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The Michigan Argus

From Songs for the Little One at Home.

The Snowdrop. Now the spring is coming on, Now the snow and ice are gone,

Come, my little snow-drop, Will you not begin to about?

Oh, I see your little head Peeping from the snow-bed,

Looking out so green and gay, On this fine and pleasant day.

For the mild south wind soft blow, And hath melted all the snow;

And the sun shines out so warm, You need not fear another storm.

So your pretty flowers show, And your petals white and low;

Then you'll bring your modest head Down upon the snow-bed.

A Story for the Little Folks.

BY MRS. ALICE B. HAVEN.

"Ministering Children."

Kitty Lyman was feeling very happy and healthy. She liked to be of use to her mamma, and no pet name of the many that she said ever pleased her like "Little Housekeeper."

She was only five years old, scarcely tall enough to keep her bright red border of the "glass-top" from touching the floor, but for all that she was helping wife the breakfast-things for the first time in her life.

"No, it's not a boy's work, but papa is going to teach him work fit for a boy," he heard him say yesterday that he was too large now to play all the time.

"I guess not," said Master Louis, who was hanging about the store-room door, and inspecting the pies on the lower shelf, that had just come in from the kitchen, "I'm not going to work!"

"Papa will see to that," said his mother. "Suppose you stop swinging on that door, and find your reading-book, it's almost school-time!"

"Well, but I'm not going to—"

"Hush, my son," and Mrs. Lyman interposed before he could repeat his disobedient saying. "Go at once. Come, little housekeeper, those plates will be so cold you cannot dry them, if you stand gazing out of the door. If you could stay by the table two minutes together!"

It was not wonderful that Kitty liked to take her work into the sunshine. It was early spring, and the children had been shut up in the house so much during the rainy season, that now, since the clouds were gone, and the muddy roads were dry, and the snow had melted, they began to enjoy the lawn, they could not enjoy it enough. They were country children, and their papa's house was called "The Maples," from the beautiful maple trees that shaded it.

They were just putting out pale green leaves; and in the flower-beds about the door, the hyacinths, and pink and white, nodded their fragrant bells, and the gay tulips were beginning to unfold. On the lawn, the graceful spires trailed their bridal wreaths, and the birds sang in the trees above them. Every thing was so bright, and pleasant, and sweet this morning, that Mrs. Lyman herself could scarcely keep in doors; and as she looked at all this beauty, a thought of thanksgiving arose in her heart, that this pleasant place was her home, and that God had given her these busy little ones, with ample means to train them up for usefulness here, and happiness hereafter.

The house itself was old-fashioned, but very comfortable. The dining-room in which she stood, opened on a piazza shaded by vines. It was neatly and comfortably furnished, and the bright silver and pretty shapes of the china before her bespoke the prosperity of the family.

Upstairs there was a little room with a green carpet, and white curtains at the window, and a set of oak furniture, a bed, and small dressing bureau, and a bookcase filled with fascinating "juveniles"; and this Kitty and her little sister Gertrude called "their room."

So you see they had a great deal to make them happy—pleasant things around them, a kind father and mother, whose greatest earthly happiness was studying the good of their children; neat and comfortable clothes, abundantly of good, nourishing food, nicely served, and not a care or trouble in the world, except such as they made for themselves by naughtiness.

They had all learned the hymn, which I dare say you know—even baby Gertrude could lip it as she sat on her papa's knee on Sunday night:—

"Not more than others I desire, Yet God has given me more, For I have food while others starve, Or beg from door to door."

But whether they understood it or not, we shall see.

"It's a nice day, isn't it mamma?" said Kitty, traveling to the open door for the ninth time, slowly rubbing a cup, with her eyes fixed on the tulip-beds. "A beauty day, as Tooty says, and O mamma! here's some one coming—such a queer little boy—O dear!"

"I guess not; he hasn't got any shoes on, and I guess the gravel cut his feet; and he's only got a pair of trousers, and a shirt, and a great vest, that comes way down. I think he's a beggar-boy!"

"Where!" called out Louis, bursting into the room; and even Tooty craned out her little fat neck from the high chair by her mother, to see the queer little stranger.

