

# The Light in the Clearing

A TALE of the NORTH COUNTRY in the TIME of SILAS WRIGHT

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## UNCLE PEABODY SPURNS BRIBE OFFERED BY GRIMSHAW TO SEAL BART'S LIPS.

**Synopsis.**—Barton Baynes, an orphan, goes to live with his uncle, Peabody Baynes, and his Aunt Deel on a farm on Rattleroad, in a neighborhood called Lickitysplit, about the year 1826. He meets Sally Dunkelberg, about his own age, but socially of a class above the Bayneses, and is fascinated by her pretty face and fine clothes. Barton also meets Roving Kate, known in the neighborhood as the "Silent Woman." Amos Grimshaw, a young son of the richest man in the township, is a visitor at the Baynes home and Roving Kate tells the boys' fortunes, predicting a bright future for Barton and death on the gallows for Amos. Barton meets Silas Wright, Jr., a man prominent in public affairs, who evinces much interest in the boy. Barton learns of the power of money when Mr. Grimshaw threatens to take the Baynes farm unless a note which he holds is paid. Now in his sixteenth year, Barton, on his way to the post office at Canton, meets a stranger and they ride together. They encounter a highwayman, who shoots and kills the stranger. Barton's horse throws him and runs away. As the murderer bends over the stranger Barton throws a stone, which he observes wounds the thief, who makes off at once. A few weeks later Bart leaves home to enter Michael Hackett's school at Canton. Amos Grimshaw is arrested, charged with the murder which Bart witnessed.

### CHAPTER IX—Continued.

To my utter surprise he resumed his talk with me as the young man went away.

"You see all ways are north when you put this lodestone near the needle," he went on. "If it is to tell you the truth you must keep the lodestone away from the needle. It's that way, too, with the compass of your soul, partner. There the lodestone is selfishness, and with its help you can make any direction look right to you and soon—you're lost."

He bound the last bundle and then we walked together toward the house, the senator carrying his satchel.

"I shall introduce you to the president," he said as we neared our destination. "Then perhaps you had better leave us."

I could not remember that I had ever been "introduced" to anybody. I knew that people put their wits on exhibition and often flung down a "snag" by way of demonstrating their fitness for the honor, when they were introduced in books. I remember asking rather timidly:

"What shall I say when—when you—introduce me?"

"Oh, say anything you want to say," he answered with a look of amusement.

"I'm kind o' scared," I said.

"You needn't be—he was once a poor boy just like you."

"Just like me!" I repeated thoughtfully, for while I had heard a good deal of that kind of thing in our home, I had not, somehow, got under my jacket, as they used to say.

"Just like you—cowhide and all—the son of a small freeholder in Kinderhook on the Hudson," he went on. "But he was well fed in brain and body and kept his heart clean. So of course he grew and is still growing. That's a curious thing about men and women, Bart. If they are in good ground and properly cared for they never stop growing—never!—and that's a pretty full word—isn't it?"

We had come in sight of the house. I lagged behind a little when I saw the great man sitting on the small piazza with Mrs. Wright. I see vividly



"It is an Honor to Meet You, Sir, and Thank You For the Right to Vote—When I am Old Enough."

ly, as I write, the full figure, the ruddy, kindly face, the large nose, the gray eyes, the thick hale of silvered hair extending from his collar to the bald top of his head. He rose and said in a deep voice:

"He sows ill luck who hinders the reaper."

Mr. Wright hung his satchel on a small tree in the dooryard and answered:

"The plowman has overtaken the reaper, Mr. President. I bid you welcome to my humble home."

"It is a pleasure to be here and a regret to call you back to Washington," said the president as they shook hands.

"I suppose that means an extra session," the senator answered.

"First let me reassure you. I shall get away as soon as possible, for I know that a president is a heavy burden for one to have on his hands."

"Don't worry. I can get along with almost any kind of a human being, especially if he like pudding and milk as well as you do," said the senator, who then introduced me in these words:

"Mr. President, this is my young friend, Barton Baynes, of the neighborhood of Lickitysplit in the town of Ballybeen—a coming man of this country."

"Come on," was the playful remark of the president as he took my hand.

"I shall be looking for you."

