

FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Hornet's Nest.

"When I was young," said Cousin Tom, "At the old house that I came from A honeysuckle used to grow, That clambered round the portico. How sweetly, I remember well, Its yellow blossoms used to smell; And how, one summer, in its shade, Their great, gray nest the hornets made."

'Around the room they buzzing flew, And wandered all the garden through, And always knew precisely where Grow sweetest plum and choicest pear. With their dull drone and cruel stings, They seemed such idle, spiteful things, To drive them off, I said, one day, 'I'll tear their ugly nest away!'

'No, Tom,' my mother said; 'no, no! You must not think of doing so; You foolish boy! 't is never best To meddle with a hornet's nest.'

"Her good advice away was thrown; The moment that I was alone I climbed, and hold of it I caught To pull it down; when, quick as thought, Out flew the hornets, great and small, And full of fury, one and all; About my neck and face they clung, Nose, eyelids, ears and mouth they stung; I tried to beat them off in vain, And shrieked aloud with fright and pain. The startled household hurried out— 'What could the outcry be about?' My burning, smarting hands they swathed With linen cloths, and gently bathed My swollen face and throbbing head, And laid me tenderly in bed; And then my mother talked with me— 'You've been a naughty boy,' said she; 'I told you that it was not best To meddle with a hornet's nest.'

"But all your pain to good will turn, If you will now a lesson learn, And keep it, when you older grow Wherever you may chance to go— To aid the wronged, to help the weak, One should not be afraid to speak; But every wise and prudent man Keeps out of quarrels if he can; For in this world 't is never best To meddle with a hornet's nest."

—Marian Douglass, in St. Nicholas.

Dab Kinzer and the Ponies.

"Miranda," said Mrs. Kinzer, a well-to-do widow of Long Island, to her married daughter, on the morning of the day she was to give a grand party, "all the invitations are sent now, and we must get rid of Dabney and the boys for a few hours."

Dabney was her son, a lank boy of fourteen years old, and the other boys were his friends Frank Harley and Ford Foster, with the latter's cousins Joe and Fuz Hart.

"Send 'em for some greens to rig the parlor with," suggested Ham, Mrs. Kinzer's son-in-law. "Let 'em take the ponies."

"Do you think the ponies are safe to drive just now?"

"Oh, Dab can handle 'em. They're a trifle skittish, that's all. They need a little exercise."

So they did, but it was to be doubted if the best way to secure it for them was to send them out in a light, two-seated wagon, with a load of five lively boys.

"Now, don't you let one of them other boys touch the reins," said Mrs. Kinzer.

Dab's promise to that effect was a hard one to keep, for Joe and Fuz almost tried to take the reins away from him before they had driven two miles from the house. He was firm, however, and they managed to reach the strip of woodland, some five miles inland, where they were to gather their load, without any disaster; but it was evident to Dab all the way, that his ponies were in unusually "high" condition. So took them out of the wagon while the rest began to gather their very liberal harvest of evergreens, and did not bring them near it again until all were ready for the start homeward.

"Now, boys," he said, "you get in. Joe and Ford and Fuz on the back seat to hold the greens. Frank, get up there, forward, while I hitch the ponies. These fellows are full of mischief."

Very full, certainly, nor did Dab Kinzer know exactly what the matter was, for a minute or so after he seized the reins and sprang up beside Frank Harley. Then, indeed, as the ponies reared and kicked and plunged, it seemed to him he saw something work out from under their collars and fall to the ground. An acorn burr is just the thing to worry a restive horse, if put in such a place, but Joe and Fuz had hardly expected their "little joke" would be so very successful as it was.

The ponies were off now. "Joe," shouted Fuz, "let's jump!"

"Don't let 'em, Ford," exclaimed Dab, giving his whole energies to the horses. "They'll break their necks if they do. Hold 'em in!"

Ford, who was in the middle, promptly seized an arm of each of his panic-stricken cousins, while Frank clambered over the seat to help him. They were all down on the bottom now, serving as a weight to hold the branches, as the light wagon bounced and rattled along over the level road.

In vain Dab pulled and pulled at the ponies. Run they did, and all he could do was to keep them fairly in the road. Bracing strongly back, with the reins wound around his tough hands, and with a look in his face that should have given courage even to the Hart boys, Dab strained at his task as bravely as he had stood at the tiller of the "Swallow" in the storm. No such thing as stopping them.

And now, as they whirled along, even Dab's face paled a little.

