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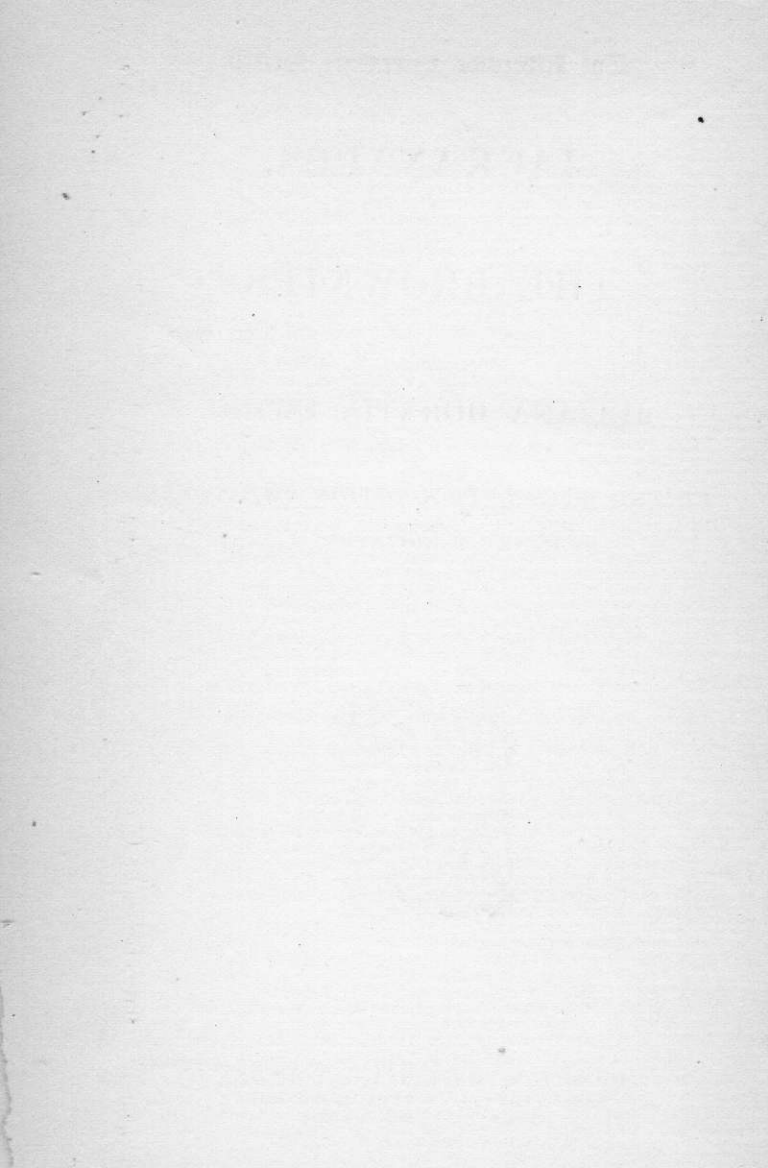
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JACKANAPES

AND

THE BROWNIES

BY
JULIANA HORATIA EWING

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

By HENRY W. BOYNTON, M. A.



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INTRODUCTION

ALFRED GATTY was an English clergyman, vicar of Ecclesfield in Yorkshire, where in 1841 his daughter Juliana Horatia, afterward Mrs. Ewing, was born. The Gattys seem to have been an exceptionally clever family. While the children were still very young they learned to amuse each other by story-telling, and a little later they edited and wrote a story-magazine, which was not printed, but circulated in manuscript among their friends. Juliana was particularly good as an oral story-teller and mimic, and even as a child evidently had something of the magnetism which is so important an element in her nature work. Indeed, one can hardly think of her written stories as mere compositions; the author seems to be talking to us frankly and unaffectedly, and paper and ink serve only as conductors for that sweet and friendly voice. Her first book of stories was published when she was twenty-one years old, and from that time to the end of her not very long life she was producing tales in prose and verse, most of them about children.

In 1866 began the publication of "Aunt Judy's Magazine," edited by the Gattys, and really the public continuation of the nursery magazine with which they had grown up. At twenty-five Miss Juliana Gatty was married to Major Ewing of the British Army. Soon afterward he was stationed in New Brunswick, where Mrs. Ewing and he lived for several

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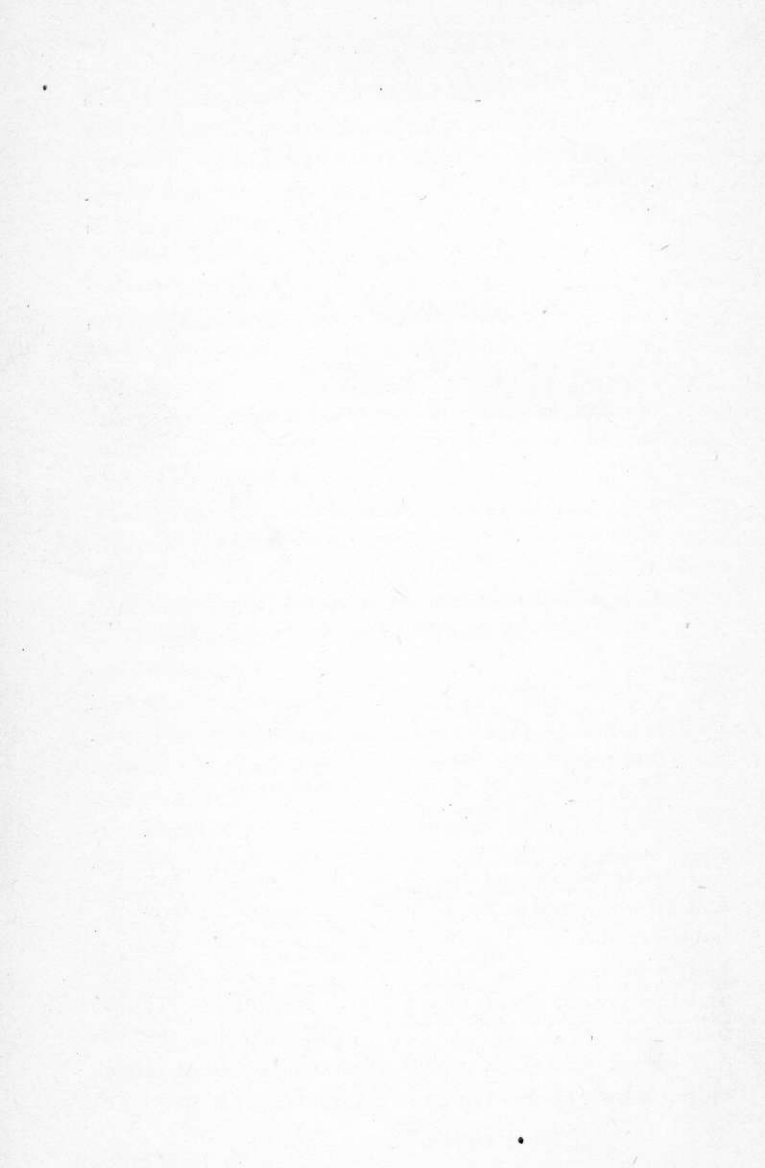
years. Here she naturally learned a good deal about army life. It is odd that although she was continually writing stories, many of which were published in "Aunt Judy's Magazine," it did not occur to her for some time to make literary use of her army experience. At last in 1872, she wrote her first soldier story, "The Peace Egg." This tale is not very well known now, but the two which followed, "Jackanapes," and "The Story of a Short Life," not only became quickly popular, but are as widely read and as generously cried over to-day as they ever were.

In the mean time the Ewings had returned to England, where Mrs. Ewing lived for the rest of her life. In 1873 a part-editorship of "Aunt Judy's Magazine" fell into her hands, and was retained for about two years. But she had always been delicate. The routine of regular work was very difficult for her; and when, a few years after the return from New Brunswick, Major Ewing was transferred to Malta, she was not strong enough to go with him. Consequently they were separated for several years, and when he was finally ordered back to England she had not long to live; she died at Bath in 1885.

The secret of Mrs. Ewing's charm is hardly a secret at all. As a woman she was simple, sympathetic, and universally beloved; and she was the rare sort of person who is just as lovable in print as in real life. She is a writer of sentiment, but of sentiment wholly free from mawkishness or strained pathos. Her work is marked by a tender humor which reminds one of Dr. John Brown more than of anybody else. We are not so tolerant of the pathetic as our fathers were in the days of Colonel Newcome and Little Nell. A good many people find fault nowadays with Mrs.

Ewing's stories because they are so sad. But if the reader is not too ready to be cast down, he will notice that Mrs. Ewing herself is never so sad that she is not a little merry too. She does not admit that the sacrifice of Jackanapes's life was a waste, or a slip on the part of Providence; and the lifelong grief of the poor Doctor in "The Brownies," instead of embittering him, makes him more tender and considerate of the happiness of those who have not yet known the hard discipline of bereavement. Mrs. Ewing might not have been willing, considering them from a larger point of view than what is comfortable to one's feelings, to admit that her stories do not "turn out right." She evidently perceived that pain and death are as valuable incidents in human experience as life and happiness; or, rather — for she was a great lover of life and happiness — she seems to have felt that pain and death are preferable to selfishness and dishonor.

Mrs. Ewing's style was the direct expression of her nature, simple and spontaneous, yet with the unmistakable hall-mark of social and literary good-breeding. It would not be an exaggeration to say, adapting the phrase so often used of Thackeray, that one of her chief distinctions is to have written like a gentlewoman. But this quality alone would not account for her continued popularity, any more than to have written like a gentleman accounts for Thackeray's. We must refer it rather to the sweet and sound philosophy, the gracious womanhood, which are at the basis of all her work.



JACKANAPES.

CHAPTER I.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms — the day
Battle's magnificently stern array !
The thunder-clouds rose o'er it, which when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse, — friend, foe, — in one red burial blent.

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine ;
Yet one would I select from that proud throng.

.
To thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake ;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for.

BYRON.¹

Two Donkeys and the Geese lived on the Green, and all other residents of any social standing lived in houses round it. The houses had no names. Everybody's address was "The Green," but the Postman and the people of the place knew where each family lived. As to the rest of the world, what has one to do with the rest of the world when one is safe at home on one's own Goose Green ? Moreover, if a stranger

¹ *Childe Harold*, canto iii. 28-31.

did come on any lawful business, he might ask his way at the shop.

Most of the inhabitants were long-lived, early deaths (like that of the little Miss Jessamine) being exceptional; and most of the old people were proud of their age, especially the sexton, who would be ninety-nine come Martinmas,¹ and whose father remembered a man who had carried arrows, as a boy, for the battle of Flodden Field.² The Gray Goose and the big Miss Jessamine were the only elderly persons who kept their ages secret. Indeed, Miss Jessamine never mentioned any one's age, or recalled the exact year in which anything had happened. She said that she had been taught that it was bad manners to do so "in a mixed assembly."

The Gray Goose also avoided dates; but this was partly because her brain, though intelligent, was not mathematical, and computation was beyond her. She never got farther than "last Michaelmas," "the Michaelmas before that," and "the Michaelmas before the Michaelmas before that." After this her head, which was small, became confused, and she said, "Ga, ga!" and changed the subject.

But she remembered the little Miss Jessamine, the Miss Jessamine with the "conspicuous" hair. Her aunt, the big Miss Jessamine, said it was her only fault. The hair was clean, was abundant, was glossy; but do what you would with it, it never looked quite like other people's. And at church, after Saturday

¹ The feast-day of Martinmas falls on the 11th of November, Michaelmas on the 29th of September.

² The battle of Flodden Field was fought September 9, 1513, and the Scotch, under King James, totally defeated. The battle is described in the sixth canto of Scott's *Marmion*.

night's wash, it shone like the best brass fender after a spring cleaning. In short, it was conspicuous, which does not become a young woman,¹ especially in church.

Those were worrying times altogether, and the Green was used for strange purposes. A political meeting was held on it with the village Cobbler in the chair, and a speaker who came by stage-coach from the town, where they had wrecked the bakers' shops, and discussed the price of bread.² He came a second time by stage; but the people had heard something about him in the mean while, and they did not keep him on the Green. They took him to the pond and tried to make him swim, which he could not do, and the whole affair was very disturbing to all quiet and peaceable fowls. After which another man came, and preached sermons on the Green, and a great many people went to hear him; for those were "trying times," and folk ran hither and thither for comfort. And then what did they do but drill the ploughboys on the Green, to get them ready to fight the French, and teach them the goose-step!³ However, that came to an end at last; for Bony was sent to St. Helena,⁴ and the ploughboys were sent back to the plough.

Everybody lived in fear of Bony in those days, especially the naughty children, who were kept in

¹ "Which does not become a young woman," is one of the favorite refrains of Mrs. Malaprop, in Sheridan's *The Rivals*.

² This shows that the story begins in about 1811. Between 1811 and 1815 there were frequent riots throughout England, due to the low rate of wages and the high price of wheat.

³ **Goose-step**, lock-step, made necessary by the nearness of the rear to the front rank.

⁴ This is anticipating by several years, as "Bony" (Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte) was not sent to St. Helena till after his defeat at Waterloo, in 1815.

order during the day by threats of "Bony shall have you," and who had nightmares about him in the dark. They thought he was an Ogre in a cocked hat. The Gray Goose thought he was a Fox, and that all the men of England were going out in red coats¹ to hunt him. It was no use to argue the point; for she had a very small head, and when one idea got into it there was no room for another.

Besides, the Gray Goose never saw Bony, nor did the children, which rather spoilt the terror of him, so that the Black Captain became more effective as a Bogy with hardened offenders. The Gray Goose remembered *his* coming to the place perfectly. What he came for she did not pretend to know. It was all part and parcel of the war and bad times. He was called the Black Captain, partly because of himself and partly because of his wonderful black mare. Strange stories were afloat of how far and how fast that mare could go when her master's hand was on her mane and he whispered in her ear. Indeed, some people thought we might reckon ourselves very lucky if we were not out of the frying-pan into the fire, and had not got a certain well-known Gentleman of the Road² to protect us against the French. But that, of course, made him none the less useful to the Johnsons' Nurse when the little Miss Johnsons were naughty.

"You leave off crying this minnit, Miss Jane, or I'll give you right away to that horrid wicked officer.

¹ The point is that the soldier and the fox-hunter both wear red coats.

² **Gentleman of the Road** is the romantic title given to the highwayman in the eighteenth century, when his calling, though likely to end on the gallows, was considered an honorable profession by the common people.

Jemima ! just look out o' the windy, if you please, and see if the Black Cap'n 's coming with his horse to carry away Miss Jane."

And there, sure enough, the Black Captain strode by, with his sword clattering as if he did not know whose head to cut off first. But he did not call for Miss Jane that time. He went on to the Green, where he came so suddenly upon the eldest Master Johnson, sitting in a puddle on purpose, in his new nankeen skeleton suit,¹ that the young gentleman thought judgment had overtaken him at last, and abandoned himself to the howlings of despair. His howls were redoubled when he was clutched from behind and swung over the Black Captain's shoulder ; but in five minutes his tears were stanchd, and he was playing with the officer's accoutrements. All of which the Gray Goose saw with her own eyes, and heard afterwards that that bad boy had been whining to go back to the Black Captain ever since, which showed how hardened he was, and that nobody but Bonaparte himself could be expected to do him any good.

But those were "trying times." It was bad enough when the pickle² of a large and respectable family cried for the Black Captain : when it came to the little Miss Jessamine crying for him, one felt that the sooner the French landed and had done with it, the better.

The big Miss Jessamine's objection to him was that he was a soldier ; and this prejudice was shared by all the Green. "A soldier," as the speaker from the town had observed, "is a bloodthirsty, unsettled sort of a rascal, that the peaceable, home-loving, bread-

¹ **Nankeen skeleton suit**, a suit made of a Chinese cotton, the trousers buttoning directly upon the jacket.

² **Pickle**, the "case," the most troublesome member.

winning citizen can never conscientiously look on as a brother till he has beaten his sword into a ploughshare and his spear into a pruning-hook."

