THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

ETHEL AND ARCHIE

THE AGE
OF
INNOCENCE

Text and Pictures by

WALTER RUSSELL

AUTHOR OF "THE SEA CHILDREN,"
"THE BENDING OF THE TWIG," ETC.

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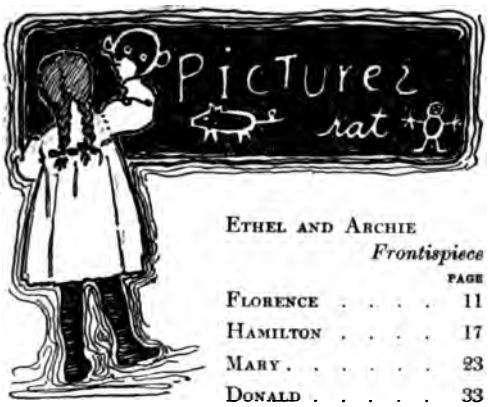
DEDICATION

To Ethel, Archie, Quentin, and Nicholas Roosevelt, with whom the Author re-lived his boyhood's days in countless merry romps around the frog pond, on the sea beach, and in the old barn and daisy fields and forests of Sagamore Hill, this book is affectionately dedicated.

WALTER RUSSELL



PICTURES

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

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THE
AGE OF INNOCENCE

THE Age of Innocence — The Golden Age — The Joyous Age — The Age of Happy, Happy Childhood — which we all have lived and, alas, too many have forgotten.

Oh, ye grown-ups, go back with me for one sweet hour of contemplation. Leave the noonday and the evening, and go back again to dawn, the dawn of life, when joy and gladness sparkled on the waters of the earth in paths of brilliant light, which led to children's hearts and made them leap and bound with quickening touch, till day had gone and night had wrapped its sombre garment round the hearts of those who would forget the joy that had been theirs at dawn. There is youth in thus re-living days when care

and worry concerned tops and kites instead of notes soon due.

Let us live our childhood once again — visit that daisy field of those fair days — play in the old barn, where we leaped from lofty beams — fish along the brookside — play on sandy beaches — and whatever else we did when we were little boys and girls.

THE DAISY FIELD


HANNAH
CHARLES
ROBERT
SPOT

THE DAISY FIELD

REMEMBER the long happy days of summer, before you ever dreamed of being a grown-up, when each moment was full of the countless joys which nature provides for healthful youngsters like yourself. Remember that daisy field — don't you remember that wonderful daisy field beyond the stables? How vividly it recalls its every feature to your mind, until you actually smell the long grass and feel the tangle of it beneath your feet. Mentally you cross the strawberry patch; then the field-road, with its streaks of grass, where the horses or wagon wheels did n't wear it out; then you gaze wistfully at that certain cherry tree whose fruit ripened first, and calculate the number of days before those greenish-red cherries will be ripe enough for — um, how your mouth wa-

ters at the thought! You spy one rather reddish one in the long grass, and forget that you are not to eat any (those are mother's orders), but you just pick it up to look at it, — only just to look at it, you know, and — well, it must be ripe, else the robin would not have eaten one side out of it. You nibble the other side. Oh, how luscious! "My, that's ripe!" you exclaim; and then, somehow, you find yourself up on the fence reaching for more, and thinking, thinking, way back in your head somewhere, that mother would not have forbidden you eating them if she had only known how ripe they really were — on this tree especially — and just on this especial branch.

So you go right on eating them and framing good, plausible, boyish explanations against the time that you meet mother, whom you must tell, of course, because she would know of it anyway somehow or other, in the way mothers have of knowing almost everything. You are positive that mother will not mind a bit, and succeed in assuring yourself of

this fact. Then you get up into the tree and are surprised to find so many ripe; even the greenish ones are ripe, — at any rate, they taste ripe.

But suddenly your slumbering conscience is quickened by a shout from your brothers and sister, who provokingly happen along at this moment and tauntingly remark: "Ah, ha, mister sneaky, you just wait till mother knows what you are doing and then see what 'll happen to you-u-u. You just wait."

Then it is that you begin to feel queer somewhere, and pretend that you are only climbing, not eating, and you ask, "Is there any rule against climbing cherry trees, I 'd like to know, smarties?"

And they reply, "This is the first time that we ever knew of cherry stones dropping from the tree without the cherries round them, just 'cause a boy is climbing the tree."

You see how you are caught and suggest a play in the daisy field, ostensibly to be agreeable, but really to change the

subject. You add: "And besides I have invented a new game and want to show it to you. It 's a game of whoever gets to the apple tree first, without getting himself discovered or running into anybody, wins the game, and whoever gets spied is out."

"There are n't enough to play that," Harvey suggests, and adds, "We could have more fun rolling the barrels down into the frog pond and hearing them go SPLASH into it."

You are down from the tree now, and point out eagerly the paths you have made everywhere in the long grass by laboriously crawling on your knees and elbows, yes, right on your elbows, so the grass would stay down. "And they run every which way round and round, and some come to a stop; then, when they come to a stop, it is n't fair to go on. You have to go back again and try another path; and if you peek up and see any one else sticking up over the grass, you cry, 'I spy, Lewis!' or whoever it is, and he is out if it is he. If it is n't,

FLORENCE

you have made a mistake and you are out. Now, is n't that a good game?" you inquire eagerly. And how happy you feel when Harvey and Lewis and Elsie express themselves enthusiastically over the game, and suggest that each one run and get some more to help play it. "Because four would n't be much fun in a big field like that," Lewis says.

Then away you all scamper to the neighboring villas, and bring back Arthur, and Fred, and Polly (Polly's brother Melbert could n't come because he was burying his pet guinea pig), and Cousin Ted, and the Horton twins.

How out of breath you are when you get back, before any of the rest, with Cousin Ted, your hair and his streaked wet over your forehead! You feel your shirt all rolled up your back uncomfortably, but you don't care, oh, no! You rush to the house (both of you), and take a long drink of cold water, and rush out again, with a faint memory of mother's voice raised in mild protestation over something or other, — your noise, or dirty

face, or, perhaps, you knocked her sewing down, or forgot to close the screen door. Whatever it was you don't quite hear, for you are the hero of a new game, and other children are soon to know that *you — you alone* — invented it and made all the paths yourself. Pretty soon you are on the fence, pointing out the paths from above and assigning one to each, explaining the game, and conceding and combating all sorts of modifications from each of the other children.

Finally you all start. Down on your hands and knees you stoop, and plunge into the forest of long, waving, sweet-scented grass. Oh, the memory of it! The clover blossoms, and the immense number of four-leaved clovers that you don't have time to pick because you must get to the apple tree first, if possible; and the daisies, millions of them, standing up, up way above your head, like live people bobbing their yellow faces and white bonnets at you, and the thousands of them that lie in the path trampled down by your elbows and knees,—enough

of them to make a million-thousand daisy chains, you think.

Oh, the glory of that long weed that sticks up here and there above the grass, like poplars over a forest, and which you *never* could pass, if you were walking upright, without skimming your hand through it and getting it full of the little triangular beechnut-shaped seeds! Oh, how the sun burns down on your neck as you creep, creep, stealthily peering ahead and keeping low lest you be seen! How your shirt persists in rolling up, so you actually lose time in getting it down again! How very quiet everything is, and how different the noises are from those you hear up in the world above the grass! Not that the noises are really different noises from those up above the long grass, but you notice them more. Up in the world you see things, while down here in the long grass you don't see things, so you listen instead.

A locust rasps shrilly somewhere. That makes everything seem hotter, and you wipe some seeds from your face. You

are sure some one is near you. There is a suspicious sound in the grass. You wait a minute, then peer cautiously up, and see only just the tip of a red ribbon, and you cry, "I spy you, Elsie," and down you bob again; and she replies, "Oh, you mean thing! you just could n't see me, there now!" and walks back to the fence to start all over again. You keep right on, getting slowly ahead and listening to the noises that you hear only when you are so awful quiet, which is n't often. The distant rumble of a railroad train and its faint whistle delight you. The orioles and robins in the trees are sweetest music to your ears. The sounds of the insects in the grass make you think of fairy land. The buzzing of the bees so busily engaged in gathering honey from the red clover makes you wish that you could sleep. The swish of an occasional breeze in the grass tops (which helps the daisies to turn every part of themselves to the sun, you have been told) ruffles up your hair and cools your back.

The whole combined influence of sun-

HAMILTON

shine and birds and bees and flowers and waving grass and mysterious noises is so delightful, so fascinating, that you wonder why you ever allow yourself to rise to the upper world at all. You are making rapid headway now, and are quite sure that you will be there first because you know the paths better than the others.

No one has seen you anyhow, and you have put Elsie way back again. Not only that, but you have heard Ted and Lewis and one of the Horton twins put back. And then you recall robber stories, and wonder why robbers, when they were chased, did n't hide in daisy fields; for they could have done it if they only had thought of doing it. But they did n't because you cannot remember reading of any robbers who did hide in a daisy field. Then you wonder if robbers might not possibly be hiding in this daisy field, and you bob up your head to make sure, and Elsie cries out, "I spy." And you get up into the world and walk back to the fence, clipping daisies' heads off between your fingers indignantly as you

go. Several times you are sent back, but finally reach the apple tree to find Elsie and Ted there ahead of you.

They assure you that that isn't bad anyhow when there are ten of you, and, besides, it wouldn't really be polite to win at your own game; and then Elsie calls, "Come here and see who you are going to marry," and taking a daisy she plucks the petals one at a time, repeating, "Rich man, poor man, beggar man —" when you interrupt her to remind her that you are a boy, and she commences all over again with another daisy, "Rich girl, poor girl, beggar girl, thief, doctor, lawyer, Indian chief—" Again you remonstrate, telling her that she must say only the first four, because the rest of it is for girls. Then you snap a daisy and tell her fortune. "Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief, doctor, lawyer, Indian chief. Rich man, poor man — Ah, ha! You're going to marry a poor man, and wash his dishes."

"I am not," she replies. "I am going to marry a doctor and nurse his patients.

Ted got it that way six times this morning; so there, smarty!"

"Well, I'll try it again," you suggest, and you sort of make it come out that way to please Elsie, for she is dreadfully set in some things, you know.

"Let's see what you are going to wear, Elsie?" and you snip another daisy.

"Oh, I'm going to wear satin! Ted says so — and, besides, I like it better than silk. It's shinier."

So you pull away slowly at the daisy petals, one at a time, because you have every intention of cheating just a little to make it come out right for Elsie. You will be in need of her good will later on, when you tell about those cherries.

"Silk — satin — calico — rags —" you say, as you pull off the petals, "Silk — satin — calico — rags — Goodness me, it's going to come out rags!" So you turn away just a little and pull two at a time for two pulls; and then, when you are sure you are coming out right, you pull the last two with triumphant jerks, flinging the petals into the air as you announce

the verdict — "Satin, yes, satin is what you will wear. But won't it be real un-convenient, Elsie, when you want to wash dishes? Would n't you rather have some calico with it, — say about one daisy's worth in five?"

"Oh, no," Elsie replies. "If one daisy in a hundred came out calico, it would be enough, because I 'm not going to wash dishes. Dr. Armstrong's wife does n't wash dishes, does she? She has lots of servants to do it for her."

"Well, I should think she would, for Dr. Armstrong charges so much for coming to see you that he can have all the servants he wants. Do you know, I asked him how much he charged for cutting off men's legs, and what do you suppose he said?"

"I don't know. Tell me?" Elsie asked eagerly, while Ted looked up with an expression of interest from the June bug which he kept crawling up and down a grass blade by reversing it again and again.

"He said 'one thousand dollars, if the

MARY

man has it, and one hundred, if he has n't,' and I told him he ought not to charge anything for cutting off legs at all, because no one wanted them off, and a person should n't have to pay for what they don't want done, should they?"

"Of course they should," Ted remarks, dropping his tired June bug and hitching round into the conversation. "Do you ever want your teeth filled? Well, I guess not; and don't you suppose you have to pay for them just the same? They have to put gold in them, and the dentist has to pay for that — and — he has to earn money same as anybody else."

"Well, I 'm going to have my husband cut off the legs of poor people for nothing," Elsie states with positiveness. "And I 'm going to nurse 'em for nothing till they get well too. That 's what I 'm going to do."

"Then you 'll need more calico for wear to nurse in," you break in.

"Oh, no, nurses wear gingham and linen, which is n't in a daisy fortune anyway, so you can't put it in."

"Well, let's see how much money you will have," Ted suggests.

Both you and Ted pretend not to notice that she surreptitiously wets her hand, so lots of the gold will stick to it. Then you squeeze all the gold from the daisy's centre into her palm, spread it a little and blow real hard, but a little to one side purposely. Lots of the gold clings to that damp palm, and you admit her prospective wealth much to her pleasure, just as Polly and Lewis come in fourth and fifth.

Then Polly wants to know whom she is going to marry. "I hope it isn't an Indian chief," she says, "or a beggar man, or a poor man either, or a thief, because I — Well, it wouldn't be nice, so you must promise to stop if you see it coming that way, and I'll untie my shoe-strings and cross them the other way and break the charm."

You get her married to a lawyer, with quite a lot of money, and silk clothing to wear, which pleases her immensely, and she is quite happy until she forgets all

about it in her desire to be up in the apple tree, where Ted and one of the Horton twins are.

In another moment you are all up in the tree. Oh, what bliss! What a perfect tree to climb! Its gently sloping trunk makes only the slightest "boost" necessary, and you — you got up without any boost at all, and are now climbing up into its very "toppest" branches, way above the heads of the others.

What exhilaration! What a feeling of power you experience in mounting to such a height! You feel the leaves flapping against your face, as you climb, and you cling tightly to the forks of the branches with your knees, lest you fall. Oh, what a fall it would be! When you look down it makes you cling tighter than ever, and you decide not to climb any higher.

Then another sensation, one that fills you with apprehension, steals slowly over you, and you think, "Oh dear, I wish I had obeyed mother and not eaten those cherries — perhaps they were n't ripe, after

all." You gradually lose interest in the glory of climbing, and fall to wondering just what your punishment will be, for you know that you have got to go and tell mother now, anyhow, and there seems no claim of ripeness left upon which to fasten your argument.

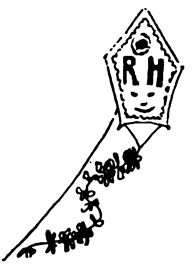
Slowly you descend to the ground and strike off across the daisy field.

"Where are you going?" Ted shouts after you.

"Oh — I'm thirsty," you reply evasively.

"Well, get a drink. Hurry back, for we are going to fly Arthur's kite," Ted replies.

But you keep right on toward mother. Kites and daisy fields and everything else have lost their charms for you at present. You have learned another lesson: that disobedience brings its own punishment.



THE OLD BARN

THE OLD BARN

WITHOUT any exception whatever the old barn is as good a place to have fun in as any place you ever knew. You could go there any time, even when it rained, if you would only remember the rules that mother had made. First and foremost, you must never use a pitchfork in any way, and you must always see if any were sticking in the hay; if so, you must put them in a certain place, prongs downward. Then you must search the hay for hens' eggs, for a few of the hens always lay their eggs somewhere in the hay. Then you must not climb to the high beams in any part of the barn that did not have hay under them, because Johnny Litchfield did it and fell on a hay-cutter and broke his arm. Then, let us see, — oh, yes, you are not to hide in the cow-shed part of

the barn when you play hide-and-seek. That 's all, except that you must not jump from the high beams while you are alone. That is because there would be no one to run to the house and tell mother, if you hurt yourself. But then, who would want to jump all alone? No one would. Half the fun of jumping is in showing the other boys and girls how high a beam you can jump from, and how much braver you are than Lewis or Melbert.

To go to the barn you must cross the cornfield, which, if it is in June, you always race across, each child taking a separate row to race in; and if it is in August, you have all kinds of fun getting lost among the stalks, or playing robbers there.

One day, when your cousins Mortimer and Allen were there, and most of the neighboring children had come up to meet them, you found yourself down at the old barn, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world to suggest a game of hide-and-seek. There were enough for a bully game — eleven — so not the slightest

DONALD

difficulty was experienced in arriving at a decision.

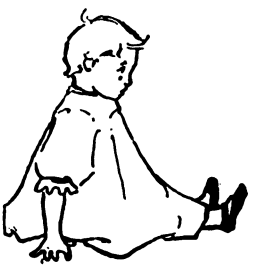
Not so easy, however, was it to decide who was first to be "it." Anybody is willing to be "it," if fairly caught; but when you haven't been caught, and you are just "it" to start a game, it doesn't seem like a fair show. Every one should stand even somehow or other in children's games; therefore, when you're asked to be "it," you reply, "I will if there is anybody who can beat me to the fence and back."

That was a fair proposition and agreed to immediately. It was a contest, with a trial of speed as a test to pick out the fittest. The un-fitted should be "it"; that was his punishment for being un-fitted.

"Give the girls a fair start," Ted suggests.

"I don't want any start," Elsie replies indignantly. "I think I can run as fast as you can, Mister Teddy; and if I can't, then I'll be 'it' with pleasure."

That aroused Polly to an expression of the same sentiments, — which you regret



very much, because it does n't seem quite fair to beat girls anyhow.

"Now — ready! One — two — THREE!" and away you scamper, eleven pairs of flying legs and rapidly swinging arms. Hurrah! you touched that fence second (Ted is always first in running), then you return — you are flying like the wind, Ted ahead, a whole bunch of children just behind, only a piece of the cornfield to cross and — But suddenly you trip and roll over and over in the grass. You hear shout after shout as each child arrives at the goal. Then you pick yourself up and gracefully accept your fate.

Lewis and Elsie claim that the race should be run over again, because it is n't fair to make you be "it" when you tripped, but you spurn the suggestion. "That was my own fault," you urge. "I had no business to trip."

"Of course he had n't," the others chime in, "or else anybody might trip on purpose when he found he was going to be beaten."

"But he was second," Elsie urged.

(Strange how nice Elsie could be at times.)

You silence it all by jumping to the corner post of the barn, and start counting as fast as possible — "fivetenfifteentwentytwentyfive — "

"Wait a minute," some one shouts; "how much are you going to count?"

"Five hundred, by fives," you respond, and proceed once more with your lightning-like counting: "five — ten — fifteen — twentytwentyfivethythtyfiforty" (you have to take breath occasionally, of course) — "fortyfifityfiftyfisixty — sixtyfiseventy — seventyfieighty — " and so on until you have counted five hundred. Then you add those all-important technicalities without which no game of hide-and-seek could ever be considered perfect: "Ready or not, you shall-be-caught in your hiding-place or not. No huggings nor smugglings around — my — goal."

Two angry voices just behind you cry out: "That is n't fair, that is n't fair. You have to count it all over again, be-

cause you said 'no huggings nor smugglings' last, when you should have said it first."