I had carefully chosen my words and I remember saying, with some dignity, like one in a story book, although with a trembling voice:

"It is an honor to meet you, sir, and thank you for the right to vote—when I am old enough."

Vividly, too, I remember his gentle smile as he looked down at me and said in a most kindly tone:

"I think it a great honor to hear you say that."

He put his hands upon my shoulders and turning to the senator said:

"Wright, I often wish that I had your modesty."

"I need it much more than you do," the senator laughed.

Straightway I left them with an awkward bow and blushing to the roots of my hair.

As I neared the home of Mr. Hackett I heard hurrying footsteps behind me and the voice of Sally calling my name. I stopped and faced about.

How charming she looked as she walked toward me! I had never seen her quite so fixed up.

"Bart," she said. "I suppose you're not going to speak to me."

"If you'll speak to me," I answered.

"I love to speak to you," she said.

"I've been looking all around for you. Mother wants you to come over to dinner with us at just twelve o'clock. You're going away with father as soon as we get through."

I wanted to go but got the notion all at once that the Dunkelbergs were in need of information about me and that the time had come to impart it. So then and there that ancient Olympus of our family, received notice as it were.

"I can't," I said. "I've got to study my lessons before I go away with your father."

It was a blow to her. I saw the shadow that fell upon her face. She was vexed and turned and ran away from me without another word and I felt a pang of regret as I went to the lonely and deserted home of the schoolmaster.

At twelve-thirty Mr. Dunkelberg came for me, with a high-stepping horse in a new harness and a shiny, still-running buggy. He wore gloves and a beaver hat and sat very erect and had little to say.

"I hear you met the president," he remarked.

"Yes, sir. I was introduced to him this morning," I answered a bit too proudly, and wondering how he had heard of my good fortune, but deeply gratified at his knowledge of it.

"What did he have to say?"

I described the interview and the looks of the great man. Not much more was said as we sped away toward the deep woods and the high hills.

I was eager to get home but wondered why he should be going with me to talk with Mr. Grimshaw and my uncle. Of course I suspected that it had to do with Amos, but how I knew not. He hummed in the rough going and thoughtfully flicked the bushes with his whip. I never knew a more persistent hummer.

Aunt Deel shook hands with Mr. Dunkelberg and then came to me and said:

"Wal, Bart Baynes! I never was so glad to see anybody in all the days o'

my life—ayes! We been lookin' up the road for an hour—ayes! You come right into the house this minute—both o' you."

The table was spread with the things I enjoyed most—big, brown biscuits and a great comb of honey surrounded with its nectar and a pitcher of milk and a plate of cheese and some jerked meat and an apple pie.

"Set right down an' eat—I just want to see ye eat—ayes I do!"

Mr. Grimshaw came soon after we had finished our luncheon. He hitched his horse at the post and came in.

"Good day," he said, once and for all, as he came in at the open door. "Baynes, I want to have a talk with you and the boy. Tell me what you know about that murder."

"Wal, I had some business over to Plattsburg," my uncle began. "While I was there I thought I'd go and see Amos. So I drove out to Beekman's farm. They told me that Amos had left there after workin' four days. They gave him fourteen shillins an' he was goin' to take the stage in the mornin'." He left some time in the night an' took Beekman's rifle with him, so they said. There was a piece o' wood broke out o' the stock o' the rifle. That was the kind o' gun that was used in the murder."

It surprised me that my uncle knew all this. He had said nothing to me of his journey or its result.

"How do you know?" snapped Mr. Grimshaw.

"This boy see it plain. It was a gun with a piece o' wood broke out o' the stock."

"Is that so?" was the brusque demand of the money lender as he turned to me.

"Yes, sir," I answered.

"The boy lies," he snapped, and turning to my uncle added: "Yer mad 'cause I'm tryin' to make ye pay yer honest debts—ain't ye now?"

Uncle Peabody, keeping his temper, shook his head and calmly said: "No, I ain't anything agin' you or Amos, but it's got to be so that a man can travel the roads o' this town without gettin' his head blowed off."

Mr. Dunkelberg turned to me and asked:

"Are you sure that the stock of the gun you saw was broken?"

"Yes, sir—and I'm almost sure it was Amos that ran away with it."

"Why?"

"I picked up a stone and threw it at him and it grazed the left side of his face, and the other night I saw the scar it made."

