

# The Children's Friend.

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## From the Companion. THE MUSICAL ROBBERS.

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Years ago, when I was but five or six years old, we lived on a farm. Our house was on a well-traveled turnpike, and tramps very often stopped at the door to beg for food or money. I vividly remember the childish terror with which I used to fly into the house at the approach of these visitors, and hiding myself in the folds of my mother's dress, peer out at them with wide-open eyes.

Our travelers were of every kind and character, from the really needy beggar to the clever vagabond cheat, or the lazy drunkard. Most of them called in daytime, though occasionally one or more would come late, and beg a night's lodging.

My father was a minister, whose duties now and then took him from home; but being a man of very domestic habits, it was only when some special call summoned him away farther than usual that he ever left us to be gone over night.

It became necessary, however, one autumn afternoon for him to take my brother and sister, both much older than myself, back to their school (about twelve miles distant), from which they had come home some time before to spend a vacation.

"You will not get back to-night, I suppose?" said mother, interrogatively, as she finished the packing and wiped her heated face.

"I think not," returned father, locking the last trunk, and lifting it into the wagon with brother Johnnie's help. "It is three o'clock now, and I shall feel too tired to undertake a night journey unless it is necessary. You'll not be afraid, will you?"

"O no," said mother, always forgetful of herself; "Susie and I will get along nicely." And, kissing my brother and sister, and warning the latter to be very careful of her health, she watched them drive away.

Tears stood in her soft, brown eyes, but with the dinner-dishes lying still unwashed, and the floor unswept, she was not a woman to sit down and idly give way to her feelings. Soon her hands were busy with her work, and I was as usual at liberty to make myself quite as busy with my play.

It was a lovely afternoon. The sun was shining gloriously from a cloudless sky, and after a good look up and down the road to make sure there were no tramps in sight, I took a little tin pail of water in my hand, and stole cautiously outside the gate into the dusty highway, to amuse myself by manufacturing mud pies.

In this occupation I presently became absorbed. So intent, indeed, was I on my pie-making that I did not hear footsteps nor the sound of strange voices until I felt myself roughly grasped by the shoulder. Glancing up from beneath my sunbonnet, I saw two burly men, with very ill-looking faces, and armed with walking-sticks. For a moment I acted as if petrified. Then, with a shriek which aroused the echoes far and near, I tore myself away, and

tumbling wildly through the fence, dashed into the house.

No time was given me to tell my frightened mother what had happened, before the stragglers presented themselves at the door. In broken language they begged for something to eat. It was now nearly sundown. The time to milk was approaching, but my mother, hiding her uneasiness, set before them food.

After eating, they expressed a wish to stay all night; saying they had traveled far that day, and were exceedingly tired. At that I was more terrified than ever, and cried out, child-like,—

"Don't, mamma, please don't! Papa isn't coming home, you know."

I immediately felt that I had said something I ought not to have said, for I saw a look of mingled alarm and reproof of my mother's face. It was too late to mend it, however, and she said nothing, but decidedly refused to lodge the travelers.

I watched them as they went away talking together in low, earnest tones. They disappeared round the turn of the road.

"Will they come back when we've gone to sleep and kill us, ma?" I asked, creeping towards her as she stood in the door.

"Kill us! Why, darling, how in the world came such an idea into your little head?" said my mother, smiling.

"Why, I don't know," I answered, "only they look so dreadful—and talk so queer."

"So all people who look dreadful and talk queer think of coming to kill us, do they?" said mother, touching my cheek playfully. "No one wants to hurt little girls like you, I am sure. Now get your pail, and we'll go and see if the cows have any milk for us."

I was reassured by her manner, and ran to do her bidding.

That evening was rather lonely, as was natural after the departure of three of our family. If I grew nervous again, and thought of the two tramps, it was not strange.