You argue the point so strenuously that every one comes in from his hiding-place to join in the argument, each asserting his opinion with all the strength of his nature. The word-battle waxes hot and hotter, and opinions fly back and forth like missiles of warfare. But you cannot come to any agreement among yourselves; and at last some one suggests calling in Michael to act as referee. To this you all agree; for Michael has settled so many points before and with such fairness that you have all learned to respect his wisdom, and are willing to accept whatever verdict he delivers.

At your loud summons Michael leaves his hoe against the fence, and approaches with a wonder-what's-up-now look on his face.

You state the case to him, all of you at once. He puts his hands to his ears, saying, "Shure, now, wait a bit; won to a time, now, won to a time"; and

MARIE

then, after listening carefully, he replies, "Shure, now, I have made up me moind about it, but I want ye to be afther promising me a few things first before I tell ye."

"All right," you all agree. "But hurry."

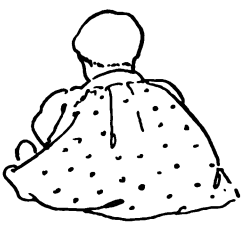
"Well, will ye promise not to roll any more barrels down into th' pond?"

"Oh, that's easy," Harvey responds, "because there aren't any more to roll down. They're all in the pond."

"Shure an' the're not. Jim an' me had th' divil's own job a-getten 'em out, an' Jim, poor feller, fell in an' got soaked with black mud up to his waist."

"Did he — he — he — Hurrah! That's great!" you all exclaim.

"Shure, an' it isn't so great as you think, me laddies," Michael urges. "Shure, an' if I wasn't right there wid a rope an' a plank Jim 'd be there yet, sinkin' slowly down toward Chiney, wid his eyes stickin' out like saucers. Shure, thot's a bog — or a quicksand; thot's what it is."



That scares you just a bit, and all

promise willingly not to do it again, — all except Harvey, who says, "Well, Michael, if the barrels are there — and I pass that pond — I just know I can't help pushing them down; so I'll agree not to, if you'll agree to saw them up into kindling wood."

"Shure, thot's a bargain," Michael agrees, and adds, "Will yes not tramp down th' hay in th' daisy field till I get it cut on Monday; an' will yes let th' turkeys alone; an' not dig th' putty out av th' chinks in th' piazzy where it 's been painted?"

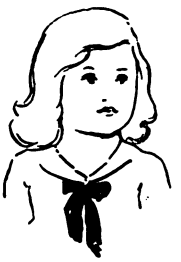
"Oh, yes, we'll agree. Tell us now."

"Well, thin, ye shuld say y'r huggens an' smuggens foirninss th' countin' because av ye don't th' fellers thot are hidin' behind th' gools has no chanst to get hid at all, 'n he is only hidin' there anyhow a-hopin' thot ye'll forget to say 'no huggins or smuggins.' If ye do forget to say it, yer a gonner, for thin he's in, shure. Ain't thot right?"

This seems unassailable, so back you go to goal, and say your "huggings" first,

then count again, while Michael plods back to the field, remarking as he passes you, "Shure, if ye count thot way, loike a shtrake av graced loightnin', shure not a won av them 'll git hid at all, at all. Go a bit aisy, me boy."

But what does Michael know about the feverish hurry of hide-and-seek? That's where the fun comes in. You spring to your goal and commence counting as fast as you can, so you can catch some one off his guard, and get well into the first hundred before they stop doing whatever they have been doing. You know that that five-ten-twenty-twentifithty is a magic sound which starts ten pairs of heels a-scampering through the hay. You glory in the excitement of that first movement, when the girls say, "Oh dear, he's counting, hurry!" and the boys say nothing, but rush across the hay and pull themselves up on the beams in their efforts to get hidden.



You count right along, as fast as you can, with your "ears turned back" to catch every sound which will help you to

locate Lewis or Ted, or the others. You hear some one press through the broken boards of the barn, and you know that some one is getting outside to hide. You hear a barrel head give way, as some one climbs up on it, and from what follows you know that Lewis has hidden under the hay-cutter. You hear a chain rattle ever so slightly, and you know that some one is hiding in the old boat way back in the barn.

Michael is absolutely unable to appreciate all this, so why should you consider his admonition at all?

Very soon, long before you have finished counting, all is perfectly quiet, save for a slight rustle in the hay, perhaps where some one is settling into it or pulling it over his head for covering, but nothing more than that. Then an eager voice cries out "Ready!" and you cut your five hundred short and turn stealthily about.

You must proceed very cautiously now for fear of letting them know your position by the sounds you make in the hay.

JUNE DELIGHT

You feel the eyes fastened upon you from crevices in boards and holes in the hay, although you can see no one. Never mind about the one in the boat, or Lewis under the hay-cutter. You can get them later. Those that you know about you do not fear. The ones that you have not located are the ones who trouble you.

You wonder if anybody is behind that door. You dare not look, for, if you do, some one is apt to spring up out of the hay, almost anywhere, or out from the tunnel under the hay, and rush in.

Ah, the tunnel! That 's the first move. You know a place where you can run your hand into the side of the tunnel, and it might run against somebody! At any rate, you can watch the other avenues of egress, while so doing. Slowly you approach the one vulnerable spot, making as little noise as possible. You reach your hand in. Oh, joy! It fastens on some one's collar. Who can it be? A boy, of course. You move your hand and grasp a suspender. "Ah! One — two — three — for you, Harvey! You 're

caught!" you exclaim, as you run to goal. You know that Harvey has his coat off, and that he is the only boy there who wears suspenders anyway.

Now you have one caught. That is a guarantee that you will not have to be "it" next time. You are therefore a trifle more bold when you leave goal next time, and have ventured just around the corner of the hay-mow, when you hear a swish of the hay which indicates that some one is trying to get in. You rush back just in time to see Elsie rise from the tunnel mouth, and run across the hay toward goal. You leap wildly to prevent her from getting there first. She is ahead of you and she is a capital runner. Three bounds you see her make; and then at the fourth one you hear a muffled shriek from beneath the hay, and Elsie goes down in it, face under, and rolls over and over, while you proceed to goal and put her out.

Then you turn and see Ted sitting up in the hay, rubbing the back of his head, and Elsie laughing merrily at his discom-

fiture. You understand at once that Ted had hidden in the hay and that Elsie had stepped on his body. She had actually run over the length of his anatomy, and would have got in all right if she had not stepped on his head and slipped. Then you put Ted out.

It seems like an unfair advantage; but then, this is really, truly hide-and-seek, with real boys and girls. This is no babies' game. The rules are, therefore, inexorable. Ted should be shown no quarter, accident or no accident.

While you are explaining your point of view, Lewis gets in through a hole in the barn. That is really a surprise, and you exclaim, "I thought you were under the hay-cutter, Lewis!"

"Oh, you did, did you? Well, I was not, I 'll inform you," Lewis answers.

Now you move very cautiously toward the boat. It is n't well to be too certain. Perhaps no one is there, after all —

Swish! — Ssh! — and almost before you can turn, Polly and Mortimer and Allen shoot down the hay-mow, as

though it were a toboggan-slide, land in the soft hay beneath, and leap for the goal with shouts of triumph.

They are in; but, never mind, you have caught enough to make a fairly good average; and there are still others to be found.

How fascinating it is to match your wit against the wits of other children! You recall the hunting stories of your elders, in which they and the animals they chased matched wits. Animals? Pshaw! The game of hide-and-seek with animals is unfair. In your hide-and-seek, child cunning is pitted against child cunning. The opposing forces are equal. Your hide-and-seek is much more fair, and consequently more interesting, than the game played between grown-ups and animals.

Ah, no one is in the boat! Nothing there but a wisp of hay at one end. Without the slightest hesitation you go beyond the boat to look behind the barrels.

Zip-rattly-bang! The wisp of hay leaps from the boat, with some one under

HAZEL

it of course; and a race is run in which you are handicapped, and both of you touch the goal at the same time. You cry, "One — two — three; Arthur, you are caught!" and Arthur shouts simultaneously, "I'm in!"

Then you both engage in a hot debate, in which each is absolutely certain of the justness of his position.

"You got caught fairly!" you declare.

"I did n't!" Arthur asserts vehemently.

"You did."

"I did n't."

"Did."

"Did n't."

"I 'll leave it to the crowd," you exclaim.

"So 'll I," Arthur snaps hotly.

"Get a bat," Teddy suggests, "and try it that way."

"There is n't one here, but you can try it on the pitchfork handle," Harvey volunteers, and produces the pitchfork.

"Ready, now!" he shouts. "One — two — three, catch it!" and he throws it to you.

You catch it near the top. Arthur puts his hand above yours. You pass your left hand over his; and so on until but one inch sticks out above your right hand.

"Can you swing it, Arthur?" Ted asks.

"Well, I guess; but I 'll have to get on a box. This is n't as short as a base-ball bat."

A box is granted. Arthur mounts, and swings the fork, once — twice — (ah, it is slipping) — thrice around his head. Arthur wins.

There is no use in combating that decision. You have accepted this means of arbitration, and you willingly abide by the verdict.

The rest of the players are in now, having taken advantage of the controversy to steal around just outside of the barn and reach the goal.

Now it is Harvey's turn to be "it," and yours to hide in the tunnel, or under the hay-cutter, or in the boat or hay-mow, or behind the barrels, or wherever your fancy

or preference leads. You are considering all these delightful, fascinating, strategical positions when you notice Polly going slowly across the cornfield, and you call to her, "Where are you going, Polly?"

No answer. Polly continues without giving the slightest indication that she has heard you.

Your suspicion is aroused, and a glance at Ted assures you that he entertains the same suspicion, — that the game is about to be broken up through some damage done to the physical or mental feelings of Mistress Polly.

"Strange how little it takes to break up a game where girls are playing, anyhow," you soliloquize, as you and Ted run to overtake her.

"Now, Polly, what is the matter?" you demand, as you see the big tears in her eyes.

"Harvey says that I am so freckled that I look like his calico pony; and I'm not freckled — so there, now!"

"Well, don't mind him, Polly. He's

fresh ; and he is twice as freckled as you are," Ted consolingly remarks.

"That 's what I — boohoo — told him ; and he said that his were tiny little ones and mine were like pancakes, and that one of mine was bigger than all of his put together ; and — and I just won't play with him any more. I 'm never — never going to even speak to him again."

Then you go back and remonstrate with Harvey.

"Do you think that I 'm going to let her call me 'skinny' and 'flat-nose' and 'shavey-head the barber,' without getting it back on her ? Well, I guess — I guess not," and Harvey's head goes back indignantly. "My, but is n't she a cry-baby ! Come, and let 's play without her."

But you don't.

Somehow or other the fun is ended. You sit on the sill of the barn and wonder if Harvey and Polly will ever speak to each other again in this world. You wiggle your bare toes up and down and through

the cool soft earth under the sill, and wonder how it will all end; but you don't play hide-and-seek any more that day. That's what comes of having girls in the game, anyhow.

THE PEAT MEADOW

THE PEAT MEADOW

DO you remember those meadows which in summer were dotted with little frog ponds connected by a brook, and in winter were flooded and frozen over, making a skating pond of over a mile across? Do you remember what a glorious place it was to spend a day, fishing, catching frogs, or wading in the brook? You wonder why you have never since seen such a wonderful, such an enchanted watercourse; and one day, when you happen to be in your native town, you walk four miles to see that same old meadow of your boyhood, and are surprised to find that it is not at all wonderful. In fact, you wonder why those boys frolicking there have not better sense than to play in such dirty mud-holes. They are doing exactly what you did thirty years ago, but you cannot real-

ize it. Your perspective is so altered that you imagine the place shrunken to one-tenth of what it used to be.

The old fallen tree where you leaned your fishpole before you climbed over the log is still there; but you leap over it now with hardly a thought, while thirty years before it was an obstacle to surmount, a landmark which registered the end of one stage of your journey and the beginning of another.

You are astonished to find that you can see clear across the meadows. Your boyhood impression was that of vast and boundless expanses, over which you might wander forever and not reach the other side. There was no other side to it then.

Oh, what a difference thirty inches added to one's stature makes in one's point of view! You realize this, and lower your view-point by sitting on a log to aid in reviving your boyhood impressions. It is useless. The point of view is not only thirty inches higher, but thirty years older.

Over there, peeking out from behind

MORTIMER

the clump of willows, is the little sheet of water where you caught that great big strange turtle, with the date 1807 and the letters H. H. H. carved on its back. Oh that day! and that turtle! How vividly it all comes back to you now, as you sit there pondering! The odor of that black swampy peat is in your nostrils. You are no longer a man in a cutaway coat and patent leather shoes, with a panama hat and cane. You are once more a boy of eight years, a healthful, vigorous, nature-loving, fun-loving, barefooted boy, trotting down that grassy lane, with a fishpole over your shoulder and Ted, Harvey, and Lewis by your side.

You remember how actively your mind was engaged with the various cares and responsibilities which demanded your attention. You had charge of the bait. Suppose you had dropped it! You could, of course, pick up the angleworms again, but there were two young frogs in that tomato can, and you must hold the lid just so or they would get out, or if you

squeezed it any tighter, they would n't get air to breathe — and then would n't Ted be mad? You had gone a long way around to get to that certain little spot where there were always young frogs a plenty sitting in the mud. That is where you took off your shoes. If, then, by any chance you should lose those frogs, Ted would have just cause for getting mad; for, after he and Lewis had crept stealthily up to a point where they could capture these two by putting their hands over them suddenly, the noise of it all had scared the others away, and they would not return for some time. Or, if they did return, they would be m-i-g-h-t-y wary now, I tell you.

So, carrying the bait was serious business, especially as it was an experiment in new bait for Ted. It would not do to thwart Ted in this long-planned experiment.

Then, besides that, you had your fish-pole to think of, and that needed constant care and watchfulness. Why, you had to keep twisting your neck every minute

or so to see if it were all right. Perhaps the hook might become unfastened and hang down. Oh, goodness! would n't that be dreadful? It might get itself caught in your ear or your neck, because you bobbed it up and down so. It might also get itself twisted around another fellow's line; and then the first fellow who said "cuttings" had a right to cut the other's line if he could not untangle it. You had seen many a real fight caused in this way. Or (it gave you the horrors to think of it) suppose you swung around quickly and caught the hook in your brother's eye? Mother had reminded you of that possibility so many, many times that you thought of it constantly. And that was another great responsibility.

Then, too, ever since you left the frog place, you had been barefoot. That meant that you had to look for soft places for your yet tender feet, for anybody who saw those very white legs would know that you had not been barefoot much that season. That was another care which complicated your situation.

And why it was that you were singled out to carry the potatoes in your blouse, you never could understand. They gave you no end of bother as you trudged along. It seemed as though one of them rolled out at every dozen steps, and when you stopped to pick the potato up, your pole knocked against Cousin Ted's or Lewis's, and each of you would give a lightning-like glance to see if it was necessary to call "cuttings." Yes, the potatoes certainly added to your cares.

True, Harvey carried the eggs, and he had to be mighty careful; and Ted carried all the luncheon things; but they did n't roll out of their waists as your potatoes rolled out, because they had baskets to carry them in.

These were the cares of the journey to the ponds. Other cares were coming later. You were so desirous of having a day of fishing with Cousin Ted and your brothers that you had practically inveigled them into coming by promising to show them where the hornpouts were so thick that you could n't help catching

GWENDOLYN

them, "even if they would n't bite, you could catch them in the fins, by jerking the hook up through the swimming mass," you assured them.

Then, too, you had told them that you knew where a crow's nest was, when you really did n't. You had heard of it through some other boys, and you felt moderately sure of your ability to locate it. But suppose you could n't, after you had told them that you knew just where it was? Was that not enough to occupy one boy's mind?

You are coming to that clump of woods where the gypsies always camp; and, as you approach, you all slow up by unspoken mutual consent, intending to keep close behind the blackberry hedge, until you can get near enough to see whether or not there are any gypsies there. None of you are the least bit afraid — oh, no, not the slightest bit; but you each know exactly what is in the others' minds.

"There is n't any smoke coming over the trees," Ted ventures after a while, as

though it were a commonplace matter to him.

"That does n't prove that there are no gypsies there," Lewis argues; "for it's after breakfast time now and they may not have a fire. The only way to tell is to see if there are any horses out in the grass, or, by getting close, to find out if there are any clothes hanging up on the lines."

Just then a happy thought strikes you. You remember, when father took you up to see the gypsies' camp last year, that the grassy lane was all cut up with deep ruts made by the gypsies' wagon wheels, and now there is n't a single indication that a wagon had passed on that lane for months. Here is an opportunity to show some extraordinary bravery.

"Come, fellows," you say, "let's take the short cut across the fields," and you mount the stone wall right in full view of the gypsy camp, while Ted and Lewis and Harvey hang back with looks of astonishment on their faces.

"Why don't you come on?" you urge.

"Because the lane is the best way," they answer.

"Oh, that is n't the reason you won't take the short cut," you reply in derision. "It 's because you are afraid of the gypsies. Oh, before I 'd be such a bunch of 'fraid-cats I 'd sell out, that 's what I 'd do."

Oh, the glory of it! You — you are smaller than any of them, are brave enough to defy the whole gypsy band, while they would show their fear by sneaking around the hedge. True, you know there are no gypsies there, but that does not enter into your philosophy. You forget it, — forget all save that you are doing something that your older brothers and Cousin Ted would not do. You are "stumping" them. Oh, the glory of it all!

"Afraid? Who 's afraid?" Ted demands.

"You are, all of you, or else you would come when I stump you," you reply. You very well know that none of them will allow a smaller boy to stump them.

That would be too humiliating. So they follow you, one by one, with their eyes fast on the clump of woods, while you walk along ahead as unconcernedly as though you had never heard of gypsies and how they kidnapped boys and sold them for slaves. You feel with great pleasure that your companions have increased respect for you. Your fishline gets tangled with Ted's, but he is very nice about it, and does not yell "cuttings."

Just ahead the path forks, one branch leading to the lane again and the other going directly through the woods to the swimming hole and the pond beyond. Here is another opportunity to show what you are made of. Your companions start down the path to the lane, while you take the other one, urging, "Come on, fellows, this is nearer."

"Now, look here," Ted says in exasperation. "You don't know what you are doing. You think you are brave, but that's because you are a kid. Do you know what gypsies do with boys if they get a chance?"

TOWNSEND

"Oh, yes, they kidnap them," you reply, as if somewhat bored. "What of it?"

"What of it? Do you want to be kidnapped, and sold, and perhaps have your ears cut off?" Lewis demanded angrily.

"Oh, I can run," you reply. "Well, I'll meet you at the swimming hole. Good-by;" and off you start.

"Oh, if you must go that way, and be a little fool, we'll have to go with you to protect you; but your mother will scold us for letting you do it, now see if she does n't," Ted remonstrates.

