conscious that it was an utter impossibility, that the scientific school—the mecca of this embryo engineer—was an expense so far beyond his father's slender means as to put it among those never-to-be-realized day-dreams. And so, with a beautiful consideration, he never so much as hinted that there was such an institution, but with a patient perseverance and unfaltering faith, he kept on with his studies as best he might, so that, as he himself would have expressed it, "he might be ready when the time came." He never neglected his duties about the farm, but many a half hour was secured, even during the busy summer, for the beloved books; and now as the autumn advanced he had begun to look forward to an extra hour or so during the day, to be added to the evening study period. But careful as Jack had been he had not hidden his great wish from his mother; little things, which none but a mother would have noticed—a clipped advertisement, a marked notice of a scientific school—had revealed it to her, and though she, perhaps even more fully than Jack, realized the seeming hopelessness of the case, she prayed that if it were God's will, he might have his great desire fulfilled.

After Jack left the house that morning he helped his father about the barn for awhile and then went to his drains working so steadily that it was not till called to dinner that he noticed a long gray streak lying low in the western sky, and, on glancing at the weather vane, saw that the wind, which had blown steadily from the west in the early morning, was now shifting with that unsteadiness which betokened a change.

Nor was he mistaken; for the next morning the sky was overcast, and the wind blowing from the northeast in a manner which left little doubt as to what was to be expected, and before noon the rain had begun, increasing in violence as the day waned. It was just at dusk that Jack came in, streaming with water, his hair dripping about his face; and as he opened the outer door it was snatched from his grasp and flung to with a furious bang.

"I beg your pardon, ladies," the wind is a trifle high."

"Oh, Jack," laughed Molly, "you do look too funny! like a half-drowned chicken; your pin-feathers are uncoupled and hanging in your eyes."

"Go and take off those wet things, dear," said his mother, "you will find others ready in your room; where is father?"

"He'll be in in a moment; we've finished everything up so that we shall not have to go out again; it's going to be the kind of a night that is best spent in the house. My! listen to that shutter, will you, as one closed with a report like a gun; 'I'll have to make them fast before it gets dark,' and away he went upstairs, but not, as his mother noticed, two steps at a time."

"What about the drains, dear?" she asked, when fifteen minutes later Jack returned with a pile of books under his arm.

For a moment Jack did not reply; then, looking over at her from the little table at which he had seated himself with a lamp and his books, he said:

"By tomorrow morning my ten days' work will be washed clean away, and things will be far worse than if I had not begun the drains. It's pretty hard on a fellow, don't you think, mother? Why couldn't this old equinoctial gale have kept off till it was due?"

Though Jack spoke half laughingly, there was a strain of seriousness in the question. He had worked very hard for those last ten days, and tonight he was tired and discouraged. His moments were so precious, and to see two good weeks washed away was certainly trying; and the deep sigh with which he turned to his books told that he felt it so. His mother looked at him with pitying eyes; but as she crossed the room to help Molly put the supper on the table she paused behind his chair, and laying her hand on his shoulder, said, in a low voice:

"Some troubles we bring upon ourselves; but such as this are sent straight from a hand whose every touch is for some loving purpose, dear boy, and then he dropped a little kiss upon the face that had been turned up to her as she spoke, and went about her work.

Supper was over and the little family had gathered with books and work about the large table, now covered with a bright red cloth. Jack had piled his books and papers at one end, and was hard at work over a difficult problem, obvious to every thing; even the wild fury of the storm unheeded; but when presently his father rose and went toward the door, Jack was on his feet in a moment.

"Where are you going, father; can't I do it for you?" he asked.

"Why, I thought, in that last lull, that I heard some one calling," his father replied, "and I was just going out into the porch to see."

"Well, please go back to your seat; if any one is going to get wet again, it is not you."

Taking down his hat, and pushing his father gently aside, he went from the room, and presently they heard his voice calling to some one, evidently in the road:

"Yes, of course; wait, and I'll fetch a lantern and show you the way."

The next moment he was back in the room, saying:

"A man caught out in all this storm—wants to stay all night; I'll send him in to you and will look after his horse. No, father, there's no necessity for your coming."