"I must reach the bridge before he does. He's just stupid enough to keep right on."

And it was very stupid indeed for the driver of that one-horse "truck wagon" to try and reach the narrow little un-railed bridge first. It was an old, used-up sort of a bridge, at best.

Dab loosened the reins a little, but could not use the whip.

"Why can't he stop!"

It was a moment of breathless anxiety, but the wagon kept stolidly on. There would be barely room to pass him on the road itself; none at all on the narrow bridge.

The ponies did it. They seemed to put on an extra touch of speed, on their own account, just then.

There was a rattle, a faint crash, and then, as the wheels of the two vehicles almost grazed one another in passing, Ford shouted:

"The bridge is down!"

Such a narrow escape!

One of the rotten girders, never half strong enough, had given way under the sudden shock of the hind wheels, and that truck wagon would have to find its path across the brook as best it could.

There were more wagons to pass as they plunged forward, and rough places in the road for Dabney to look out for, but even Joe and Fuz were now getting confidence in their driver. Before, long, too, the ponies themselves began to feel that they had had nearly enough of it. Then it was that Dab used his whip again, and the streets of the village were traversed at such a rate as to call for the disapprobation of all sober-minded people.—St. Nicholas.

Frangipani Scent and Puddings.

"Let's begin with the puddings, and make sure of them," as a little boy once remarked. Well, then, in former times, frangipani puddings were of broken bread, and their queer name is made from two words,—frangi, meaning "to break," and panus, "bread;" but, after some time, these puddings were made with pastry-crust and contained cream and almonds.

Frangipani scent, however, was named after a great marquis who first made it, getting it from the jasmine plant. And the marquis got his name from an ancestor whose duty it has been to break the holy bread or wafer in one of the church services, and who on that account was called "Frangipani," or "Breaker of Bread."

Now, this way of explaining how words come to be formed, sounds well enough, no doubt. But how are we to know, in this case, that the marquis didn't invent the pudding as well as the scent?—St. Nicholas.

Russian Marriage Customs.

Russian marriages are generally arranged through priests. A well-bred bridegroom must present a gift to a monastery and another to his parish church; the bride, through her friends, is expected to clothe some statue of a virgin with a gown of silver brocade, enriched with more or less jewels, according to the piety of the donor; and in some parts of Southern Russia she adds a gift of two white doves to the pope. The consent of parents is necessary for a marriage until the age of thirty in the case of men, twenty-five in that of women, but young people are at liberty to appeal to the civil authorities if consent be arbitrarily withheld. In this event the parents are called upon to show reason for their refusal. The reason must not be mercenary, unless one of the young people be heir to a landed estate; then the question is referred to the marshal of the nobility in the district, whose decisions are based upon expediency rather than upon fixed principles. These appeals are rare, because the Russians are a marrying people, and dispose of their children early. In the middle and lower classes men marry at twenty, when not drafted by the conscription. In the higher aristocracy a young man goes the "grand tour" before settling down, but he is often betrothed, before starting, to a young lady not yet out of the school-room. There is no country that has so few old maids as Russia. When a girl has reached the age of twenty-five without finding a mate, she generally sets out on what she calls a pilgrimage, if poor—on a round of travels if rich, and in either case she turns up some years later as a widow. Widows are plentiful as old spinners are scarce, and widows whose husbands were never seen are more numerous than the rest. Etiquette forbids any allusion to a lady's dead husband in her presence, and this is sometimes convenient. When a couple are engaged a betrothal feast is held, and the bride-elect has a lock of her hair cut off in the presence of witnesses and given to the bridegroom, who in return presents a silver ring set with a turquoise, an almond cake and a gift of bread and salt. From this moment the two are pledged, nor can the relatives break the match except with the consent of the parties themselves, which is signified by a return of the ring and lock of hair. So much importance is attached to the ring that among poor people who cannot afford silver and a turquoise, tin and a bit of blue stone are substituted. These betrothal rings are kept as heirlooms, but must not be made to serve twice—a son cannot give his bride the ring which his mother received, for instance, though why this should be so is a mystery which the clergy, who sell the ring, could best explain. On the wedding day the bride comes to church dressed in white; but it is only among the highest classes that the bridal costumes are entirely white and that a wreath of orange flower blossoms is worn.

"How long," said a crushed tragedian to a ticket clerk in a depot, striking an attitude, "how long will it take a first-class actor to get to Podunk?" "No longer," replied the clerk, "than it would any other first-class blamed fool!"