So you lead the way, conscious of the admiration of your companions. You really quite admire your own heroism. It would never do to discount it by telling them of your observations and deductions. Oh, no, that would never do. Very soon, however, you come to the woods, passing over the old fires of the gypsy camp itself, and on down the hill of slippery pine needles to the swimming hole.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

THE BROOK

"SAY, fellows, shall we swim first or fish first?" you ask.

"Fish, of course," Ted replies decidedly, "or else we might not have any for dinner; for we certainly would scare all the fish away from this part of the brook, and here's the only place to get any fish."

"All right," you all agree, and begin to untwist your lines.

"I hosey one of the frogs," Ted announces.

"I hosey the other," Lewis chimes in.

You are not quick enough to get one; so you remark: "Well, you are welcome to them, aren't they, Harvey? We don't want frogs anyway, do we?"

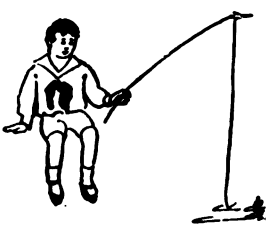
"No, indeed. Worms are better any day except for bass, and there are no bass in these ponds."

"Well, you wait," Ted says confidently, as he hooks the poor little frog. "You just wait and see. Father says little frogs catch big fishes, and if there are any big

fish here I'm going to try for them. Now, you worm-fellows stay on this side, leave the lunch and your shoes on the stump, and we frog-fellows will go on the other side." So saying, he carefully crosses the brook on the fallen tree, closely followed by Lewis, and swings his dangling frog over into the very place where he had caught four perch last year — with worms, you remember.

Now, all are as quiet as boys can possibly be, and for as long a time as boys can possibly remain quiet. For seven minutes exactly you remember the great rule of fishing, to keep silent and not move too much. For seven minutes you all watch your bobs, as though they possessed the magic of Aladdin's lamp. How much more beautiful your blue and orange bob is than any of the others! And what a very ordinary one Harvey's is! How interesting it is to sit there with your toes in the water, and your fish-line held just so, watching and waiting for a fish to come along!

Oh, just suppose one should come along!



Would n't that be — oh, would n't that be fine? Suppose he just came along and nibbled at your bait, then pulled your bob way under? What would you do? Involuntarily you move your arm in accord with your thoughts. That, of course, pulls your bob under water. Immediately Harvey and Ted yell, "Yank him in! Yank him in!" and you yank him with all your might and main only to find there is no fish on the hook at all.

"Ah, you jerked too quick," Ted calls.

"No, he did n't," Lewis insists. "His bob was way under. Say, see if he got your bait."

You examine your hook. "No, it is still there," you admit with regret. You would much rather it was n't there, for the reason your bob went under the water has occurred to your mind during the last thirty seconds. "Say, Lewis, I think it was a terrible big one," you add, "and I think you 'd better make sure of him with your frog. Perhaps my worm is too little."

MARY

"Perhaps I'd better," Lewis admits, pulling in his line with such rapidity and crossing the log so quickly that no one doubts his eagerness in accepting the proposition. "Perhaps, too, you'd better go where I was, for I know there are perch there. I saw bubbles. Did n't you, Ted?"

"Yes, but bubbles don't always mean fish," Ted answers.

"Say, you fellows make too much noise. How do you suppose I 'm going to catch that fish if you keep up such a racket?" Lewis protests, as he drops his frog into the water.

You settle yourself down in Lewis's place, and for a moment all are quiet. Suddenly Lewis yells: "Now, everybody be still! I think I 'm going to get him!"

"Well, you 'll drive him across to Ted and Rob if you yell that way," Harvey remarks dryly.

Some subtle movement in the water attracts your attention. You look, but see nothing unusual. Could there have been anything down there? Oh, suppose it was a fish! Suddenly the movement is re-

peated, and beneath you a long black fish slowly fins his way toward your hook.

"Jinks, there goes a fish!" you whisper to yourself. Your heart leaps, your breath comes more quickly, your hand tightens its grasp on your pole, which you now hold so steadily, so firmly that your elbows ache. He goes down out of sight somewhere, but in the direction of your bait, which you cannot see. You watch your bob. That's where you next expect him to show signs of life. Don't look into the water for the fish. Never mind where he has gone. Watch your bob. Watch your bob. That is what you do — nothing else — nothing — just only watch your bob. You stare so that you forget to wink. Then — oh, indescribable joy — he nibbles. Oh! — he nibbles again. You hold your breath. You feel the palms of your hands all wet, and drops of perspiration trickle down your forehead. You wonder if — if the fellows will notice that you have a bite — Oh, see that! Did you see that? The bob nearly turned over!

THE PEAT MEADOW

"S-hh, fellows! Rob has a bite!" Ted whispers.

You scarcely hear this, when down, way down, almost out of sight, goes your pretty orange and blue bob.

"Pull! PULL HIM IN!" your companions all yell; and you pull.

"You 've got him! You 've got him! Land him, or he 'll flop off into the water! Hurry!" all exclaim.

A swing of your arm and you have him. The first fish, and you the smallest fellow in the crowd!

In another moment you are surrounded by your admiring companions, who left their rods sticking into the banks to take care of themselves while they admired the fish, this beautiful shiny thing flopping around on the grass.

"Did n't I tell you there were some here?" Lewis demands. "But I 'm glad you caught him instead of me, because I 'm older and can catch plenty anyhow."

You mentally thank him for his generous statement, and discount its sincerity

at the same moment, while you vainly endeavor to unhook the fish.

"Say, but is n't he hooked deep?" you remark.

"That is the way with perch," Ted informs you. "They nibble for quite a time, then they swallow the whole thing and run away. Is n't that what he did, Rob?"

"Yes, exactly," you answer.

"How did you feel when he first began to nibble? Did it make you feel queer all over, as it did me when I caught one last year?" Harvey asks, stroking the now unhooked fish with his fingers.

"You bet it did," you respond.

"Oh, say, let 's keep him alive," Lewis suggests.

"How? We have n't anything to put him in."

"The bait can, the bait can. Empty it out and fill it with water."

"Oh, too small!"

"We 'll get a — Oh, Harvey, Harvey, you have a bite! Your bob is going down — Hurry! Quick! or you 'll lose him!"

HAMILTON

THE PEAT MEADOW

Over the fallen tree Harvey leaps in double-quick time. He almost reaches the other side, when he loses his balance and falls, splash, into the water. The water is only up to his waist; so in a second he is on his feet, ploughing through the brook, like the paddle-wheel of a steamer, toward his pole. He reaches it, and while still in the water, gives it a jerk, and, sure enough, there is a fish there, and a big one.

"Bravo! Hurrah! Bully for you, Harvey!" you all shout, and Harvey clambers up on the bank to inspect his prize, caring as little for the wetting he got as he would for a mosquito bite.

"Say, but is n't he a dandy?" he calls out, as he holds up the fish.

But you had all returned to your poles by this time. Harvey's experience had suggested the wisdom of watching bobs rather than jumping all around the brook each time anybody caught a fish.

"Well, if there are any here that are not scared to death by that high dive of yours, Harvey, I think they have no ner-

vous systems," Ted calls out from up the brook where he had gone.

"Their nervous systems are all right. I 'm going to catch his brother when I get my clothes off," Harvey responds, squeezing the water out of his trousers and hanging them on a bush to dry.

Very soon Harvey pulls up a pretty good-sized fish, unhooks it, drops in his line again, and almost instantly pulls up a little fellow.

"Oh, chuck that back again. That 's only a kiver," Ted calls from the bait can.

"What 's the matter, Teddy? Tired of frogs?" Harvey says banteringly.

"Gone! Eaten right off my hook! Had a bully nibble," Ted explains, as he turns a worm on to the hook.

"Then it must have been a water snake. I don't think much of frog bait, Ted," Harvey replies.

"Well, it 's all right with big fish, but there are no big fish here; that 's the trouble. Hey, there! What are you going to do, Harvey, — take a swim?"

"Yes, why not? I might as well. I'm all ready for it."

"What? And scare all the fish away? Get back there and keep yourself quiet, or go way down the brook."

"Oh, I forgot about the fish. I'll wait. No use in trying to swim on the pebbles down there, you keep bumping your toes on the stones and scratching your stomach," Harvey answers.

Now all is quiet for seventeen seconds; then Harvey catches a "kiver," drops him on the bank, throws in his line again, and almost immediately pulls in a great big perch, while the others, especially Ted, who haven't caught anything, look on with envy, and put fresh bait on their hooks.

"Just wait until I catch a few, Harvey," Ted says. "I may be slow, but — just wait."

"Oh, I'll wait all right. But — say — watch my bob! — Oh! — Well, what do you think of that? Say, isn't he a daisy?" and Harvey swings in another slick, shiny perch.

"You are in great luck, Harvey! There must be a school of them there," Ted calls.

"Oh, that is n't it. Do you want to know why they — S-hh! There 's another — s-hh! — watch him."

Nibble — nibble — nib-ble-niblnible-nib — DOWN it goes, and Harvey has another.

"Do you want to know why they bite on mine, Ted?" he asks, after he has unhooked the perch.

"Yes, why?"

"Because I have my clothes off, and it attracts them. If you want to catch fish, you 've just got to get your clothes off."

"Pshaw!" you all respond.

"Well, you need n't believe me if — you — don't — want — to, smarties. That 's all I 've got to say. Go and ask any Indian you ever heard of, and see what he says. See if he does n't say that clothing scares fish. And Indians are the greatest fishers in — "

"Say, he 's got another bite!" you exclaim.

HAZEL

That settles it for Ted. He sticks his pole in the bank, and about as soon as Harvey lands his fish Ted returns to his pole naked, and — by all the leeches in the pond — he has a bite!

That does the business for you and Lewis also. Harvey was right. There was the proof; for no sooner had Ted got that white shirt off than he had a bite and landed a fish. Off come your shirts and trousers, with your eyes fastened on the bobs during the operation. But, somehow or other, there is n't a nibble at your bob, nor at Lewis's, and Harvey has just caught another.

"Well, here we are stripped, but they don't bite. I wonder why?" you exclaim.

"I think it is because you don't — er — turn in your toes," Harvey explains.

"What?"

"And hold your shoulders back and chest out," Harvey continues sarcastically.

"Oh, you chump! You have been guying us!" Ted calls out, rather amused than angry.

"You ought not to be the one to say that, Ted. You might never have caught one if you had n't."

"Well, that may have changed his luck, but stripping had nothing to do with it. And you just wait until we get through fishing; we'll maul you for that, just see if we don't," Lewis threatens.

"Take your medicine, boys; take your medicine. Don't be kids. The joke 's on you. Do you think I want to stand here and get all sunburnt on my back without having you fellows do it too?" The quiet amusement in Harvey's face and voice drives away all resentment, and you again give all your attention to your fishing.

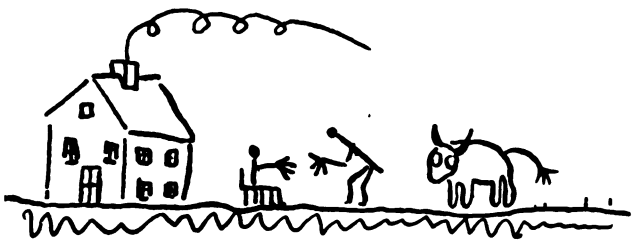
Now, if Harvey was "guying," the fish did not seem to know it, for from now on they bite so fast that you have no time to put on your clothes, but are kept busy pulling in the fish. Never before have you had such great luck fishing! Some one seemed to be having a bite almost every minute until close up to noon. Then for fully half an hour no one gets

THE PEAT MEADOW

so much as a nibble; and you dress yourselves slowly on the instalment plan, all save Harvey, whose trousers are dry on one side only.

"Say, let 's quit," some one suggests.

"All right! We 're hungry," the rest agree, and the fishing is at end.



THE CAMP FIRE

"WELL, Lewis, you get the wood. Harvey, you can build the fire, because you can't get wood with only your shirt on; and Rob and I will clean the fish."

With what joy you spring to your task! It was an honor to have been selected by

Ted to help him clean the fish, for usually he is so particular about it that he does it all himself. Then, too, you are nearly famished. How can you ever wait until it is all ready!

Pretty soon Lewis returns with a goodly amount of wood and some dry punk from the punk tree; and Harvey begins at the fire.

You and Ted are busily engaged with your work, when you are startled by an exclamation from Harvey, and you look up to see him standing by his wet trousers, a box of wet matches in his hand, and a dejected look on his face, which creeps into your own and your companions' countenances when you think of what those wet matches — the only matches you have with you — mean.

"Well, by jinks!" Harvey exclaims.

To a hungry group of boys the situation is tragic. Three miles from home and no matches to light a fire with which to cook your fish and eggs and potatoes! Nothing but bread and cake to eat! That was the thought which flashed through

JAMES

each mind at once; but closely following it came the instinct which compels a healthy boy to overcome obstacles and to reverse conditions, making unfavorable ones favorable.

"Well, I'll tell you what we've got to do, fellows," Lewis says.

"What?"

"Well, one of us has got to go over to Back Street, and wait for a farmer to pass, and ask him for a match."

"Suppose he hasn't any? And suppose he says, 'No, little boy, I'm afraid you'll set the woods on fire'?" you remark pessimistically.

"That might be if we sent a kid over, but you needn't go. We'll send Ted. He's big enough."

"You needn't call me a kid. I caught four more fish than you did," you remind Lewis, and bristle up for a wordy combat, which is suddenly dissipated by Ted, who says eagerly: "Say, boys, I'll fix it all right. Give me some of that punk. You go on with the fish, Rob, and, Harvey, you get the clay to do 'em up in;" and, leaving

his work, he took some punk, broke it into pieces, and after scrutinizing carefully every rock in the vicinity, finally selected one and laid it down in a semicircle on a particular spot on the rock. Then running up the lane he soon returned with an old horseshoe.

"Come here, Lewis" he calls. "Now stoop right there, and when you see a spark go into the punk, you blow for all your life." Then he strikes on the flinty rock with the horseshoe, making the sparks fly in every direction.

Wonder of all wonders! Ted is going to make fire as the Indians made it!

You stop your work, — forget all about it, in fact. Harvey stands and watches in wonder, his attention divided between the operation and the innumerable "skeeters" feasting on his uncovered legs.

Ted looks suddenly up, with a surprised expression on his face. "What! don't we have any dinner to-day?" he says. "Go on and get the clay, Harvey. Finish those fish, you over there;" and he resumes his skilful manipulation of the

horseshoe. For fully ten minutes he strikes the sparks. They fly in all directions, but do not strike the punk. "Hold the stuff up close, Lewis. There, that's right. Now see them fly — see them! There — now you've got it, blow! — blow! Keep it up! Don't stop!"

Poor Lewis blows until he nearly faints, but is rewarded by seeing the sparks grow in size until Ted thinks it safe for twirling. Then he seizes the punk and swings it around and around in circles, his shoulder as a centre, until the end of it is one bright glowing spark.

"Ah, now we're all right," he says reassuringly, holding several of the pieces to the ignited punk, and swinging those in a like manner until they glowed in the same way. Then, running to the place where Harvey had piled the wood, he placed the ignited pieces in such a way that he could force a draught up through like a chimney and piled on more punk. Ten minutes of patient coaxing and a tiny flame burst from the mass.

"Hurrah! You're a brick!" you ex-

claim, and Ted is so pleased at the compliment that he forgets to admonish you for neglecting your work, or Harvey for forgetting the clay.

But now that there is actually a flame Harvey "scoots" for the clay, and you skin fish as though your very life depended on it — and by the feeling in your stomach you think your life does depend on it.

Very soon the fish and eggs are all wrapped up in little prisms and balls of clay, and placed in the fire to steam and sizzle and snap and crack until they are dry and hot, and their contents are cooked. There is little preparation needed for their luncheon other than the cooking, and that is being done in good boy fashion, which means that each boy is cook. But the old proverb, "too many cooks," does not apply, for nothing is spoiled. Nothing could be spoiled unless it were entirely consumed. A little burning does n't spoil things for such healthful, ravenous appetites.

Savory odors of roasted potatoes and

HESTER

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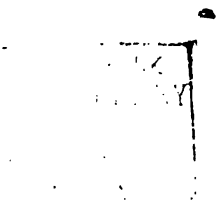


baked fish add to the torture of waiting until everything should be done. Really it did n't take long to bake the fish, only twenty minutes at the most, but it seemed an age. Finally a fish prism cracked.

"They 're done! Take 'em out!" Ted exclaims; and out they all come, eggs and fish and potatoes.

"Oh, how savory! How luscious! Did anything ever taste so nice before?" you all think, as you crack open the little bricks of clay, and pull out the steaming, juicy fish inside.

"Say, they 're bully!" you exclaim, ignoring a burnt finger.

"And they 're cooked just exactly right, are n't they? Father never cooked 'em better himself," Lewis declares.

"I guess not. No one could. The eggs are just a bit too hard, don't you think? but —"

"Oh, I like 'em that — way better. If they were soft you 'd — have to eat 'em with — spoons, and that 's no fun," Harvey says, in instalments between bites.

For fifteen minutes you are all very busy, — very busy, indeed, and conversation is the least important feature of the event.

"Say, pass the salt," some one demands.

"Quit it! That's my potato. Yours are over there," another protests.

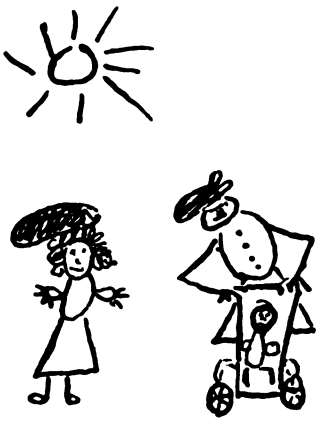
"Aren't you glad the girls didn't come?" one affirms.

"Didn't I tell you I'd show you where they were thick?" you say.

Thus you eat, and banter one another, until you are filled; then you stretch out on your stomachs in the shade, and watch the fire go out, too lazy to assist it; and you tickle one another's toes and ears and noses and soles with long grass, and tell stories, and half drop off to sleep, and do other delightful lazy things for ever so long.

The sun changes and changes his position. The shadows creep around on the grass. At last some one suggests that you have a swim, as the prescribed two hours after eating must certainly have passed. There is no answer to that; but, by mu-

tual consent, all rush to the deep place in the brook which you all know as the swimming hole.



THE SWIMMING HOLE

"I HOSEY the stump!" you cry.

"I hosey the rock!" Ted yells.

"I hosey the log," Lewis shouts.

How you all run, peeling off your shirts on the way!

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

The preparation a boy usually undergoes before a swim is not a lengthy affair. There is a rush, a swirl of white clothing, a pair of trousers in the air for a second, then a SPLASH! One boy is in. Whack! SPLASH! — another boy is in, then another, and another, until but one remains on the bank, waiting to ask if the water is cold and just the least bit timid about plunging in.