When, half an hour later, Jack returned to the house after having fed and rubbed down the stranger's steaming horse, he found the gentleman sitting at the table eating the hearty meal which his mother and Molly had prepared for him, and full of gratitude for his hospitable reception. He was a physician from the city, he told them, and had been called to an important consultation. After it was over he had started to reach an evening train, having an important engagement in the city the next morning; but the condition of the roads was such that it was worse than useless to go on. As he talked Jack noticed he kept glancing toward his books, which had been pushed aside, but not removed from the table, and as he finished his supper he stretched out his hand and took one of them up.

"Who is the student?" he asked, glancing in surprise down the page at which the book was open.

"They are my books," answered Jack.

"Do you go to school; and where?" asked the stranger.

"No, sir; I finished at the academy last spring," answered Jack, glancing uneasily toward his father.

"Oh, you should go on!" exclaimed the gentleman, glancing over the problem which lay, as Jack left it, half worked out; "you must not stop at this point; you ought to go to a scientific school; are you going?"

"No, sir," replied Jack, perhaps a little shortly. "Mother! I think that I had better change again; I shall spoil your carpet." With that he hurriedly left the room.

"I hope I have not annoyed him," said the stranger, who could not but notice his embarrassment; "I am sorry, but I spoke before I thought. He must have an unusually fine mind to at his age have conquered such difficulties as these."

Molly had gone to prepare the bedroom, and the father had left the room also, so Jack's mother did not hesitate to tell of the boy's ambition, and the brave struggle he was making for an education. She had hardly finished when they all returned, but Jack did not notice the look of interest which, from time to time, the gentleman cast upon him as he chatted pleasantly with the rest, telling them of some of his work, especially among the poor in the city. But suddenly he turned to Molly and said:

"Do you like a story, my little maid?"

"Oh, dearly, sir!" cried Molly, too delighted to notice the abrupt change of subject.

"Very well, then; listen. Once upon a time there was a boy left alone in the world, with very little to live upon. But there was one thing that he had, and that was an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, for an education."

Here Jack, who had been surreptitiously peeping into his book, looked up eagerly (which the doctor did not fail to note), and with his cheek resting on his hand, prepared to listen.

"This boy, I say, wanted an education; he wanted to go to school, to college, and finally to study for a certain profession; but there was no prospect, no possibility of his wish being fulfilled for, though only a boy, he was obliged to work for his daily bread, which, with a smile, 'was quite often, so to speak, eaten without butter. It is getting too near bed time to tell how it all came to pass, but I will simply say that it did come to pass that the boy had his wish; that he finally met one who gave him all that his wildest hopes had imagined, at last found himself well established in his chosen profession. But when he realized that his dream had come true—when he saw how the dear Lord had led him and provided for him by the hand of his faithful servant, he made to himself, upon his bended knees, this promise: that when he met a boy, longing as he had longed, for an education, he would do by him as he had been done by. What do you think of his resolution?' turning suddenly to Jack.

"Think!" exclaimed the boy, his face flushed, his eyes glowing. "I think it beautiful—grand!"

"But suppose," urged the doctor, "that the one to whom he made the offer refused it?"

"Refuse such an opportunity?" cried the boy; "who would do such a thing when he understood how it was offered and with the prospect of doing as much for some one else some day?"

"Then," said the doctor, leaning toward him, "I make you the offer, for I am the boy of my story. Come back to the city with me, and if, when you are able, you do as much for some other boy, I shall be more than satisfied. But I ask no such promise. Will you go Jack?"

"But I make the promise, and I will come," answered the boy.

When his mother came down from showing the doctor to his room, she found Jack alone, standing in the middle of the room with clasped hands.

"Mother, mother, he cried, as she entered, 'suppose that the storm had kept off till it was due! Suppose that it had come one day later!' Then he put his arms around his mother's neck and laid his head upon her shoulder as he used to do when he was a little child. And the storm raged on; that blessed equinoctial gale which had brought such happiness upon its tempestuous wings.—Interior.