On the other hand, there was some truth in what the Postman (an old soldier) said in reply, — that the sword has to cut a way for us out of many a scrape into which our bread-winners get us when they drive their ploughshares into fallows that don't belong to them. Indeed, whilst our most peaceful citizens were prosperous chiefly by means of cotton, of sugar, and of the rise and fall of the money-market (not to speak of such salable matters as opium, fire-arms, and "black ivory"¹), disturbances were apt to arise in India, Africa, and other outlandish parts, where the fathers of our domestic race were making fortunes for their families. And for that matter, even on the Green, we did not wish the military to leave us in the lurch, so long as there was any fear that the French were coming.

To let the Black Captain have little Miss Jessamine, however, was another matter. Her aunt would not hear of it; and then, to crown all, it appeared that the Captain's father did not think the young lady good enough for his son.² Never was any affair more clearly brought to a conclusion.

But those were "trying times"; and one moonlight night, when the Gray Goose was sound asleep upon one leg, the Green was rudely shaken under her by the thud of a horse's feet. "Ga, ga!" said she, putting down the other leg and running away.

By the time she returned to her place not a thing was to be seen or heard. The horse had passed like a shot. But next day there was hurrying and skurrying

¹ Black ivory, African slaves.

² Of course "good enough" means of good enough family.

and cackling at a very early hour, all about the white house with the black beams, where Miss Jessamine lived. And when the sun was so low and the shadows so long on the grass that the Gray Goose felt ready to run away at the sight of her own neck, little Miss Jane Johnson and her "particular friend" Clarinda sat under the big oak-tree on the Green, and Jane pinched Clarinda's little finger till she found that she could keep a secret, and then she told her in confidence that she had heard from Nurse and Jemima that Miss Jessamine's niece had been a very naughty girl, and that that horrid wicked officer had come for her on his black horse and carried her right away.

"Will she never come back?" asked Clarinda.

"Oh, no!" said Jane decidedly. "Bony never brings people back."

"Not never no more?" sobbed Clarinda, for she was weak-minded, and could not bear to think that Bony never, never let naughty people go home again.

Next day Jane had heard more.

"He has taken her to a Green."

"A Goose Green?" asked Clarinda.

"No. A Gretna Green.¹ Don't ask so many questions, child," said Jane, who, having no more to tell, gave herself airs.

Jane was wrong on one point. Miss Jessamine's niece did come back, and she and her husband were forgiven. The Gray Goose remembered it well; it was Michaelmas-tide, the Michaelmas before the Michaelmas before the Michaelmas — but, ga, ga! What does the date matter? It was autumn, harvest time, and everybody was so busy prophesying and praying

¹ **Gretna Green** was the famous marrying-place, just across the border in Scotland, the goal of all English elopements.

about the crops, that the young couple wandered through the lanes, and got blackberries for Miss Jessamine's celebrated crab and blackberry jam, and made guys of themselves with bryony wreaths, and not a soul troubled his head about them, except the children and the Postman. The children dogged the Black Captain's footsteps (his bubble reputation as an Ogre having burst) clamoring for a ride on the black mare. And the Postman would go somewhat out of his postal way to catch the Captain's dark eye, and show that he had not forgotten how to salute an officer.

But they were "trying times." One afternoon the black mare was stepping gently up and down the grass, with her head at her master's shoulder, and as many children crowded on to her silky back as if she had been an elephant in a menagerie; and the next afternoon she carried him away, sword and *sabretache*¹ clattering war music at her side, and the old Postman waiting for them, rigid with salutation, at the four cross-roads.

War and bad times! It was a hard winter; and the big Miss Jessamine and the little Miss Jessamine (but she was Mrs. Black Captain now) lived very economically, that they might help their poorer neighbors. They neither entertained nor went into company; but the young lady always went up the village as far as the George and Dragon,² for air and exercise, when the London Mail came in.

One day (it was a day in the following June) it

¹ **Sabretache**, a sort of heavy leather scabbard (literally, "sword-pocket") worn by cavalry.

² **The George and Dragon** is the village inn, which undoubtedly stood behind a swinging sign painted with the figures of St. George and the Dragon.

came in earlier than usual, and the young lady was not there to meet it.

But a crowd soon gathered round the George and Dragon, gaping to see the Mail Coach dressed with flowers and oak-leaves, and the guard wearing a laurel wreath over and above his royal livery. The ribbons that decked the horses were stained and flecked with the warmth and foam of the pace at which they had come, for they had pressed on with the news of Victory.¹

Miss Jessamine was sitting with her niece under the oak-tree on the Green, when the Postman put a newspaper silently into her hand. Her niece turned quickly, —

“Is there news?”

“Don’t agitate yourself, my dear,” said her aunt. “I will read it aloud, and then we can enjoy it together; a far more comfortable method, my love, than when you go up the village, and come home out of breath, having snatched half the news as you run.”

“I am all attention, dear aunt,” said the little lady, clasping her hands tightly on her lap.

Then Miss Jessamine read aloud, — she was proud of her reading, — and the old soldier stood at attention behind her, with such a blending of pride and pity on his face as it was strange to see : —

¹ The English mail coach of the period of Waterloo was considered a marvel of speed. It travelled fifteen miles an hour, while a modern express train can make sixty miles an hour with ease, and seventy or eighty if necessary. But the hard thing to realize is that less than a century ago news had to travel at the same slow rate, so that the mail coach played a very important part at such moments as the Waterloo victory.

“ DOWNING STREET,
“ June 22, 1815, 1 A. M.”

“ That’s one in the morning,” gasped the Postman ; “ beg your pardon, mum.”

But though he apologized, he could not refrain from echoing here and there a weighty word : “ Glorious victory,” — “ Two hundred pieces of artillery,” — “ Immense quantity of ammunition,” — and so forth.

“ The loss of the British Army upon this occasion has unfortunately been most severe. It had not been possible to make out a return of the killed and wounded when Major Percy left headquarters. The names of the officers killed and wounded, as far as they can be collected, are annexed.

“ I have the honor — ”

“ The list, aunt ! Read the list ! ”

“ My love — my darling — let us go in and — ”

“ No. Now ! now ! ”

To one thing the supremely afflicted are entitled in their sorrow, — to be obeyed ; and yet it is the last kindness that people commonly will do them. But Miss Jessamine did. Steadying her voice, as best she might, she read on ; and the old soldier stood bareheaded to hear that first Roll of the Dead at Waterloo, which began with the Duke of Brunswick and ended with Ensign Brown. Five-and-thirty British Captains fell asleep that day on the Bed of Honor, and the Black Captain slept among them.

There are killed and wounded by war, of whom no returns reach Downing Street.

Three days later, the Captain's wife had joined him, and Miss Jessamine was kneeling by the cradle of their orphan son, a purple-red morsel of humanity, with conspicuously golden hair.

"Will he live, Doctor?"

"Live? Bless my soul, ma'am! Look at him! The young Jackanapes!"

CHAPTER II.

And he wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old Nurse.

LONGFELLOW.

THE Gray Goose remembered quite well the year that Jackanapes began to walk, for it was the year that the speckled hen for the first time in all her motherly life got out of patience when she was sitting. She had been rather proud of the eggs, — they were unusually large, — but she never felt quite comfortable on them; and whether it was because she used to get cramp and go off the nest, or because the season was bad, or what, she never could tell; but every egg was addled but one, and the one that did hatch gave her more trouble than any chick she had ever reared.

It was a fine, downy, bright yellow little thing, but it had a monstrous big nose and feet, and such an ungainly walk as she knew no other instance of in her well-bred and high-stepping family. And as to behavior, it was not that it was either quarrelsome or moping, but simply unlike the rest. When the other chicks hopped and cheeped on the Green about their mother's feet, this solitary yellow brat went waddling off on its own responsibility, and do or cluck

what the speckled hen would, it went to play in the Pond.

It was off one day as usual, and the hen was fussing and fuming after it, when the Postman, going to deliver a letter at Miss Jessamine's door, was nearly knocked over by the good lady herself, who, bursting out of the house with her cap just off and her bonnet just not on, fell into his arms, crying, —

“Baby! Baby! Jackanapes! Jackanapes!”

If the Postman loved anything on earth, he loved the Captain's yellow-haired child; so, propping Miss Jessamine against her own door-post, he followed the direction of her trembling fingers and made for the Green.

Jackanapes had had the start of the Postman by nearly ten minutes. The world — the round, green world with an oak-tree on it — was just becoming very interesting to him. He had tried, vigorously but ineffectually, to mount a passing pig the last time he was taken out walking; but then he was encumbered with a nurse. Now he was his own master, and might, by courage and energy, become the master of that delightful downy, dumpy, yellow thing that was bobbing along over the green grass in front of him. Forward! Charge! He aimed well, and grabbed it, but only to feel the delicious downiness and dumpiness slipping through his fingers as he fell upon his face. “Quack!” said the yellow thing, and wobbled off sideways. It was this oblique movement that enabled Jackanapes to come up with it, for it was bound for the Pond, and therefore obliged to come back into line. He failed again from top-heaviness, and his prey escaped sideways as before, and, as before, lost ground in getting back to the direct road to the Pond.

And at the Pond the Postman found them both, — one yellow thing rocking safely on the ripples that lie beyond duck-weed, and the other washing his draggled frock with tears because he too had tried to sit upon the Pond and it would n't hold him.

CHAPTER III.

If studious, copy fair what time hath blurred,
 Redeem truth from his jaws : if soldier,
 Chase brave employments with a naked sword
 Throughout the world. Fool not ; for all may have,
 If they dare try, a glorious life, or grave.

.
 In brief, acquit thee bravely : play the man.
 Look not on pleasures as they come, but go.
 Defer not the least virtue : life's poor span
 Make not an ell, by trifling in thy woe.
 If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains.
 If well : the pain doth fade, the joy remains.

GEORGE HERBERT.¹

YOUNG Mrs. Johnson, who was a mother of many, hardly knew which to pity more, — Miss Jessamine for having her little ways and her antimacassars² rumpled by young Jackanapes, or the boy himself for being brought up by an old maid.

Oddly enough she would probably have pitied neither, had Jackanapes been a girl. (One is so apt to think that what works smoothest, works to the highest ends, having no patience for the results of friction.) That Father in God who bade the young

¹ From *The Church Porch*.

² **Antimacassars** were crocheted coverings hung upon the backs of sofas and chairs to protect them from the macassar oil then commonly put on the hair.

men to be pure and the maidens brave, greatly disturbed a member of his congregation, who thought that the great preacher had made a slip of the tongue.

"That the girls should have purity, and the boys courage, is what you would say, good Father?"

"Nature has done that," was the reply; "I meant what I said."

In good sooth, a young maid is all the better for learning some robusiter virtues than maidenliness and not to move the antimacassars; and the robusiter virtues require some fresh air and freedom. As, on the other hand, Jackanapes (who had a boy's full share of the little beast and the young monkey in his natural composition) was none the worse, at his tender years, for learning some maidenliness, — so far as maidenliness means decency, pity, unselfishness, and pretty behavior.

And it is due to him to say that he was an obedient boy, and a boy whose word could be depended on, long before his grandfather the General came to live at the Green.

He was obedient; that is, he did what his great-aunt told him. But — oh, dear! oh, dear! — the pranks he played, which it had never entered into her head to forbid!

It was when he had just been put into skeletons (frocks never suited him) that he became very friendly with Master Tony Johnson, a younger brother of the young gentleman who sat in the puddle on purpose. Tony was not enterprising, and Jackanapes led him by the nose. One summer's evening they were out late, and Miss Jessamine was becoming anxious, when Jackanapes presented himself with a ghastly face all besmirched with tears. He was unusually subdued.

"I'm afraid," he sobbed, — "if you please, I'm very much afraid that Tony Johnson's dying in the churchyard."

Miss Jessamine was just beginning to be distracted, when she smelt Jackanapes.

"You naughty, naughty boys! Do you mean to tell me that you've been smoking?"

"Not pipes," urged Jackanapes; "upon my honor, aunty, not pipes. Only cigars like Mr. Johnson's! and only made of brown paper with a very, very little tobacco from the shop inside them."

Whereupon Miss Jessamine sent a servant to the churchyard, who found Tony Johnson lying on a tombstone, very sick, and having ceased to entertain any hopes of his own recovery.

If it could be possible that any "unpleasantness" could arise between two such amiable neighbors as Miss Jessamine and Mrs. Johnson, and if the still more incredible paradox can be that ladies may differ over a point on which they are agreed, that point was the admitted fact that Tony Johnson was "delicate"; and the difference lay chiefly in this: Mrs. Johnson said that Tony was delicate, — meaning that he was more finely strung, more sensitive, a properer subject for pampering and petting, than Jackanapes, and that, consequently, Jackanapes was to blame for leading Tony into scrapes which resulted in his being chilled, frightened, or (most frequently) sick. But when Miss Jessamine said that Tony Johnson was delicate, she meant that he was more puling, less manly, and less healthily brought up than Jackanapes, who, when they got into mischief together, was certainly not to blame because his friend could not get wet, sit a kicking donkey, ride in the giddy-go-round, bear the noise of

a cracker, or smoke brown paper with impunity, as he could.

Not that there was ever the slightest quarrel between the ladies. It never even came near it, except the day after Tony had been so very sick with riding Bucephalus¹ in the giddy-go-round. Mrs. Johnson had explained to Miss Jessamine that the reason Tony was so easily upset was the unusual sensitiveness (as a doctor had explained it to her) of the nervous centres in her family — “Fiddlestick!” So Mrs. Johnson understood Miss Jessamine to say; but it appeared that she only said “Treaclestick!”² — which is quite another thing, and of which Tony was undoubtedly fond.

It was at the Fair that Tony was made ill by riding on Bucephalus. Once a year the Goose Green became the scene of a carnival. First of all, carts and caravans were rumbling up all along, day and night. Jackanapes could hear them as he lay in bed, and could hardly sleep for speculating what booths and whirligigs he should find fairly established when he and his dog Spitfire went out after breakfast. As a matter of fact, he seldom had to wait so long for news of the Fair. The Postman knew the window out of which Jackanapes’ yellow head would come, and was ready with his report.

“Royal Theayter, Master Jackanapes, in the old place, but be careful o’ them seats, sir; they’re ricketier than ever. Two sweets³ and a ginger beer under the oak-tree, and the Flying Boats is just a-coming along the road.”

¹ Bucephalus was the horse of Alexander the Great.

² Treaclestick! Treacle is what we call molasses, so this means a stick of molasses candy.

³ Sweets, candy-booths.

No doubt it was partly because he had already suffered severely in the Flying Boats that Tony collapsed so quickly in the giddy-go-round. He only mounted Bucephalus (who was spotted, and had no tail) because Jackanapes urged him, and held out the ingenious hope that the round-and-round feeling would very likely cure the up-and-down sensation. It did not, however, and Tony tumbled off during the first revolution.

Jackanapes was not absolutely free from qualms; but having once mounted the Black Prince, he stuck to him as a horseman should. During his first round he waved his hat, and observed with some concern that the Black Prince had lost an ear since last Fair; at the second, he looked a little pale, but sat upright, though somewhat unnecessarily rigid; at the third round he shut his eyes. During the fourth his hat fell off, and he clasped his horse's neck. By the fifth he had laid his yellow head against the Black Prince's mane, and so clung anyhow till the hobby-horses stopped, when the proprietor assisted him to alight, and he sat down rather suddenly and said he had enjoyed it very much.

The Gray Goose always ran away at the first approach of the caravans, and never came back to the Green till there was nothing left of the Fair but foot-marks and oyster-shells. Running away was her pet principle; the only system, she maintained, by which you can live long and easily and lose nothing. If you run away when you see danger, you can come back when all is safe. Run quickly, return slowly, hold your head high, and gabble as loud as you can, and you'll preserve the respect of the Goose Green to a peaceful old age. Why should you struggle and get

hurt, if you can lower your head and not swerve, and not lose a feather? Why in the world should any one spoil the pleasure of life, or risk his skin, if he can help it?