In this case the fellow on the bank happens to be you. It is your first swim this season, and you only learned how last season anyhow; and you forget that you can touch bottom anywhere you want to.

Three blowing, spouting porpoises soon cease their kicking, plunging, and shouting, which is the first joy of a swim, and turn on you.

"Well, why don't you come in? What are you staying out there for?" they call. "It 's only so deep. Come along, Rob."

"Is the water warm?" you ask.

"Oh, yes. Warm as milk. Come in."

You hesitate.

DONALD

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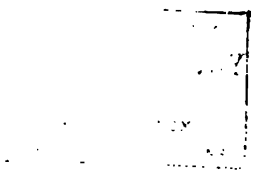


THE PEAT MEADOW

"Now who's a 'fraid-cat?" Harvey asks.

That settles it. With a running-jump you are in — WHACK! — flat on your stomach.

"Oh, what a dive!" Ted remarks.

That was rather a flapjack dive, so you try it again with better success.

Oh, how cool and refreshing the water is! Could anything in the whole wide world be more fun than splashing around in this shady pool on a hot summer day? And to feel that you are actually swimming, swimming like a fish! That is great! And to know now that you might be able to save yourself by swimming, if wrecked in mid ocean; think of that! How brave it all makes you feel; and, with an imaginary wreck in mind, you plunge across the brook in eight strokes, wishing it were a mile wide, so you could show yourself how you would swim to land if you were shipwrecked.

"Look! Look! I can float!" Harvey cries. You look, and really he is floating, or appearing to float at any rate.

"Oh, who could n't float with one foot on the bottom?" Ted says disdainfully.

"Who 's got one foot on the bottom?" Harvey demands, splashing water all over Ted.

"Oh, you will, will you?" — Splash — Whack — Splash — "There are two" — Splash — "who can play at that game;" and Ted assails Harvey, both hands spouting water.

"Oh, say, wait a minute, Ted!" — Splash — "Hold up! Muggins a minute — Say, I said muggins," Harvey protests.

"What do you want muggins for?" Ted inquires.

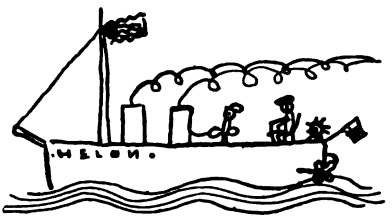
"Because — Let 's have a water duel, you and Bob, and Lewis and I," Harvey explains, wiping the water from his eyes.

"All right! Come on, fellows! Ready, now! — No muggins allowed — Go!"

In an instant that quiet shady brook becomes a seething, foaming Niagara. Hand-spouts of foamy water shoot out and meet one another half-way, and fall back hissing with much watery commotion. It is a really truly battle, no make be-

lieve about it. You stand by Cousin Ted, with your back to the enemy, and give them a terrible, terrible wetting. What do you care if the water is coming down on you in torrents, in sheets, in columns, in a soapy, bubbling, foamy deluge? What do you care if your eyes are sprayed until you cannot see, or if your ears are full of water and ringing like bells, because of a whacking blow from a waterspout as hard as a leather strap? What do you care if you fall and your head goes under? You are up again in a jiffy; and the fighting goes on until you are all so tired that you stop by mutual consent.

But no one ever wins in a water duel anyhow, except when you are just going in and some one in the water bombards you with hand-spouts. Then you have to give in or dive, because the water makes you shiver. In this case, you remember, both sides claim the victory upon such technical ground as, "I fired last, so our side won," or "Rob was knocked under, so our side won." But



the argument does n't last long, for each side feels the weakness of its position; besides, it's more fun to play in the water than to argue.

At last your new accomplishment suggests itself. "Say, look, fellows!" you exclaim. "See what I can do!" and down you go, holding your nose and squatting on the bottom of the pool. Then you let your breath out slowly, and it rises to the surface in bubbles, which are quickly followed by yourself, all out of breath and expectant. "What do you think of that?" you ask proudly.

"Oh, that's easy! You can't turn a somerset, though? Watch me!" Harvey exclaims, and makes a feint at diving, but does n't dive.

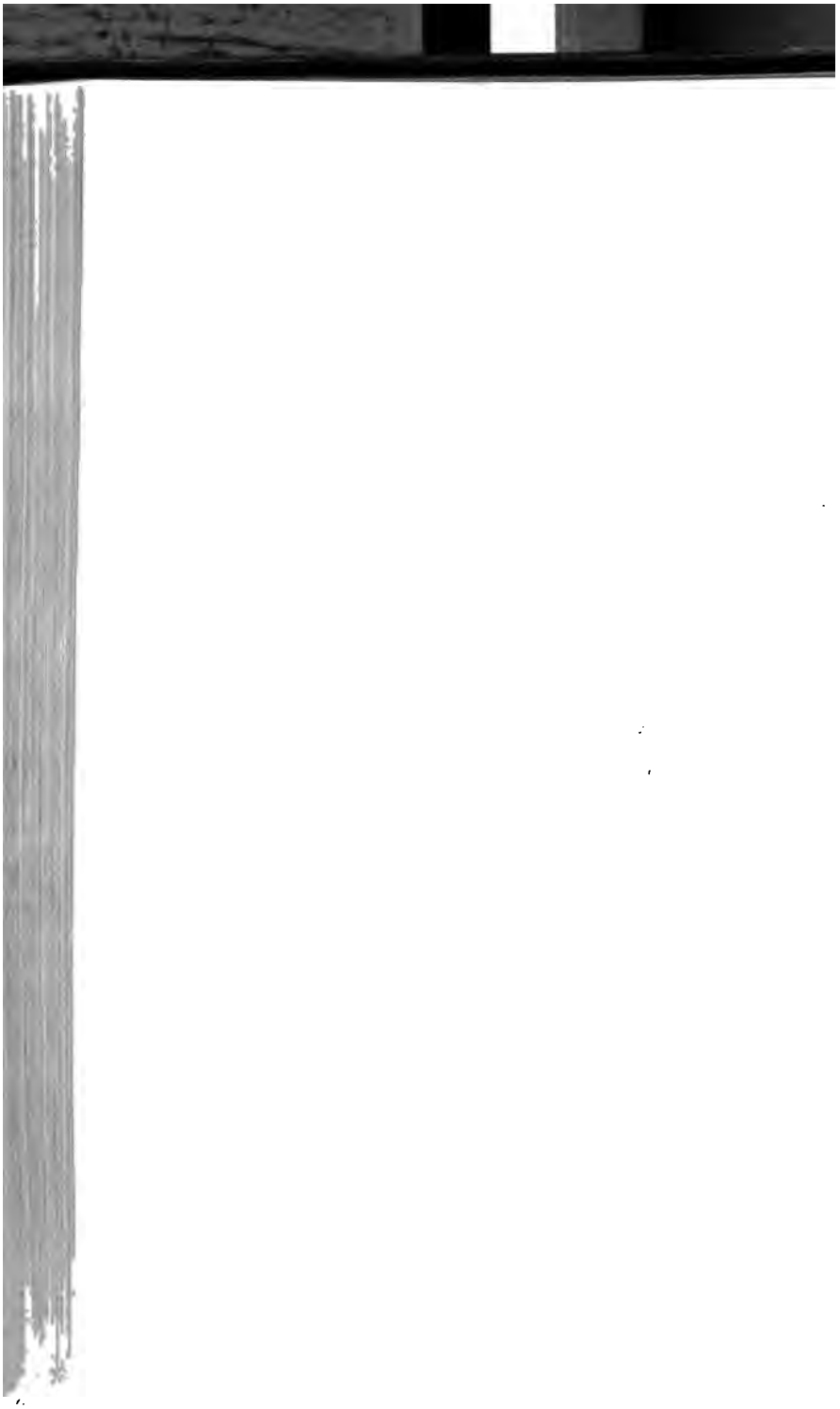
"Why don't you dive?" Ted urges.

"Oh, give a fellow a chance. One — two — Now wait a minute. One — two —"

"Dive! What's the matter with you?"

"Well, I 'm going to — One — This is hard, do you know it? You might get

JUNE DELIGHT



your head stuck in the mud, or hit a rock — One — two — two — three! —"

Splash!

The upper half of Harvey disappears, while the lower rises above the water, and waves about for a second or two, each leg pointing in different directions, then disappears again to let the half that should be uppermost take its accustomed place.

"How's that?" Harvey inquires, as he wipes his eyes.

"Bully! But watch me!" Ted exclaims, disappearing suddenly.

You watch. Where has he gone? The water is somewhat riled now and it is impossible to see him. You wait — you grow nervous.

"Oh, that's all right. He's just seeing how long he can stay under," Lewis explains.

You wait another three seconds — you are sure it is five minutes.

"Perhaps he hit his head on a stone," you suggest.

"Oh no, not he! He keeps his eyes open under water, and, besides, he knows

how to swim under water. You only hit your head if you don't keep your eyes open — But I wonder why he doesn't come up?" Harvey is nervous now also.

Another five seconds — ten — fifteen — you grow white with fear and anxiety.

"Say, no one could stay down so long," you protest. "What shall we do?"

"Dive after him. He's hurt. Come along," Harvey yells, and plunges out of sight.

Both Lewis and yourself follow, and feel all around the bed of the brook in desperation, each second expecting to grasp the lifeless form of Cousin Ted. Ouch! It is terrible down there! The place is full of hobgoblins and things that might catch your legs and haul you down. Perhaps some of them got Ted. Your breath is giving out. You must rise. But you hold on to a root and feel about just a little more before doing so. Then up you come — Oh, how provoking! There sits the drowned Ted on a fallen tree making faces at you.

"Say, fellows, how 's the weather down there?" he inquires pleasantly.

Pshaw! There is nothing to do but to give him a splash or two and make him drop back into the water. Useless to moralize with him. If you would forget how well Ted could swim under water, you deserve to be fooled. But to think that all the time you spent in worrying about him, he was sitting behind a log out of sight with his face just above the water! Pshaw! To ignore such a thing is the best way to make him feel cheap.

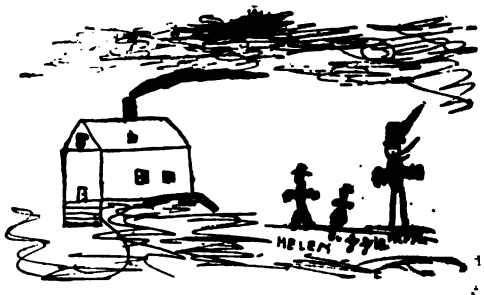
"Let 's play acrobats?" you suggest.

"All right!" all agree, and Ted joins you once again. But as he approaches, you see him look at your hands, then his own, then Harvey's and Lewis's.

"Say, fellows, we 've got to quit. Look at your finger-nails. They 're blue."

So they are. That ends your swim. There is no use of arguing. Blue nails recall mother's commands, and you all take only just one more swim across the brook and back, then leap out into the sunlight,

and dance up and down, and run about like wild Indians until you are warm again; and then you race to see who will get first into his clothes and over to the hickory-nut tree near the frog pond.



THE FROG POND

To get to the frog pond you follow the brook in the direction that isn't toward the way you take to go home, and keep right on past the willows; then you cross the stepping-stones where a little brook starts out from the big one, and, well, you follow that, walking up on the banks

MARIE

because the little brook is all black mud, and pretty soon you come to a pond that is n't very clean — and that 's the frog pond.

My ! but what a lot of fun a fellow can have around a pond like that, even if it is dirty ! Of course you would n't want to fall in it ; oh dear, no ! And you would n't swim in it for anything anybody would ever give you, because you never would get clean again if you ever did get out, which would n't be likely ; for you might stick in the black mud, and go down and down and down in it, way down where all the seven-headed serpents are, and dragons too, that never come out, because there are no brave knights nowadays to give them battle.

When you come to the great hickory-nut tree which grows near the pond, it is time for you to get your poles ready and to put the red flannel on the hooks for the frogs and the turtles, because you have to creep up quietly, so as not to scare every frog and turtle and spoil your fun ; and then, when you have your poles

and hooks all fixed, you separate, admonishing one another to go slowly and carefully; for after the first half-hour the fun is over. By that time you have either caught them all, or they have hidden where you cannot find them.

You and Ted choose the lily-pad side, and Lewis and Harvey take the side where the muskrats live. Very carefully you proceed, holding your long pole and its bait of red flannel out before you all ready to place near the mouth of the first big green frog you see.

"Oh, there are lots of them!" you whisper to Ted.

"S-s-hh! You 'll drive 'em away if you make any noise. Keep perfectly quiet and — Say, Rob, see that log! Jinks! There are three — four — five turtles on it! S-h-hh — and we 'll have the greatest fun you ever had in your life. You take that big frog next to that brown thing, and I 'll take the one just beyond. Ss-h-hh! Carefully now!"

A few more noiseless steps, your bare feet sinking in the soft black mud, and

you are within reach. Steadily now — carefully — or you 'll scare him and he 'll jump; and if he does, half the frogs in the pond will think that a sufficient reason for them to jump. Then you 'll have to squat for twenty minutes, perhaps, before they 'll come out again.

Is it any wonder, then, that you are intensely nervous, and that you move your pole very, very slowly until the big piece of red flannel hanging from your hook is pretty near the frog's mouth?

Now he sees it, and hunches his back, and tucks his hind legs in closer. Very, very cautiously and slowly you move the flannel still closer, until it is hardly six inches from the frog, and there you hold it, expectant. That is close enough.

For one brief moment the frog regards that red object most curiously, blinks his eyes once or twice, probably in an effort to resist temptation; and then, his frog nature asserting itself, with a grand leap he seizes the flannel, and you have him dangling his funny legs at the end of the line. You swing him in; and before

taking him off you quickly slip a noose around his hind legs (to make sure he will not escape, you know), and cast for another with the same piece of flannel.

Oh, what fun! But what fools those frogs are! There they sit and watch their brothers and sisters and friends get themselves caught, and never take warning. Surely their eyes are large enough to see when a companion is hoisted on that line not four feet away? Well, if they do see, why do they sit there, like little ninnies, and foolishly suffer themselves to be swung to the same fate? Indeed frogs must be very, very stupid creatures, you conclude; and continue to demonstrate their stupidity by pulling them in one after another, until you have circled the pond twice.

By this time you are very glad to quit for a while, because you have a very good string of frogs, and the black mud caking in the sun on your bare legs makes them so itchy that you want to wash the mud off. So back to the brook you run, wash your legs, and dip your four strings

TOWNSEND

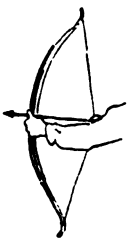
of frogs in to revive them. "To make 'em think they 're back home again for a while," Ted facetiously remarks.

"Say," you ask, "how are we going to kill them? Pound their heads or stick 'em?"

"Stick 'em, I think. It 's quicker," Ted answers. "And, well — I don't like pounding their heads, because they open their mouths so wide and look sad."

"What 's the matter with taking them home alive, and letting Patrick fix them when he gets their hind legs ready?" Lewis suggests.

"That 's a good idea, Lewis, because they might taste better. Let 's do that, and keep them here in the brook until we catch our turtles. What do you say to that?"



You all agree. So you tie your strings to a low branch and throw the frogs in the water to enjoy their last swim, while you go back to the pond for turtles.

Pretty soon you are again circling the pond in search of turtles, enough time having elapsed since catching the frogs to

restore it to its usual tranquil state. The remaining few frogs in the pond are again sitting in the chickweed or on peaty stumps, blinking their eyes sleepily in the sun, while here and there, upon old boards or the ends of logs, a line of turtles sit lazily cooking themselves, after the manner of their kind.

You swing your hook carefully, carefully toward four of them sitting close together on a log. The small piece of red flannel hovers over their heads for just a second, then — splash — splash — splash — splash — off they go.

"Oh, what luck!" you exclaim, and watch for a nose to appear so you can tempt one to catch hold from the water.

Crack! — a dry twig snaps under Lewis's feet, and every turtle within forty feet of him slides into the water.

"I guess turtles aren't biting to-day," Harvey calls out, for the same thing has happened to his section of the pond.

"They got too scared when we came for the frogs," you answer, while dangling your hook just over the nose of a floating one.

"Oh, Ted has one!" Lewis shouts. "Good for you! Good for you, Ted! Turn him on his back, and don't let him get away."

"No, you bet I won't," Ted replies, as he shakes the dangling thing loose and turns his yellow side up, putting a small flat stone on him to keep him there.

"Look, fellows, oh, look! What's that?" Ted calls excitedly.

"What? Where?" you all reply in unison.

"See, near you, Lewis. Oh, a big — something — what is it?"

On looking in the direction indicated, you are surprised, astonished to see a great round something suddenly raise itself out of the water, its wet disklike surface shining in the sun.

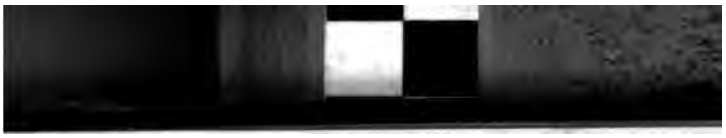
"It's something alive anyway," Ted shouts, observing the commotion in the water. "Swing your hooks out, boys, and try to get him. Jinks! it's a big turtle! Hurry! Get him!"

You need no urging. You are more excited than you remember ever having

been before in your life. Tremblingly you guide your shaking pole so that the hook hangs just over the monster's nose. Will he take hold? Lewis's hook swings there now also, and you hear Ted and Harvey running toward you from their side of the pond.

"Stay back! Stay back, you will frighten them away!" you cry. You might as well have ordered them to stop breathing. In five seconds both Harvey and Ted are crowding you on your stump, the nearest to this strange leviathan of the deep, and are swinging their hooks over the huge head of the creature. You feel a great dread that in the next second he may dive and you will see him no more. Why won't he bite at the flannel? Oh, why won't he? He does n't —

"Jingo, fellows, he sees it! See him turn his head — sh! — Say, get away from there, Rob, he 's going to get my flannel! Pull yours away! Pull it away, I say! I 'm going to get him!" Harvey insists in excited whispers. And, indeed, it seems as if Harvey was right, for slowly,



HESTER

very slowly, the huge fellow paddled toward the bright bit of cloth, as though he knew the harrowing effect of his movement on the boys' minds.

"Sh! — keep still, Harvey, keep still! He'll take it in a minute; turtles are slow to make up their minds, you know. There — oh, why don't you hold it still, Harvey? Oh, there he goes! HOOK HIM! HOOK HIM!" Ted cries in desperation, as the monster silently glides to the bottom of the pond, that is now being lashed and laced and dragged by four wildly excited boys.

"He went right down there! Poke him up with your pole, Ted, and I'll hook him when — No, over this way farther — get him up if you can, then we must hook him anywhere that we can. Poke away, Ted!" Harvey urges, as he draws his line back and forth in the now black and muddy water, in the hope of hooking him under the shell somewhere as he comes up.

