

Supposing.

Supposing trees grew down, like beets—in orchard and in dell!
 I'd climb for pears and buttermilk we'd simply dig a well!

Supposing shadows that we cast were solid—I'll be bound
 I'd find them quite embarrassing affairs to carry round!

Supposing rain was black as ink—good gracious! what a sight
 I'd often make of picknickers, attired in pretty white!

Supposing birds were eagle big, and walked instead of flew—
 I'd like to know what chance there'd be to take a stroll—don't you?

Supposing snow was hard and hot instead of soft and cold—
 I'd dreadfully the people who slipped down in it would scold!

Supposing fishes swam in air as thick as in the sea—
 I'd whales and sharks and porpoises how frightened we would be!

Supposing we fell up—just think how very far we'd fall!
 I'd presently the earth would have no people left at all!

—E. L. Sablin in the Churchman.

The Word of a Boy.

What do you know about him, any? asked Alfred Grierson, sharply.
 Not much, only he thinks a lot of words, answered Charley, timidly.

What do you mean?
 Why, if he says he'll do a thing, he sticks to it. His word is enough.

The questioner turned aside with a profound whistle.

The boy who had won the approval of Charles Grierson was a newcomer to the school they attended, and more than a year older than Alfred. George Sanborn soon became popular, and Alfred was secretly jealous of his influence.

The old Romans were not the only ones who admired great physical strength, and Sanborn was tall for his age, well built, and with muscles finely developed. His widowed mother was too poor, and too prudent to pamper him, but plenty of open-air exercise on hillside and river, frequent changes, and good, wholesome food, were combining to build up an early, vigorous manhood, which was good to behold.

Almost immediately on entering the school Charley Grierson's somewhat diminutive figure and delicate appearance had appealed to him, and his weakness always should appeal to strength.

"Hello," he said one day during play, passing a corner where he had seen Charley a short time before, pouring over a volume profusely illustrated. The little fellow was now sitting with hands idly folded and a drooping head, but no book. "Have you finished reading?"

"I had to give up my book," was the careless answer.

"Were you reading it?"

"Of course I was, and just in the best part, where the bear—"

"Who's got it?"

"Murray."

"Never mind, old chap," said Sanborn, heartily; "another bear has got to the school; he must be tamed a bit. You shall have your book."

Charley never inquired by what means this desirable end was attained. He only knew that in ten minutes the book lay in his lap, and he was poring over the bear through its pages. It was this incident which made the new hero in Charley Grierson's eyes.

There are heroes in humdrum, everyday life, in humble homes, performing common tasks faithfully and selflessly. They are in training, and perhaps some day hearts will be stirred by the account of some brave deed which brings one after another to the world's notice.

"What would I do without him?"

Mrs. Sanborn, stopping one morning in the porch to watch the active figure of her lad as he sped to the village on an errand. "He promised his mother he'd be a help to me, and he never once broke his word."

The next morning as the gate to the school yard was about to open, a group of boys were seen talking excitedly.

"My father says I may bring three fellows along," exclaimed one, in a high tone.

"You, Grierson, and Murray and Sanborn. We have a two-seater sleigh and a pair of horses."

Sanborn caught his cap and tossed it into the air with a wild "Hoorah!" as it descended his face clouded.

"It is too bad," he said. "I hate my father for saying that, but it is too bad. I must go home directly after school this afternoon."

"Who said so?" asked the others.

"I did."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Alfred Grierson, and a flush rose to young Sanborn's face, but he answered steadily.

"I promised mother before I came here. I gave my word and I'll stick to it. It is something that can't be broken off, or you know I would try all I

could; I'm up to fun as well as any of you. Now, don't let it be harder, but do something for me, to make up. Will you take young Charley Grierson in my place? I can't tell how obliged I am to you and your father for asking me," he concluded, turning to the lad who had invited him. "It was real good of you."

There was a straightforward manliness in this that was catching, and the boy he addressed cried out: "Charley shall go," and Murray echoed: "Charley shall," and even Alfred struck in.