“ ‘What’s the use?’

Said the Goose.”

Before answering which one might have to consider what world, which life, and whether one’s skin were a goose-skin; but the Gray Goose’s head would never have held all that.

Grass soon grows over footprints, and the village children took the oyster-shells to trim their gardens with; but the year after Tony rode Bucephalus there lingered another relic of Fair-time in which Jackanapes was deeply interested. “The Green” proper was originally only part of a straggling common, which in its turn merged into some wilder waste land where Gypsies sometimes squatted if the authorities would allow them, especially after the annual Fair. And it was after the Fair that Jackanapes, out rambling by himself, was knocked over by the Gypsy’s son riding the Gypsy’s red-haired pony at breakneck pace across the common.

Jackanapes got up and shook himself, none the worse except for being heels over head in love with the red-haired pony. What a rate he went at! How he spurned the ground with his nimble feet! How his red coat shone in the sunshine! And what bright eyes peeped out of his dark forelock as it was blown by the wind!

The Gypsy boy had had a fright, and he was willing enough to reward Jackanapes for not having been hurt, by consenting to let him have a ride.

“Do you mean to kill the little fine gentleman, and

swing us all on the gibbet, you rascal?" screamed the Gypsy mother, who came up just as Jackanapes and the pony set off.

"He would get on," replied her son. "It'll not kill him. He'll fall on his yellow head, and it's as tough as a cocoanut."

But Jackanapes did not fall. He stuck to the red-haired pony as he had stuck to the hobby-horse; but, oh, how different the delight of this wild gallop with flesh and blood! Just as his legs were beginning to feel as if he did not feel them, the Gypsy boy cried, "Lollo!" Round went the pony so unceremoniously that with as little ceremony Jackanapes clung to his neck; and he did not properly recover himself before Lollo stopped with a jerk at the place where they had started.

"Is his name Lollo?" asked Jackanapes, his hand lingering in the wiry mane.

"Yes."

"What does Lollo mean?"

"Red."

"Is Lollo your pony?"

"No. My father's." And the Gypsy boy led Lollo away.

At the first opportunity Jackanapes stole away again to the common. This time he saw the Gypsy father, smoking a dirty pipe.

"Lollo is your pony, is n't he?" said Jackanapes.

"Yes."

"He's a very nice one."

"He's a racer."

"You don't want to sell him, do you?"

"Fifteen pounds," said the Gypsy father; and Jackanapes sighed and went home again. That very

afternoon he and Tony rode the two donkeys; and Tony managed to get thrown, and even Jackanapes' donkey kicked. But it was jolting, clumsy work after the elastic swiftness and the dainty mischief of the red-haired pony.

A few days later, Miss Jessamine spoke very seriously to Jackanapes. She was a good deal agitated as she told him that his grandfather the General was coming to the Green, and that he must be on his very best behavior during the visit. If it had been feasible to leave off calling him Jackanapes and to get used to his baptismal name of Theodore before the day after to-morrow (when the General was due), it would have been satisfactory. But Miss Jessamine feared it would be impossible in practice, and she had scruples about it on principle. It would not seem quite truthful, although she had always most fully intended that he should be called Theodore when he had outgrown the ridiculous appropriateness of his nickname. The fact was that he had not outgrown it, but he must take care to remember who was meant when his grandfather said Theodore. Indeed, for that matter, he must take care all along.

"You are apt to be giddy, Jackanapes," said Miss Jessamine.

"Yes, aunt," said Jackanapes, thinking of the hobby-horses.

"You are a good boy, Jackanapes. Thank God, I can tell your grandfather that. An obedient boy, an honorable boy, and a kind-hearted boy. But you are — in short, you *are* a Boy, Jackanapes. And I hope," added Miss Jessamine, desperate with the result of experience, "that the General knows that Boys will be Boys."

What mischief could be foreseen, Jackanapes promised to guard against. He was to keep his clothes and his hands clean, to look over his catechism, not to put sticky things in his pockets, to keep that hair of his smooth ("It's the wind that blows it, aunty," said Jackanapes — "I'll send by the coach for some bear's-grease," said Miss Jessamine, tying a knot in her pocket handkerchief), — not to burst in at the parlor door, not to talk at the top of his voice, not to crumple his Sunday frill, and to sit quite quiet during the sermon, to be sure to say "sir" to the General, to be careful about rubbing his shoes on the door-mat, and to bring his lesson-books to his aunt at once that she might iron down the dogs' ears. The General arrived; and for the first day all went well, except that Jackanapes' hair was as wild as usual, for the hair-dresser had no bear's-grease left. He began to feel more at ease with his grandfather, and disposed to talk confidentially with him, as he did with the Postman. All that the General felt, it would take too long to tell; but the result was the same. He was disposed to talk confidentially with Jackanapes.

"Mons'ous pretty place, this," he said, looking out of the lattice on to the Green, where the grass was vivid with sunset and the shadows were long and peaceful.

"You should see it in Fair-week, sir," said Jackanapes, shaking his yellow mop, and leaning back in his one of the two Chippendale¹ armchairs in which they sat.

"A fine time that, eh?" said the General, with a twinkle in his left eye (the other was glass).

Jackanapes shook his hair once more. "I en-

¹ Chippendale was a noted English furniture maker.

joyed this last one the best of all," he said. "I'd so much money."

"By George, it's not a common complaint in these bad times. How much had ye?"

"I'd two shillings. A new shilling aunty gave me, and elevenpence I had saved up, and a penny from the Postman, — *sir!*" added Jackanapes with a jerk, having forgotten it.

"And how did ye spend it, — *sir?*" inquired the General.

Jackanapes spread his ten fingers on the arms of his chair, and shut his eyes that he might count the more conscientiously.

"Watch-stand for aunty, threepence. Trumpet for myself, twopence; that's fivepence. Gingersnaps for Tony, twopence, and a mug with a Grenadier on for the Postman, fourpence; that's elevenpence. Shooting-gallery a penny; that's a shilling. Giddy-go-round, a penny; that's one and a penny. Treating Tony, one and twopence. Flying Boats (Tony paid for himself), a penny, one and threepence. Shooting-gallery again, one and fourpence; Fat Woman a penny, one and fivepence. Giddy-go-round again, one and sixpence. Shooting-gallery, one and sevenpence. Treating Tony, and then he would n't shoot, so I did, one and eightpence. Living Skeleton, a penny — no, Tony treated me, the Living Skeleton does n't count. Skittles,¹ a penny, one and ninepence. Mermaid (but when we got inside she was dead), a penny, one and tenpence. Theatre, a penny (Priscilla Partington, or the Green Lane Murder. A beautiful young lady, sir, with pink cheeks and a real

¹ **Skittles** is an English game like ninepins, but played with wooden disks instead of balls.

pistol); that's one and elevenpence. Ginger beer, a penny (I *was* so thirsty!), two shillings. And then the shooting-gallery man gave me a turn for nothing, because, he said, I was a real gentleman, and spent my money like a man."

"So you do, sir, so you do!" cried the General. "Egad, sir, you spent it like a prince. And now I suppose you 've not a penny in your pocket?"

"Yes, I have," said Jackanapes. "Two pennies. They are saving up." And Jackanapes jingled them with his hand.

"You don't want money except at Fair-times, I suppose?" said the General.

Jackanapes shook his mop.

"If I could have as much as I want, I should know what to buy," said he.

"And how much do you want, if you could get it?"

"Wait a minute, sir, till I think what twopence from fifteen pounds leaves. Two from nothing you can't, but borrow twelve. Two from twelve, ten, and carry one. Please remember ten, sir, when I ask you. One from nothing you can't, borrow twenty. One from twenty nineteen, and carry one. One from fifteen, fourteen. Fourteen pounds nineteen and—what did I tell you to remember?"

"Ten," said the General.

"Fourteen pounds nineteen shillings and tenpence, then, is what I want," said Jackanapes.

"God bless my soul! what for?"

"To buy Lollo with. Lollo means red, sir. The Gypsy's red-haired pony, sir. Oh, he *is* beautiful! You should see his coat in the sunshine! You should see his mane! You should see his tail! Such little

feet, sir, and they go like lightning! Such a dear face, too, and eyes like a mouse! But he's a racer, and the Gypsy wants fifteen pounds for him."

"If he's a racer you could n't ride him. Could you?"

"No—o, sir, but I can stick to him. I did the other day."

"The dooce you did! Well, I'm fond of riding myself; and if the beast is as good as you say, he might suit me."

"You're too tall for Lollo, I think," said Jackanapes, measuring his grandfather with his eye.

"I can double up my legs, I suppose. We'll have a look at him to-morrow."

"Don't you weigh a good deal?" asked Jackanapes.

"Chiefly waistcoats," said the General, slapping the breast of his military frock coat. "We'll have the little racer on the Green the first thing in the morning. Glad you mentioned it, grandson; glad you mentioned it."

The General was as good as his word. Next morning the Gypsy and Lollo, Miss Jessamine, Jackanapes and his grandfather and his dog Spitfire, were all gathered at one end of the Green in a group, which so aroused the innocent curiosity of Mrs. Johnson, as she saw it from one of her upper windows, that she and the children took their early promenade rather earlier than usual. The General talked to the Gypsy, and Jackanapes fondled Lollo's mane, and did not know whether he should be more glad or miserable if his grandfather bought him.

"Jackanapes!"

"Yes, sir!"

"I've bought Lollo, but I believe you were right. He hardly stands high enough for me. If you can ride him to the other end of the Green, I'll give him to you."

How Jackanapes tumbled on to Lollo's back he never knew. He had just gathered up the reins when the Gypsy father took him by the arm.

"If you want to make Lollo go fast, my little gentleman —"

"I can make him go!" said Jackanapes; and drawing from his pocket the trumpet he had bought in the Fair, he blew a blast both loud and shrill.

Away went Lollo, and away went Jackanapes' hat. His golden hair flew out, an aureole from which his cheeks shone red and distended with trumpeting. Away went Spitfire, mad with the rapture of the race and the wind in his silky ears. Away went the geese, the cocks, the hens, and the whole family of Johnson. Lucy clung to her mamma, Jane saved Emily by the gathers of her gown, and Tony saved himself by a somersault.

The Gray Goose was just returning when Jackanapes and Lollo rode back, Spitfire panting behind.

"Good, my little gentleman, good!" said the Gypsy. "You were born to the saddle. You've the flat thigh, the strong knee, the wiry back, and the light caressing hand; all you want is to learn the whisper. Come here!"

"What was that dirty fellow talking about, grandson?" asked the General.

"I can't tell you, sir. It's a secret."

The two were sitting in the window again, in the Chippendale armchairs, the General devouring every

line of his grandson's face, with strange spasms crossing his own.

"You must love your aunt very much, Jackanapes?"

"I do, sir," said Jackanapes warmly.

"And whom do you love next best to your aunt?"

The ties of blood were pressing very strongly on the General himself, and perhaps he thought of Lollo. But love is not bought in a day, even with fourteen pounds nineteen shillings and tenpence. Jackanapes answered quite readily, "The Postman."

"Why the Postman?"

"He knew my father," said Jackanapes, "and he tells me about him and about his black mare. My father was a soldier, a brave soldier. He died at Waterloo. When I grow up I want to be a soldier, too."

"So you shall, my boy; so you shall."

"Thank you, grandfather. Auntie doesn't want me to be a soldier, for fear of being killed."

"Bless my life! Would she have you get into a feather-bed and stay there? Why, you might be killed by a thunderbolt if you were a butter merchant!"

"So I might. I shall tell her so. What a funny fellow you are, sir! I say, do you think my father knew the Gypsy's secret? The Postman says he used to whisper to his black mare."

"Your father was taught to ride, as a child, by one of those horsemen of the East who swoop and dart and wheel about a plain like swallows in autumn. Grandson! love me a little, too. I can tell you more about your father than the Postman can."

"I do love you," said Jackanapes. "Before you came I was frightened. I'd no notion you were so nice."

"Love me always, boy, whatever I do or leave undone. And — God help me! — whatever you do or leave undone, I'll love you. There shall never be a cloud between us for a day; no, sir, not for an hour. We're imperfect enough, all of us — we need n't be so bitter; and life is uncertain enough at its safest — we need n't waste its opportunities. God bless my soul! Here sit I, after a dozen battles and some of the worst climates in the world, and by yonder lych gate¹ lies your mother, who did n't move five miles, I suppose, from your aunt's apron-strings, — dead in her teens; my golden-haired daughter, whom I never saw!"

Jackanapes was terribly troubled.

"Don't cry, grandfather," he pleaded, his own blue eyes round with tears. "I will love you very much, and I will try to be very good. But I should like to be a soldier."

"You shall, my boy; you shall. You've more claims for a commission than you know of. Cavalry, I suppose; eh, ye young Jackanapes? Well, well; if you live to be an honor to your country, this old heart shall grow young again with pride for you; and if you die in the service of your country — egad, sir, it can but break for ye!"

And beating the region which he said was all waistcoats, as if they stifled him, the old man got up and strode out on to the Green.

¹ A lych gate is a gate covered by a roof, and common in English churchyards.

CHAPTER IV.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. — JOHN xv. 13.

TWENTY and odd years later the Gray Goose was still alive, and in full possession of her faculties, such as they were. She lived slowly and carefully, and she lived long. So did Miss Jessamine ; but the General was dead.

He had lived on the Green for many years, during which he and the Postman saluted each other with a punctiliousness that it almost drilled one to witness. He would have completely spoiled Jackanapes if Miss Jessamine's conscience would have let him ; otherwise he somewhat dragooned¹ his neighbors, and was as positive about parish matters as a ratepayer² about the army ; — a stormy-tempered, tender-hearted soldier, irritable with the suffering of the wounds of which he never spoke, whom all the village followed to his grave with tears.

The General's death was a great shock to Miss Jessamine, and her nephew stayed with her for some little time after the funeral. Then he was obliged to join his regiment, which was ordered abroad.

One effect of the conquest which the General had gained over the affections of the village was a considerable abatement of the popular prejudice against "the military." Indeed, the village was now somewhat importantly represented in the army. There was the General himself, and the Postman, and the Black Captain's tablet in the church, and Jackanapes, and Tony Johnson, and a Trumpeter.

¹ Dragooned, bullied.

² Ratepayer, taxpayer.

Tony Johnson had no more natural taste for fighting than for riding, but he was as devoted as ever to Jackanapes. And that was how it came about that Mr. Johnson bought him a commission in the same cavalry regiment that the General's grandson (whose commission had been given him by the Iron Duke¹) was in ; and that he was quite content to be the butt of the mess where Jackanapes was the hero ; and that when Jackanapes wrote home to Miss Jessamine, Tony wrote with the same purpose to his mother, — namely, to demand her congratulations that they were on active service at last, and were ordered to the front. And he added a postscript, to the effect that she could have no idea how popular Jackanapes was, nor how splendidly he rode the wonderful red charger which he had named after his old friend Lollo.

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 “Sound ‘Retire!’”

A Boy Trumpeter, grave with the weight of responsibilities and accoutrements beyond his years, and stained so that his own mother would not have known him, with the sweat and dust of battle, did as he was bid ; and then, pushing his trumpet pettishly aside, adjusted his weary legs for the hundredth time to the horse which was a world too big for him and muttering, “’T ain’t a pretty tune,” tried to see something of this his first engagement before it came to an end.

Being literally in the thick of it, he could hardly have seen less or known less of what happened in that particular skirmish if he had been at home in England. For many good reasons, — including dust and smoke, and that what attention he dared distract from his

¹ The “Iron Duke” was the popular name for the Duke of Wellington, victor at Waterloo.

commanding officer was pretty well absorbed by keeping his hard-mouthed troop-horse in hand, under pain of execration by his neighbors in the *mêlée*.¹ By and by, when the newspapers came out, if he could get a look at one before it was thumbed to bits, he would learn that the enemy had appeared from ambush in overwhelming numbers, and that orders had been given to fall back, which was done slowly and in good order, the men fighting as they retired.