It was a sorry sight, as Mrs. Lyman went to meet him—a miserable little figure, with a bright, delicate face, and clear blue eyes, but there were traces of tears on the dirty little cheeks, and the child's hair was matted and

tossed, as if he had not seen a comb for months. His trousers were out at the knees, and his only other garment besides his shirt was a man's vest, that hung about him like a coat.

Louis stared in boyish curiosity, but Kitty's kind little face worked oddly, betraying astonishment and very lively sympathy.

Mrs. Lyman went forward as the child shrank back, apparently through fear. He was but a very little taller than Louis, and did not look so strong.

"Did you want some breakfast, my boy?" she said very kindly, for her heart was stirred at such childish want and desolation.

"If you please, ma'am, I'm hungry."

It was no new thing to feed travelers' feet at the Maples. Almost every day some weary wayfarer found rest and food in his hospitable kitchen, where the good-natured cook contrived to find "a bit and a sup" for all comers. So Kitty lost no time in pouring out a cup of milk herself, and then there was a nice slice of bread already buttered, which Gertrude had left on her plate.

"May I, mamma?"

"Yes, dear; and Mrs. Lyman told me to give you a little of the pie, while Kitty brought you food, with great efforts not to spill from her full cup on the nice clean matting.

The boy scarcely raised his eyes, but drank the milk with one deep, full draught. Mrs. Lyman did not speak to him again until the bread had almost disappeared, but Kitty hovered round and replenished the cup, and gazed at him, to the neglect of her housekeeping duties, which her mother speedily and quickly finished.

"Where have you been living?" Mrs. Lyman asked kindly, as the eager eyes were raised with a half-grateful, half-frightened look.

"Up on John Taylor's farm, ma'am."

"And why did you come away? I hope you have not run off."

"No ma'am, he hunted me off," and the boy looked quickly over his shoulder towards the road, as if in dread of a pursuer.

"Hunted you off! poor child!"—That was the shy, appealing look exactly, the look which had roused Mrs. Lyman's sympathy more than the shrewdest face of famished man.

"Yes, ma'am, he got drunk last night, and abused me and hunted me off at daylight."

At daylight, in the chillness of early dawn, when her own children were singing and chattering like so many happy birds, in their comfortable beds, this child, no older than her own boy, who had never yet been taught what labor meant, was flying from the blows and angry curses of a brutal master!

There was too much honesty in the story, and the simple way in which it was told, for Mrs. Lyman to question its truth.

"Here's how he beat me," said the boy, who had already learned that doubt and unbelief cling to the unfortunes with their tattered garments; and he turned back his shirt, exposing the livid stripes on the fair, white skin, that might have been a baby's.

"O mamma! won't father be the wicked man sent to prison?" burst from Kitty's matted lips. "Won't you keep the little boy and take care of him? Hasn't he got any father and mother?"

"Have you?"

"No, ma'am, they're dead in New York, but he aunts lives in Connecticut, and it's her I'm going; me uncle put me with John Taylor when he moved away up there."

"Cannot your uncle keep you with him?"

"No, ma'am, he's but a poor man himself, and sick mostly, but he'd take me in and get me another place maybe."

"What can you do?"

"Most anything, ma'am; chop wood, and mind the cows, and feed the turkeys, and water the cattle, ma'am."

Mrs. Lyman tried to think that she could employ him, but Willie Patrick, the present errand boy, who lived with his mother in the village, had the strongest claims. She could only dispatch Mary, her right-hand woman, to the garret for the great "give-away" bag, wherein she stored all the clothes as the children had defaced or out-grown, were deposited regularly, for just such times of need; and Kitty, still hovering about the poor boy like a little mother, had the pleasure of finding two old jackets and a pair of stout shoes, that fitted him exactly, and stood by while he put them on, and saw his dreary little face light up with the first smile that had visited it for many a day, when he found the comfort of them.

Louis felt sorry too, but his playmate, Harry Page, had come for him to go to school, that diverted his attention; but Kitty scarcely took her eyes from the lad while he rolled up the second jacket and a pair of trousers Mrs. Lyman had brought out, and thanked the lady and the little girl a great many times.

"May I say something to him, mamma?" Evidently her mind was bent on some childish consolation.