Small Beginnings.

A traveler through a dusty road strewed acorns on the sea;

And one took root and sprouted up, and grew into a tree.

Love sought its shade, at evening time, to breathe its early vows;

And age was pleased, in heats of noon, to bask beneath its boughs;

The dormouse loved its dangling twigs, the birds sweet music bore;

It stood a glory in its place, a blessing evermore.

A little spring had lost its way amid the grass and fern,

A passing stranger scooped a well, where weary men might turn;

He walked it in, and hung with care a ladle at the brink;

He thought not of the deed he did, but judged that toil might drink.

He passed again, and lo! the well, by summers never dried,

Had cooled ten thousand parching tongues, and saved a life beside.

A dreamer dropped a random thought; 't was old, and yet 't was new;

A simple fancy of the brain, but strong in being true.

It shone upon a genial mind, and lo! its light became

A lamp of life, a beacon ray, a monitory flame. The thought was small, its issue great; a watchfire on the hill;

It sheds its radiance far adown, and cheers the valley still!

A nameless man, amid a crowd that thronged the daily mart,

Let fall a word of Hope and Love, unstudied, from the heart;

A whisper on the tumult thrown—a transitory breath—

It raised a brother from the dust; it saved a soul from death.

O germ! O fount! O word of love! O thought at random cast!

Ye were but little at the first, but mighty at the last.

—Charles Mackay.

WAS IT UNWOMANLY?

After Doctor Reid died, Mrs. Reid very sensibly sold out the big house with its lawns around it, conservatory on the terrace, and stables behind the clump of cedars, and moved into a smaller, though not less pleasant house, on Academy Avenue. People were not surprised at this, but when they heard that Kate Reid was going to teach mathematics at the Female Seminary, then the public was amazed. It began to pity Mrs. Reid a little. The doctor must have been terribly in debt, or the place mortgaged, for otherwise it would not have been necessary for Kate to teach school. Too bad for her, poor thing, just twenty, and so bright and good-looking, to be obliged to toil from nine to twelve with a parcel of stupid girls at the seminary. In reality, however, Kate was not obliged to do it at all, but being a young woman of independent ideas, she fancied that to have six hundred dollars a year all her own, would not be a disagreeable sensation to experience. She was not needed particularly in the domestic department at home; in fact, like a good many other bright and agreeable unmarried women, she was not needed anywhere to any extent. So it came about that she taught the seminary girls arithmetic, algebra, and geometry, and though it was rather trying to the patience once in a while, on the whole, she very much liked training the young idea.

One day in December, she walked home as usual at twelve o'clock, and proceeded directly into the parlor. Sitting by the window she saw Howard Winslow, a middle-aged gentleman of pleasant appearance, who rose and shook hands with Kate cordially, and stood and talked to her as she warmed her feet and hands. You never would have guessed from the greeting that these two people were laboring under the sentimental bonds of an engagement, but such was the fact. They had been engaged over a month. To be sure it had been a very prosaic affair, for they had known and liked each other always. Winslow finally came to the conclusion that he might as well get married. He had money enough, and was old enough surely, being nearly forty; and as he and Kate had always been very good friends, he sat down in his New York office, one day, and wrote her a proposal.

When she received it, she was a little amused and a great deal surprised, but as she liked Howard, she sat down straightway, also, and wrote an acceptance. Nothing romantic about this, you see; but I have a heretical idea that very happy marriages are often the result of such engagements.

"No, I didn't come up from New York merely to see you," said Winslow, in answer to Kate's question; "but on business about the new railroad. And, by the way, one of the civil engineers, Ed. Kasson, at work here, is an old friend of mine. He's very clever as to his profession, and is a gentleman through and through. He isn't much of a ladies' man, but I should like to give him a note of introduction to you, if you wouldn't mind."

"I should be glad to meet him, of course," replied Kate; "and mother and I will try to cure him if he is boorish or bashful. Now I must go up to my room, Howard, and renovate myself a little for luncheon." With this she left the parlor.

About a week after, Edward Kasson called one evening. He impressed Kate with a sense of squareness. He was tall, and had square shoulders. His forehead was square; his eyebrows arched very little; his chin and jaws were squared off rather heavily, and his mustache stood out quite straight at the ends, instead of drooping over the straight, firmly-closed lips. Moreover,

he had a little, straight cleft in his chin. He was neither boorish nor bashful, however, though he was a trifle clumsy and had very little idea of dancing-school grace. Kate took a fancy to him straightway, and after he and she had talked together about a little of everything, and he had gone home, she wrote a letter to Howard containing the following paragraph:

"Your friend, Mr. Kasson, called this evening; and both mother and I liked him very much. He seems so pleasant-tempered, and is certainly a very agreeable talker."