So Charley went, and rubbed his little hands in glee, and laughed and shouted, while George Sanborn was ten times more his hero than ever before.

But previous to this, just as the gate swung open, George almost knocked against a gentleman who had come up unpereceived and overheard the conversation. With a friendly nod, he said in passing: "That's right, my boy; stick to your mother. You never had, never will have a better friend."

Mrs. Sanborn had business in a town about five miles distant that afternoon, and her son was to drive her in a sleigh, a very shabby affair. At first the idea was agreeable, and he thought little of the turnout. Now, however, as he contrasted it in his mind with a certain double sleigh he had seen, with a fur rug thrown over the back and another drawn up in front to keep the feet warm, while a pair of dashing horses proudly tossed their necks and set the bells a jingling, he was conscious of a glow of shame.

He hated himself for the poor pride, but it had been there, and left a sore spot, as if scorched by fire.

But this was only the beginning of the humiliation. Returning home, some hours later, a sleigh swept past, going in the same direction, the bells and glad young voices mingling in merry music. Sanborn's schoolmates shouted their recognition; only one failed in a fraternal greeting. As the gentleman in charge of the party turned to look at the object of their salutation, his eyes roamed over the homely figure of the mother, the poor, shabby vehicle and the heavy horse, with a sort of comprehensive pity. Alfred Grierson, catching that look, was ashamed to shout.

"Never mind, there will come a time when they won't be ashamed to know me," George muttered to himself. "Money means influence, and influence and money mean labor. The road doesn't lie before me as clear as this I'm driving on now, but I'll learn all I can, and it will come to me or I shall come to it."

And it did, sooner than he thought. Mr. Grierson kept his eye on the lad, and at the close of the school term offered young Sanborn a place in his office.

"I want him there," he explained to his mother, "because I can depend on his word, and if he is what I think, he will get on. He shall have leisure and advantages for evening study. And now my wife is coming to see you. If there is anything you would like to have done, let her know."

Mrs. Grierson was a kind-hearted, Christian woman, with tact and judgment. She avoided wounding the widow's feelings and her son's boyish pride, but their home had more refining influences, and Mrs. Sanborn added comforts from that time.

And in after years, when people commented on the prosperity of a certain man of business, he was wont to say:

"It all came of my keeping my word to my mother."—New York Observer.

Nelsie's "Cheeruping."

BY MINNIE L. UPTON.

"Cheerup! Cheerup!" quoth Madam Robin, who, with Sir Robin, was feasting off late choke-cheeries by the back kitchen window.

"Cheerup! Cheerup!" repeated Sir Robin.

"I won't!" snapped Nelsie, and then felt sorry as soon as she said it; for since Sir and Madam were so kind as to stay all winter, when all the other birds whisked away to some "resort" or other, it did seem as though the least one could do was to be civil to them and take a bit of advice occasionally, if they pleased to offer it.

"Please excuse me. I didn't really mean it," murmured Nelsie, wiping her eyes with the corner of her blue tye, and reflecting that she could go nutting some other day, and that things might be worse, even if the rain was pouring right down at the very hour when Cousin Bert was to call for her to go to Chestnut Wood for a long, long day of fun.

"Cheerup! Cheerup!" persisted the happy pair, between cherry bites.

"I will! I will!" responded Nelsie.

"But, whom shall I cheer up? And how shall I do it?"

The door opened just then, and the answer came in a glimpse of grandma,

sitting by her south window, and looking out over the brown fields.

In a moment Nelsie was by her side.

"Mayn't I read for you, grandma? I have such a nice book!" chirruped she.

Might she! Grandma was as fond of stories as any of her grandchildren, and at the word "story" she brightened up as if by magic, and settled her cap and apron for a long forenoon of delight.

Of course, Nelsie would much rather have curled up in the window-seat and read it all by herself. Grandma knew that, — grandmas are such knowing folk! — and that's why she remarked to the robins (after the book was finished and Nelsie had gone out on the piazza to look for weather), "Ain't she the dearest girlie?"

"Ye-up! Ye-up!" came in a silvery duet from Sir and Madam.

"She can listen to advice!" said Madam.