Born and bred on the Goose Green, the youngest of Mr. Johnson's gardener's numerous offspring, the boy had given his family "no peace" till they let him "go for a soldier" with Master Tony and Master Jackanapes. They consented at last, with more tears than they shed when an elder son was sent to jail for poaching; and the boy was perfectly happy in his life, and full of *esprit de corps*.² It was this which had been wounded by having to sound retreat for "the young gentlemen's regiment," the first time he served with it before the enemy; and he was also harassed by having completely lost sight of Master Tony. There had been some hard fighting before the backward movement began, and he had caught sight of him once, but not since. On the other hand, all the pulses of his village pride had been stirred by one or two visions of Master Jackanapes whirling about on his wonderful horse. He had been easy to distinguish, since an eccentric blow had bared his head without hurting it; for his close golden mop of hair gleamed in the hot sunshine as brightly as the steel of the sword flashing round it.

Of the missiles that fell pretty thickly, the Boy

¹ *Mêlée*, confused hand-to-hand encounter.

² *Esprit de corps*, pride in his regiment.

Trumpeter did not take much notice. First, one can't attend to everything, and his hands were full; secondly, one gets used to anything; thirdly, experience soon teaches one, in spite of proverbs, how very few bullets find their billet.¹ Far more unnerving is the mere suspicion of fear or even of anxiety in the human mass around you. The Boy was beginning to wonder if there were any dark reason for the increasing pressure, and whether they would be allowed to move back more quickly, when the smoke in front lifted for a moment, and he could see the plain, and the enemy's line some two hundred yards away. And across the plain between them, he saw Master Jackanapes galloping alone at the top of Lollo's speed, their faces to the enemy, his golden head at Lollo's ear. But at this moment noise and smoke seemed to burst out on every side; the officer shouted to him to sound "Retire!" and between trumpeting and bumping about on his horse, he saw and heard no more of the incidents of his first battle.

Tony Johnson was always unlucky with horses, from the days of the giddy-go-round onwards. On this day — of all days in the year — his own horse was on the sick list, and he had to ride an inferior, ill-conditioned beast, and fell off that, at the very moment when it was a matter of life and death to be able to ride away. The horse fell on him, but struggled up again, and Tony managed to keep hold of it. It was in trying to remount that he discovered, by helplessness and anguish, that one of his legs was crushed and broken, and that no feat of which he was master would get him into the saddle. Not able

¹ The old proverb referred to is, "Every bullet has its billet;" that is, will find its goal.

even to stand alone, awkwardly, agonizingly, unable to mount his restive horse, his life was yet so strong within him ! And on one side of him rolled the dust and cloud-smoke of his advancing foes, and on the other, that which covered his retreating friends.

He turned one piteous gaze after them, with a bitter twinge, not of reproach, but of loneliness ; and then, dragging himself up by the side of his horse, he turned the other way and drew out his pistol, and waited for the end. Whether he waited seconds or minutes he never knew, before some one gripped him by the arm.

“ *Jackanapes ! * God bless you ! It’s my left leg. If you could get me on —* ”

It was like Tony’s luck that his pistol went off at his horse’s tail, and made it plunge ; but Jackanapes threw him across the saddle.

“ Hold on anyhow, and stick your spur in. I’ll lead him. Keep your head down ; they’re firing high.”

And Jackanapes laid his head down — to Lollo’s ear.

It was when they were fairly off that a sudden upspringing of the enemy in all directions had made it necessary to change the gradual retirement of our force into as rapid a retreat as possible. And when Jackanapes became aware of this, and felt the lagging and swerving of Tony’s horse, he began to wish he had thrown his friend across his own saddle and left their lives to Lollo.

When Tony became aware of it, several things came into his head : 1, That the dangers of their ride for life were now more than doubled ; 2, that if Jackanapes and Lollo were not burdened with him they would undoubtedly escape ; 3, that Jackanapes’

life was infinitely valuable, and his — Tony's — was not ; 4, that this, if he could seize it, was the supremest of all the moments in which he had tried to assume the virtues which Jackanapes had by nature ; and that if he could be courageous and unselfish now —

He caught at his own reins and spoke very loud, —

“Jackanapes ! It won't do. You and Lollo must go on. Tell the fellows I gave you back to them with all my heart. Jackanapes, if you love me, leave me !”

There was a daffodil light over the evening sky in front of them, and it shone strangely on Jackanapes' hair and face. He turned with an odd look in his eyes that a vainer man than Tony Johnson might have taken for brotherly pride. Then he shook his mop, and laughed at him.

“*Leave you ?* To save my skin ? No, Tony, not to save my soul !”

CHAPTER V.

MR. VALIANT *summoned. His Will. His last Words.*

Then said he, “I am going to my Fathers. . . . My Sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my Courage and Skill to him that can get it.” . . . And as he went down deeper, he said, “Grave, where is thy Victory ?”

So he passed over, and all the Trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

BUNYAN : *Pilgrim's Progress.*

COMING out of a hospital tent, at headquarters, the surgeon caromed against, and rebounded from, another officer, — a sallow man, not young, with a face worn more by ungentle experiences than by age, with

weary eyes that kept their own counsel, iron-gray hair, and a mustache that was as if a raven had laid its wing across his lips and sealed them.

“Well?”

“Beg pardon, Major. Did n’t see you. Oh, compound fracture and bruises. But it’s all right; he’ll pull through.”

“Thank God.”

It was probably an involuntary expression; for prayer and praise were not much in the Major’s line, as a jerk of the surgeon’s head would have betrayed to an observer. He was a bright little man, with his feelings showing all over him, but with gallantry and contempt of death enough for both sides of his profession; who took a cool head, a white handkerchief, and a case of instruments, where other men went hot-blooded with weapons, and who was the biggest gossip, male or female, of the regiment. Not even the Major’s taciturnity daunted him.

“Did n’t think he’d as much pluck about him as he has. He’ll do all right if he does n’t fret himself into a fever about poor Jackanapes.”

“Whom are you talking about?” asked the Major hoarsely.

“Young Johnson. He —”

“What about Jackanapes?”

“Don’t you know? Sad business. Rode back for Johnson, and brought him in; but, monstrous ill luck, hit as they rode. Left lung —”

“Will he recover?”

“No. Sad business. What a frame — what limbs — what health — and what good looks! Finest young fellow —”

“Where is he?”

"In his own tent," said the surgeon sadly.

The Major wheeled and left him.

"Can I do anything else for you?"

"Nothing, thank you. Except — Major! I wish I could get you to appreciate Johnson."

"This is not an easy moment, Jackanapes."

"Let me tell you, sir, — *he* never will, — that if he could have driven me from him, he would be lying yonder at this moment, and I should be safe and sound."

The Major laid his hand over his mouth, as if to keep back a wish he would have been ashamed to utter.

"I've known old Tony from a child. He's a fool on impulse, a good man and a gentleman in principle. And he acts on principle, which it's not every — Some water, please! Thank you, sir. It's very hot, and yet one's feet get uncommonly cold. Oh, thank you, thank you. He's no fire-eater, but he has a trained conscience and a tender heart, and he'll do his duty when a braver and more selfish man might fail you. But he wants encouragement; and when I'm gone —"

"He shall have encouragement. You have my word for it. Can I do nothing else?"

"Yes, Major. A favor."

"Thank you, Jackanapes."

"Be Lollo's master, and love him as well as you can. He's used to it."

"Would n't you rather Johnson had him?"

The blue eyes twinkled in spite of mortal pain.

"Tony *rides* on principle, Major. His legs are bolsters, and will be to the end of the chapter. I could n't insult dear Lollo; but if you don't care —"

"While I live — which will be longer than I desire or deserve — Lollo shall want nothing but — you. I have too little tenderness for — My dear boy, you're faint. Can you spare me for a moment?"

"No, stay — Major!"

"What? What?"

"My head drifts so — if you would n't mind."

"Yes! Yes!"

"Say a prayer by me. Out loud, please; I am getting deaf."

"My dearest Jackanapes — my dear boy —"

"One of the Church Prayers — Parade Service,¹ you know —"

"I see. But the fact is — God forgive me, Jackanapes! — I'm a very different sort of fellow to some of you youngsters. Look here, let me fetch —"

But Jackanapes' hand was in his, and it would not let go.

There was a brief and bitter silence.

"'Pon my soul, I can only remember the little one at the end."

"Please," whispered Jackanapes.

Pressed by the conviction that what little he could do it was his duty to do, the Major, kneeling, bared his head, and spoke loudly, clearly, and very reverently, —

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ —"

Jackanapes moved his left hand to his right one, which still held the Major's —

"The love of God —"

And with that — Jackanapes died.

¹ Jackanapes wants one of the prayers he has been used to hearing at the service read by the chaplain before the regiment.

CHAPTER VI

Und so ist der blaue Himmel grösser als jedes Gewolk darin, und dauerhafter dazu.¹

JEAN PAUL RICHTER.

JACKANAPES' death was sad news for the Goose Green, a sorrow just qualified by honorable pride in his gallantry and devotion. Only the Cobbler dissented; but that was his way. He said he saw nothing in it but foolhardiness and vainglory. They might both have been killed, as easy as not; and then where would ye have been? A man's life was a man's life, and one life was as good as another. No one would catch him throwing his away. And, for that matter, Mrs. Johnson could spare a child a great deal better than Miss Jessamine.

But the parson preached Jackanapes' funeral sermon on the text, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it;" and all the village went and wept to hear him.

Nor did Miss Jessamine see her loss from the Cobbler's point of view. On the contrary, Mrs. Johnson said she never to her dying day should forget how, when she went to condole with her, the old lady came forward, with gentlewomanly self-control, and kissed her, and thanked God that her dear nephew's effort had been blessed with success, and that this sad war had made no gap in her friend's large and happy home circle.

"But she's a noble unselfish woman," sobbed Mrs.

¹ "And so the blue sky is greater than any cloud therein, and more enduring too."

Johnson, "and she taught Jackanapes to be the same; and that's how it is that my Tony has been spared to me. And it must be sheer goodness in Miss Jessamine, for what can she know of a mother's feelings? And I'm sure most people seem to think that if you've a large family you don't know one from another any more than they do, and that a lot of children are like a lot of store apples, — if one's taken it won't be missed."

Lollo, — the first Lollo, the Gypsy's Lollo, — very aged, draws Miss Jessamine's bath-chair slowly up and down the Goose Green in the sunshine.

The Ex-postman walks beside him, which Lollo tolerates to the level of his shoulder. If the Postman advances any nearer to his head, Lollo quickens his pace; and were the Postman to persist in the injudicious attempt, there is, as Miss Jessamine says, no knowing what might happen.

In the opinion of the Goose Green, Miss Jessamine has borne her troubles "wonderfully." Indeed, to-day, some of the less delicate and less intimate of those who see everything from the upper windows say (well, behind her back) that "the old lady seems quite lively with her military beaux again."

The meaning of this is, that Captain Johnson is leaning over one side of her chair, while by the other bends a brother officer who is staying with him, and who has manifested an extraordinary interest in Lollo.

He bends lower and lower, and Miss Jessamine calls to the Postman to request Lollo to be kind enough to stop, while she is fumbling for something which always hangs by her side, and has got entangled with her spectacles.

It is a twopenny trumpet, bought years ago in the

village fair ; and over it she and Captain Johnson tell, as best they can, between them, the story of Jackanapes' ride across Goose Green ; and how he won Lollo — the Gypsy's Lollo — the racer Lollo — dear Lollo — faithful Lollo — Lollo, the never vanquished — Lollo, the tender servant of his old mistress. And Lollo's ears twitch at every mention of his name.

Their hearer does not speak, but he never moves his eyes from the trumpet ; and when the tale is told, he lifts Miss Jessamine's hand and presses his heavy black mustache in silence to her trembling fingers.

The sun, setting gently to his rest, embroiders the sombre foliage of the oak-tree with threads of gold. The Gray Goose is sensible of an atmosphere of repose, and puts up one leg for the night. The grass glows with a more vivid green, and, in answer to a ringing call from Tony, his sisters, fluttering over the daisies in pale-hued muslins, come out of their ever-open door, like pretty pigeons from a dovecote.

And if the good gossips' eyes do not deceive them, all the Miss Johnsons and both the officers go wandering off into the lanes, where bryony wreaths still twine about the brambles.

.
A sorrowful story, and ending badly ?

Nay, Jackanapes, for the end is not yet.

A life wasted that might have been useful ?

Men who have died for men, in all ages, forgive the thought !

There is a heritage of heroic example and noble obligation, not reckoned in the Wealth of Nations, but essential to a nation's life ; the contempt of which, in any people, may, not slowly, mean even its commercial fall.

Very sweet are the uses of prosperity, the harvests of peace and progress, the fostering sunshine of health and happiness, and length of days in the land.

But there be things, — oh, sons of what has deserved the name of Great Britain, forget it not! “the good of” which and “the use of” which are beyond all calculation of worldly goods and earthly uses: things such as Love, and Honor, and the Soul of Man, which cannot be bought with a price, and which do not die with death. And they who would fain live happily ever after should not leave these things out of the lessons of their lives.

THE BROWNIES

A LITTLE girl sat sewing and crying on a garden seat. She had fair, floating hair, which the breeze blew into her eyes; and between the cloud of hair, and the mist of tears, she could not see her work very clearly. She neither tied up her locks, nor dried her eyes, however; for when one is miserable, one may as well be completely so.

“What is the matter?” said the Doctor, who was a friend of the Rector’s, and came into the garden whenever he pleased.

The Doctor was a tall stout man, with hair as black as crows’ feathers on the top, and gray underneath, and a bushy beard. When young, he had been slim and handsome, with wonderful eyes, which were wonderful still; but that was many years past. He had a great love for children, and this one was a particular friend of his.

“What is the matter?” said he.

“I’m in a row,” murmured the young lady through her veil; and the needle went in damp, and came out with a jerk, which is apt to result in what ladies called “puckering.”

“You are like London in a yellow fog,” said the Doctor, throwing himself on to the grass, “and it is very depressing to my feelings. What is the row about, and how came you to get into it?”

“We’re all in it,” was the reply; and apparently

the fog was thickening, for the voice grew less and less distinct—“the boys and everybody. It’s all about forgetting, and not putting away, and leaving about, and borrowing, and breaking, and that sort of thing. I’ve had father’s new pocket handkerchiefs to hem, and I’ve been out climbing with the boys, and kept forgetting and forgetting, and mother says I always forget; and I can’t help it. I forget to tidy his newspapers for him, and I forget to feed Puss, and I forgot these; besides, they’re a great bore, and mother gave them to Nurse to do, and this one was lost, and we found it this morning tossing about in the toy-cupboard.”

“It looks as if it had been taking violent exercise,” said the Doctor. “But what have the boys to do with it?”

“Why, then there was a regular turn out of the toys,” she explained, “and they’re all in a regular mess. You know we always go on till the last minute, and then things get crammed in anyhow. Mary and I did tidy them once or twice; but the boys never put anything away, you know, so what’s the good?”

“What, indeed!” said the Doctor. “And so you have complained of them?”

“Oh, no!” answered she. “We don’t get them into rows, unless they are very provoking; but some of the things were theirs, so everybody was sent for, and I was sent out to finish this, and they are all tidying. I don’t know when it will be done, for I have all this side to hem; and the soldier’s box is broken, and Noah is lost out of the Noah’s Ark, and so is one of the elephants and a guinea-pig, and so is the rocking-horse’s nose; and nobody knows what has become of Rutlandshire and the Wash, but they’re so

small, I don't wonder; only North America and Europe are gone, too."

The Doctor started up in affected horror. "Europe gone, did you say? Bless me! what will become of us!"

"Don't!" said the young lady, kicking petulantly with her dangling feet, and trying not to laugh. "You know I mean the puzzles; and if they were yours, you would n't like it."

"I don't half like it as it is," said the Doctor. "I am seriously alarmed. An earthquake is one thing: you have a good shaking, and settle down again. But Europe gone — lost — Why, here comes Deordie, I declare, looking much more cheerful than we do; let us humbly hope that Europe has been found. At present I feel like Aladdin when his palace had been transported by the magician; I don't know where I am."