Eight o'clock came, and I went to bed, but I did not fall asleep. Nine o'clock struck, and mother put away her sewing, blew the lamp out, and retired herself. But before she did so, I noticed, with a creeping fear at my heart, that she went to the window and gazed out at the peaceful moonlight, running her eyes uneasily up and down the road. When, however, she had taken her place by my side in bed, my weary eyes soon closed, and I forgot all my troubles.

I woke again about midnight. Mother had slipped quietly out of bed, and was stealing softly to the window. I sprang up and called in a frightened whisper,—

"Ma, O ma!"

"Sh!" and a quick gesture, bidding me be still, was all the response my mother made.

I sat quaking with fear, for I heard now what had doubtless aroused her,—the crunching of gravel under approaching feet outside. Presently mother came back to the bedside.

"Susie," said she, and I could see how white her face was, "you

must not stir nor speak. Lie very still, and don't fear. God will take care of you and mamma."

I promised to obey, but clung to her and began to weep. The footsteps came nearer, and I could hear them stealthily ascending the stone steps. Then there were low words and sounds, as if some persons had seated themselves upon the porch which shaded our front door.

"O—O ma, who is it?" I sobbed.

"Two men," was her answer, placing her hand over my lips to smother the sound of my voice. "Be still, darling!"

For a minute we heard nothing, and my mother, coaxing me to lie down, hastily slipped on a wrapper and a pair of slippers.

Of course she supposed the two men to be the persons who had begged their supper in the early evening at our door, and whom my incautious words had informed of my father's absence. In a small closet in the room where we slept was a little iron box, containing a large black pocket-book with quite a sum of money in it, beside some very valuable notes.

Intending to prepare for the worst, mother now took out this pocket-book and secreted it in her bosom. A minute more we waited, trembling (and it seemed an hour to me), hearing no sound but the beating of our hearts.

Hark! Something broke the terrible suspense! but it was not the picking of a lock, or the forcing of a window. A strain of music from two sweet and mellow male voices swelled up in the moonlight night before our door! The song was "Home, Sweet Home."

I need not say how in a moment the thrill of that tender melody calmed our frightened hearts. We knew now that our burglars were no desperadoes. They had come to rob us of nothing but sleep. How thankful we were!

Mother hastened to the window, but this time not unattended, for I had clambered out of the high bed, and was standing by her side, robed in my little white night-dress.

"Why, ma," I cried, as soon as I had taken a good look at our serenaders, "it's Harry and John Richmond," naming two noted musicians of the place, who were also great friends of our family.

"So it is," said mother. "I was so frightened I did not recognize them;" and by the time their song was ended, she had placed refreshments upon the table, and, opening the door, bade them come in.

"I felt all my fears depart as soon as you began your music," she said, in concluding her story to them, "for I knew that nobody intent on crime could be singing 'Sweet Home.'"

Of course we slept well the rest of that night, and afterwards you may be sure I told the story of our grand adventure to everybody I met, till in fact, it became quite a joke in the neighborhood; and it was long before Harry and John Richmond lost the title of the "Musical Robbers."