"You've got one Father left, little boy, haven't you?" and her brown eyes were raised reverently to the sky overhead, and her hands, just bunched in labors of love, instinctively pointed upwards. "God takes care of you now, doesn't he?"

The boy looked wonderingly into her face. Alas! to him his Father in heaven seemed as far off and unknown as the "Father" who had died in his babyhood.

"She wants to tell you," said Mrs. Lyman, standing between the two, "that God is your father if you love him, and he will always take care of you if you try to please him, whatever happens to you."

And who knows but that Kitty's words of comfort and sympathy may have cheered the boy's lonely, empty heart, for that weary journey, and for the hard journey of life that lay beyond. As for the little girl herself, she went thoughtfully about the house, and played with her sister, or waited on her mamma, more gently than her restless standing usually allowed. All day long she thought at times, "what if that had been her dear, dear brother Louis, wandering about hungry and beaten!"

Her father heard her sobbing at night, as she knelt by her mother's knee to say her prayers.

"Has Kitty been naughty to-day?" he asked his wife, as she came back to the sitting-room.

"Oh! no, unusually good; but when she came to pray for all poor little children who have no fathers or mothers," as she always does, she burst out crying for a little boy who was here this morning," and then Mrs. Lyman told the story.

"She says she never knew before how good God was to her, and Louis, and Gertrude, to give them 'such a nice home, and kind father and mother,' and she wants to be a better little girl, and please Him, when he is so kind to her."

You should have heard her childish faith, when she prayed, sobbing all the while that God would give the little boy a place to sleep to-night, and friends to take care of him. I do believe she has learned how much she has to be thankful for, in finding the reality of the suffering there is in the world.

Have you learned it yet, little boy and girl, whose home is as happy as Kitty Lyman's, or do you murmur and complain when anything crosses and vexes you? Do you ever think of the homeless, wandering children, all over the world, who have no place to lay their heads, and are beaten and thrust out to starve, or steal, or die? God help them, and send them friends, as Kitty Lyman prayed; for this is a true story, and may you all come to say in your hearts:

"Are these thy favors day by day, And above the rest? To me to love the more than they, And try to serve thee best."

—Western Advocate.

THE GRANARY.

A Tale which Every Person will Read.

BY REV. A. C. THOMAS.

"Who so readeth let him understand."

"Jonathan Hardwork, having purchased an extensive farm, and provided himself with every requisite to prosperous husbandry, proposed to furnish subscribers with a quart of wheat weekly, at the low price of two dollars in advance, and two dollars and fifty cents if paid after six weeks.

"The facilities afforded by the government for the transportation of wheat to every section of the country and adjacent provinces are such as must prove satisfactory to every subscriber; and the proprietor of the Granary assures all who may patronize him that he will exert himself to supply an article of the first quality.

"N. B.—Agents will be allowed a generous percentage.

"Address (post-paid) proprietor of the Granary, Hopewell."

Such was the prospectus issued by my friend Mr. Hardwork. Feeling a lively interest in his welfare, I visited his farm, although it was a long journey from my home, and was pleased to find everything in nice order. He informed me that he had contracted a large debt in the purchase of the premises, stock and implements of husbandry, but that he had no doubt of the ability to discharge every obligation in a few years. He also stated that he had already received many hundred subscribers, and that in four or five weeks he would commence the delivery of the wheat according to proposal.

The scheme appeared plausible; and my friend was so confident of success that I had not the slightest doubt of his prosperity. I entered my name as a subscriber, and when I left him he was preparing many thousand quart sacks.

I received a quart of wheat, and I concluded, from the excellent quality and prompt delivery, that everything was prosperous with Jonathan Hardwork and his farm. So I gave myself no concern about my indebtedness to him; for said I, to a farmer so extensively patronized as he is, the small pittance of two years arrears would be but a drop in the bucket. It is true there was occasional printing on the sacks a general notice to delinquents; but I never suspected this was intended for his friends.

The notice, however, became more frequent; and having leisure, I concluded to visit my friend, the proprietor of the Granary, who lived in a comfortable house, but I saw that there had been trouble. He was evidently worn with toil and anxiety, and in the conversation of the evening he entered into particulars.