Desperately you all poke and drag at the spot, without any result whatever ex-

cepting to have Ted's hook catch in a log and break right off when he tries to pull it out.

"Oh, we can't get him that way! What do you say to waiting till the mud all settles and then try again?" Ted suggests, while putting on a new hook, which he dug out of the cork containing the extra supply.

"That's a good idea, but how would it do to mark the place where he went down, and go tell father, and get him to come here with Patrick to help us catch him?" you suggest.

"Perhaps that would be a good plan, because men could do it better than we boys, and I know how father marks places in the water that he wishes to remember," Harvey says. "I'll show you how. First, you see this stump? Well, that's one point. Then you look over the place where he went down, and that dead tree on the other shore —"

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" interrupts Ted. "That's all right on a big lake to locate a spot, because you have to, but here, on

this little pond, well, see — it is not quite the length of my fishpole out from this stump. Now, that 's enough to remember it by."

"Say, perhaps Patrick may know of a way to get all the water out, and — oh, say, fellows, are n't we a lot of gillies — jackasses — ninnies! Suppose we did mark the spot exactly, you don't suppose that turtle would stay right there till some day next week or next month, when we could get some grown-ups here, do you?" Lewis philosophizes. Whereupon you all laugh heartily.

"Well, anyhow, I 'll never be satisfied till we get him," Ted remarks, and throws his new hook into the water to drag for the monster.

"Would n't it be fine to take him home?" Harvey says eagerly.

"Oh, would n't it?" Lewis agrees.

"We could have a show and charge admission," you venture.

"That 's so. We 'll have a show. Oh, that 's a bully idea! Shall we charge money or pins?" Harvey asks.

"Pins, of course. When you charge money, no one comes; and what is the use of having a show without having people to see it?" Lewis queries.

"Well, you answer me just one question, Mister Lewis; what are you going to do with the pins?"

"Give 'em to — oh, well, I don't know what we can do with them exactly," Lewis replies.

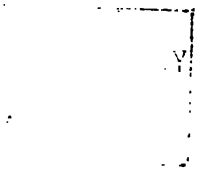
"No, you don't know! Well, you can't do anything, so why make everybody go hunting around carpets for fifty pins, when ten will do? And it's hard enough to get ten of them, let alone fifty, without cribbing from mother's pincushion," Harvey argues.

"And what will fellows do where there are three or four in a family? They will have to buy a paper of them, or stay at home," you suggest.

"And think of the one who takes tickets," Harvey says. "It will take him so long to hunt pins that it will be night before we get them all seated."

"Well, then, ten," Lewis agrees.

JAMES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'Now, let's see. What day would you, have it?"

"Have what?" Ted calls.

"Why, the show to see the big turtle, of course. We are going to have —"

"Oh, are you? Well, where's the turtle?" Ted inquires, with just a suggestion of sarcasm in his tone.

"Why, in the pond, of course; but we will get him," Harvey replies.

"Well, you'd better get him first, then plan your show afterwards, you gillies. You can't get him by talking, either."

Admitting the force of this argument, Harvey and Lewis lend their assistance in dragging and poling the pond, while you slip a worm on your hook and edge away.

"Say, where are you going, Rob?" Lewis calls.

"I know where there are some 'kivers' and 'sunnies.' You fellows can get the turtle," you answer.

"All right, mister, catch your 'sunnies,' if you want to. We don't need the assistance of kids anyway in catch-

ing sea monsters," Harvey calls back indignantly.

"Who 's a kid?" you demand resentfully.

"You!"

"I 'm not!"

"You are too!"

"I 'm not!"

"You are, and you 're a baby too. Go along, baby dear, and catch your 'sunnies,'" Harvey drawls exasperatingly.

"I 'll bang your head for you, mister brave man afraid of an empty gypsy camp," you fling back, conscious that your taunt was a masterstroke.

"Say, fellows, quit your wrangling. Let Rob fish, if he wants to. We don't care," Cousin Ted breaks in, ceasing his strenuous trolling through the mud for a moment.

Silently and in a somewhat irritated mood you wander around to the other side of the pond, and swing your bob out as far as you can. The stirred up mud from the opposite side of the water has made it impossible for you to see the fish, but you throw your bob out where you

usually catch them; and watch — watch and wait, with the impatience which characterizes an eight-year-old boy — for the little mysterious twitch of your bob and its attendant water rings, which arouses in you that intense excitement which makes fishing such fun.

Pretty soon it comes. Nibble — nibble-nibble — nibble — nib-ble — nib — twitch — jerk — and away it goes, down, down into the mud. Then you jerk; and up, high up in the air, flies the poor little wiggling yellow and black thing whose capture has aroused in you the spirit of savagery inherited from your prehistoric ancestors.

"Ah! so you have caught a 'sunnie,' have you? Well, you are welcome to them. We're after big game," Harvey calls.

"And we intend to make you pay to see the turtle, and we three are going to divide," Lewis taunts.

"Well, I have pins enough, anyhow," you reply.

"We may make it money instead, and

then you 'll be sorry," was the reply from the opposite shore.

Before you can answer you feel a jerk on your hook, a mighty jerk that starts your heart to thumping like a steam-hammer and drives away all thought of retaliation.

ZIP!

Oh, what was that? Your line cuts the water with a sharp hiss, and draws taut as a banjo string. You jerk with all your might, and pull until the strong pole bends to the point of snapping; but nothing moves. A dead weight holds your hook beneath the surface.

"O-ho! Mister Fisherman, got a log this time, have n't you?" Harvey calls.

You resent his impertinence by your silence. Strange, your bob went under all right. Logs don't bite, you reason. Ah, it must have been a fish, and when you pulled in, you caught your hook in a log. Yes, that must be it. But you keep on pulling — pulling — pulling — pulling, until gradually you feel the log slipping out of the mud, while across the pond

MARGARET

the banterings and taunts and sarcastic thrusts of your brothers and Cousin Ted continue mercilessly. Hand over hand now you pull in your line with its dead weight. Your only concern is to get your hook out uninjured. That is your sole thought. Suddenly you feel a terrible jerk ; the sudden fright of it causes you to scream, and fully five yards of line goes tearing through your fingers. Then you gather your wits together and stop it. Your tender fingers burn and bleed from the swift movement of the line through them. Now all is still again ; but the dead weight of the log continues to drag down your hook.

"What is the matter, kid ? Don't you think you should have a reel for that log ?" Ted calls.

You say nothing, but pull steadily, hand over hand, nervously, excitedly, just a trifle scared, for a terrible suspicion has entered your mind. Very soon you feel that the same suspicion is shared by the spectators across the pond, for they cease their poking and watch,—watch with their

mouths and eyes open as wide as they can open them.

If that thing on your hook is a log, it is the funniest acting log you ever saw! It contests mightily each yard of line that you draw in. Oh, suppose the line should break! What a calamity that would be! Whatever it is that has hold of your hook, you will land it and show the boys that you are not a kid — yes, you will land it somehow.

Suddenly there is a commotion in the water that brings a "Whoop!" from the other boys, followed by a general stampede for your side of the pond.

"Wait till we get there, Rob! I'll help you! It's a pickerel!" Ted yells.

"Hold him tight! Don't let him break your line!" Harvey shouts, as he runs.

"Oh, I don't need the assistance of— kids!" you exclaim, between pulls.

Suddenly the opposing force in this tug of war relaxes for a moment. You take instant advantage of it, and something gives way. A huge black thing glides to

the surface. You give a long strong pull; and, just as the boys come dashing up, you land your "log" on the mud under their very noses.

"THE BIG TURTLE!!! Good for you, Rob!" they shout, in real admiration.

"Poke him up farther, fellows, and turn him on his back, or he'll escape," you command, big with the glory of your capture.

"Hurrah! Now we'll have the show! We've got him! We've got him!" you all exclaim in glee, when the turtle is on his back and safe.

"And will you divide with me now?" you ask.

"Divide! Why, Rob, you shall have the whole gate receipts," Ted assures you, as he stoops over the big fellow.

"Oho! Look here!" Lewis shouts, as he flops the turtle over on his back.

"Whew!"

"What!"

"Why!"

"Where do you think he got that?"

You all crowd around the turtle and

stare in astonishment on the letters and date,

H. H. H.
1807

carved on the whitish-green under surface of the shell.

"Whew! Say, fellows, is n't it funny? Those are grandfather's initials. I wonder if he carved 'em?" Harvey asks.

"He used to fish here when he was a boy. I know, for he told me so," Ted remarks excitedly.

"Eighteen hundred and seven! My, what a long time ago! I did n't know turtles lived so long," Lewis exclaims, in wonderment.

"Oh, it could n't have been grandfather, could it?" you ask.

"Well, the letters H. H. H. are unusual initials; and grandfather has them; and I don't know any one else that has; and he used to fish here," Ted asserts.

Surely this is indisputable evidence.

"Whoop!" you all shout, flinging out

MARY

A Nap with Pussy after the Morning Walk

your arms and jumping about wildly, overjoyed, excited, thrilled by the pleasure of anticipating grandfather's surprise.

"Come on, fellows; let's take him right home and show grandfather. Oh, won't he be the surprisedest man you ever saw! Let's see, how shall we get him home?" Ted looks inquiringly about. "We might make a stretcher of branches and carry him on that," he suggests.

"Oh, I know a better way. Let's put him in my coat. It won't matter if it is torn, because it is an old coat anyway, and carry him by that," you suggest.

"Goody! That's it! Two take the sleeves and the other two take the corners," Lewis exclaims.

Instantly you carry the plan into effect. Very carefully you slide the coat under the turtle; and, with much chattering in the way of suggestions, admonitions regarding the danger of getting near his mouth, advice concerning the best way of handling him, recollections of things you have read about turtles, suppositions respecting his edibility, queries and guesses

in anticipation of gate receipts at the "show," you start for home.

And thus you trudge along, across the fields and up the lane, toward Back Street, the four happiest, hungriest, most excited, most tired, most talkative boys that ever returned from an outing.

And in this manner you pass Melbert's and Arthur's house; and Melbert and Polly and Arthur join in the procession and help you land your prize on your own piazza.

Oh, then, the joy, the pleasure of seeing grandfather's surprise; and his recollections of the time when he captured and marked the turtle; and better still, the five-dollar bills he gave to each of us. That was better than any show could be, for five dollars would give one no end of fun and circuses and things.

Then, besides, all the children in the neighborhood came to see it at once, so of course they would n't pay to see it again. Then, also, grandfather spoiled all possibility of a show by saying that he would fix up a place in the fountain

basin for the turtle to live in, and you would n't have to pay to see it there.

But, never mind, you had the five dollars, and the satisfaction of having caught a turtle seventy-five years old and measuring fifteen inches across the shell. So you were a very happy group of boys that night, when you went to bed.

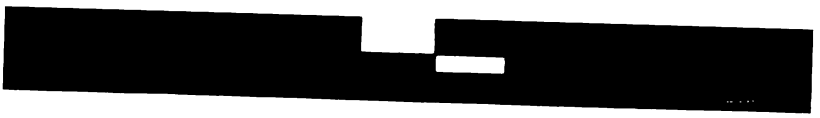
"Say, Lewis, did n't we have a bully time?" Harvey asks for the hundredth time. Receiving no answer, he adds, "Are you asleep?"

"No, but I was just thinking that we forgot about that other turtle lying there on his back."

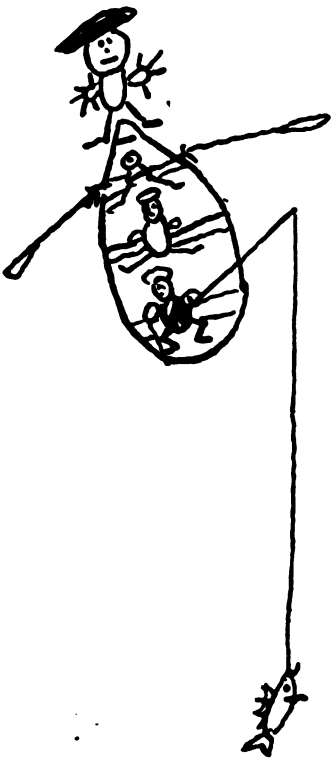
"Oh, and, say, our frogs!" you break in suddenly, remembering where you had left them.

"Oh dear, yes, we have forgotten our strings of frogs. Well, we 'll have to go back in the morning. Good-night."

"Good-night."



THE SEA BEACH



THE SEA BEACH

SOFTLY the light of the noonday sun penetrates your shelter under the trees. Absently, dreamily you turn the pages of your book, read a few of them without knowing what you have read, then drop your book from the hammock and swing easily, lazily, while the soft breezes and the low murmurings of the leaves lull you into a spirit of restful, dreamy meditation.

The charm of the day, the music of the breeze, the swish of the ocean bring back to you the days when, as a boy, you used to find such indescribable pleasure in the little nothings of the ocean's edge. How vividly it all returns to you now, as you lie there swinging in your hammock! How clearly you remember the hours you used to spend catching baby crabs in the pools, or, lying lazily on your stomach,

where the brook emptied into the ocean, watching the skippers skimming tirelessly over the surface of the brook. You remember whole days spent there with Daddy and the boys, and also those glorious half-holidays when you used to go there with your brothers.

Oh, those happy boyhood days! when, with a boy's thoughts, a boy's happy rollicking disposition, a boy's sturdy legs to carry you swiftly, untiringly wherever you wish to go, a boy's appetite, ever ready to eat anything at any time, a boy's concern about things you have no concern for now, you explored the golden glories of the child-world, and pronounced them all "Good! Bang up! Fine!"

You recollect every foot of the journey from your door to the ocean's edge, the paths you traversed, the roads you crossed, the fences you climbed, the woods you went through, the brooks you leaped.

You can see yourself in fancy with Elsie and Lewis and Harvey and Cousin Ted and Polly and Melbert and Arthur and Gyppie, the dog, eagerly, joyously, trudg-

DEAR GRANDMAMA

ing to the brow of the hill, through the goldenrod knee high. You crane your neck expectantly for what you know will soon appear, and shout in glee when it does appear, a long pencil of blue over the brow of the hill, a streak of ultramarine, brilliant, iridescent, alive with its countless little whitecaps, with its murmur of baby waves rolling in on the sheltered beach, and the poundings on the rocks in the wind. You think of the countless little fishes and periwinkles and crabs and starfish and other live creatures, which you know are there awaiting you; of its seaweed and its clams, and slippery rocks and tide pools, and flocks of horseshoe crabs that walk backward and do such funny things if you catch them and turn them on their backs; of its minnows, hosts of them, and dead squids and dried-up jelly fishes, and the sea shells, and — oh, of everything that lies in or along the edge of that long blue stretch of the mighty ocean which reaches out its arms and beckons you to its shores.

You respond to its beckonings, to

its magnetism; and, with a "Hurrah! Whoop! Come on, fellows!" you rush pell-mell down the hill, with your brothers and sisters and playmates, down through the goldenrod, through the sweet fern, through the brier and brush and tangle of the hillside, down, down, into the forest, the ocean lost to you as you run whooping and cheering through its depths, past the old maple tree, across the brook, through the tangle again, and out, out into the great blue sunshiny happy world, ankle deep in the hot white sand of the dunes, then down again, tumbling, rolling, heels over head, to the beach and the ocean.

Then down at once you sit and take off your shoes and stockings, and roll up your trousers into a wad as high up as you can get them, and rush into the cooling foamy surf in search of whatever creatures mysterious old ocean provides a home for.

"Oh, is n't it great fun!" Harvey exclaims, splashing Elsie just a bit, while she pins up her dress.

"Oh, you mean thing! Harvey, please don't," Elsie pleads.

"I won't if you will come in and wade and help me get — Oh, say, Rob, there 's a devil's tail! I hosey it!" and Harvey leaps for the long weed, and sticks its stem through his belt, letting it trail behind him on the water, much to the amusement of everybody, and especially of Gyp, who barks furiously at it and finally succeeds in dislodging and tearing it into shreds.

"Ouch! You scamp! Gyppie, you 're splashing me!" Polly exclaims, running away as fast as she can.

And so the fun is on. A merry chase, a merry race, a game of water tag, and eight wet children and a dog lie panting on the beach in the sun to "dry off" and "get a breath." Then, because of sitting in the sand and because you are of an age when it is impossible for you to be still for seven consecutive minutes, you fall to digging holes and burying one another up. That is, the boys do, while the girls make little rivers with bridges crossing

them; and lakes dotted with islands; and Japanese tea gardens with twigs for trees and sea shells for houses.

Elsie becomes very indignant and justly so, when her beautiful castle with a moat around it, the labor of half an hour, is suddenly destroyed, because Gyppie bounds wildly across after a stick which Harvey has thrown.

Could anything be more mean than that?

Then Harvey invents a new trick. Pretending to impersonate a sculptor, he carves away at a mound of sand until he has scraped it all away from Arthur, who is buried there; and, behold, a statue of a boy!

"All dressed," Polly remarks, remembering that statues as a rule are not dressed.

"Yes, and what is more I 'm going to make it alive. See! With this wand I inject into his veins the elixir of life! LIVE! Oh, thou boy!" Harvey commands dramatically.

Instantly Arthur's face assumes a most

ELIZABETH

grotesque expression, an indication of the fact that he lives.

"Now I'll oil your joints, so you can sit up and stand and walk. Here you go;" and he pretended to squeeze oil in the elbow joint.

"Squeak — squeak — squeak — Ah, now one arm is all right!" Harvey exclaims.

He oils all the joints in the same way, one by one, making such a series of funny noises in imitation of the rusty joints squeaking, while Arthur moves his arms and legs in such queer, quick, spasmodic jerks that all of you are convulsed with merriment. It is so extremely funny that you laugh and shriek to the accompaniment of Gyppie's hysterical barking until you absolutely have to stop from sheer exhaustion. Then, of course, each one, including Gyppie, must go through the same process of being carved into a statue and brought to life.

Oh, what fun it was trying to bury Gyppie! Somehow or other he would not allow you to bury him more than half-

way, then he would jump out of the sand as though dreading the possibility of being buried alive. Finally, after watching each of you in turn go through the same performance, his face lighted up with an understanding of the situation, and he actually barked his insistence upon an immediate burial for the cause of art.

Never had the light of genius so manifested itself in Gyppie before. Patiently, very patiently, he allows himself to be buried in the sand, until only his eyes, ears, and nose are above it. Then Harvey, the great sculptor, carves boldly away in the sand until he fashions a perfect dog just like Gyppie.

"There, what do you think of my dog statue?" he asks, when the work is finished.

"Fine! Fine!" you all exclaim.

"Looks like Gyppie," Elsie remarks.

"There is something wrong about the expression of the mouth," Ted suggests in mock seriousness.

"Now oil up. Oil his joints and pump

the elixir of life into him. We want to play with him," Melbert insists.