"You're here, Doctor; are n't you?" asked the slow, curly-wigged brother, squatting himself on the grass.

"Is Europe found?" said the Doctor tragically.

"Yes," laughed Deordie. "I found it."

"You will be a great man," said the Doctor. "And — it is only common charity to ask — how about North America?"

"Found too," said Deordie. "But the Wash is completely lost."

"And my six shirts in it!" said the Doctor. "I sent them last Saturday as ever was. What a world we live in! Any more news? Poor Tiny here has been crying her eyes out."

"I'm so sorry, Tiny," said the brother. "But don't bother about it. It's all square now, and we're going to have a new shelf put up."

"Have you found everything?" asked Tiny.

"Well, not the Wash, you know. And the elephant and the guinea-pig are gone for good; so the other elephant and the other guinea-pig must walk together as a pair now. Noah was among the soldiers, and we have put the cavalry into a night-light box. Europe and North America were behind the bookcase; and, would you believe it? the rocking-horse's nose has turned up in the nursery oven."

"I can't believe it," said the Doctor. "The rocking-horse's nose could n't turn up, it was the purest Grecian, modelled from the Elgin marbles. Perhaps it was the heat that did it, though. However, you seem to have got through your troubles very well, Master Deordie. I wish poor Tiny were at the end of her task."

"So do I," said Deordie ruefully. "But I tell you what I've been thinking, Doctor. Nurse is always nagging at us, and we're always in rows of one sort or another, for doing this, and not doing that, and leaving our things about. But, you know, it's a horrid shame; for there are plenty of servants, and I don't see why we should be always bothering to do little things, and" —

"Oh! come to the point, please," said the Doctor; "you do go round the square so, in telling your stories, Deordie. What have you been thinking of?"

"Well," said Deordie, who was as good-tempered as he was slow, "the other day Nurse shut me up in the back nursery for borrowing her scissors and losing them; but I'd got 'Grimm' inside one of my knickerbockers, so when she locked the door, I sat down to read. And I read the story of the Shoe-

maker and the little Elves who came and did his work for him before he got up; and I thought it would be so jolly if we had some little Elves to do things instead of us."

"That's what Tommy Trout said," observed the Doctor.

"Who's Tommy Trout?" asked Deordie.

"Don't you know, Deor?" said Tiny. "It's the good boy who pulled the cat out of the what's-his-name."

'Who pulled her out?
Little Tommy Trout.'

Is it the same Tommy Trout, Doctor? I never heard anything else about him except his pulling the cat out; and I can't think how he did that."

"Let down the bucket for her, of course," said the Doctor. "But listen to me. If you will get that handkerchief done, and take it to your mother with a kiss, and not keep me waiting, I'll have you all to tea, and tell you the story of Tommy Trout."

"This very night?" shouted Deordie.

"This very night."

"Every one of us?" inquired the young gentleman with rapturous incredulity.

"Every one of you. — Now, Tiny, how about that work?"

"It's just done," said Tiny. — "Oh! Deordie, climb up behind, and hold back my hair, there's a darling, while I fasten off. Oh! Deor, you're pulling my hair out. Don't."

"I want to make a pig-tail," said Deor.

"You can't," said Tiny, with feminine contempt. "You can't plait. What's the good of asking boys to do anything? There! it's done at last."

Now go and ask mother if we may go. — Will you let me come, Doctor," she inquired, "if I do as you said?"

"To be sure I will," he answered. "Let me look at you. Your eyes are swollen with crying. How can you be such a silly little goose?"

"Did you never cry?" asked Tiny.

"When I was your age? Well, perhaps so."

"You've never cried since, surely," said Tiny.

The Doctor absolutely blushed.

"What do you think?" said he.

"Oh, of course not," she answered. "You've nothing to cry about. You're grown up, and you live all alone in a beautiful house, and you do as you like, and never get into rows, or have anybody but yourself to think about; and no nasty pocket handkerchiefs to hem."

"Very nice; eh, Deordie?" said the Doctor.

"Awfully jolly," said Deordie.

"Nothing else to wish for, eh?"

"I should keep harriers,¹ and not a poodle, if I were a man," said Deordie; "but I suppose you could, if you wanted to."

"Nothing to cry about, at any rate?"

"I should think not!" said Deordie. — "There's mother, though; let's go and ask her about the tea;" and off they ran.

The Doctor stretched his six feet of length upon the sward, dropped his gray head upon a little heap of newly mown grass, and looked up into the sky.

"Awfully jolly — no nasty pocket handkerchiefs to hem," said he, laughing to himself. "Nothing else to wish for; nothing to cry about."

¹ **Harriers** are small hounds used in hunting hares.

Nevertheless, he lay still, staring at the sky, till the smile died away, and tears came into his eyes. Fortunately, no one was there to see.

What could this "awfully jolly Doctor" be thinking of to make him cry? He was thinking of a gravestone in the churchyard close by, and of a story connected with this gravestone which was known to everybody in the place who was old enough to remember it. This story has nothing to do with the present story, so it ought not to be told.

And yet it has to do with the Doctor, and is very short, so it shall be put in, after all.

THE STORY OF A GRAVESTONE.

One early spring morning about twenty years before, a man going to his work at sunrise through the churchyard stopped by a flat stone which he had lately helped to lay down. The day before, a name had been cut on it, which he stayed to read; and below the name some one had scrawled a few words in pencil, which he read also — *Pitifully behold the sorrows of our hearts.* On the stone lay a pencil, and a few feet from it lay the Doctor, face downwards, as he had lain all night, with the hoar frost on his black hair.

Ah! these gravestones (they were ugly things in those days; not the light, hopeful, pretty crosses we set up now), how they seem remorselessly to imprison and keep our dear dead friends away from us! And yet they do not lie with a feather's weight upon the souls that are gone, while God only knows how heavily they press upon the souls that are left behind. Did the spirit whose body was with the dead stand that morning by the body whose spirit was with the dead,

and pity him? Let us only talk about what we know.

After this it was said that the Doctor had got a fever, and was dying, but he got better of it; and then that he was out of his mind, but he got better of that, and came out looking much as usual, except that his hair never seemed quite so black again, as if a little of that night's hoar frost still remained. And no further misfortune happened to him that I ever heard of; and as time went on he grew a beard, and got stout, and kept a German poodle, and gave tea-parties to other people's children. As to the gravestone story, whatever it was to him at the end of twenty years, it was a great convenience to his friends; for when he said anything they did n't agree with, or did anything they could n't understand, or did n't say or do what was expected of him, what could be easier or more conclusive than to shake one's head and say,—

“The fact is, our Doctor has been a little odd, *ever since*—!”

THE DOCTOR'S TEA-PARTY.

There is one great advantage attendant upon invitations to tea with a doctor. No objections can be raised on the score of health. It is obvious that it must be fine enough to go out when the Doctor asks you, and that his tea-cakes may be eaten with perfect impunity.

Those tea-cakes were always good; to-night they were utterly delicious; there was a perfect *abandon* of currants, and the amount of citron peel was enervating to behold. Then the housekeeper waited in awful splendor, and yet the Doctor's authority over her seemed as absolute as if he were an Eastern despot. Deordie must be excused for believing in the

charms of living alone. It certainly has its advantages. The limited sphere of duty conduces to discipline in the household, demand does not exceed supply in the article of waiting, and there is not that general scrimmage of conflicting interests which besets a large family in the most favored circumstances. The housekeeper waits in black silk, and looks as if she had no meaner occupation than to sit in a rocking-chair, and dream of damson cheese.

Rustling, hospitable, and subservient, this one retired at last, and —

“Now,” said the Doctor, “for the veranda ; and to look at the moon.”

The company adjourned with a rush, the rear being brought up by the poodle, who seemed quite used to the proceedings ; and there under the veranda, framed with passion flowers and geraniums, the Doctor had gathered mats, rugs, cushions, and armchairs, for the party ; while far up in the sky a yellow-faced harvest moon looked down in awful benignity.

“Now,” said the Doctor, “take your seats. Ladies first, and gentlemen afterwards. Mary and Tiny race for the American rocking-chair. Well done ! Of course it will hold both. Now, boys, shake down. No one is to sit on the stone, or put their feet on the grass ; and when you’re ready, I’ll begin.”

“We’re ready,” said the girls.

The boys shook down in a few minutes more, and the Doctor began the story of —

THE BROWNIES.

“Bairns are a burden,” said the Tailor to himself as he sat at work. He lived in a village on some of the glorious moors of the north of England ; and

by bairns he meant children, as every Northman knows.

"Bairns are a burden," and he sighed.

"Bairns are a blessing," said the old lady in the window. "It is the family motto. The Trouts have had large families and good luck for generations; that is, till your grandfather's time. He had one only son. I married him. He was a good husband, but he had been a spoilt child. He had always been used to be waited upon, and he could n't fash¹ to look after the farm when it was his own. We had six children. They are all dead but you, who were the youngest. You were bound to a tailor. When the farm came into your hands, your wife died, and you have never looked up since. The land is sold now, but not the house. No! no! you're right enough there; but you've had your troubles, son Thomas, and the lads *are* idle!"

It was the Tailor's mother who spoke. She was a very old woman, and helpless. She was not quite so bright in her intellect as she had been, and got muddled over things that had lately happened; but she had a clear memory for what was long past, and was very pertinacious in her opinions. She knew the private history of almost every family in the place, and who of the Trouts were buried under which old stones in the churchyard; and had more tales of ghosts, doubles, warnings, fairies, witches, hobgoblins, and such like, than even her grandchildren had ever come to the end of. Her hands trembled with age, and she regretted this for nothing more than for the danger it brought her into of spilling the salt.² She was past housework, but all day she sat knitting hearth-rugs

¹ **Fash**, trouble.

² Spilling the salt is supposed to bring ill luck.

out of the bits and scraps of cloth that were shred in the tailoring. How far she believed in the wonderful tales she told, and the odd little charms she practised, no one exactly knew; but the older she grew, the stranger were the things she remembered, and the more testy she was if any one doubted their truth.

“Bairns are a blessing!” said she. “It is the family motto.”

“*Are they?*” said the Tailor emphatically.

He had a high respect for his mother, and did not like to contradict her, but he held his own opinion, based upon personal experience; and not being a metaphysician, did not understand that it is safer to found opinions on principles than on experience, since experience may alter, but principles cannot.

“Look at Tommy,” he broke out suddenly. “That boy does nothing but whittle sticks from morning till night. I have almost to lug him out of bed o’ mornings. If I send him an errand, he loiters; I’d better have gone myself. If I set him to do anything, I have to tell him everything; I could sooner do it myself. And if he does work, it’s done so unwillingly, with such a poor grace; better, far better, to do it myself. What housework do the boys ever do but looking after the baby? And this afternoon she was asleep in the cradle, and off they went, and when she awoke, *I* must leave my work to take her. *I* gave her her supper, and put her to bed. And what with what they want and I have to get, and what they take out to play with and lose, and what they bring in to play with and leave about, bairns give some trouble, Mother, and I’ve not an easy life of it. The pay is poor enough when one can get the work, and the work is hard enough when one has a clear day to do it in; but housekeep-

GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

ing and bairn-minding don't leave a man much time for his trade. No! no! Ma'am, the luck of the Trouts is gone, and 'Bairns are a burden' is the motto now. Though they are one's own," he muttered to himself, "and not bad ones, and I did hope once would have been a blessing."

"There's Johnnie," murmured the old lady dreamily. "He has a face like an apple."

"And is about as useful," said the Tailor. "He might have been different, but his brother leads him by the nose."

His brother led him in as the Tailor spoke, not literally by his snub, though, but by the hand. They were a handsome pair, this lazy couple. Johnnie especially had the largest and roundest of foreheads, the reddest of cheeks, the brightest of eyes, the quaintest and most twitchy of chins, and looked altogether like a gutta-percha cherub in a chronic state of longitudinal squeeze.¹ They were locked together by two grubby paws, and had each an armful of moss, which they deposited on the floor as they came in.

"I've swept this floor once to-day," said the father, "and I'm not going to do it again. Put that rubbish outside."

"Move it, Johnnie!" said his brother, seating himself on a stool, and taking out his knife and a piece of wood, at which he cut and sliced; while the apple-cheeked Johnnie stumbled and stamped over the moss, and scraped it out on to the doorstep, leaving long trails of earth behind him, and then sat down also.

"And those chips the same," added the Tailor; "I will *not* clear up the litter you lads make."

"Pick 'em up, Johnnie," said Thomas Trout, junior,

¹ Longitudinal squeeze, stretched lengthwise.

with an exasperated sigh ; and the apple tumbled up, rolled after the flying chips, and tumbled down again.

“ Is there any supper, Father ? ” asked Tommy.

“ No, there is not, Sir, unless you know how to get it,” said the Tailor ; and taking his pipe, he went out of the house.

“ Is there really nothing to eat, Granny ? ” asked the boy.

“ No, my bairn, only some bread for breakfast to-morrow.”

“ What makes Father so cross, Granny ? ”

“ He’s wearied, and you don’t help him, my dear.”

“ What could I do, Grandmother ? ”

“ Many little things, if you tried,” said the old lady. “ He spent half an hour to-day, while you were on the moor, getting turf for the fire, and you could have got it just as well, and he been at his work.”

“ He never told me,” said Tommy.

“ You might help me a bit just now, if you would, my laddie,” said the old lady coaxingly ; “ these bits of cloth want tearing into lengths, and if you get ’em ready, I can go on knitting. There’ll be some food when this mat is done and sold.”

“ I’ll try,” said Tommy, lounging up with desperate resignation. “ Hold my knife, Johnnie. Father’s been cross, and everything has been miserable, ever since the farm was sold. I wish I were a big man, and could make a fortune. — Will that do, Granny ? ”

The old lady put down her knitting and looked. “ My dear, that’s too short. Bless me ! I gave the lad a piece to measure by.”

“ I thought it was the same length. Oh, dear ! I am so tired ; ” and he propped himself against the old lady’s chair.

"My dear! don't lean so! you'll tittle me over!" she shrieked.

"I beg your pardon, Grandmother. Will *that* do?"

"It's that much too long."

"Tear that bit off. Now it's all right."

"But, my dear, that wastes it. Now that bit is of no use. There goes my knitting, you awkward lad!"

"Johnnie, pick it up! — Oh, Grandmother, I *am* so hungry!"

The boy's eyes filled with tears, and the old lady was melted in an instant.

"What can I do for you, my poor bairns?" said she. "There, never mind the scraps, Tommy."

"Tell us a tale, Granny. If you told us a new one, I should n't keep thinking of that bread in the cupboard. — Come, Johnnie, and sit against me. Now then!"

"I doubt if there's one of my old-world cracks¹ I haven't told you," said the old lady, "unless it's a queer ghost story was told me years ago of that house in the hollow with the blocked-up windows."

"Oh! not ghosts!" Tommy broke in; "we've had so many. I know it was a rattling, or a scratching, or a knocking, or a figure in white; and if it turns out a tombstone or a white petticoat, I hate it."

"It was nothing of the sort as a tombstone," said the old lady with dignity. "It's a good half-mile from the churchyard. And as to white petticoats, there was n't a female in the house; he would n't have one; and his victuals came in by the pantry window. But never mind! Though it's as true as a sermon."

Johnnie lifted his head from his brother's knee.

¹ Old-world cracks, old-fashioned tales.

"Let Granny tell what she likes, Tommy. It's a new ghost, and I should like to know who he was, and why his victuals came in by the window."

"I don't like a story about victuals," sulked Tommy. "It makes me think of the bread. Oh, Granny dear! do tell us a fairy story. You never will tell us about the Fairies, and I know you know."

"Hush! hush!" said the old lady. "There's Miss Surbiton's Love Letter, and her Dreadful End."

"I know Miss Surbiton, Granny. I think she was a goose. Why won't you tell us about the Fairies?"

"Hush! hush! my dear. There's the Clerk and the Corpse-candles."

"I know the Corpse-candles, Granny. Besides, they make Johnnie dream, and he wakes me to keep him company. *Why* won't you tell us about the Fairies?"

