

# AT THE POST OF DUTY

OR, THE WATERMAN'S SONS.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Left alone with the fairy, Willie Wilders began his duties as sick-nurse, a sphere of action into which he had never thought of being introduced, even in his wildest dreams. He began by asking the fairy, if she was all right and comfortable, to which she replied that she was not, upon which he explained that he meant was she as right and comfortable as could be expected in the circumstances; could he do anything for her, in fact, or get her anything that would make her more comfortable than she was—but the fairy shook her poor head and said,

"Come, now, won't you have somethin' to eat? What had you for dinner?" said Willie, in a cheery voice, looking round the room, but not discovering any symptoms of food beyond a few empty plates and cups (the latter without handles), and a teapot with half a spoon.

"I had a little bread and butter," said the fairy.

"No tippie?" inquired the nurse. "No, except water."

"Aint that none in the house?"

"D'you git nothin' better at other times?" inquired Willie in surprise.

"Not often. Father's very poor. He is ill for a long time, too, and if he hasn't been for year six master I think we should all have starved."

"He's bliter now, but he needs pretty good living to keep him up to his work—for there's a deal of training to be done, and it wears him out if he don't get meat." But the pantomimes began and we were getting on better; when the fire came and burnt everything we had almost, so we can't afford much meat or beer, and I don't like beer, so I've got them persuaded to let me live on bread and butter and water! I would like tea better, because it's hot, but we can't afford that."

There was a revelation! The fairy lived upon bread and butter and water! Willie thought that but for the interpolation of the butter it would have borne marvelous resemblance to prison fare.

"When had you dinner?" inquired Willie suddenly.

"I talk about four o'clock."

"Ay, can't you eat nothin' now?"

Again the fairy shook her head.

"Nor drink?"

"Look if there's anythin' in the temt," said the fairy.

Willie looked, shook his head and said—  
"Not a drop."

"Any leaves?"

"Why, yes," he brought the pot-nurse to the candle; "there are a few used-up ones."

"Oh, do pour some hot water in to it; but I fear the water is cold, and the fire's too low to boil it!"

"I know the coals are done, but father gets paid his salary to-morrow, and he'll give me some tea then. He's very kind to me, father is, and so is Jim."

She sighed as she spoke, and shut her eyes.

"Ziza," said Willie in a careless tone, "you won't object to my leavin' you for a few minutes; only a few; I want to get a little fresh air, and get what sort of a night it is. I won't be gone long."

Ziza, so far from objecting, said that she was used to being left alone for long hours at a time, and wouldn't mind it. So Willie put the candle nearer to her beside, placed a tea-cup of water within reach, in front of her, saying that it was a capital tray, and on this, he arranged the viands neatly.

"Now, then, go at it, Ziza," he said, when all was arranged.

That day his recent employer had paid him his first month's wage, a sovereign, with many complimentary remarks as to his usefulness. The golden coin lay in his pocket. It was the first he had ever earned. He had intended to go straight home and lay the shining piece in his mother's lap; for Willie was a peculiar boy, and had some strange notions in regard to the destination of "first-fruits." Where he had got them nobody could tell. Perhaps his

mother knew, but nobody ever questioned her upon the point.

Taking this gold piece from his pocket, he ran into the nearest respectable street, and selected there the most respectable grocer's shop, into which he entered; and demanded a pound of the shopman's best tea, a pound of his best sugar, a pound of his best butter, a cut of his best bacon, and one of his best wax candles. Willie knew nothing about relative proportion in regard to such things; he only knew that they were usually bought and consumed together.

The shopman looked at the little purchaser in surprise, but as Willie emphatically repeated his demands.

On receiving the sovereign he looked twice at Willie, rung the piece of money three times on the counter, and then returned the change.

Gathering the packages in his arms, and putting the candle between his vest and bosom, he went into a baker's shop, purchased a loaf, and returned to the "scrubaceous grotto" laden like the bee.

To say that the fairy was surprised when he displayed these things, would be a feeble use of language. She opened her large eyes until Willie begged her in alarm not to open them wider for fear they should come out, at which silly she laughed, and then, being weak, she cried.

After that she fell in with her master's humor, and the two proceeded to "have a night of it."

Ziza said she'd be a real fairy and tell him what to do, and Willie said he'd be a gnome or a be-fairy and do it.

At the outset Willie discovered that he had forgotten coals, but this was rectified by another five minutes' airing, and a rousing fire was quickly roaring in the chimney, while the kettle sang and splattered on it like a sympathetic thing, as no doubt it was.