And not only was Kate pleased, but so was Kasson, and though he did not write many letters to his married sister, when he did honor her with an epistle he devoted a few lines thereof to Miss Reid:

"She is very good-looking and sensible, and has introduced me to several pleasant people. It is she to whom Winslow is engaged, and he has chosen with excellent taste. Hope I shall have the *entree* of their New York house."

So you see it was all a sort of mutual admiration society in the beginning. It did not last, however, for a very long time.

Kasson became disgusted with Winslow first. He was such an ass to be engaged to so charming a girl, and instead of living in her smiles, go off to Florida to get rid of the cold weather. What was cold weather, compared to the tender passion? Then Kate: she was so happy without her love that she surely could not care very much for the absent one, although they did appear on such excellent terms with each other. Kasson leveled a great deal of unnecessary vituperation at the heads of the engaged people, but, nevertheless, he went to the Widow Reid's on every excuse he could devise, and a good many times when he had no excuse at all. Along in February, however, he put himself through a severe course of self-examination. What was he going to the Widow Reid's for? To see Kate. What business had he to devote himself to a girl who was engaged? And thereupon he shook his wicked inclinations fiercely, and did not go near Kate for ten days.

Finally she met him on the street. "Have you been away?" she asked, smiling up at him in a most friendly fashion.

"Oh, no," said Kasson.

"Been sick, then?" persisted Kate.

"I should think not," was the reply, given with a healthy man's contempt of illness.

"Are you mad at me?" added Kate, cleverly mimicking a child's pout.

"Good heavens! No!" exclaimed Kasson. "The fact is, I am a fool, and I have been busy, Miss Reid, and I'll be down to see you this evening, if I shall not bore you."

"You are never a bore to mother and me," said Kate; "and don't overwork yourself, Mr. Kasson, but take time for social relaxation."

In truth Kate's philanthropy was only skin deep. She liked Kasson's company, and hardly deceived herself when she urged him to take time for social relaxation.

Kasson obeyed her, and the result was they were left together more than ever. She stored up all the funny stories about her pupils to tell him. She made him read the articles in magazines of which she approved. She scolded him for shunning his political duties, and in short, treated him as an old and favored friend. As for Kasson, he sat at the feet of his charming female Gamaliel and learned not only to discriminate as to magazine articles and to know his whole duty as a free citizen of the United States, but also received a variety of other decidedly interesting information. He threw out a vague remark once about being fond of music, and Kate resumed her neglected practicing again. When she woke up to the fact that she was practicing for Kasson's express benefit, she was ashamed of herself, and took her turn at mental discipline, and wrote Howard such an affectionate letter that the recipient was nearly struck dumb with surprise.

He was to return in the latter part of March, but long before that time Kate realized very keenly that she was in love with Edward Kasson. She felt much distressed thereat on Howard Winslow's account, for though she had told him frankly she did not love him, nevertheless to love some other man was certainly dishonorable.

Kasson was miserable, also. He was a gentleman, and therefore would have chopped his right hand off rather than show a spark of his love for Kate. He kept his secret well, but it came out one evening, accidentally. Kate had been puzzling him with a mathematical problem to solve, on which he had used some old letter-backs that he had in his pocket. After he had gone, the scraps of paper were strewn over the table. Kate tossed them in the fire, one by one, absent, but as she lifted the last scrap, she was caught by seeing her name written thereon. She read what was written, as any one might have done, for Kasson had said that the papers were nothing. This was what she read:

"I am heartily sorry for you, Ed. It seems hard that the only woman you ever cared for should be engaged to another man. As you say, the only thing you can do is to run away from Miss Reid before any one can guess that you love her."

Kate held the scrap in her hand for a second; then tossed it in the fire.

"So he loves me," she thought, exultantly.

Like a dash of water on a hot coal came the memory of Howard Winslow. Kate dropped into the nearest chair, and cried a little. It seemed very hard, indeed, that she and Winslow must marry each other when neither cared a great deal for the other.