## The True End of Education.

The true end of education is not what the man shall most do, but what he shall most be, and this, too, in order that he may most and best do the part assigned to him. It is character more than calling. Character first and calling next. Not to get tools, so much as to become himself the superior instrument or agent for all the work of life. In an age like ours, and especially in a land like ours where material values are the high prizes of life to the multitude, it is no marvel if old barriers should be broken down in our educational systems. It is seen that the practical talent is that which succeeds—that mere scholarship, however prized by the possessor, does not win the chief prizes of our day. It is even said that higher learning is often positively in the way of one's success in life—may so smooth and polish a man as to make him a poor wrestler for promotion in every day affairs. It has been charged that the high education "rides the cannon until the strength of the metal is gone." But if the metal was of poor stuff, or lacking in careful preparations for the strain upon it, then rifled or unrifled, it would burst at the first charge. I know that, as is said of Sir John Hunter, men may be ignorant of the dead languages and yet may be able to teach those who sneer at their ignorance that which they never knew in any language, dead or living. But is that an argument against the classics in education? No! But to day that learning is sought with most avidity which graduates a man as a railroad president or bank president upon the fattest living. And not the rings of the planets are studied half so much as the municipal or state rings of the contractor. Where are the college graduates to-day—in the foremost ranks of learning, pushing forward literary enterprises, controlling our public schools, and guarding all our educational interests? Alas! "One to his farm, another to his merchandise." I have lately seen it alleged that for the last twenty years no graduate of our American colleges has risen to fame as an orator, a poet, a statesman, or an historian, or in either of the learned professions. And even if this be so, why is it except that the public mind has so set itself to the new methods as to turn aside the course of popular education from the ideal to the practical, and to merge it in business affairs. I see it stated that the greatest warfare is the struggle between the great nations for supremacy in the various industries. And out of this legitimate strife come the great world's fairs at Sydenham, Paris, Vienna, and the Centennial of Philadelphia. And out of such a want come the Cornell and Michigan Universities. Plainly enough, the industries of the country claim to be developed. There is a training that is adapted to this. Let it go forward. Let wealth and talent be applied in this direction also. Let the masses enjoy the freest, fullest benefit of such a practical education for pursuing their cho-

sen specialities.—But give us the old college, which should not be superseded, but which may be enriched and enlarged in its appliances and its apparatus, so as to become an university only more universal—that hitherto.—*Dr. Jacobus.*

## Evance and Scalfity in War.

We talk exultingly, and with a certain fire, of "a magnificent charge!" of "a splendid charge!" yet very few will think of the ludicrous particulars that these two airy words stand for. The "splendid charge," is a headlong rush of men on strong horses, urged to their fullest speed, riding down and overwhelming an opposing mass of men on foot. The readers' mind goes no further; being content with the information that the enemy's line was "broken" and "gave way." It does not fill in the picture. When the "splendid charge" has done its work, and passed by, there will be found a sight very much like the scene of a frightful railway accident. There will be the full complement of broken backs; of arms twisted wholly off; of men impaled upon their own bayonets; of legs smashed up like bits of fire-wood; of heads sliced open like apples; of other heads crunched into jelly by iron hoofs of horses; of faces trampled out of all likeness to anything human. This is what skulks behind "a splendid charge!" This is what follows, as matter of course, when "our fellows rode at them in style," and "cut them up famously."—*Charles Dickens, in "All the Year Round."*

## Pure Girls and Impure Boys.

Girls in treating dissipated young men as equals, do a wrong that they can scarcely realize.

Such men should be made to feel that until they redeem themselves, until they walk with correctness and honor in the path of right, good people would stand aloof from them. Girls who respect themselves will not be seen with such men and will decline to receive them on the familiar footing of friendship. It is mistaken kindness to politeness when caution is needed, and I am inclined to think that a little sharp decision on the part of the young girls to-day would go far to correct the general looseness of morality among young men.—*Woman's Journal.*

## To Put Away Faults.

One day I was watching a great Newfoundland dog. He had been told by his master to fetch him a basket of tools that the gardener had left in the shed. The great dog went to obey his young master. He took hold of the basket with his mouth, but he could not lift it. What did he do? Give it up! No, never! One by one he took the things out of the basket and carried them to his master.

One by one! That is what we must try to do with our faults. Try and get rid of them, one by one. Jesus knows how hard it is for you to do this, and so he has given you a word that will help you to do it, and that word is "To-day."

I will show you how. Take one fault—we will call it bad temper—and in the morning when you get out of the bed, ask God for Christ's sake to help you "to-day" to overcome that bad temper. Perhaps by and by, something will begin to make you feel angry; then remember your prayers, and try and drive away the angry feeling, and say, "Not to-day."

If you learned any bad, wicked words, like some poor children in the streets, who do not know any better, then ask God for Christ's sake to help you to day; then when you are tempted to do so, remember, "Now to-day I will not say any wicked words to-day."

And do the same with all your faults. Take them one by one, and try for one whole day not to give way to them. It will come easier then.—*Grading Star.*