Willie cleared the small table that stood at the invalid's bedside, and arranged upon it the loaf, the teapot, two cracked teacups, the butter and sugar, and the wax-candle which latter was stuck into a quartz bottle in default of better candlesticks.

"Here it's under the pillow."

Willie put his hand under the pillow and pulled out a small pocket-Bible.

"Read the third chapter of St. John's Gospel," said the child, closing her eyes.

Willie read in the monotonous tones of a schoolboy's voice until he came to the sixteenth verse:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Stop at that verse," whispered Ziza. "I'll go to sleep now."

Her deep breathing soon proclaimed that she was in the land of dreams, so Willie removed the candle a little further away from her, and then resting his elbows on the table, his head in his hands began to recite the Bible. He turned over a few pages without much intention of finding any particular place, for he was beginning to feel sleepy.

The first words his eyes fell upon were, "Blessed are they that consider the poor."

"New ain't that jolly?" said the nurse, sitting down and rubbing his hands.

"Very," replied the patient, her eyes sparkling with delight.

"It's so like a scene in a play," continued Willie.

"Only much more real," suggested the fairy.

"Now, then, Ziza, have a cup of tea, fresh from the market o' Chilly as your Dad would say, if he was sellin' it by auction. He's a knowin' codger your dad is, Ziza. I know I forgot somethin' else—the cream."

"I don't mind it, indeed I don't," said Ziza earnestly.

Willie had started up to run out rectifying this omission, but on being assured that the fairy liked tea almost as well without as with cream, and that there was no cream to be got near at hand, he sat down again and continued to do the honors of the table. First he made the fairy sit up in bed, and commanded sadly on her poor thin neck as she did it, observing that she was nothing better than a skeleton in a skin. Then he took off his own jacket and put it on her shoulders, tying the arms round her neck. Next he placed a piece of bread in front of her, saying that it was a capital tray, and on this, he arranged his forehead down upon it, quietly sound asleep.

In his state the couple were discovered, an hour or two later, by Messrs. Cattley senior and junior on their return from the theatre.

"Fascinating mysteries I say, what is this?" exclaimed the elder clown, advancing into the room on tiptoe.

At astrophizing his eye and one Betty Martin, the younger clown said that it was a "rare go and no mistake" whenupon his father laid his hand on Willie's shoulder and gently shook him.

"Oh! another cup, Ziza?"

explained the self-accused nurse, as he put out his hand to seize the teapot.

"Hello! I thought it was the fairy!" he added, looking up with a sleepy smile; "I do believe I've gone and fell asleep."

"Why, lad, where got ye all those things?" inquired the senior Cattley, laying aside his cloak and cap, and speaking in a low tone, for Ziza was still sleeping soundly.

"Well, I got 'em," replied Willie in a meditative tone, "from a friend of mine—a very particular friend of mine—as declines to let me mention his name, so you'll have to be satisfied with the wittles and without the name of the virtuous giver. It's a dock or a snare, or a archbishop as did it. Anyway his name warn't Walker. See now, you've bin an' woke up the fairy!"

The sick child moved as he spoke, but it was only a turn, without awaking, on her side.

"Well, lad," said the clown sitting down and looking wistfully in the face of his daughter, "you've got your own reasons for not tellin' me—mayhap I've a pretty good guess—anyhow I say God bless him for I do believe he's saved the child's life. I've not seen her sleep like for weeks. Look at her, Jim; ain't she like her old self?"

"Yes, father, I don't need no paint and flour to make a fairy as her just now. She's just like what she was the last time I seed her go up in a gauze cloud to heaven, with red and blue fire blazin' all round her."

"I'll bid ye good-night now," said Willie, buttoning up his jacket, to the chin, and pulling his cap down on his brows with the air of a man who has a long walk before him.

"You're off, are you—oh?"

said the older clown, rising and taking Willie by the hand, "well, you're a good lad. Thank'e for comin' here an' takin' care of Ziza. My subterrenean grotto ain't much to boast of, but such as it is you're welcome to it at all times. Good night."

"Good-night," said Willie; "good-night, Jim."

Jim replied good-night heartily,

and then Willie stepped into the dark passage. He glanced back at the fairy before shutting the door, but her eyes were closed, so he said

"Because you have not eaten or drunk one mouthful yet."

"But I'm lookin' at you, and ain't that better! However, if ye won't go on, I'll not keep you back," and with that Willie set to work, and being uncommonly hungry, did what he styled "terrible execution among the wittles."

For some time the nurse and patient ate in comparative silence, but by degrees they began to talk, and as they became more confidential their talk became more personal.