"Here I have been laboring day and night for two years, and am more in debt now than when I began. My creditors are pressing for payment; I am conscious of inability to meet their demands, and can perceive no result but bankruptcy and ruin."

"But have you not a large list of subscribers?"

"Yes, a very large list," was the reply, "but too many of them are like you."

"Pardon me," said my friend, in melancholy tone, "pardon me, for oppression will make even a wise man mad; I have a large list of the same kind of patrons, scattered here and there over thousands of miles; if they would pay me the trifles they severally owe, I should be perfectly freed from embarrassment, and go on my way rejoicing. But they reason as you reason, and so I am brought to the door of poverty and ruin."

I felt the full force of the rebuke, and paid promptly, arrears at the increased prices named in the prospectus, and also a year in advance. I bid adieu to the worthy and wronged farmer, resolved to do everything in my power to repair the injury which had accrued from my delinquency.

O ye patrons of Jonathan Hardwork!—wherever ye are, or whoever ye are! Ye have received and eaten the wheat from his Granary, without making payments! Ye are guilty of a grievous sin in conscience. Therefore repent! Pay the farmer what you owe him! Uncle Sam's teamsters will bring you the sacks of wheat every week, and Uncle Sam's teamsters will carry the money safely to Jonathan Hardwork.

A soldier in one of the Kentucky camps says the motto with him is: "United we sleep; divided we freeze!"

The ancient Greeks buried their dead in jars. Hence the origin of the expression: "He's gone to pot."

Postal Incident.

A young man from the rural districts went to the postoffice the other day with a bank-note for a dollar's worth of stamps.

He was told that paper money was not received. He went for Spanish quarters.

"We don't receive them now," said the attendant, "for more than twenty cents apiece."

The countryman thought Uncle Sam mightily particular, so he went and obtained a dollar's worth of coppers.

"Now," said he, on returning to the office, and laying down his pile on the window of the delivery, "I guess I can suit you."

The man inside looked at the display of coppers and coolly replied: "We never take more than three cents in copper at one time—it is not a legal tender about that sum."

The countryman looked at the composed official for the space of a minute without stirring, and then belched out: "Look here, you—ain't you almighty king of particular, for a fellow backed up like this jail as this 'ere? You don't take only three cents of copper at a time, hey? Well, then, s'pose you give me three cents' worth of stamps anyhow."

"To official very politely cut off a single stamp and passed it out, for which the countryman laid down three cents. He was about to pass away, when the latter cried out:

"Look here, you! That 'ere's one time. Now, s'pose you give me three cents' worth more on 'em!"

Uncle Sam's clerk was not slow in discovering that he had caught a Tartar. He turned back to the window, and asked:

"How many coppers have you got?"

"Well, only about ninety-seven of 'em. I had a hundred when I begun."

"Pass them in," was the gruff reply.

"Pass out your stamps fast, and then I will; but I reckon you won't fetch me again."

The stamps were passed out and the coppers handed over, when the countryman went off, saying:

"S'pose because a fellow holds office under Uncle Sam he thinks he is smarter 'n all creation; but I guess they larn't something that time."

Practical Joke in Camp.

A Correspondent writing from the camp of Gen. Nelson's division, in Kentucky, relates this incident:

"Our boys are famous for practical jokes, and are consequently on the lookout for subjects. One was recently procured in the person of a teamster, who had the charge of six large, shaggy mules. Jehu was also the proprietor of two bottles of old Bourbon—a contraband in camp—while he was discovered, and resolved to possess. Being aware that the driver's presence was an impediment to the theft, he hits upon the following to get rid of him:

"Address (post-paid) proprietor of the Granary, Hopewell."

Approaching the driver, who was busy carrying his mules, he accosted him with,

"I say, old fellow, what are you doing there?"

"Can't you see," replied Jehu gruffly.

"Certainly," responded the wag, "but it is not your business. It is after tattoo, and there is a fellow hired by the General who carries all the mules and horses brought in after tattoo."

The mule driver bit at once and wanted to know where the "hair-dresser" kept himself. Whereupon he was directed to Gen. Nelson's tent, with the assurance that