"My dear, they don't like it," said the old lady.

"Oh, Granny dear, why don't they? Do tell! I should n't think of the bread a bit, if you told us about the Fairies. I know nothing about them."

"He lived in this house long enough," said the old lady. "But it's not lucky to name him."

"Oh, Granny, we are so hungry and miserable, what can it matter?"

"Well, that's true enough," she sighed. "Trouts' luck is gone; it went with the Brownie, I believe."

"Was that *he*, Granny?"

"Yes, my dear, he lived with the Trouts for several generations."

"What was he like, Granny?"

"Like a little man, they say, my dear."

"What did he do?"

"He came in before the family were up, and swept

up the hearth, and lighted the fire, and set out the breakfast, and tidied the room, and did all sorts of housework. But he never would be seen, and was off before they could catch him. But they could hear him laughing and playing about the house sometimes."

"What a darling! Did they give him any wages, Granny?"

"No! my dear. He did it for love. They set a pancheon¹ of clear water for him overnight, and now and then a bowl of bread and milk, or cream. He liked that, for he was very dainty. Sometimes he left a bit of money in the water. Sometimes he weeded the garden, or threshed the corn. He saved endless trouble, both to men and maids."

"Oh, Granny! why did he go?"

"The maids caught sight of him one night, my dear, and his coat was so ragged that they got a new suit and a linen shirt for him, and laid them by the bread and milk bowl. But when Brownie saw the things, he put them on, and dancing round the kitchen, sang, —

"What have we here? Hemten hamten!
Here will I never more tread nor stampen,"

and so danced through the door, and never came back again."

"Oh, Grandmother! But why not? Did n't he like the new clothes?"

"The Old Owl knows, my dear; I don't."

"Who's the Old Owl, Granny?"

"I don't exactly know, my dear. It's what my mother used to say when we asked anything that puzzled her. It was said that the Old Owl was Nanny

¹ Pancheon, pannikin, little pan.

Besom¹ (a witch, my dear!), who took the shape of a bird, but could n't change her voice, and that that's why the owl sits silent all day for fear she should betray herself by speaking, and has no singing voice like other birds. Many people used to go and consult the Old Owl at moonrise, in my young days."

"Did you ever go, Granny?"

"Once, very nearly, my dear."

"Oh! tell us, Granny dear. — There are no Corpse-candles, Johnnie; it's only moonlight," he added consolingly, as Johnnie crept closer to his knee, and pricked his little red ears.

"It was when your grandfather was courting me, my dears," said the old lady, "and I could n't quite make up my mind. So I went to my mother, and said, 'He's this on the one side, but then he's that on the other, and so on. Shall I say yes or no?' And my mother said, 'The Old Owl knows;' for she was fairly puzzled. So says I, 'I'll go and ask her to-night, as sure as the moon rises.'"

"So at moonrise I went, and there in the white light by the gate stood your grandfather. 'What are you doing here at this time o' night?' says I. 'Watching your window,' says he. 'What are *you* doing here at this time o' night?' 'The Old Owl knows,' said I, and burst out crying."

"What for?" said Johnnie.

"I can't rightly tell you, my dear," said the old lady, "but it gave me such a turn to see him. And without more ado your grandfather kissed me. 'How dare you?' said I. 'What do you mean?' 'The Old Owl knows,' said he. So we never went."

¹ A *besom* is a heavy broom made of twigs — just the sort which witches were supposed to ride.

"How stupid!" said Tommy.

"Tell us more about Brownie, please," said Johnnie. "Did he ever live with anybody else?"

"There are plenty of Brownies," said the old lady, "or used to be in my mother's young days. Some houses had several."

"Oh! I wish ours would come back!" cried both the boys in chorus. "He'd —

"Tidy the room," said Johnnie.

"Fetch the turf," said Tommy.

"Pick up the chips," said Johnnie.

"Sort your scraps," said Tommy.

"And do everything. Oh! I wish he had n't gone away."

"What's that?" said the Tailor, coming in at this moment.

"It's the Brownie, Father," said Tommy. "We are so sorry he went, and do so wish we had one."

"What nonsense have you been telling them, Mother?" asked the Tailor.

"Heighty teighty," said the old lady, bristling. "Nonsense, indeed! As good men as you, Son Thomas, would as soon have jumped off the crags as spoken lightly of *them*, in my mother's young days."

"Well, well," said the Tailor, "I beg their pardon. They never did aught for me, whatever they did for my forbears;¹ but they're as welcome to the old place as ever, if they choose to come. There's plenty to do."

"Would you mind our setting a pan of water, Father?" asked Tommy very gently. "There's no bread and milk."

¹ Forbears, ancestors.

"You may set what you like, my lad," said the Tailor; "and I wish there were bread and milk for your sakes, Bairns. You should have it, had I got it. But go to bed now."

They lugged out a pancheon, and filled it with more dexterity than usual, and then went off to bed, leaving the knife in one corner, the wood in another, and a few splashes of water in their track.

There was more room than comfort in the ruined old farmhouse, and the two boys slept on a bed of cut heather, in what had been the old malt loft. Johnnie was soon in the land of dreams, growing rosier and rosier as he slept, a tumbled apple among the gray heather. But not so lazy Tommy. The idea of a domesticated Brownie had taken full possession of his mind; and whither Brownie had gone, where he might be found, and what would induce him to return, were mysteries he longed to solve. "There's an owl living in the old shed by the mere,"¹ he thought. "It may be the Old Owl herself, and she knows, Granny says. When father's gone to bed, and the moon rises, I'll go." Meanwhile he lay down.

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The moon rose like gold, and went up into the heavens like silver, flooding the moors with a pale ghostly light, taking the color out of the heather, and painting black shadows under the stone walls. Tommy opened his eyes, and ran to the window. "The moon has risen," said he, and crept softly down the ladder, through the kitchen, where was the pan of water, but no Brownie, and so out on to the moor. The air was fresh, not to say chilly; but it

¹ Mere, lake.

was a glorious night, though everything but the wind and Tommy seemed asleep. The stones, the walls, the gleaming lanes, were so intensely still, the church tower in the valley seemed awake and watching, but silent; the houses in the village round it had all their eyes shut, that is, their window blinds down; and it seemed to Tommy as if the very moors had drawn white sheets over them, and lay sleeping also.

"Hoot! hoot!" said a voice from the fir plantation behind him. Somebody else was awake, then. "It's the Old Owl," said Tommy; and there she came, swinging heavily across the moor with a flapping, stately flight, and sailed into the shed by the mere. The old lady moved faster than she seemed to do, and though Tommy ran hard she was in the shed some time before him. When he got in, no bird was to be seen, but he heard a crunching sound from above, and looking up, there sat the Old Owl, pecking and tearing and munching at some shapeless black object, and blinking at him — Tommy — with yellow eyes.

"Oh, dear!" said Tommy, for he didn't much like it.

The Old Owl dropped the black mass on to the floor; and Tommy did not care somehow to examine it.

"Come up! come up!" said she hoarsely.

She could speak, then! Beyond all doubt it was *the* Old Owl, and none other. Tommy shuddered.

"Come up here! come up here!" said the Old Owl.

The Old Owl sat on a beam that ran across the shed. Tommy had often climbed up for fun; and he climbed up now, and sat face to face with her,

and thought her eyes looked as if they were made of flame.

"Kiss my fluffy face," said the Owl.

Her eyes were going round like flaming catherine wheels,¹ but there are certain requests which one has not the option of refusing. Tommy crept nearer, and put his lips to the round face out of which the eyes shone. Oh! it was so downy and warm, so soft, so indescribably soft. Tommy's lips sank into it, and could n't get to the bottom. It was unfathomable feathers and fluffiness.

"Now, what do you want?" said the Owl.

"Please," said Tommy, who felt rather reassured, "can you tell me where to find the Brownies, and how to get one to come and live with us?"

"Oohoo!" said the Owl, "that's it, is it? I know of three Brownies."

"Hurrah!" said Tommy. "Where do they live?"

"In your house," said the Owl.

Tommy was aghast.

"In our house!" he exclaimed. "Whereabouts? Let me rummage them out. Why do they do nothing?"

"One of them is too young," said the Owl.

"But why don't the others work?" asked Tommy.

"They are idle, they are idle," said the Old Owl, and she gave herself such a shake as she said it that the fluff went flying through the shed, and Tommy nearly tumbled off the beam in his fright.

"Then we don't want them," said he. "What is the use of having Brownies if they do nothing to help us?"

¹ A catherine wheel is very much like our American "pin-wheel."

"Perhaps they don't know how, as no one has told them," said the Owl.

"I wish you would tell me where to find them," said Tommy. "I could tell them."

"Could you?" said the Owl. "Oohoo! oohoo!" and Tommy could n't tell whether she were hooting or laughing.

"Of course I could," he said. "They might be up and sweep the house, and light the fire, and spread the table, and that sort of thing, before Father came down. Besides, they could *see* what was wanted. The Brownies did all that in Granny's mother's young days. And then they could tidy the room, and fetch the turf, and pick up my chips, and sort Granny's scraps. Oh! there's lots to do."

"So there is," said the Owl. "Oohoo! Well, I can tell you where to find one of the Brownies; and if you find him, he will tell you where his brother is. But all this depends upon whether you feel equal to undertaking it, and whether you will follow my directions."

"I am quite ready to go," said Tommy, "and I will do as you shall tell me. I feel sure I could persuade them; if they only knew how every one would love them if they made themselves useful!"

"Oohoo! oohoo!" said the Owl. "Now pay attention. You must go to the north side of the mere when the moon is shining — ('I know Brownies like water,' muttered Tommy) — and turn yourself round three times, saying this charm: —

'Twist me, and turn me, and show me the Elf —
I looked in the water, and saw —'

When you have got so far, look into the water, and at the same moment you will see the Brownie, and think

of a word that will fill up the couplet, and rhyme with the first line. If either you do not see the Brownie, or fail to think of the word, it will be of no use."

"Is the Brownie a merman," said Tommy, wriggling himself along the beam, "that he lives under water?"

"That depends on whether he has a fish's tail," said the Owl, "and this you can discover for yourself."

"Well, the moon is shining, so I shall go," said Tommy. "Good-by, and thank you, Ma'am;" and he jumped down and went, saying to himself as he ran, "I believe he is a merman all the same, or else how could he live in the mere? I know more about Brownies than Granny does, and I shall tell her so;" for Tommy was somewhat opinionated, like other young people.

The moon shone very brightly on the centre of the mere. Tommy knew the place well, for there was a fine echo there. Round the edge grew rushes and water plants, which cast a border of shadow. Tommy went to the north side, and turning himself three times, as the Old Owl had told him, he repeated the charm —

"Twist me, and turn me, and show me the Elf —
I looked in the water and saw —"

Now for it! He looked in, and saw — the reflection of his own face.

"Why, there's no one but myself!" said Tommy. "And what can the word be? I must have done it wrong."

"Wrong!" said the Echo.

Tommy was almost surprised to find the Echo awake at this time of night.

"Hold your tongue!" said he. "Matters are provoking enough of themselves. Belf! Celf! Delf!

Felf! Gelf! Helf! Jelf! What rubbish! There can't be a word to fit it. And then to look for a Brownie, and see nothing but myself!"

"Myself," said the Echo.

"Will you be quiet?" said Tommy. "If you would tell one the word there would be some sense in your interference; but to roar 'Myself!' at one, which neither rhymes nor runs—it does rhyme, though, as it happens," he added; "and how very odd! it runs too—"

'Twist me, and turn me, and show me the Elf;
I looked in the water, and saw myself,'—

which I certainly did. What can it mean? The Old Owl knows, as Granny would say; so I shall go back and ask her."

"Ask her!" said the Echo.

"Did n't I say I should?" said Tommy. "How exasperating you are! It is very strange. *Myself* certainly does rhyme, and I wonder I did not think of it long ago."

"Go," said the Echo.

"Will you mind your own business, and go to sleep?" said Tommy. "I am going; I said I should."

And back he went. There sat the Old Owl as before.

"Oohoo!" said she, as Tommy climbed up. "What did you see in the mere?"

"I saw nothing but myself," said Tommy indignantly.

"And what did you expect to see?" asked the Owl.

"I expected to see a Brownie," said Tommy; "you told me so."

"And what are Brownies like, pray?" inquired the Owl.

"The one Granny knew was a useful little fellow, something like a little man," said Tommy.

"Ah!" said the Owl, "but you know at present this one is an idle little fellow, something like a little man. Oohoo! oohoo! Are you quite sure you did n't see him?"

"Quite," answered Tommy sharply. "I saw no one but myself."

"Hoot! toot! How touchy we are! And who are you, pray?"

"I'm not a Brownie," said Tommy.

"Don't be too sure," said the Owl. "Did you find out the word?"

"No," said Tommy. "I could find no word with any meaning that would rhyme but 'myself.'"

"Well, that runs and rhymes," said the Owl. "What do you want? Where's your brother now?"

"In bed in the malt loft," said Tommy.

"Then now all your questions are answered," said the Owl, "and you know what wants doing, so go and do it. Good-night, or rather good-morning, for it is long past midnight;" and the old lady began to shake her feathers for a start.

"Don't go yet, please," said Tommy humbly. "I don't understand it. You know I'm not a Brownie, am I?"

"Yes, you are," said the Owl, "and a very idle one too. All children are Brownies."

"But I could n't do work like a Brownie," said Tommy.

"Why not?" inquired the Owl. "Could n't you sweep the floor, light the fire, spread the table, tidy

the room, fetch the turf, pick up your own chips, and sort your grandmother's scraps? You know 'there's lots to do.' "

"But I don't think I should like it," said Tommy. "I'd much rather have a Brownie to do it for me."

"And what would you do meanwhile?" asked the Owl. "Be idle, I suppose; and what do you suppose is the use of a man's having children if they do nothing to help him? Ah! 'if they only knew how every one would love them if they made themselves useful!'"

"But is it really and truly so?" asked Tommy, in a dismal voice. "Are there no Brownies but children?"

"No, there are not," said the Owl. "And pray do you think that the Brownies, whoever they may be, come into the house to save trouble for the idle, healthy little boys who live in it? Listen to me, Tommy," said the old lady, her eyes shooting rays of fire in the dark corner where she sat. "Listen to me: you are a clever boy, and can understand when one speaks; so I will tell you the whole history of the Brownies, as it has been handed down in our family from my grandmother's great-grandmother, who lived in the Druid's Oak, and was intimate with the fairies. And when I have done, you shall tell me what you think they are, if they are not children. It's the opinion I have come to at any rate, and I don't think that wisdom died with our great-grandmothers."

"I should like to hear, if you please," said Tommy.

The Old Owl shook out a tuft or two of fluff, and set her eyes a-going, and began:—

"The Brownies, or as they are sometimes called, the Small Folk, the Little People, or the Good Peo-

ple, are a race of tiny beings who domesticate themselves in a house of which some grown-up human being pays the rent and taxes. They are like small editions of men and women, they are too small and fragile for heavy work; they have not the strength of a man, but are a thousand times more fresh and nimble. They can run and jump, and roll and tumble, with marvellous agility and endurance, and of many of the aches and pains which men and women groan under, they do not even know the names. They have no trade or profession, and as they live entirely upon other people, they know nothing of domestic cares; in fact, they know very little upon any subject, though they are often intelligent and highly inquisitive. They love dainties, play, and mischief. They are apt to be greatly beloved, and are themselves capriciously affectionate. They are little people, and can only do little things. When they are idle and mischievous, they are called Boggarts, and are a curse to the house they live in. When they are useful and considerate, they are Brownies, and are a much coveted blessing. Sometimes the Blessed Brownies will take up their abode with some worthy couple, cheer them with their romps and merry laughter, tidy the house, find things that have been lost, and take little troubles out of hands full of great anxieties. Then in time these Little People are Brownies no longer. They grow up into men and women. They do not care so much for dainties, play, or mischief. They cease to jump and tumble, and roll about the house. They know more, and laugh less. Then, when their heads begin to ache with anxiety, and they have to labor for their own living, and the great cares of life come on, other Brownies come and live with them, and take up their

little cares, and supply their little comforts, and make the house merry once more."