My aunt and uncle and Mr. Dunkelberg moved with astonishment as I spoke of the scar. Mr. Grimshaw, with keen eyes fixed upon me, gave a little grunt of incredulity.

"Huh!—Liar!" he muttered.

"I am not a liar," I declared with indignation, whereupon my aunt angrily stirred the fire in the stove and Uncle Peabody put his hand on my arm and said:

"Hush, Bart! Keep your temper, son."

"If you tell these things you may be the means of sending an innocent boy to his death," Mr. Dunkelberg said to me. "I wouldn't be too sure about 'em if I were you. It's so easy to be mistaken. You couldn't be sure in the dusk that the stone really hit him, could you?"

I answered: "Yes, sir—I saw the stone hit and I saw him put his hand on the place while he was running. I guess it hurt him some."

"Look a' here, Baynes," Mr. Grimshaw began in that familiar scolding tone of his, "I know what you want an' we might jest as well git right down to business first as last. You keep this boy still an' I'll give ye five years' interest."

Aunt Deel gave a gasp and quickly covered her mouth with her hand. Uncle Peabody changed color as he rose from his chair with a strange look on his face. He swung his big right hand in the air as he said:

"By the eternal jumptin'—"

He stopped, pulled down the left sleeve of his flannel shirt and walked to the water pail and drank out of the dipper.

"Say, Mr. Grimshaw, I'm awful sorry for ye," said my uncle as he returned to his chair, "but I've always learnt this boy to tell the truth an' the hull truth. I know the danger I'm in. We're gettin' old. It'll be hard to start over agin' an' you can ruin us if ye want to an' I'm as scared o' ye as a mouse in a cat's paw, but this boy has got to tell the truth right out plain. I couldn't muzzle him if I tried—he's too much of a man. If you're scared o' the truth you mums' know that Amos is guilty."

Mr. Grimshaw shook his head with anger and beat the floor with the end of his cane.

"Nobody knows anything o' the kind, Baynes," said Mr. Dunkelberg. "Of course Amos never thought o' killing anybody. He's a harmless kind of a boy. I know him well and so do you. Under the circumstances Mr. Grimshaw is afraid that Bart's story will make it difficult for Amos to prove his innocence."

Uncle Peabody shook his head with a look of firmness.

Again Grimshaw laughed between his teeth as he looked at my uncle. In his view every man had his price.

"I see that I'm the mouse an' you're the cat," he resumed, as that curious laugh rattled in his throat. "Look a' here, Baynes, I'll tell ye what I'll do. I'll cancel the hull mortgage."

Again Uncle Peabody rose from his chair with a look in his face which I have never forgotten. How his voice rang out!

"No, sir!" he shouted so loudly that we all jumped to our feet and Aunt Deel covered her face with her apron and began to cry. It was like the explosion of a blast. Then the fragments began falling with a loud crash:

"NO, SIR! YE CAN'T BUY THE NAIL ON MY LITTLE FINGER OR HIS WITH ALL YER MONEY—D—N YOU!"

It was like the shout of Israel from the top of the mountains. Shep bounced into the house with hair on



"No, Sir! Ye Can't Buy the Nail on My Little Finger or His With All Yer Money—Damn You!"

end and the chickens cackled and the old rooster clapped his wings and crowed with all the power of his lungs. Every member of that little group stood stock still and breathless.

I trembled with a fear I could not have defined. Mr. Grimshaw shuffled out of the door, his cane rapping the floor as if his arm had been stricken with palsy in a moment.

Mr. Dunkelberg turned to my aunt, his face scarlet, and muttered an apology for the disturbance and followed the money lender.

"Come on, Bart," Uncle Peabody called cheerfully, as he walked toward the barnyard. "Let's go an' git in them but'nuts."

He paid no attention to our visitors—neither did my aunt, who followed us. The two men talked together a moment, unhitched their horses, got into their buggies and drove away.

"Wal, I'm surprised at Mr. Horace Dunkelberg tryin' to come it over us like that—ayes! I be," said Aunt Deel.

"Wal, I ain't," said Uncle Peabody. "Ol' Grimshaw has got him under his thumb—that's what's the matter. You'll find he's up to his ears in debt to Grimshaw—prob'ly."