"All right;" and Harvey picks up his mock syringe to perform the operation, but suddenly drops it as he catches sight of Lewis, who has waded into the water and found a great big horseshoe crab, which he is holding up by the tail for inspection. "Whoop! How did you catch him?" and the great sculptor becomes a very much excited boy.

"There are lots of them here, a whole school of them! Come and get them quick! Hurry!" Lewis urges.

Hardly had he finished the sentence before you are all in the water, where, sure enough, a dozen or so crabs are moving slowly toward deep water.

"Head them off! Drive them in!" Harvey commands, catching one.

"Get me one, oh, please, Harvey," Polly pleads.

"And me, too," Elsie adds.

"Why don't you get them yourself? Are you afraid of them?" Harvey inquires, rushing out and dropping

his wriggling animal away up on the sand.

"They might bite our toes! Oh, please get us some," Elsie begs.

"All right. You watch them, and we'll get them," he replies, as he rushes into the water for more.

By this time you have headed them off, but only momentarily, for the instinct of self-preservation urges them to flee, and they scatter, going in many directions. Then, in desperation, you plunge in after them, as they make for the open sea, caring nothing for a ducking or wet clothes so long as you succeed in capturing the queer-looking creatures. Soon you emerge, dripping but successful, and nine horseshoe crabs lie wriggling and squirming well up on the beach.

"What are we going to do with them?" Elsie asks.

"What are we going to do with them? Oh, what a question! Why, we are going to race them, of course," Harvey replies decisively.

"Race them! Race those things!

"JUNIOR"

Why, they can't move much faster than a snail, anyhow," Polly asserts incredulously.

"Well, just wait and see. Here, now, each take one. There are nine. Oh, there's one left over! Well, throw him in the water."

"No, let Gyppie have him," Ted suggests.

"Good idea," Harvey continues. "Now, each of us put our crabs on a line, and the first crab that gets into the water wins, and he gets his freedom and his owner gets a prize."

"What will the prize be?" Elsie asks.

"Ten dollars," Harvey replies.

"How will we get it?"

"Why, I'll give you a check for it," Harvey answers.

"Oh, shoot your old checks! They're no good. You think that just because father gave you an old check book that you can write checks as men do, but they're no good," Elsie declares.

"Well, they will be if you keep them long enough. You wait until I grow up

and have money, and I 'll honor my signature all right, because, Miss Smarty, if you only take notice all my checks are dated twenty years ahead."

"Well, I 'd rather have five cents now than ten dollars when my hair turns gray," Elsie asserts.

"Well, then, we will make it five cents now, and make believe about the five cents. Are you all ready? One — two — three — Let go!" Harvey commands, amid a storm of protests regarding the make-believe prize.

Slowly, painfully slow and snail-like, the racing crabs crunch over the pebbles and the sand, their instincts drawing them oceanward. Each of you follows on behind his or her own particular crab, urging him on, while Gyp, seemingly unappreciative of the fact that one of them is his alone, runs barking up and down the line, barking at them all collectively and sometimes singling out an individual to bark at. This he did to Polly's crab.

"Get away, Gyppie. Attend to your

own 'horse' and let mine alone. Go away now!" she cried.

"Get up! Hurry! You'll beat!" Ted urges.

"Oh, say, you pushed his tail. That's not fair, Ted," Melbert cries.

"No, I didn't. Honest, I didn't. I just straightened him out a little. Honest, Melbert," Ted answers.

"Well, that isn't fair. You mustn't touch him at all," Harvey insists.

"All right, I'll pull him back a little," Ted replies good-naturedly, and he moves his crab back the fraction of an inch. "There, get up, Maud S."

A burst of laughter follows this.

"Oh, what a name! Maud S., the fastest race-horse in the world, for the slowest horseshoe crab in the world!" Harvey laughs.

"What is your horse's name?" Ted inquires.

"Mine? Oh, mine is named — Elsie. Come, get up, Elsie," Harvey replies smilingly.

"Oh, you mean thing!" Elsie calls.

"Why, did you name him Elsie?" you ask.

"Why, don't you know, Rob? Listen, now does n't this sound quite natural to you? Get up, Elsie, get up, get up! Have n't you ever heard that before?" Harvey replies.

Elsie herself joins heartily in the laughter which follows, but still insists that it is "a mean thing to do just the same," and scatters some sand on her crab, saying: "There, I christen thee Harvey because thou art so dirty."

"Good for you, Elsie, good for you! I like a girl that has wits enough to get square instead of getting mad," Harvey says.

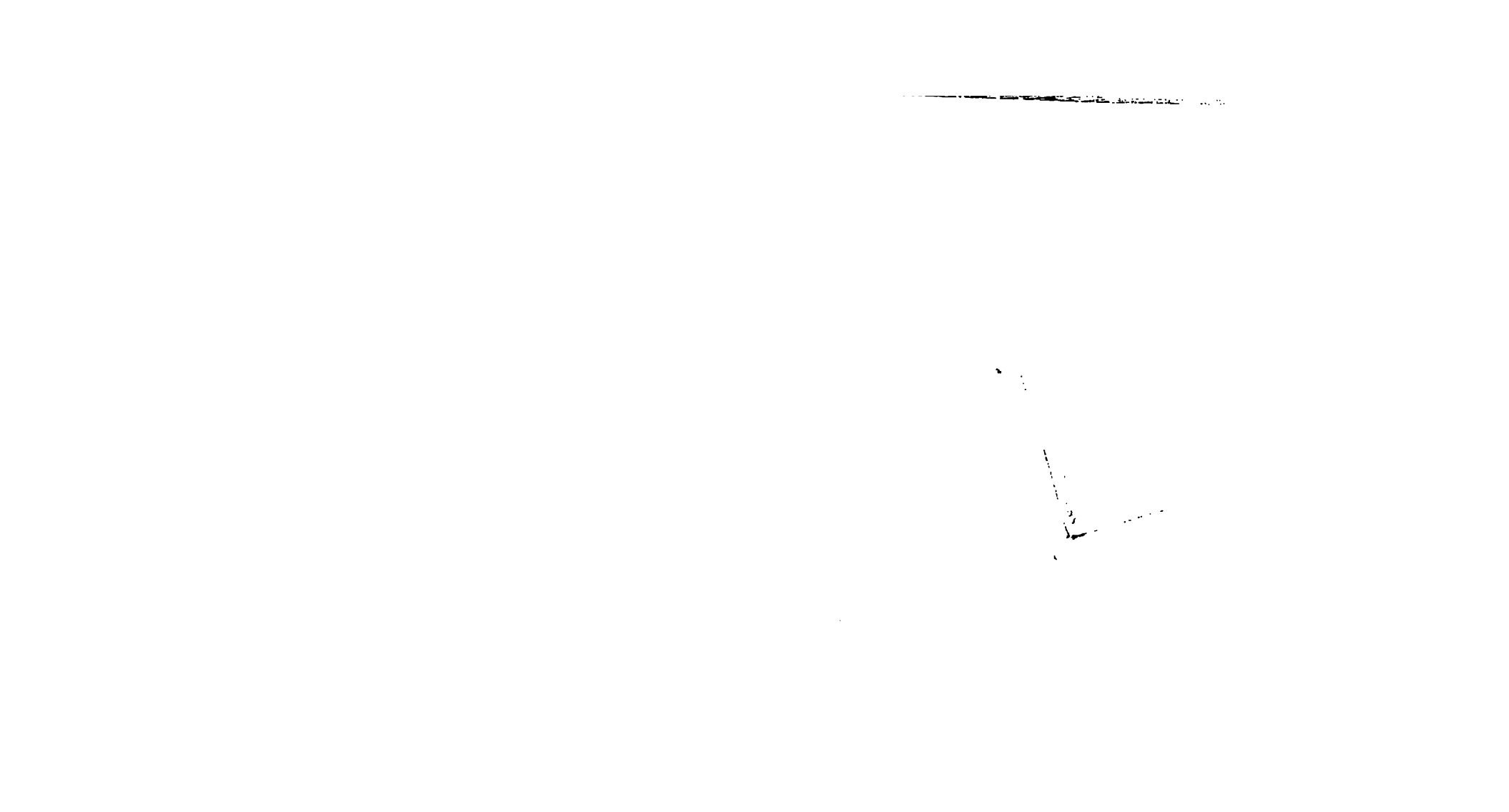
"Say, is n't this an exciting horse-race?" Ted remarks sarcastically.

"What 's the matter with Maud S.?" you ask.

"Sprained one of her ankles, I guess," Melbert suggests.

"Say, mine is ahead. His name is Jocko, because he has a long tail," Polly explains.

IN PENSIVE MEDITATION



"And mine is, let 's see — The Baptist, because he has such a hard shell," you break in.

"Good for you, Rob. Let 's see, what will I name mine? How would Spider do, because he has so many legs?" Lewis inquires.

"Good! That 's all right," you all agree.

"Are n't you going to name yours, Melbert?" you inquire.

"Yes, mine is named The Sun, because he is going down in the sea."

"And mine is The Four-forty Train, because it is always behind time," Arthur says.

"Rather far-fetched, but I suppose it will do," Ted agrees.

"How about Gyppie's here? He should have a name," Polly urges.

"The Sphinx will do for him," Ted suggests.

"Why?"

"Well, look and see. He has n't moved, nor does he look as though he intended to move for the next thousand years.

Come, hurry, Maud S., or The Baptist will get ahead of you," Ted urges.

All this time the "horses" were making slow but sure progress toward the water's edge. Jocko was ahead at first, but Maud S. soon caught up, and then The Baptist passed them both. Then The Four-Forty Train got up even, and had his name changed to The Flyer, then again to The Bat, because he did such crazy things. Finally, as they neared the water's edge amid the urgings of their respective backers, all but two, Maud S. and The Baptist, stopped. These two kept right on, and Maud S. plunged into the water first, "winning by a neck," as Ted exclaimed, while your "horse," The Baptist, got in second.

"Say, I know why the others stopped," Ted explains. "They dried out. You see they can only go as long as they have water left in them, and the sun is so hot it dried them out, and they probably have quite a bad headache by this time. Now I'll tell you what to do. Each of

you mark your place, and then revive them by holding them in the water."

"All right," you agree, and carry out his suggestion, finding that it did revive the "horses" enough to continue the race, with the exception of The Sphynx. He would n't move at all, which made Harvey so indignant that he said: "Well, you can stay there, then. Serves you right,—" a threat which would have been carried out if the more tender-hearted Polly and Elsie had not surreptitiously carried him to the water, after the boys had gone to the Point in search of starfish and other curious things.

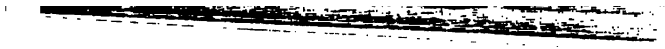
Soon you find yourselves among the rocks and seaweed, clambering up their slippery surfaces, clinging on by your very toes, listening to the crackling of the air-bulbs of the seaweed as you trample over them, dodging the spouting streams from clam-holes, and scooping for the minnows left in tiny tide pools among the rocks, which you keep alive, for your aquarium, in a tomato can. You turn over the rocks in the larger tide pools, looking for

baby crabs, which you put in Harvey's pail; gather shells, filling your pockets or giving them to the girls; pick up snails and periwinkles to see them crawl in their houses and close their doors after them, and do the hundred other things that suggest themselves spontaneously in such a wonder of a place.

And so the minutes and the hours go by, until the afternoon is far gone, and the lowering sun warns you that it is time to go home. Of course no one wants to go, but, equally of course, you must go, for the tide is coming in fast, and you will have to wade over your knees even now to get to the mainland from the rocky point.

How different is the procession which leaves the beach from that which arrived there four hours before! In marked contrast with the joyous, happy, shouting, racing children, who pounced down upon the dunes, end over end, is the tired, almost solemn procession marching barefoot up the dunes toward home, with shoes, tied together by their laces and

MARGARET



stuffed with stockings, hanging over their shoulders.

You are all wet to the skin. What do you care? You will be dry soon. You are so tired that you ache all over. What matters it? You will be home soon. You are so hungry that you munch sorrel and red clover, as you go through the fields. What is the difference? Supper will end that. You are so sunburned that you cannot touch your noses. Pshaw! there is plenty of cold cream at home. You have had a jolly afternoon, and are bringing back with you a fine collection of minnows and starfish and other curios for your aquarium.

As you pass Melbert's and Polly's home, and the lane leading to Arthur's and Ted's houses, they leave the procession, saying: "We have had just a bully time! What do you say to going again this week?"

"All right," you call back.

"Good-by!"

"Good-by!"

"Bow-wow-wow-o-o-ow!"

THE FOREST

[redacted]

THE FOREST

DO you remember those wonderful forests of your boyhood's days? Where are they now? Those forests were boundless, trackless, dark, and mysterious, canopied by trees thousands of feet high, with trunks, oh, ever so much larger than any in the forests of nowadays. They were alive with myriads of squirrels, and rabbits, and birds, and other visible creatures; and, more interesting still, with countless whisperings of unseen beings, of elves, and fairies, and water nixes in the pools, and hobgoblins in dark places, and horrid old witches that come in the night time when the bats fly. Oh, yes, and there were robber-barons' caves! Very frequently you discovered such caves in your boyhood, and crept silently away from them, lest you awaken the slumbers of their occupants.

How strange it is that you can discover none of these things in the forests of now!

Do you remember those happy days when you wandered through those mighty forests of your youth with other boys, creeping stealthily toward a certain fox hole in the hope of seeing the baby foxes playing around the edge of it, or stealing silently along in search of hidden treasure left by robber-barons, your pulses quickened by the dangers of your position?

Do you remember the trees you climbed in search of birds' nests? Of course only to look at the eggs, for you never really took any, or, at least, not many.

And, oh, do you remember when the nuts were ripe? That was the time of all times in the forest, for Daddy always went with you for a day then, and helped you get the nuts, and told you about the animals and other things in the forest.

As vividly as though it were but yesterday you can remember one of those old nutting days, and see yourself as you awakened at early dawn, tumbling out of

THE LITTLE ARTIST

your warm bed and running to the window to satisfy yourself that it is going to be a fine day, and shouting the news to Lewis and Harvey, and then to Elsie in the next room.

"Hurrah!" they shout, in response, and you all pounce into father's room, which ends all possibility of further sleep for him.

How you hurry through your breakfast, and how quickly you gather together the things laid aside last night to take with you, and then, with merry shouts of farewell to mother, you are off in the early morning, bound for the distant woods where the nut trees grow. Down the road you hurry, the frost-covered leaves crackling beneath your feet, each one of you with a cloth bag and a stout stick under your arm, and Daddy with a heavy sledge hammer. It is a good two-miles walk to that certain forest where the nuts are the thickest, but what are two miles to you? The anticipated pleasures of the day puts wings to your feet, and you fairly fly along the road, your hand

in Daddy's, your eyes everywhere, your tongue busy, very busy, asking innumerable questions and making countless suggestions regarding everything that occurs to you.

You leave the road beyond the Watrous farm, and follow the wood road across the field and up over the hill, where you got such bully blueberries earlier in the year. Daddy takes down the bars for you to pass, but you are all over or under them, like a flock of chickens, before he has dislodged the first one.

"Oho! I did n't know you were such chickens!" Daddy exclaims, putting the bar back in its place and vaulting the fence as lightly as an acrobat.

"Are chickens the only things that go through fences, father?" Harvey asks.

"Oh, I don't know. Let me see. Rabbits must go through, and squirrels, and foxes, and pigs, and wolves. Why?" father inquires.

"Oh, I just wanted to know why we are chickens any more than those other animals," Harvey replies.

"Well, how would you like it if I called you my piggies or my wolves? Would those sound very much like pet names?" father queries, smiling.

"No, don't call us wolves; we would much prefer being chickens," you protest.

And so you ramble on, chatting with Daddy until you reach the edge of the forest where the huge chestnut trees grow. Then you all run ahead of father, impatiently, anxiously, as though some sudden something might come and get all the nuts before you could possibly gather them; and, shouting with glee, you throw your sticks as hard as you can up against the branches, where there are myriads of opened burrs with their brown twin and triplet chestnuts awaiting the privilege of dropping into your laps.

"Oh, aren't there just millions of them!" you exclaim, as they shower down upon you, pelting you on the back and head and hands. One of them lands right on Elsie's nose and makes her jump, and then don't you all laugh?

"Just wait a few moments, my chickens,

or, rather, my squirrels, and I 'll keep you pretty busy;" and Daddy, with a smile, takes off his coat. That action always awakens in you a queer feeling, as though something remarkable was about to happen, for something wonderful almost always does happen when Daddy takes off his coat. Daddy has such big hard muscles, and he is such a giant of a man anyway.

Daddy rolls up his sleeves and picks up the sledge hammer. Goodness, see those great muscles swelling like ropes! How glad you feel to have such a powerful father, and how you mentally long to be just like him when you grow up; and as it is almost impossible for a boy to think about anything without talking about it, you ask, "How did your arms get so hard and muscular, father?"

"Oh, rowing boats, and swimming, and riding horseback, and exercising hard, and working hard to earn money to buy clothes and things for my squirrels," father answers, approaching the tree.

"Oh, I wish you did n't work at all to

MARY

earn money, so we could have you all the time to play with us," Harvey says impetuously.

"Well, if I did n't work what would we do for money to buy things?" Daddy asks.

"Oh, I don't want any money — well, except an occasional quarter or so. I 'd much rather you would n't have to work, so we could have you to play with us," Harvey replies.

"I would much rather work, my boys. Working is what makes the world move on. Every one and everything has his work to do, even the little raindrops that nourish the plants, or the wind which blows the pollen from one flower to another, as your teacher explained to you," father says, pausing before the tree trunk.

"Well, I don't have any work to do. Why don't I?" Harvey asks.

"Oh, yes, you do. Don't you take all of Daddy's mail to the post-office, and stamp it, and bring his letters and papers to him?" father asks.

"Oh, yes, but that is n't work. I like

to do that, because it is helping you," Harvey replies.

"All work that you like to do is a pleasure. It is only hard when you do it grudgingly, as you did that errand Patrick asked you to do yesterday to help him. Now stand back. Look out for your nose, Elsie!" and Daddy wields the sledge, striking once — twice — thrice, with all his might and main, making the old tree quiver from its roots to its branch tips. The loosened chestnuts fall in a brown shower, quarts of them.

Again and again he strikes the tree, while you all pick the nuts up as fast as you can, regardless of the downpour on your backs. Then to the next tree you go, and to the next and the next for an hour or more, until all the chestnut bags are full. There are so many bags left that you are tempted to fill the hickory nut and butternut bags also, but Daddy says, "No, leave the rest for other nut gatherers and the squirrels."

The squirrels! What wonderful little nut gatherers they are!

Father tells you all about them, — how they watch and wait for the nuts to get ripe, so they can store them away for the winter, and eating last year's supply and maple seeds and buds and bark and everything else, while waiting for new nuts to ripen.