After considerable reflection, Kate came to the conclusion that she would

not marry Howard; it was an impossibility now. But could she tell him the reason why she had changed her mind? and again, Kasson was going to leave in a week or ten days, and he would not say a word to her, except friendly ones, while thinking her engaged to Winslow. Then the result would be, Kate would have no lover at all. A vision of old-maidhood rose up before her—a vision of lonely years at school-teaching, over which she would grow gray and crabbed. She could not solve her problem at all, but she finally did send Howard a most friendly note telling him she could not marry him because she loved some one else.

The evening after she sent that note, there came in for a call the minister's wife, Mrs. Van Vleck, and a little later, Edward Kasson. Kate had just written a letter to her bosom friend, Millicent Sheppard, and the clump of note paper, the pen and ink, still lay on the table. She fingered the letter impatiently at Mrs. Van Vleck maundered away about some fair that the church people were getting up. Finally, she turned to Kate, and said:

"And we want you to act as secretary, my dear. We want you to write a note to Mrs. Morse, asking for flowers—but just take that piece of paper, and put down the list of your duties."

There was no escape. Kate drew the sheet of paper towards her, and made a list of the things she must do for the Fair.

"And now," added Mrs. Van Vleck, finally, with a patronizing smile towards Kasson. "You must write notes to Mr. Weeks and Mr. Kasson, asking their aid in some heavy work, such as putting up tables."

Kate laughed.

"I'll write Mr. Kasson's note right away," she said, beginning to do so in fact.

"While you are doing that," said Mrs. Reid, "I'll take Mrs. Van Vleck in the dining room to look at my home-made lambrequins."

They went out of the parlor, leaving Kate writing an absurd note to Kasson. She had hardly finished it, when her mother called her.

"Come here just a minute, Kate."

Like a flash there entered a thought into Kate's brain. On the table lay two notes, one to Millicent Sheppard, one to Mr. Kasson. It took but a second to thrust the letter to Millicent into the envelope directed to Kasson. Then she handed it him with a smile, saying as she did so:

"Here are your commands."

As she went out of the room, Kasson opened his note and read thus:

"I have time but for a few lines, but they are enough to tell you a secret; a secret which I have just discovered myself, and which is making me very unhappy."

Kasson read this in amazement; then brushed a lock of hair off his forehead, and continued:

"You know very well that I didn't love Howard Winslow when I engaged myself to him, and I told him that frankly. We were simply excellent friends. But now I love somebody else, and I wrote a letter to Howard to-day, breaking off the engagement. I could not marry him while I loved Edward Kasson, the gentleman of whom I have written you before."

Kasson read no more. He understood now that Kate had handed him the wrong note. He glanced on the table and saw the other note. In a second he had put the letter to Millicent in the right envelope, and was reading his absurd "commands" when the ladies re-entered.

"It was a hard minute for Kate, but she was a good actress. Not a dash of color reddened her cheek as she turned to Kasson and said:

"Can you perform your multifarious duties?"

She saw that he had his own note in his hands, and she understood and loved him for what he had done. This square-faced, clumsy man had something of a woman's delicacy and quick-witted tact.

"I rarely have received orders so pleasant to perform," he said, with a double meaning to his words—a double meaning which he had no idea Miss Reid understood.

The rest of the evening passed quietly, and not until two days later did Kasson perform his "pleasant duty." In spite of the knowledge he had that Kate Reid loved him, he hardly knew how to ask her to be his wife. He was not going to tell her that she had handed him the wrong note, and that he had thus discovered she loved him. No, indeed. He would never lisp a syllable of her fortunate mistake. These thoughts ran through his brain as he sat near Kate, and talked with her absent. The first lull that came in the conversation he took advantage of, saying:

"Miss Reid, is it true to ask when you last heard from Winslow?"

"I have not heard from him for over a week," she answered, the color coming into her cheeks now.

A short silence followed. Then Kasson said bravely,—

"You are going to marry him next spring, are you not?"

"I shall never marry him," answered Kate.

They were not a sentimental boy and girl, but the rest of the *lata-tata* I do not propose to chronicle, on account of its incoherency. However, it resulted in satisfaction for them, and bewilderment for Mrs. Reid, and (subsequently) for the gossips of Shatemuc City. As for Winslow, he took it philosophically and married another young lady last fall. It is something of a problem in my mind whether or no Kate Kasson will ever confess her stratagem to her husband, or whether he will confess to her that by mistake (?) he saw the letter she wrote to her friend, Miss Sheppard. So far, neither has hinted a word of their respective secrets. It is my belief they never will.—Golden Rule.