"How nice!" said Tommy.

"Very nice," said the Old Owl. "But what"—and she shook herself more fiercely than ever, and glared so that Tommy expected nothing less than that her eyes would set fire to her feathers and she would be burned alive — "but what must I say of the Boggarts? Those idle urchins who eat the bread and milk, and don't do the work, who lie in bed without an ache or pain to excuse them, who untidy instead of tidying, cause work instead of doing it, and leave little cares to heap on big cares, till the old people who support them are worn out altogether?"

"Don't!" said Tommy. "I can't bear it."

"I hope when Boggarts grow into men," said the Old Owl, "that their children will be Boggarts too, and then they'll know what it is!"

"Don't!" roared Tommy. "I won't be a Boggart. I'll be a Brownie."

"That's right," nodded the Old Owl. "I said you were a boy who could understand when one spoke. And remember that the Brownies never are seen at their work. They get up before the household, and get away before any one can see them. I can't tell you why. I don't think my grandmother's great-grandmother knew. Perhaps because all good deeds are better done in secret."

"Please," said Tommy, "I should like to go home now, and tell Johnnie. It's getting cold, and I am so tired!"

"Very true," said the Old Owl, "and then you will have to be up early to-morrow. I think I had better take you home."

"I know the way, thank you," said Tommy.

"I did n't say *show* you the way, I said *take* you — carry you," said the Owl. "Lean against me."

"I'd rather not, thank you," said Tommy.

"Lean against me," screamed the Owl. "Oohoo! how obstinate boys are, to be sure!"

Tommy crept up, very unwillingly.

"Lean your full weight, and shut your eyes," said the Owl.

Tommy laid his head against the Old Owl's feathers, had a vague idea that she smelt of heather, and thought it must be from living on the moor, shut his eyes, and leant his full weight, expecting that he and the Owl would certainly fall off the beam together. Down — feathers — fluff — he sank and sank, could feel nothing solid, jumped up with a start to save himself, opened his eyes, and found that he was sitting among the heather in the malt loft, with Johnnie sleeping by his side.

"How quickly we came!" said he; "that is certainly a very clever Old Owl. I could n't have counted ten whilst my eyes were shut. How very odd!"

But what was odder still was, that it was no longer moonlight, but early dawn.

"Get up, Johnnie," said his brother; "I've got a story to tell you."

And while Johnnie sat up, and rubbed his eyes open, he related his adventures on the moor.

"Is all that true?" said Johnnie; "I mean, did it really happen?"

"Of course it did," said his brother; "don't you believe it?"

"Oh, yes," said Johnnie. "But I thought it was perhaps only a true story, like Granny's true stories."

I believe all those, you know. But if you were there, you know, it is different — ”

“ I was there,” said Tommy, “ and it ’s all just as I tell you : and I tell you what, if we mean to do anything we must get up : though, oh, dear ! I should like to stay in bed. I say,” he added, after a pause, “ suppose we do. It can’t matter being Boggarts for one night more. I mean to be a Brownie before I grow up, though. I could n’t stand Boggarty children.”

“ I won’t be a Boggart at all,” said Johnnie ; “ it ’s horrid. But I don’t see how we can be Brownies, for I ’m afraid we can’t do the things. I wish I were bigger ! ”

“ I can do it well enough,” said Tommy, following his brother’s example and getting up. “ Don’t you suppose I can light a fire ? Think of all the bonfires we have made ! And I don’t think I should mind having a regular good tidy-up either. It ’s that stupid putting-away-things-when-you ’ve-done-with-them that I hate so ! ”

The Brownies crept softly down the ladder and into the kitchen. There was the blank hearth, the dirty floor, and all the odds and ends lying about, looking cheerless enough in the dim light. Tommy felt quite important as he looked round. There is no such cure for untidiness as clearing up after other people ; one sees so clearly where the fault lies.

“ Look at that doorstep, Johnnie,” said the Brownie elect, “ what a mess you made of it ! If you had lifted the moss carefully, instead of stamping and struggling with it, it would have saved us ten minutes’ work this morning.”

This wisdom could not be gainsaid, and Johnnie only looked meek and rueful.

"I am going to light the fire," pursued his brother; — "the next turfs, you know, *we* must get — you can tidy a bit. Look at that knife I gave you to hold last night, and that wood — that's my fault, though, and so are those scraps by Granny's chair. What are you grubbing at that rat-hole for?"

Johnnie raised his head somewhat flushed and tumbled.

"What do you think I have found?" said he triumphantly. "Father's measure that has been lost for a week!"

"Hurrah!" said Tommy; "put it by his things. That's just a sort of thing for a Brownie to have done. What will he say? And I say, Johnnie, when you've tidied, just go and grub up a potato or two in the garden, and I'll put them to roast for breakfast. I'm lighting such a bonfire!"

The fire was very successful. Johnnie went after the potatoes, and Tommy cleaned the doorstep, swept the room, dusted the chairs and the old chest, and set out the table. There was no doubt he could be handy when he chose.

"I'll tell you what I've thought of, if we have time," said Johnnie, as he washed the potatoes in the water that had been set for Brownie. "We might run down to the South Pasture for some mushrooms. Father said the reason we found so few was that people go by sunrise for them to take to market. The sun's only just rising, we should be sure to find some, and they would do for breakfast."

"There's plenty of time," said Tommy; so they went. The dew lay heavy and thick upon the grass by the roadside, and over the miles of network that the spiders had woven from blossom to blossom of the

heather. The dew is the sun's breakfast ; but he was barely up yet, and had not eaten it, and the world felt anything but warm. Nevertheless, it was so sweet and fresh as it is at no later hour of the day, and every sound was like the returning voice of a long absent friend. Down to the pastures, where was more network and more dew, but when one has nothing to speak of in the way of boots, the state of the ground is of the less consequence.

The Tailor had been right ; there was no lack of mushrooms at this time of the morning. All over the pasture they stood, of all sizes, some like buttons, some like tables ; and in the distance one or two ragged women, stooping over them with baskets, looked like huge fungi also.

"This is where the fairies feast," said Tommy. "They had a large party last night. When they go, they take away the dishes and cups, for they are made of gold ; but they leave their tables, and we eat them."

"I wonder whether giants would like to eat our tables," said Johnnie.

This was beyond Tommy's capabilities of surmise ; so they filled a handkerchief, and hurried back again, for fear the Tailor should have come downstairs.

They were depositing the last mushroom in a dish on the table, when his footsteps were heard descending.

"There he is !" exclaimed Tommy. "Remember, we must n't be caught. Run back to bed."

Johnnie caught up the handkerchief, and smothering their laughter, the two scrambled back up the ladder, and dashed straight into the heather.

Meanwhile the poor Tailor came wearily downstairs. Day after day, since his wife's death, he had come

down every morning to the same desolate sight — yesterday's refuse and an empty hearth. This morning task of tidying was always a sad and ungrateful one to the widowed father. His awkward struggles with the housework in which *she* had been so notable,¹ chafed him. The dirty kitchen was dreary, the labor lonely, and it was an hour's time lost to his trade. But life does not stand still while one is wishing, and so the Tailor did that for which there was neither remedy nor substitute; and came down this morning as other mornings to the pail and broom. When he came in he looked round, and started, and rubbed his eyes; looked round again, and rubbed them harder; then went up to the fire and held out his hand (warm certainly) — then up to the table and smelt the mushrooms (esculent² fungi beyond a doubt) — handled the loaf, stared at the open door and window, the swept floor, and the sunshine pouring in, and finally sat down in stunned admiration. Then he jumped up and ran to the foot of the stairs, shouting, —

“Mother! Mother! Trouts' luck has come again. And yet, no!” he thought, “the old lady's asleep, it's a shame to wake her. I'll tell those idle, rascally lads; they'll be more pleased than they deserve. It was Tommy, after all, that set the water and caught him. Boys! boys!” he shouted at the foot of the ladder, “the Brownie has come! — and if he has n't found my measure!” he added, on returning to the kitchen; “this is as good as a day's work to me.”

There was great excitement in the small household that day. The boys kept their own counsel. The old Grandmother was triumphant, and tried not to seem surprised. The Tailor made no such vain effort, and

¹ Notable, thrifty.

² Esculent, good to eat.

remained till bedtime in a state of fresh and unconcealed amazement.

"I've often heard of the Good People," he broke out toward the end of the evening. "And I've heard folk say they've known those that have seen them capering round the gray rocks on the moor at midnight: but this is wonderful! To come and do the work for a pan of cold water! Who could have believed it?"

"You might have believed it if you'd believed me, Son Thomas," said the old lady tossily. "I told you so. But young people always know better than their elders!"

"I did n't see him," said the Tailor, beginning his story afresh; "but I thought as I came in I heard a sort of laughing and rustling."

"My mother said they often heard him playing and laughing about the house," said the old lady. "I told you so."

"Well, he shan't want for a bowl of bread and milk to-morrow, anyhow," said the Tailor, "if I have to stick to Farmer Swede's waistcoat till midnight."

But the waistcoat was finished by bedtime, and the Tailor set the bread and milk himself, and went to rest.

"I say," said Tommy, when both the boys were in bed, "the Old Owl was right, and we must stick to it. But I'll tell you what I don't like, and that is father thinking we're idle still. I wish he knew we were the Brownies."

"So do I," said Johnnie: and he sighed.

"I tell you what," said Tommy, with the decisiveness of elder brotherhood, "we'll keep quiet for a bit for fear we should leave off; but when we've gone on

a good while, I shall tell him. It was only the Old Owl's grandmother's great-grandmother who said it was to be kept secret, and the Old Owl herself said grandmothers were not always in the right."

"No more they are," said Johnnie; "look at Granny about this."

"I know," said Tommy. "She's in a regular mud-dle."

"So she is," said Johnnie. "But that's rather fun, I think."

And they went to sleep.

Day after day went by, and still the Brownies "stuck to it," and did their work. It is no such very hard matter after all to get up early when one is young and light-hearted, and sleeps upon heather in a loft without window blinds, and with so many broken window panes that the air comes freely in. In old times the boys used to play at tents among the heather, while the Tailor did the housework; now they came down and did it for him.

Size is not everything, even in this material existence. One has heard of dwarfs who were quite as clever (not to say as powerful) as giants, and I do not fancy that fairy godmothers are ever very large. It is wonderful what a comfort Brownies may be in the house that is fortunate enough to hold them! The Tailor's Brownies were the joy of his life; and day after day they seemed to grow more and more ingenious in finding little things to do for his good.

Nowadays Granny never picked a scrap for herself. One day's shearings were all neatly arranged the next morning and laid by her knitting-pins; and the Tailor's tape and shears were no more absent without leave.

One day a message came to him to offer him two or three days' tailoring in a farmhouse some miles up the valley. This was pleasant and advantageous sort of work: good food, sure pay, and a cheerful change; but he did not know how he could leave his family, unless, indeed, the Brownie might be relied upon to "keep the house together," as they say. The boys were sure that he would, and they promised to set his water, and to give as little trouble as possible; so, finally, the Tailor took up his shears and went up the valley, where the green banks sloped up into purple moor, or broke into sandy rocks, crowned with nodding oak fern. On to the prosperous old farm, where he spent a very pleasant time, sitting level with the window geraniums on a table set apart for him, stitching and gossiping, gossiping and stitching, and feeling secure of honest payment when his work was done. The mistress of the house was a kind, good creature, and loved a chat; and though the Tailor kept his own secret as to the Brownies, he felt rather curious to know if the Good People had any hand in the comfort of this flourishing household, and watched his opportunity to make a few careless inquiries on the subject.

"Brownies?" laughed the dame. "Ay, Master, I have heard of them. When I was a girl, in service at the old hall, on Cowberry Edge, I heard a good deal of one they said had lived there in former times. He did housework as well as a woman, and a good deal quicker, they said. One night one of the young ladies (that were then, they're all dead now) hid herself in a cupboard, to see what he was like."

"And what was he like?" inquired the Tailor, as composedly as he was able.

"A little fellow, they said," answered the Farmer's

wife, knitting calmly on. "Like a dwarf, you know, with a largish head for his body. Not taller than — why, my Bill, or your eldest boy, perhaps. And he was dressed in rags, with an old cloak on, and stamping with passion at a cobweb he could n't get at with his broom. They 've very uncertain tempers, they say. Tears one minute and laughing the next."

"You never had one here, I suppose?" said the Tailor.

"Not we," she answered; "and I think I'd rather not. They're not canny,¹ after all; and my master and me have always been used to work, and we've sons and daughters to help us, and that's better than meddling with the Fairies, to my mind. No! no!" she added, laughing, "if we had had one you'd have heard of it, whoever did n't, for I should have had some decent clothes made for him. I could n't stand rags and old cloaks, messing and moth-catching in my house."

"They say it's not lucky to give them clothes, though," said the Tailor; "they don't like it."

"Tell me!" said the dame, "as if any one that liked a tidy room would n't like tidy clothes, if they could get them. No! no! when we have one, you shall take his measure, I promise you."

And this was all the Tailor got out of her on the subject. When his work was finished, the Farmer paid him at once; and the good dame added half a cheese, and a bottle-green coat.

"That has been laid by for being too small for the master, now he's so stout," she said; "but except for a stain or two it's good enough, and will cut up like new for one of the lads."

¹ Canny, safe.

The Tailor thanked them, and said farewell, and went home; down the valley, where the river, wandering between the green banks and the sandy rocks, was caught by giant mosses, and bands of fairy fern, and there choked and struggled, and at last barely escaped with an existence, and ran away in a diminished stream; on up the purple hills to the old ruined house. As he came in at the gate he was struck by some idea of change, and looking again, he saw that the garden had been weeded, and was comparatively tidy. The truth is, that Tommy and Johnnie had taken advantage of the Tailor's absence to do some Brownie's work in the daytime.

"It's that Blessed Brownie!" said the Tailor. "Has he been as usual?" he asked, when he was in the house.

"To be sure," said the old lady; "all has been well, Son Thomas."

"I'll tell you what it is," said the Tailor, after a pause. "I'm a needy man, but I hope I'm not ungrateful. I can never repay the Brownie for what he has done for me and mine, but the mistress up yonder has given me a bottle-green coat that will cut up as good as new; and as sure as there's a Brownie in this house, I'll make him a suit of it."

"You'll *what*?" shrieked the old lady. "Son Thomas, Son Thomas, you're mad! Do what you please for the Brownies, but never make them clothes."

"There's nothing they want more," said the Tailor, "by all accounts. They're all in rags, as well they may be, doing so much work."

"If you make clothes for this Brownie, he'll go for good," said the Grandmother, in a voice of awful warning.

"Well, I don't know," said her son. "The mistress up at the farm is clever enough, I can tell you; and as she said to me, fancy any one that likes a tidy room not liking a tidy coat!" For the Tailor, like most men, was apt to think well of the wisdom of womankind in other houses.

"Well, well," said the old lady, "go your own way. I'm an old woman, and my time is not long. It does n't matter much to me. But it was new clothes that drove the Brownie out before, and Trouts' luck went with him."

"I know, Mother," said the Tailor, "and I've been thinking of it all the way home; and I can tell you why it was. Depend upon it, *the clothes did n't fit*. But I'll tell you what I mean to do. I shall measure them by Tommy — they say the Brownies are about his size — and if ever I turned out a well-made coat and waistcoat, they shall be his."

"Please yourself," said the old lady, and she would say no more.

"I think you're quite right, Father," said Tommy, "and if I can, I'll help you to make them."

Next day the father and son set to work, and Tommy contrived to make himself so useful that the Tailor hardly knew how he got through so much work.

"It's not like the same thing," he broke out at last, "to have some one a bit helpful about you; both for the tailoring and for company's sake. I've not done such a pleasant morning's work since your poor mother died. I'll tell you what it is, Tommy," he added, "if you were always like this, I should n't much care whether Brownie stayed or went. I'd give up his help to have yours."