"Say, boys, would n't you like to see where the squirrels hide their nuts?" father asks.

"Yes, oh, yes! Show us!" you all exclaim eagerly.

"All right. But it will be necessary for you to be ab-so-lute-ly quiet for a little while. Do you think it possible for you to accept such a condition?"

"Oh, father, you know we can be just as still as little mouses," Elsie exclaims poutingly.

"Well, we shall see. Come, sit here and quietly watch those squirrels for a while. By and by I'll ask you to tell me what you have seen. Now be very still, — not a word, not a sound; and see who can first find out where one of their storehouses is."

This seems to promise great fun. When Daddy does things of this sort, he generally has some object in view which will afford a great deal of pleasure and entertainment. What his object now is you very soon begin to discern; for, as you sit there quietly watching, the score or more of squirrels in the vicinity seem to forget your presence and work with a vim that astonishes you. You soon become aware that this is their very busy season. Up the trees they scamper, returning in a few seconds with great brown nuts, which they take away with them somewhere and come back for more.

Very soon you observe several very important facts. You notice that all the squirrels are not exactly alike. That has never occurred to you before. Now you begin to recognize individuals. You see that they are all working, not playing, as you had previously supposed. You discover that each squirrel has a certain route of his own which he follows in his work; and soon you come to know the direction in which each one will carry his

ARTHUR

nut and where to look for him to appear again.

You become very much interested in one squirrel especially, a very fat old fellow, the fattest squirrel you ever saw in your life. You know also that the other children are as interested in him as you are, for each time he appears Elsie or Harvey or Lewis nudges the one next to him, as much as to say, "Look, there comes old Fatty again."

Once Elsie giggles, because Fatty tries to jump and makes such a funny mess of it; but, at Daddy's "Sh!" she stops right in the middle of it, and has to push her handkerchief in her mouth. Girls are funny things anyway. Think of having to stuff a handkerchief in your mouth to keep from giggling!

Fatty helps you to discover how all the squirrels are working, and not running about in idle play. That is because he is so very, very fat that you could n't help but observe that he always hobbles back to the same tree, an old oak very close by, and always runs out on the same old dead

limb with his nut. When he gets to a certain place, he disappears behind the limb for a minute, and then reappears without the nut. Suddenly it dawns on you that on the other side of the limb is a hole, and in that hole is Fatty's storehouse and home.

Happy with your discovery, you glance at your companions, and note by their pleased expressions that they too have made the same observations. Pleased with this, you watch other squirrels, trying to follow them with your eyes, to discover their storehouses. Unconsciously, as you note differences in squirrels, you find names for them in your thoughts. Old Scraggly Tail, for instance. How could he have any other name? He is certainly very old and wise, and he certainly has the most scraggly tail you ever saw on a squirrel.

Old Scraggly Tail spends a great deal of time with Chatterbox; in fact, they do most of their work together, appearing and disappearing almost simultaneously. This leads to the conclusion that they are

husband and wife. It is very hard to find their storehouse, for the foliage is so thick on their home-tree that they become lost to you. Pretty soon, however, Chatterbox commences an awful scolding for something her husband has done, and by their noise you find them away out on a branch, scolding at each other, for all the world like naughty children, until the woods echo with their noise. Then quiet is restored, and they leap to the next tree, an old maple, and drop their nuts in a hole which you can see very plainly.

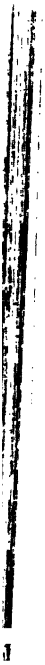
"They must have quarrelled about who should have the privilege of jumping first across the great chasm to their home," you thought.

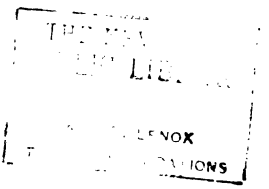
Soon after this The Triplets, so named because they are always together, leap the same chasm and deposit their nuts in the same hole with Scraggly Tail and Chatterbox. "Oh, look! The Triplets live in the same hole with Scraggly Tail and Chatterbox. They must be their children," you whisper.

Nods of approval indicate that your companions recognize the appropriateness of your names and your conclusion concerning the parentage of The Triplets. You are about to make another observation, when father's "Sh!" silences you. Then the most interesting of all the incidents so far occurs.

Bushy Tail, a young squirrel, meets Fatty on the branch nearest to where you are sitting. Bushy Tail has just hastily taken a chestnut from a burr in which are three nuts, and starts for home as fast as he can scamper. Fatty stops him with a sudden chirrr-rr-r-rrrr, which brought him back on his haunches, like father's horse when he does something which father doesn't like. Then Fatty calmly takes the nut away from Bushy Tail, looks quickly at it, lifts it up and down for a second, and throws it indignantly to the ground, uttering a chirrr-r-rrrrrr-rrr-rrrrr that you wouldn't think Fatty capable of. Bushy Tail leaps back with a bound to the burr and gets another nut, which he starts home with in the same way.

FLORENCE




LENOX

Again Fatty stops him, throwing the nut to the ground as before.

"The mean old thing!" Elsie whispers.

"Sh! That 's all right. Watch him," Daddy admonishes.

Again Bushy Tail leaps to the burr and gets the third nut. Fatty seizes this and drops it instantly, without lifting it in the funny way he lifted the others.

Then he chirrr-rrr-rrrrr-rr-r-r-rrred and chirrr-r-r-rrrrr-rr-rrred and chirrr-r-r-rrrr-rrrrr-rrrrr-rrrred so terribly that poor Bushy Tail "gets all trembly" and meekly gathers another nut. This time, instead of rushing pell-mell to the storehouse, Bushy Tail looks the nut all over, and lifts it in the funny way that Fatty lifted the nuts, and drops it to the ground.

Fatty watches him gather another nut, which he examines in the same way. This happens to meet with Bushy Tail's approval, and Fatty lets him pass without another word.

"Is n't it wonderful, boys," father inquires softly, "the way squirrels examine

each nut carefully before storing it away, to see if it is a good one, with no worm-holes in it, and weigh it in their paws to find out if the meat is solid and juicy enough for the size of the nut? Did you observe that young squirrel?"

"That's Bushy Tail, and the other one is Fatty," you interrupt.

"Bushy Tail let his name be, then. Well, Bushy Tail was getting into a bad, bad habit of not doing his work carefully and well. Now the big squirrel, Fatty, knows that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well, and does n't propose to let one of his flock grow up doing things in a shiftless, half-way sort of manner. Fatty will probably go back and examine every nut in the hole, and throw out all the bad ones that Bushy Tail has placed there; and then he will give Bushy Tail a well-deserved lecture on the extra work a shiftless squirrel causes. Now, boys, if you should examine a well-ordered squirrel's household, you would not find one bad nut. Does n't that seem wonderful when you stop to think of some things —

that — somebody — and — I — know — about, eh?" Daddy asks, while one face in the party looks a bit sheepish and turns the other way.

"Say, shall I tell you what I saw two squirrels do yesterday?" Daddy asks, to relieve the embarrassment of the last hint. Daddy is always content to stop with just smarting you a little. He never "rubs it in" afterwards.

"Yes," you all agree, the quiet broken by mutual consent.

"Well, a big Newfoundland dog saw two squirrels close together, eating nuts. This dog was quite clever, or at least he thought himself so, for when he saw the squirrels he happened to be in such a position that he could get to the only tree in the vicinity much quicker than the squirrels could. Now the squirrels saw him at the same moment he discovered them; and they instantly realized that a dash for the tree would be sure death and that a run in the opposite direction would be sure death, too, because a squirrel can't run nearly so fast

as a dog. Now what do you suppose they did?"

"Fall in a fit," Harvey suggests.

"No," father replies, laughing.

"Play 'possum," you suggest.

"Oh, no; that would n't do."

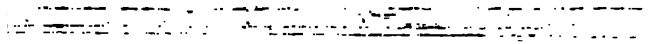
"What then?"

"Well, they just kept on eating."

"What? And let the dog get nearer? What fools!" Elsie protests.

"Wait and see. The clever dog stole quietly nearer and nearer the tree which he knew they would have to climb, but still they kept on eating, pretending not to see him. But just the same they saw out of the corners of their eyes, every move that dog made, even though their backs were turned toward him; and when he made his dash, with mouth wide open and fangs ready to snap, they waited until he was almost upon them, then each leaped to one side in opposite directions, leaving the dog so bewildered as to which one he wanted to chase, that by the time he had decided they were safe up the tree."

JUNE DELIGHT



"Hurrah for the squirrels!" you all exclaim.

"Daddy, do you suppose they talked together and planned it when they saw the dog?" you ask.

"Oh, no, their instinct teaches them to do certain things at certain times, and they do it automatically. By the way, did you ever hear the squirrel story of Abraham Lincoln's?"

"No, please tell it to us, Daddy," you exclaim eagerly.

"Well, he told about a hunter who once saw a squirrel up a tree and shot at him; but the squirrel kept right on doing what he had been doing, not minding the shot at all. 'Well, that's funny,' the man said. 'I never made such a bad shot before;' and he loaded his gun and fired again. When the smoke cleared away, there was the old fellow still doing the same thing. Again the hunter loaded and shot with the same result. 'Well, I'll be hanged!' the man exclaimed, staring in amazement at the squirrel. Just then he happened to look up into

another tree, and there sat a squirrel; and he shot at him, but the squirrel never moved. By this time the man began to get frightened, especially when he saw a squirrel in every tree that he looked at. Finally, in a sort of dazed way, he ran his hand across his eyes, and discovered that there was a little insect clinging to one of his eyelashes, and that it was this insect so near his eye that he had mistaken for a squirrel in the tree."

"Oh, how funny!" Elsie says, and you all laugh.

Father is such awfully good company, anyway.

"I know one, too, Daddy, about a squirrel. See if you can guess it," Harvey says. "You know, when a hunter goes to shoot a squirrel, the squirrel tries to get on the other side of the tree, so he can't be hit. Now suppose the hunter walks all around the tree, and the squirrel keeps on the other side of the tree from the hunter all the time he is going around the tree, does the hunter go around the squirrel?"

"Well, that is a good one. Let me see. He goes around the tree, does n't he?"

"Yes," Harvey replies.

"And the squirrel is on the tree?"

"Yes."

"Then he must go around the squirrel if the squirrel is on the tree," Daddy asserts.

"Oh, no, he does n't. He just goes around the space that the squirrel occupies, because the squirrel faces him all the time," Harvey argues triumphantly.

"Well, I don't see it that way. If he goes around the tree, he must go around the squirrel on the tree, must n't he?" Daddy persists.

"No, father. You see, it is this way. He starts around the tree, does n't he? Well, to go around anything you must go on the other side of it, in fact on all sides of it, until you get back to where you started from. Well, pretty soon the hunter gets on the other side of the tree all right, because the tree stands still; but he does n't get on the other side of

the squirrel, don't you see, because the squirrel — he — the squirrel — is n't — the squirrel goes around the tree, too, and faces him all the time, so he never gets on the other side of the squirrel. See?" Harvey asks, not quite sure whether or not he understands it himself.

"What do you think, Elsie?" Daddy asks.

"Nothing. It makes me dizzy to follow that squirrel round and round that tree. Oh, say, Daddy, this moss is damp," Elsie replies, rising and shaking her skirts.

"Well, let's be off. We must get our hickory nuts and butternuts."

"And hazel nuts," you suggest.

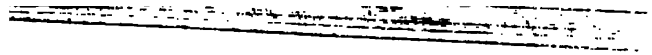
"Oh, no, you can get all the hazel nuts you wish along the road when I am not with you. Come along," father says.

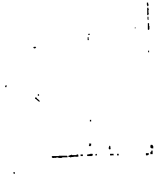
"Good-by, Fatty and Scraggly and Chatterbox," you call.

"Chirrr-rrr-r-r-rrrrr," comes from the chestnuts, but whether it is meant for good-by or not you have your doubts.

Pretty soon Lewis stops by a brier

LOUISE





bush with an exclamation of pity and astonishment. "Come here, father," he cries. "Here is a little mouse that has been killed on this thorn. Perhaps he dropped from the tree and got himself pinned on it."

"Or perhaps he committed suicide," Harvey breaks in.

"Oh, no. Look here," father says; and he points to two grasshoppers and a large moth pinned to the thorns in the same way.

"How did they do it, and what for?" you ask.

"They did n't do it, my children. A bird did it. There must be a shrike around here somewhere, or, perhaps, a family of them. They kill more than they can eat, and pin whatever they do not want up in this way for another meal. That 's why they are commonly called butcher birds," Daddy explains.

"Well, they are mean horrid things, and I for one do not like them," Elsie exclaims.

"I guess there are many other things

in nature that you would not like, little one. Every creature has to follow its own instincts, and instincts are always created for some purpose," Daddy explains, as you walk on underneath the trees.

For a time you march along, your hand in Daddy's, listening to the interesting things he has to say, and enjoying it all so keenly that you wish the day would never end, or at least that you could have Daddy every Saturday —

"Oh, there's a woodpecker, Daddy! Watch him now, and hear what a funny noise he makes," Harvey exclaims.

The woodpecker alights on a near-by tree, and clinging to its bark ascends its vertical surface, with his head cocked to one side occasionally.

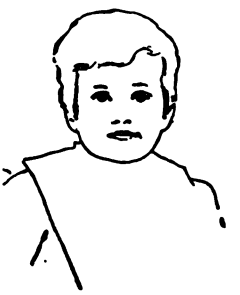
"He must be looking for a soft spot to bore a hole in the tree for his nest," Lewis says. "I have seen them start lots of nests, but I never saw them finish one. I guess they just try a tree first, and if they find it too hard to bore a big hole in they try another."

"Oh, no, little naturalist, you are wrong," father says. "See, he is listening for a worm inside of the tree, as a robin listens for worms in the ground. When he hears a worm boring slowly in the tree, he makes that hammering noise, drilling quickly so as to catch the worm — there he goes now, drilling away! Watch him. Ah, he has the worm, and is listening for another. Do you know how he gets the worm after the hole is made? Well, he has a long curious tongue, with little barbs like fish-hooks on the end, and a substance like glue comes out of the end of the tongue near the fish-hooks. When he has finished boring, he runs his tongue in and fishes out the worm, swallows it, and runs his tongue back in the hole again in search of more worms, and if there are any in there, he gets them surely."

"Oh, is n't that wonderful!" Elsie exclaims.

"But suppose he got the fish-hooks caught in himself?" you ask.

"Why, my boy, they are not iron fish-



hooks," Daddy explains, laughing heartily, "and they are very tiny things, but large enough to catch a worm."

"Well, that is funny. I thought they bored those holes to make nests in. Professor Packard said they did," Harvey insists.

"Well, so they do; but, gracious goodness, Harvey, how many nests do you think one bird needs? They bore out a good-sized hole in the spring, and make their nest in it. Why, don't you remember I showed you one last year over in Benjamin Day's Glen, with the eggs in it?" father answers.

"Oh, yes, I remember, but — but, Daddy, aren't things really — really wonderful in the woods?" Harvey replies.

"All things in nature are wonderful and beautiful, and the more you know about them the better you like them," Daddy says.

"When we are grown up, will we know as much about them as you do, Daddy, so we can make our children have as good a time as you make us have?" you ask.

HELEN

"That depends on you, and how much you like nature. See, there are some crows. Watch them a minute," Daddy says.

You stop for a few minutes and watch the crows feeding from what remains of the corn harvesting.

"Do you see that old fellow sitting on the tip-top of that hickory tree?" Daddy asks, pointing across the cornfield.

"Yes, Daddy, he is the sentinel crow. We know about them," Harvey exclaims, eager to show his knowledge.

"Oh, you do. Well, if we move along what will he do?" father asks.

"As soon as he sees us he will caw and warn the other crows of the danger," Harvey replies.

"Almost right, my boy, but not quite. He already sees us, in fact he has seen us as far away as the chestnut trees, or, very possibly, he may have had us located all the morning, for birds flying high as they do can see every moving object for miles around, you know; so, in all probability, Mr. Crow has watched us out of the

corners of his eyes for some time, but gave us little thought until we got near enough to threaten harm to his flock," father replies, as you walk toward the nut trees across the cornfield.

"Caw — caw — caw — caw — caw," suddenly comes from the tree top, and instantly all the crows rise and fly away.

"Did you know, boys, that the sentinel crow has to be sentinel all the time, and that there is no relief watch?" Daddy asks.

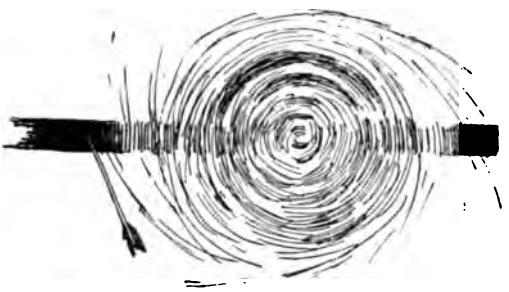
"No, does he? How does he get a chance to eat, then? I should think he would starve," you say.

"Would you? But that one didn't look very thin, did he? Well, here we are. Now get your bags and go to work," father calls.

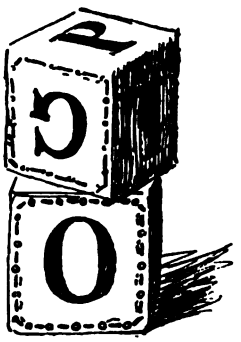
"Oh, my, how thick they are! Why, the ground is covered with them! And, oh, look up in the trees! What a lot of them there are! And, oh, what quantities of butternuts there are!" Elsie exclaims in pleased surprise.

Indeed, the nuts are so plentiful that

before you realize it the bags are filled and carted to the roadside, where Patrick awaits you with the family carriage to take you home, where you arrive just in time for dinner, and with appetites that you are very sure you can never eat enough to satisfy.



SNOW TIME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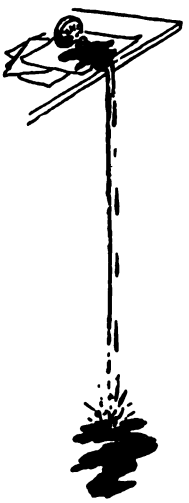
O

SNOW TIME

"IT is snowing! It is snowing!"

The glad shout from the playroom causes you to glance up at the window. Sure enough there actually are a few flakes hovering in the air outside, and one falls softly against the window-pane and melts. You turn back to your writing; but the joyous shouts and hurrahs and indistinguishable cries about sleds and snow forts and things fill you with such pleasant thoughts of your boyhood's days that your pen hangs idly over the paper, and the ink dries on the nib, and not a word is written.