"And take it!" added Sir.

"Yes, take it!" trilled Madam.

"And make it," warbled Sir, swelling his glossy throat with enthusiasm.

"Of use," crescendoed Madam. And then the time and tune and words got so mixed up that only an expert in Robinese could ever understand them.

Grandma was not an expert. She only said "Do hear the dear sweets! Their voices sound just like my Nelsie's!" — Chris. Register.

A Blue Jay's Friendship.

BY SARAH B. WALKER.

I want to tell you of how, when walking one sunny afternoon, a little Blue Jay, too young to fly well, persisted in falling out of its nest and coming over to where we were taking our lunch. I put it back in the nest carefully twice, but back it tumbled and followed me, the mother bird paying scarcely any attention to it. I was loth to have it for I was afraid I could not feed it properly and keep it alive.

It sat on my finger all the way home. I never put it in a cage but fed it as well as I knew how and left it on the window sill outside of the open window.

Close by was a small pine tree about eight or ten feet high. After the bird, or "Styx," became big enough to fly nicely he made his nest in this pine tree all night, and every morning long before anyone wanted to wake, in he would come at the open window with his happy good-morning twitter, and after circling about the room a few times would, unless he was well received and spoken to, settle on top of my head and taking a lock of hair in his bill give it quite a ferocious twitch to gain attention.

At our meal time he was always ready and would take a bit of bread or a dainty morsel from each one, always with his delightful little twitter. One peculiar feature of his friendship was his desire to imitate our walk instead of flying along above one, as he could so easily do. Styx would deliberately follow in our footsteps.

Every evening we would go to the top of the hill to see the sun set, and Styx would follow us, walking over brush and through cobwebs until, when he reached the top, his little blue feathers were a sight to see, all bedraggled and white with cobwebs. Then he would go back perched on my shoulder. He would often make the return trip that way, but would always start from the house on a walk, hop, skip or jump, never flying.

It used to create great astonishment in a stranger to see a Blue Jay fly from one of our large trees and in at the window, helping himself to anything good in reach. He never seemed to forget us for a moment, and a whistle would always call him to us. For over six months he was a constant companion, and great sorrow was felt over his loss, occasioned by his trip into a neighboring field where there was a poisoned wheat put out for killing moles or some other animal. But our faithful little friend was happy while he was with us.—Mayflower.

A Little Goose.

One day Will called Dot "a little goose." That was because she didn't go to school, only to kindergarten, and couldn't read, like her primary school brother of six.

Tom spoke up at that. "Will," said he, "a papa goose is a gander, a mamma goose is a—well, just a goose, but a little goose is a gosling! Dot is not a goose: she is a dear little gosling, aren't you, Dot?"

"I don't know," said Dot, doubtfully.

Then, says the writer in Little Folks, who is telling the story, I told them the famous goose story that has been told to children for more than two thousand years: how nearly four hundred years before the first Christmas the great, shaggy, yellow-haired Gauls swept down like a north wind into Italy and captured Rome, all but the Capital Hill; how one night the Roman

guard fell asleep, and the Gauls climbed up, up, up, to the very top; how just then the goddess Juno's sacred geese, kept there by the temple, heard them, and flapped their great wings, and hissed and honked; and how Marcus Manlius heard the geese, and seized his arms, and ran to the edge of the cliff just in time to push backward the topmost Gaul. "And so," said I, "the geese saved Rome!"

"Then, too, I went on, 'if geese are not wise enough to read, like Master Will, they knew something about our alphabet long before men did, for the flying wild geese have always shaped their flocks into A's and V's. And, if they don't know how to make all the letters, they have helped men write all the letters.'"

"Why, how could they?" asked Dot.

"Oh," said I, laughing, "they gave their big wing feathers to men, and men cut the ends into pens; and everybody, for centuries before steel pens were made, wrote with quill pens. Little children in school wrote with goose quills; and, when the points were scratchy, they raised their hands and said, 'Please, teacher, sharpen my pen!'"

And the teacher would take her pen-knife and cut new points. That's how little jack-knives came to be called pen-knives."

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