"I'll be back directly," said Tommy, who burst out of the room in search of his brother.

"I've come away," he said, squatting down, "because I can't bear it. I very nearly let it all out, and I shall soon. I wish the things were n't going to come to me," he added, kicking a stone in front of him. "I wish he'd measured you, Johnnie."

"I'm very glad he did n't," said Johnnie. "I wish he'd kept them himself."

"Bottle-green, with brass buttons," murmured Tommy, and therewith fell into a reverie.

The next night the suit was finished, and laid by the bread and milk.

"We shall see," said the old lady, in a withering tone. There is not much real prophetic wisdom in this truism, but it sounds very awful, and the Tailor went to bed somewhat depressed.

Next morning the Brownies came down as usual.

"Don't they look splendid?" said Tommy, feeling the cloth. "When we've tidied the place I shall put them on."

But long before the place was tidy, he could wait no longer, and dressed up.

"Look at me!" he shouted; "bottle-green and brass buttons! Oh, Johnnie, I wish you had some!"

"It's a good thing there are two Brownies," said Johnnie, laughing, "and one of them in rags still. I shall do the work this morning." And he went flourishing round with a broom, while Tommy jumped madly about in his new suit. "Hurrah!" he shouted, "I feel just like the Brownie. What was it Granny said he sang when he got his clothes? Oh, I know —

'What have we here? Hemten hamten,
Here will I never more tread nor stampen.'"

And on he danced, regardless of the clouds of dust raised by Johnnie, as he drove the broom indiscriminately over the floor, to the tune of his own laughter.

It was laughter which roused the Tailor that morning, laughter coming through the floor from the kitchen below. He scrambled on his things and stole downstairs.

"It's the Brownie," he thought; "I must look, if it's for the last time."

At the door he paused and listened. The laughter was mixed with singing, and he heard the words —

"What have we here? Hemten hamten,
Here will I never more tread nor stampen."

He pushed in, and this was the sight that met his eyes: —

The kitchen in its primeval condition of chaos, the untidy particulars of which were the less apparent, as everything was more or less obscured by the clouds of dust where Johnnie reigned triumphant like a witch with her broomstick; and, to crown all, Tommy capering and singing in the Brownie's bottle-green suit-brass buttons and all.

"What's this?" shouted the astonished Tailor, when he could find breath to speak.

"It's the Brownies," sang the boys; and on they danced, for they had worked themselves up into a state of excitement from which it was not easy to settle down.

"Where *is* Brownie?" shouted the father.

"He's here," said Tommy; "we are the Brownies."

"Can't you stop that fooling?" cried the Tailor angrily. "This is past a joke. Where is the real Brownie, I say?"

"We are the only Brownies, really, Father," said Tommy, coming to a full stop, and feeling strongly tempted to run down from laughing to crying. "Ask the Old Owl. It's true, really."

The Tailor saw the boy was in earnest, and passed his hand over his forehead.

"I suppose I'm getting old," he said; "I can't see daylight through this. If you are the Brownie, who has been tidying the kitchen lately?"

"We have," said they.

"But who found my measure?"

"I did," said Johnnie.

"And who sorts your grandmother's scraps?"

"We do," said they.

"And who sets breakfast, and puts my things in order?"

"We do," said they.

"But when do you do it?" asked the Tailor.

"Before you come down," said they.

"But I always have to call you," said the Tailor.

"We get back to bed again," said the boys.

"But how was it you never did it before?" asked the Tailor doubtfully.

"We were idle, we were idle," said Tommy.

The Tailor's voice rose to a pitch of desperation —

"But if you do the work," he shouted, "*where is the Brownie?*"

"Here!" cried the boys; "and we are very sorry we were Boggarts so long."

With which the father and sons fell into each other's arms and fairly wept.

It will be believed that to explain all this to the Grandmother was not the work of a moment. She

understood it all at last, however, and the Tailor could not restrain a little good-humored triumph on the subject. Before he went to work he settled her down in the window with her knitting, and kissed her.

"What do you think of it all, Mother?" he inquired.

"Bairns are a blessing," said the old lady tartly; "*I told you so.*"

"That's not the end, is it?" asked one of the boys in a tone of dismay, for the Doctor had paused here.

"Yes, it is," said he.

"But could n't you make a little more end?" asked Deordie, — "to tell us what became of them all?"

"I don't see what there is to tell," said the Doctor.

"Why, there's whether they ever saw the Old Owl again, and whether Tommy and Johnnie went on being Brownies," said the children.

The Doctor laughed.

"Well, be quiet for five minutes," he said.

"We'll be as quiet as mice," said the children.

And as quiet as mice they were. Very like mice, indeed. Very like mice behind a wainscot at night, when you have just thrown something to frighten them away. Deathlike stillness for a few seconds, and then all the rustling and scuffling you please. So the children sat holding their breath for a moment or two, and then shuffling feet and smothered bursts of laughter testified to their impatience, and to the difficulty of understanding the process of story-making as displayed by the Doctor, who sat pulling

his beard, and staring at his boots, as he made up "a little more end."

"Well," he said, sitting up suddenly, "the Brownies went on with their work in spite of the bottle-green suit, and Trouts' luck returned to the old house once more. Before long Tommy began to work for the farmers, and Baby grew up into a Brownie, and made (as girls are apt to make) the best house-sprite of all. For, in the Brownie habits of self-denial, thoughtfulness, consideration, and the art of little kindnesses, boys are, I am afraid, as a general rule, somewhat behindhand with their sisters. Whether this altogether proceeds from constitutional deficiency on these points in the masculine character, or is one result among many of the code of by-laws which obtains in men's moral education from the cradle, is a question on which everybody has his own opinion. For the present the young gentlemen may appropriate whichever theory they prefer, and we will go back to the story. The Tailor lived to see his boy-Brownies become men, with all the cares of a prosperous farm on their hands, and his girl-Brownie carry her fairy talents into another home. For these Brownies — young ladies! — are much desired as wives, whereas a man might as well marry an old witch as a young Boggartess."

"And about the Owl?" clamored the children, rather resentful of the Doctor's pausing to take breath.

"Of course," he continued, "the Tailor heard the whole story, and being both anxious to thank the Old Owl for her friendly offices, and also rather curious to see and hear her, he went with the boys one night at moonrise to the shed by the mere. It

was earlier in the evening than when Tommy went; for before daylight had vanished — and at the first appearance of the moon, the impatient Tailor was at the place. There they found the Owl, looking very solemn and stately on the beam. She was sitting among the shadows with her shoulders up, and she fixed her eyes so steadily on the Tailor that he felt quite overpowered. He made her a civil bow, however, and said, —

“‘I’m much obliged to you, Ma’am, for your good advice to my Tommy.’

“The Owl blinked sharply, as if she grudged shutting her eyes for an instant, and then stared on, but not a word spoke she.

“‘I don’t mean to intrude, Ma’am,’ said the Tailor; ‘but I was wishful to pay my respects and gratitude.’

“Still the Owl gazed in determined silence.

“‘Don’t you remember me?’ said Tommy pitifully. ‘I did everything you told me. Won’t you even say good-by?’ and he went up toward her.

“The Owl’s eyes contracted, she shuddered a few tufts of fluff into the shed, shook her wings, and shouting ‘Oohoo!’ at the top of her voice, flew out upon the moor. The Tailor and his sons rushed out to watch her. They could see her plainly against the green twilight sky, flapping rapidly away with her round face to the pale moon. ‘Good-by!’ they shouted as she disappeared; first the departing owl, then a shadowy body with flapping sails, then two wings beating the same measured time, then two moving lines still to the old tune, then a stroke, a fancy, and then — the green sky and the pale moon, but the Old Owl was gone.”

"Did she never come back?" asked Tiny, in subdued tones, for the Doctor had paused again.

"No," said he; "at least, not to the shed by the mere. Tommy saw many owls after this in the course of his life; but as none of them would speak, and as most of them were addicted to the unconventional customs of staring and winking, he could not distinguish his friend, if she were among them. And now I think that is all."

"Is that the very very end?" asked Tiny.

"The very very end," said the Doctor.

"I suppose there might be more and more ends," speculated Deordie — "about whether the Brownies had any children when they grew into farmers, and whether the children were Brownies, and whether *they* had other Brownies, and so on and on." And Deordie rocked himself among the geraniums, in the luxurious imagining of an endless fairy-tale.

"You insatiable rascal!" said the Doctor. "Not another word. Jump up, for I'm going to see you home. I have to be off early to-morrow."

"Where?" said Deordie.

"Never mind. I shall be away all day, and I want to be at home in good time in the evening, for I mean to attack that crop of groundsel between the sweet-pea hedges. You know, no Brownies come to my homestead!"

And the Doctor's mouth twitched a little till he fixed it into a stiff smile.

The children tried hard to extract some more ends out of him on the way to the Rectory; but he declined to pursue the history of the Trout family through indefinite generations. It was decided on all hands, however, that Tommy Trout was evidently one and the

same with the Tommy Trout who pulled the cat out of the well, because "it was just a sort of thing for a Brownie to do, you know!" and that Johnnie Green (who, of course, was not Johnny Trout) was some unworthy village acquaintance, and "a thorough Boggart."

"Doctor!" said Tiny, as they stood by the garden gate, "how long do you think gentlemen's pocket handkerchiefs take to wear out?"

"That, my dear Madam," said the Doctor, "must depend, like other terrestrial matters, upon circumstances; whether the gentleman bought fine cambric, or coarse cotton with pink portraits of the reigning sovereign, to commence with; whether he catches many colds, has his pocket picked, takes snuff, or allows his washerwoman to use washing powders. But why do you want to know?"

"I shan't tell you that," said Tiny, who was spoilt by the Doctor, and consequently tyrannized in proportion; "but I will tell you what I mean to do. I mean to tell Mother that when Father wants any more pocket handkerchiefs hemmed, she had better put them by the bath in the nursery, and perhaps some Brownie will come and do them."

"Kiss my fluffy face!" said the Doctor in sepulchral tones.

"The owl is too high up," said Tiny, tossing her head.

The Doctor lifted her four feet or so, obtained his kiss, and set her down again.

"You're not fluffy at all," said she in a tone of the utmost contempt; "you're tickly and bristly. Puss is more fluffy, and Father is scrubby and scratchy, because he shaves."

"And which of the three styles do you prefer?" said the Doctor.

"Not tickly and bristly," said Tiny with firmness, and she strutted up the walk for a pace or two, and then turned round to laugh over her shoulder.

"Good-night!" shouted her victim, shaking his fist after her.

The other children took a noisy farewell, and they all raced into the house, to give joint versions of the fairy tale, first to the parents in the drawing-room, and then to Nurse in the nursery.

The Doctor went home also, with his poodle at his heels, but not by the way he came. He went out of his way, which was odd; but then the Doctor was "a little odd," and moreover this was always the end of his evening walk. Through the churchyard, where spreading cedars and stiff yews rose from the velvet grass, and where among tombstones and crosses of various devices lay one of older and uglier date, by which he stayed. It was framed by a border of the most brilliant flowers, and it would seem as if the Doctor must have been the gardener, for he picked off some dead ones, and put them absently in his pocket. Then he looked round, as if to see that he was alone. Not a soul was to be seen, and the moonlight and shadow lay quietly side by side, as the dead do in their graves. The Doctor stooped down and took off his hat.

"Good-night, Marcia," he said, in a low quiet voice. "Good-night, my darling!" The dog licked his hand, but there was no voice to answer, nor any that regarded.

Poor foolish Doctor! Most foolish to speak to the departed with his face earthwards. But we are weak

mortals, the best of us ; and this man (one of the very best) raised his head at last, and went home like a lonely owl with his face to the moon and the sky.

A BORROWED BROWNIE.

"I can't imagine," said the Rector, walking into the drawing-room the following afternoon, "I can't imagine where Tiny is. I want her to drive to the other end of the parish with me."

"There she comes," said his wife, looking out of the window, "by the garden gate, with a great basket ; what has she been after ?"

The Rector went out to discover, and met his daughter looking decidedly earthy, and seemingly much exhausted by the weight of a basketful of groundsel plants.

"Where have you been ?" said he.

"In the Doctor's garden," said Tiny triumphantly ; "and look what I have done ! I've weeded his sweet-peas, and brought away the groundsel ; so when he gets home to-night he'll think a Brownie has been in the garden, for Mrs. Pickles has promised not to tell him."

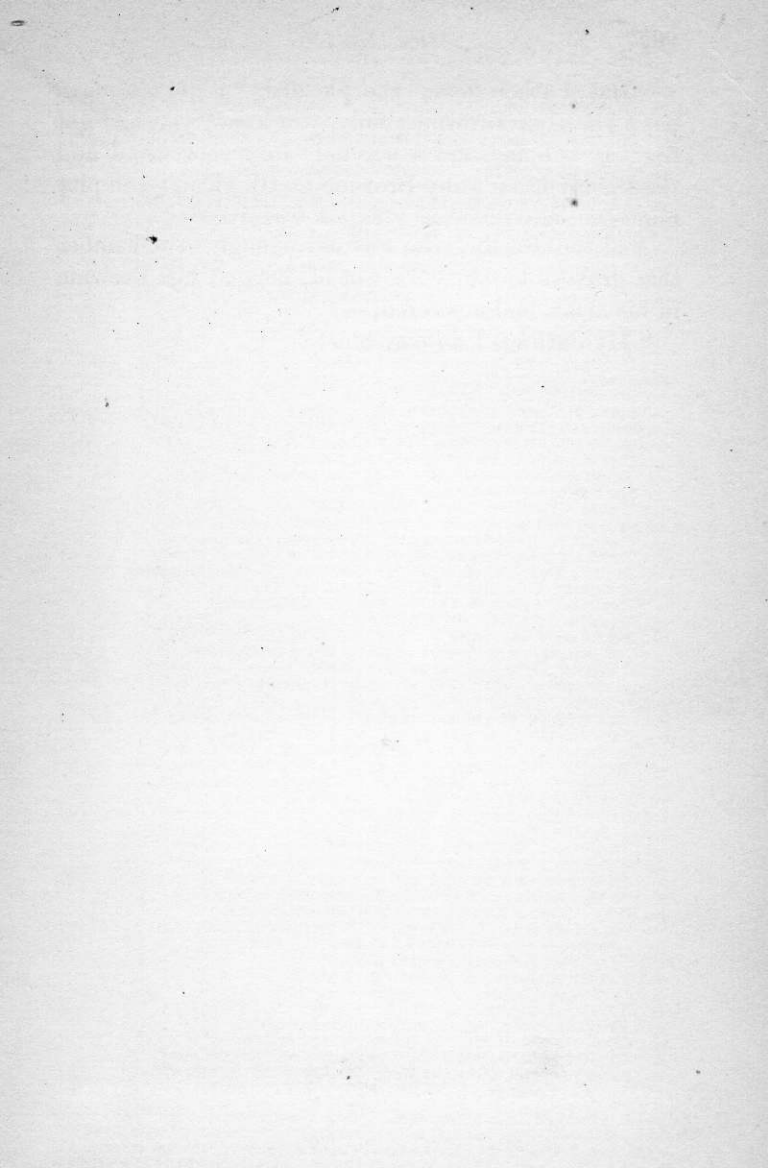
"But look here !" said the Rector, affecting a great appearance of severity, "you're my Brownie, not his. Supposing Tommy Trout had gone and weeded Farmer Swede's garden, and brought back his weeds to go to seed on the Tailor's flower-beds, how do you think he would have liked it ?"

Tiny looked rather crestfallen. When one has fairly carried through a splendid benevolence of this kind, it is trying to find oneself in the wrong. She crept up to the Rector, however, and put her golden head upon his arm.

“But, Father dear,” she pleaded, “I did n’t mean not to be your Brownie ; only, you know, you had got five left at home, and it was only for a short time, and the Doctor has n’t any Brownie at all. Don’t you pity him ? ”

And the Rector, who was old enough to remember that gravestone story we wot of, hugged his Brownie in his arms, and answered, —

“My darling, I do pity him ! ”



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