How clearly, as you sit there in the warm comfort of your library, you recall those ecstatic emotions of your own boyhood, when, through the windows of the old schoolhouse, you see the great white feathery flakes of the winter's first snow-

storm come tumbling down; and feel, even in the air of the schoolroom, that indescribable chill which assures you that a great snow-storm is coming! How intensely difficult you find it to restrain your desire to get up and shout and dance to relieve your pent-up feelings! And how kind it is of teacher to go out of the room for a minute, in order that all of you may give a slight vent to your joy in noisy whispers! Strange how completely you lose interest in your lessons, as the flakes fall faster and thicker! And what delight, what exquisite delight, there is in singling out one of those great white feathers of snow and in watching it fluttering about, dropping steadily, silently, surely against the window-pane, only to be suddenly whirled away again in the capricious swirl of a mischievous gust that makes the windows rattle loudly, while the seemingly surprised wind whistles its astonishment that so dignified an old school window should give vent to such evidence of innate frivolity. How you resent the read-

ing lesson which follows! Its prosaicness is stifling, torturing. What care you for even "The Charge of the Light Brigade," while your mind is filled with thoughts of your big red sled? What if there should be so much rust on the runners that you could n't use it until you have rubbed and rubbed them in kerosene and lard? Oh, the thought of it makes you forget to drop your voice at the end of a sentence, and teacher requires you to read it six times correctly as a punishment.

Meanwhile the wonder-world outside of the schoolroom continues to shower such countless millions of great flakes, that trees and ground and roofs of houses and window-ledges and fences and all out-door things are soon as white as the whitest ermine.

Oh, if the snow would only continue to fall until it is over your shoe tops! Then mother would let you wear your rubber boots, and you could plough about in it, jump in drifts, and get your boots filled with the snow. You imagine yourself sitting on a drift, with one rubber boot

on and the other off, picking the caked frozen snow from your flannel stockings.

Oh, will school never let out! You look at the clock, and back again to the window, and back to the clock again. The hands have n't moved. They seem motionless. Even the slow-swinging pendulum swings more slowly than it ever swung before. You are disconsolate, depressed, and depression is so new to you that you wonder if you are not really sick. Perhaps — perhaps you are. The more you think of it the more you are sure that you really are sick. Up goes your hand.

"Well, Robert?"

"Please, may I go home? I — I — I — I feel sick," you say.

"Where do you feel sick, Robert?" teacher asks, and you feel that he does not look upon the matter quite so seriously as you would like.

"I — I — I don't exactly know — all over, I think," you drawl in answer.

Teacher hesitates a moment. You wonder what his verdict will be.

BUDS

"It is rather close here, I think. James, open the south window wide for five minutes," he commands.

You are heart-broken.

But all things come to an end, as that afternoon session finally does; and then how you run shouting from the schoolroom and go tumbling, rolling into the snow, washing one another's faces, snowballing, dodging balls, pelting the girls to hear them squeal, until your hands and fingers are numb with cold and you actually have to put on your mittens!

Homeward you trudge, with your brothers and sisters and the rest of your "own particular crowd," planning how you will trample and water "the coast" so it will freeze hard and be slippery, and how you will play snow fort, when it stops snowing, and build snow statues and other things which the snow suggests.

Suddenly this delightful pastime is interrupted by a snowball which strikes Harvey right in the middle of the back.

"Oho! Mister Smarty Ned Simmons,

you will, will you?" Harvey cries, rolling a hard snowball and throwing it with such good aim that it flattens on Ned's ear with an audible whack. "How do you like it yourself?"

Now the snowballs begin to fly thick and fast, for by mutual silent consent your crowd and the Simmons crowd battle together with all the fury with which knights fought in the days of chivalry. Harry Watrous hits you on the head and knocks your hat off. You don't care. You hit him such a terrible clip back that your snowball spatters down his neck. You are squared with him. A snowball knocks you heels over head down an embankment and you bark your shin. You don't care a bit, for Harvey sends a ball whizzing at Freddie Sneider, and hits him on the chin, and that makes him cry. Then, of course, you all stop and sympathize with him, with the full consciousness that your side conquers.

"Well, it was n't a fair shot!" Freddie Sneider insists, wiping his eyes.

"Why not?" inquires Harvey.

"Well, because I — I — I — well, it was n't, that 's all! It was n't!"

"Why? Why?"

"Well, never mind why. But you could n't beat us in a regular game of forts," Ned Simmons interrupts.

"Do you dare us?" Teddy asks.

"Yes, I do," Ned answers.

"All right. We accept the challenge. How many a side? Let 's see, you have seven. We have one — two — three — eight. Get another boy, Ned; and come over on our hill, and we 'll make two bully forts. The snow is deep enough and just wet enough to roll balls, and that 's a fine place. Will you?"

"You bet we will," Ned replies.

"All right," you agree; then add: "Say, Fred, quit your crying. Harvey did n't mean to hit you so hard, and, besides, we had one more than you, anyhow, so it was n't even."

This condescension on Ted's part seems to have the desired effect, for Fred actually smiles behind his mitten, and says, "Well,

we'll see who wins when we are evenly matched."

Homeward you trudge, the snow deepening every minute and falling just wet enough for snowballs and snow forts.

"Say, you go tell mother we're home, Rob, and we'll start rolling balls — oh, yes, and bring the hoe to shave the sides of it off smooth," Lewis says.

"All right!" you exclaim with eagerness, for you are anxious to inspect the runners on your sled. You return just as Ted shouts, "Come, now let us choose positions for our forts."

"I hosey this side," Ned answers.

"Oh, no, you can't do that. This side of the hill is the highest, and we must win it by some feat of skill or valor, such as having both generals run a race or wrestle," Ted replies.

"Say, Ted, suppose you and Ned climb that flagpole, and whoever scrapes snow off highest up has first choice," Harvey suggests.

"Good idea. What do you say to that, General Ned?" Ted asks.

"That suits me all right, General Teddy. Go ahead," Ned replies.

Ted starts up the pole, on the windward side of which a thin line of wet snow clings tightly. Up he goes, up and up, a foot at a time. Now he is ten feet high, twelve feet, fifteen feet, then very slowly he climbs until he is forced to rest a bit. Once more he starts upward, with arms and legs wrapped tightly around the pole, but moves only a few inches at a time. Then, alas, he becomes completely exhausted and slides disconsolately down the pole.

"Well, Ned, I guess you have me this time, all right," Ted says, the moment his feet are on the ground. "I got my trousers so wet and slippery, and my hands so cold, with that snow that I got fagged out trying to stick. If you can't beat that, now that I have cleaned the pole, then you are some relation to the donkey."

Needless to say, Ned won first choice.

"Come on, fellows!" General Ted yells, starting for his side of the hill. "Let us start the fort."

And then — oh, well, can anything be more fun than rolling big round snowballs, starting with little ones and rolling them bigger and bigger and bigger until they are so large you can barely move them? One after another you roll the great balls up the hill, and arrange them side by side in a row around three sides of a square. Then more balls are made and placed on top of these, it being necessary to use your whole combined strength in raising each ball, until you discover that it is much easier to slide them up an inclined board and to pry them into place with an oar blade. For the very top row you cut the great balls in two by the use of a piece of strong twine, and unite them when they are in their places by pressing the two parts firmly together.

Oh, what trouble it is to keep the secret of this feat of amateur engineering from the enemy! It is Ted's invention. He thought it out, and he justly claims the glory. "It is our strategy. It will give us a big advantage in the coming

JEAN

fight, and we must n't let the enemy find out how to do it," he declares.

But how they do try, though! They soon see that their top row is thinner than our lower ones, and that ours is the same thickness at the top as at the bottom; and they send spies out to ascertain why. But they don't find out, not a bit of it. So, really, if they do have the choice of positions you have the best fort, and when both are finished and hoed down smooth and loopholes made, yours certainly looks more clean cut and neater than theirs.

But by the time the forts are finished the supper bell rings, and you are compelled to postpone the great fight until to-morrow morning.

"I 'm glad to-morrow is Saturday, are n't you, fellows?" Lewis asks, surreptitiously sprinkling water on the fort from the flower-sprinkler, so it will freeze hard during the night. "Won't we have a bully time to-morrow, though? We can tear their old fort down easily, for it won't be frozen hard like ours, and I guess

they'll be surprised when they run against ours, if we let them get that far."

"Well, all right! We're coming!" Harvey calls, as the supper bell rings again more vigorously. "Good-night, fellows. Say, Ned Simmons, you'll be here just as soon as you get your breakfast, won't you?"

"Yes, we'll be here; and you want to look out for us, for we're the Olympia Terribles," Ned shouts back.

"Well, we're the — the New York Honorables! Good-night!" Ted calls, as he departs on a run for home.

SNOW TIME

THE SNOW BATTLE

BRIGHT and early the next morning you assemble at the forts, and lose no time in arranging for the coming battle. During the night it has snowed very much, so that the forts have to be trimmed up a bit. Then there are the rules to make, lots of them, and, what is harder still, to be agreed to.

"Now, I make a rule that if you hit a fellow in the face you are out," some one says.

"What is this, a battle or a kindergarten game?" immediately comes the answer. "What do they do in battle? Don't they hit people where they can? Well, if they do hit the enemy, he is out of the game, and not the fellow who hits him. Oh, say, that 's a silly rule. If a soldier can stand up, he fights; if not, he drops."

Finally, after you have made and remade dozens of rules by sheer force of argument, it is agreed that any fellow

who gets hurt severely enough can fall dead, and then he is out of the game.

"Well, how about reviving? Soldiers revive and fight again," some one inquires.

"No reviving to be allowed here," several protest.

"Let us have reviving allowed once — just once. It will make the game longer," Ned says.

"What do you say, fellows? Is it all right? Well, then, reviving is allowed once — just once," Ted concedes; and off you go to your respective forts to make and pile up ammunition.

Now the fun is on. Rapidly you pack the spheres of snow together, rolling them hard and round, and standing them in a pyramid at the base of the fort, ready for instant use. There must be plenty of balls to guard against surprise. Occasionally you glance out of a loophole to see if the enemy is doing anything suspicious, while General Teddy makes regular rounds of inspection to see that your ammunition is up to the standard.

Pretty soon a snowball is seen coming

HELEN

from the enemy's position, aimed at General Ted's head.

"Look out, Ted!" you shout, and he ducks just in time.

Seizing two balls, he fires them rapidly, one right after the other. The first one goes wild, and one of the enemy rises above the fort to deride him and make faces at him, the humor of which is suddenly turned to pathos when the second ball catches him squarely on the forehead.

"Hurrah! Now will you be so funny?" you all shout; but a shower of balls is your only answer.

"Let us charge them. Ready — Forward — CHARGE!" General Teddy commands, and with your left arm hugging ammunition to your body, you dash forth on a fast run toward the enemy, firing as you run and yelling like twice as many Indians.

Fast and thick the balls fly. You beat your way almost up to the enemy's fortification, then your ammunition gives out, and you have to stop and make each ball that you fire, which gives the enemy

a tremendous advantage. Out they swarm from both sides of the fort, with arms loaded with ammunition, and pelt you unmercifully at short range until you are obliged to beat a rapid retreat; but not, however, without having first pushed in a big section of one end of their fort. The enemy scores one point, though, by cornering Lewis, so that he has to either surrender or fall wounded. He chooses the latter, reviving of course as soon as the enemy retires within their fort.

"Follow it up! Follow it up, boys! Don't give them a chance to repair that break! CHARGE!" General Teddy shouts in command; and again you charge, this time reserving your ammunition until you absolutely have to fire it in self-protection.

"Everybody make the hole larger!" Teddy commands, and your whole energy becomes concentrated on that one point.

A rain of snowballs beats you back, but in a slight lull you rush forward again. Once more you are driven back, for your ammunition is exhausted. You retire just far enough to make balls, and

then charge again. This time you reach the walls of the fort, and dislodge a larger section than before.

But it takes a great deal of courage to push down a fort in the face of such a fire, because the enemy has the advantage of you, for while you are using your hands to demolish the fort they are using theirs to punish you. So pretty soon you stop in a somewhat battered condition, and run, while the enemy, concentrating to a man, cuts off Lewis. For a minute or so the brave warrior holds out against all eight, calling frantically to be rescued.

"To the rescue! To the rescue!" General Teddy shouts; and you rush to the aid of Lewis. But, alas, poor Lew! he is unable to stand the pummelling from so many and falls dead, never to rise again.

The enemy has scored a point equal to yours. You are now weakened by the loss of one man; the foe by a damaged fortress.

While you are stacking up more ammunition within your fort, the enemy sud-

denly takes the offensive and makes a quick dash in your direction.

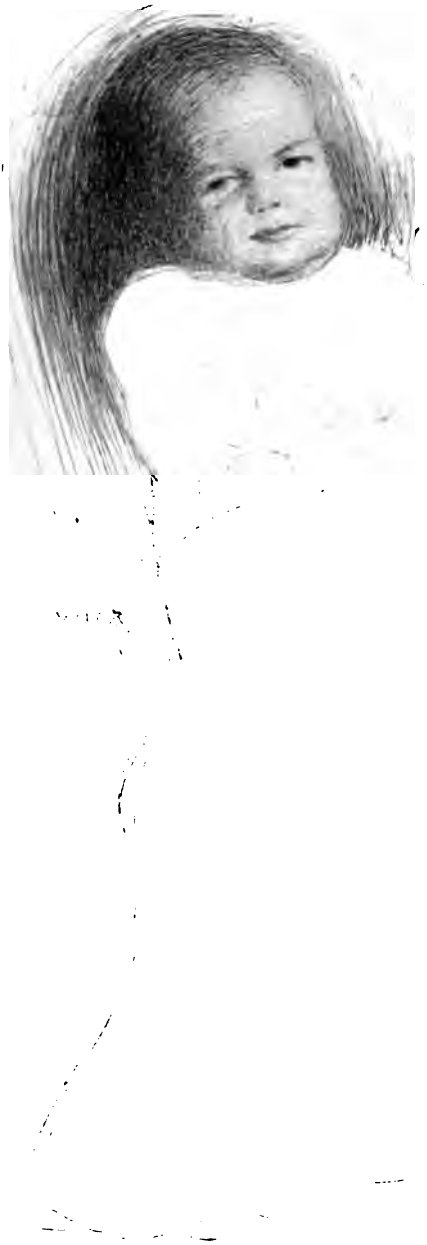
"Here they come! Hammer them!" General Teddy cries.

Onward they rush, even in the face of your hot fire, their arms full of snowballs, which they reserve for close range, and the air ringing with their exultant cries. Mercilessly you pelt them, and bravely they resist, advancing to within a dozen feet of your fort before they hurl upon you the whizzing fury of their deadly missiles.

Bang! whack! Two balls hit you together. You duck your head to dodge another, and rise again. Whack! Your forehead stings from the impact, while your hat goes skimming from your head, and the shower of snow from bursting balls sifts down your neck and shoots up your sleeves. For one second you are all unable to resist their fire, and disappear behind your walls.

"Charge! CHARGE! CHARGE their fort!" comes ringing from without.

The next instant the enemy's whole force rushes with all their combined fury



"JUST OLD ENOUGH TO NOTICE THINGS."

against the centre of your front wall, its weakest spot, their shoulders hitting it like so many battering rams.

But, oh joy! the icy wall stands like a rock, immovable, unbreakable, as solid as Gibraltar. Cries of dismay are heard from the enemy, as they realize that the only way to conquer you now is to drive you from your position and reduce your ranks until you surrender.

At this moment of greatest confusion Teddy leaps to his feet and waves his swordless hand. "Ready, boys! CHARGE!" he shouts, inspired by the spirit of a Napoleon; and, hastily gathering armfuls of ammunition, you all rush pell-mell from the fort, so suddenly that the enemy is routed, retreating in great disorder and leaving two dead on the field.

"Oh, we 've killed you!" Harvey calls exultingly.

"Well, we know it. You need not crow about it. Get away and give us a chance to revive," the dead ones reply.

"We will give you only so far, and that 's far enough," General Ted answers.

"It is n't. You could kill us before we got to our fort. Seven against two is n't fair," one dead man asserts.

Just then the enemy emerges from its fort, bearing aloft a flag of truce — a white handkerchief tied to the end of a hoe handle.

"Say, Teddy, this question has got to be settled right now. Are n't they dead?" General Ned demands.

"Yes," Teddy answers.

"Then let them alone. In a battle you don't bother with dead men. Let's go on with our battle, and let them revive when they get a chance."

"Well, all right. That seems fair; only it must be a rule that each dead man must tag goal — his own fort, you know — before he can fight again," Teddy insists.

"Agreed," General Ned answers dramatically, amid a general stampede for places by every one except the two who are dead; and the battle is on again with redoubled fury.

Fiercely again and again you charge

the enemy, always aiming to increase the breach in their fortifications; and with equal courage and ferocity they return your charges, bending all their energy to the annihilation of your forces, and to the repairing of their damaged walls between charges.

You yourself are surrounded and killed. Melbert and Arthur are killed twice. Then there are but five of you left. Again you are killed; and now you are out of the battle, and can only watch it from the place where you fell. Loudly you cheer, as your side rushes savagely at the enemy, and effects a complete breach in their walls, though at the cost of another man. But your enthusiasm is a bit dampened by Teddy, who shouts to you: "Stop your cheering! Don't you know that you are dead?"

With great enthusiasm for a dead man you watch the hand to hand encounter which now ensues. You see General Ted and his forces hurl a hissing fusillade of balls through the breach. Men on both sides drop, revive, and resume hostilities.

Now there are but three left on your side against their four. You hold your breath and take the liberty of rising on your knees to see the now evident finish.

"Forward! CHARGE!" General Ted suddenly fairly shrieks; and you see your comrades rush through the breach in the wall, force the enemy into a corner of the fortress, where there is no ammunition, and pummel them so severely without giving them an opportunity to retaliate, that General Ned soon cries, "We surrender!"

The battle is yours!

Instantly your dead arise and rush cheering to General Teddy's side. Harvey throws his hat high in the air and shouts, "Three cheers, three cheers and a tiger for General Ted!"

"One!"

"Hurrah!"

"Two!"

"Hurrah!"

"Three!"

"Hurrah! Ti-i-g-e-r-r-r!"

LOUISE

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

The great clock slowly chimes the hour of six. The shades of evening steal upon you as you sit in joyful meditation while your pen with ink-dried nibs awaits your mind's command.

A maid appears, and darkness gives way to brilliant light which calls you back again from Years Ago to Now.

And then the rustle of a gown heralds a promise soon to be fulfilled, and you arise to greet that one who is to you more than whole worlds could ever be.

"Why, dearest one," she gently chides, "where have you been this afternoon? What worlds have you been wandering in, and how have they turned back the wheel of time to make you look so radiant, so young?"

"The battle in the snow, dear one. Did you not hear the shouts of joy and cheers of victory as our side won the long-contested fight? Did you not see? — Oh no, of course you could not. But wait until the morrow when that sifting veil of snow whitens the earth, and with

our boys and girls we 'll live our childhood once again, and then you 'll see the world where flows the blessed fount of youth; the world of childhood dear, the children's world, — the children's world!"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