If you send a new subscriber with your renewal, \$2.00 will pay for both—it sent this month.

Bird Life.

No bird of prey has the gift of song. The smallest humming bird weighs twenty grains.

In all tropical countries the vulture is the natural scavenger. All birds that live on seeds are furnished with strong gizzards.

Wild birds do not sing more than eight or ten weeks in the year. It is estimated that the crow will destroy 700,000 insects every year.

In Athens, 400 years before Christ, a pair of peacocks was valued at 1000 drachme, or about \$150.

The stork has been known to perish in the flames of a burning house rather than desert her young.

The secretary bird in attacking venomous serpents uses one wing as a shield and the other as a club.

The nightingale always begins his song softly, like a well-trained orator, and gradually swells to a climax.

The smallest egg is that of the tiny Mexican hummingbird. It is scarcely larger than a pin's head.

The peacock is found in a wild state in India, Ceylon, Madagascar and many other parts of Asia and Africa. The robin is always the last bird to go to bed in the evening. Its eyes are large, and it can see well by a dim light.

The swiftest bird is the kestrel or English sparrow hawk. It has been known to achieve a speed of 150 miles an hour.

The largest egg is that of the ostrich. It weighs three pounds, and is considered equal in amount to that of twenty four hens eggs.

The smallest bird is a species of humming bird common in Mexico and Central America. It is not quite so large as a bluebottle fly.

The rook is the only bird that repairs his nest in the fall. The same birds use the same nests year after year, and just before migrating they touch up their nests and put them in order for the winter.

The mocking bird seems to have a genuine sense of humor. Often when engaged in the most charming imitation of some song bird, it will suddenly stop and break out with the quacking of a duck or some other ludicrous sound.

The present is the best time to send your renewal—and that new subscriber you are anxious to get.

WASHED THE WINDOWS.—It is said that when Queen Victoria was quite a little girl she spent an afternoon with Queen Adelaide, who assured her that she might do anything within reason that she wished. After weighty consideration the little princess declared that nothing would give her such pleasure as to be allowed to clean the windows. So a cloth, pail and water, and pieces of wash-leather were supplied to her, and greatly did she revel in the indulgence.

The words in Japanese for rat and fountain are very much alike. So an accomplished missionary, in delivering an earnest discourse, made the very easy mistake of urging his congregation to "come and seek the living rat" instead of "come and seek the living fountain." Of another evangelist the story is told that he said with a loud voice, "If you do not repent, you will go to the post-office," the words for post-office and hell being very similar in sound.

Do not wait till next week. Do it now.

All Sorts.

"Were you moved by her music?" "Yes; it amounted to that. I think we should have kept the flat for another year if it hadn't of been for her."

Thousands of cases of rheumatism have been cured by Hood's Sarsaparilla. This is abundant reason for belief that it will cure you.

Elmira: "Jennie, what do you use to keep your hair from falling off?" Jennie: "Hairpins, dear. What do you use?"

"You've frozen your ears," is the common remark. Bathe in Johnson's Anodyne Liniment.

Proud Father (to friend): "This is my youngest boy. Frank, this is Mr. Jackson." Frank (brightly): "Is that the man of whom mamma said yesterday that he had more money than brains?"

What are you using for your cold? Try Johnson's Anodyne Liniment.

She (a woman's right's woman): "Do you believe that woman should have the right of being the equal of man?" He: "Well, if she wants to let herself down so far, I don't see any reason why she should be prevented."

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Burdock Blood Bitters cures Headache.

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Home Hints.

Hints for the Dining Room.—A few drops of ammonia in the water in which silver is washed will keep it bright a long time without cleaning. This should always be done with plated ware, as frequent rubbings wear off the plate.

Ghpsy Ham.—Slice several pieces of ham rather thin, remove the fat and trim them to an equal size. Fry them over a brisk fire in butter on both sides and arrange in a hot dish. Mix with butter a handful of bread crumbs and a teaspoonful of vinegar. Heat it. Add the juice of a slice of onion and arrange about the ham.

A little flour dredged over a cake before icing it will keep the icing from spreading.

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