As we followed him toward the house, he pushing the wheelbarrow loaded with sacks of nuts, he added:

"At last Grimshaw has found somethin' that he can't buy an' he's awful surprised. Too bad he didn't learn that lesson long ago."

He stopped his wheelbarrow by the steps and we sat down together on the edge of the stoop as he added:

"I got mad—they kep' pickin' on me so—I'm sorry, but I couldn't help it. We'll start up agin' somewhere if we have to. There's a good many days' work in me yet."

As we carried the bags to the attic room I thought of the lodestone and the compass and knew that Mr. Wright had foreseen what was likely to happen.

When we came down Uncle Peabody said to me:

"I feel sorry, awful sorry, for that boy."

We spent a silent afternoon gathering apples. After supper we played old sledge and my uncle had hard work to keep us in good countenance. We went to bed early and I lay long, hearing the autumn wind in the popple leaves and thinking of that great thing which had grown strong within us, little by little, in the candle light.

Bart encounters a new peril as a result of his knowledge regarding the crime of which Amos Grimshaw is accused. How Bart escaped from the danger that menaced him is told in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## Allegiance to Spring Styles



No wonder the French are fond of beige. Time demonstrates that we never grow tired of this refined and beautiful color, which ranks with white in these two particulars. Besides this, it goes well with all other colors, as white does. The spring is welcomed by many a pretty suit in beige-colored wool and many rich and handsome ones in beige-colored tricotette and other silk weaves. The one-piece dresses reveal this color a favorite with their designers, often in combination with other colored fabrics or brightened by rich embroideries.

The second suit is of gray wool veige. Always sew children's wear with a No. 1 quality silk thread—the best to be had. In the long run it will prove the best paying investment in your children's clothes that you have ever had. Silk thread is stronger than cotton; it does not roughen in the laundering nor is it so brittle and inclined to break off or snap in the seam. In gingham, percales and other fabrics of children's wearing apparel the silk sinks deep into the mesh of the goods and holds far better with a thread of similar quality and texture as the apparel. Numerous mothers have vouched for the value of this practice.

A suit of beige tricot shown in the picture is a fine example of harmonizing color and design. Here there is the same "class" in the design as in the cloth. It is made with a plain skirt, and very neat machine stitching is an important detail in its finishing. The skirt is instep length and just wide enough for comfortable walking. The neat effect of machine stitching is emphasized by placing it on narrow panels, rounded at the ends, that are applied around the coat. It appears again on the front of the coat, where a wide panel is cut to form pockets at the sides, and again on the narrow belt of the tricot. The small, round buttons are covered with the cloth.

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## Vagaries in Blouse Styles



Combed wools and angora yarns are playing conspicuous parts in the spring styles. They appear everywhere, the combed wool in accessories of suits and coats as vestees, collars, cuffs, and the yarns in embroideries on dresses and millinery and in other forms. As nothing escapes the industrious eyes of the designers of waists the vogue for wool embroidery soon brought grist to their mills, for they appropriated the idea and have used it on blouses, adding one more to the many interesting vagaries that make the blouses of the season attractive. One would not expect wool yarn to travel hand in hand with georgette crepe, but it does, and successfully, as is witnessed by the blouse shown in the picture.

This model is of dark plum-colored crepe, ornamented with scattered spirals of beige-colored embroidery. Its front is extended into a little apron rounded at the bottom. Fancy stitching finishes the hems and outlines the round neck, and these are of silk like the pendant silk ornaments that finish the tie ends that are sewed to the front of the blouse. The tie ends are unexpected, but altogether charming as a finishing touch. The sleeves have a close-fitting cuff fastened to a flowing upper sleeve.

The other waist is of taupe-colored crepe, with front and sleeves embroidered with silk of the same color. It is another one of the several models that have extensions below the waistline, and it contrives a very original management of this feature of the styles by having two long tabs at each side gathered into silk tassels. Besides achieving this something new, the blouse has another merit in a very wide, soft girle of the georgette, and it takes advantage of the opportunity to use a small sailor collar on the round neck. Many round-necked blouses are finished with frills.

Hats for the Kiddies. Chambray hats for the kiddies have again appeared this season, and these show, stitched brims and large, puffy crowns of the fabric, with wide black velvet bands and streamers, and sometimes trimmed with little gingham flowers.

Julia Potbury