"D'y you like bein' a fairy?" said Willie, after a lull in the conversation.

"No, I don't," replied Ziza.

"Because—because—I don't like the kind of things we have to do—ah—and short, I don't like it at all, and I often pray God to deliver me from it."

"It's very dreadful," responded Miss Tippet with a sigh—"very."

"It was awful. I know I shall never get over it—never," repeated the little old lady, finishing her tea, and asking for another cup in the calmest possible voice, with the sweetest possible smile.

"Oh yes, will you, Mrs. Donman?" said Miss Deemas snappishly.

"No, indeed, I won't," repeated Mrs. Donman; "how can I? Just think of the situation. Sitting in my chair in deshabille, when a man—a man, Miss Deemas!"

"Well, I know what a man is," said the Eagle bitterly; "why don't you go on?"

"Burst himself through my bedroom door," continued Mrs. Donman, "with lime and charcoal and brick-dust and water streaming down his face,—fooled me in his arms, bore me out into the street!—the street! Oh! I shall never get over it; and so little, so very little clothing on me—"

"How much had you on?" asked Miss Deemas in a sharp voice, the calmness of which contrasted forcibly with Mrs. Donman's excited tones.

"Really, Miss Deemas, I see no necessity for going into particulars. It is sufficient to know that I was carried by a man into the street in the face of! some thousands of people, for I heard them cheering though I saw them not. I know I shall never get over it—another cup, my love; not quite so much sugar, no; if we're to live to the age of Methuselah."

"I don't wonder, indeed I don't," murmured the sympathetic Miss Tippet. "I think, Julia dear, you are a little too hard on Mrs. Donman. How would you like to have been carried out of a burning house in such a way by a big rough man?"

"Oh, my dear," interposed Mrs. Donman, "I did not say he was rough." Big he certainly was, and strong, but I must do him the justice to say that the man is—oh!—he lifted me up very tenderly, and carried me as though I had been an infant and he my mother, through smoke and fire and water, into the street, before the eyes of the whole—oh, it's too awful to think of!"

"Stuff!" ejaculated Miss Deemas, pecking a piece of cake out of her fingers as she would, metaphorically of course, have pecked the eyes out of the head of Frank Wilders.

"All they wanted to see was fresh new milk and turpentine. For a young pig say, six weeks old, I have given up to the feeders who weighed in at 166 pounds ought to be produced in seven months from its birth. It should not be crammed, neither should it be half-starved, but fed steadily and regularly. Pigs fed steadily and regularly will give the most satisfactory results to the fender which weighed in the factories. A hog which has been half-starved at any period of his life, even though well fed afterwards, will not do so. Feed three times a day, at fixed hours, never leave food in the troughs after the pigs have finished.

Pigs should be well but not overfed. A good bacon pig of 166 pounds ought to be produced in seven months from its birth. It should not be crammed, neither should it be half-starved, but fed steadily and regularly. Pigs fed steadily and regularly will give the most satisfactory results to the fender which weighed in the factories. A hog which has been half-starved at any period of his life, even though well fed afterwards, will not do so. Feed three times a day, at fixed hours, never leave food in the troughs after the pigs have finished.

A writer to an English exchange says: "I have only one remedy for a sick pig, and it is a very simple one. Rheumatism, paralysis, blind staggers, scurvy, etc., I treat all alike, though in varying proportions. My cure-all is nothing more than fresh new milk and turpentine. For a young pig say, six weeks old, I administer a teaspoonful of turpentine in, say, a half pint of milk. Unless the pig is very sick it will readily drink this. If too far gone to drink it must be administered with a spoon. An older pig, however, will seldom refuse new milk, even when a tablespoonful is given in a quart or more. Grade the dose from a teaspoonful at six weeks old to a tablespoonful or more for a mature hog."

**COOKING FOOD FOR PIGS.**

Many farmers believe in cooking food for pigs some even going so far as to cook all their food. The results of numerous experiments show that, as a rule, steaming or cooking food, especially coarse food for cattle, adds nothing to its value. Potatoes, however, cannot be swine in any quantity without cooking, and other grains which are damaged in some way should first be cooked before feeding. Warm feed must not be confused with cooking feed. Warming or soaking the food may make it more easily digestible, in this way warming the feed may be agreeable to the palate, and perhaps, make it more comfortable or advantageous for increased comfort aid in economizing the food, or increasing the gains.

**WEEDS.**

There are two ways of completely destroying weeds. One is to let them have an opportunity to grow and, by frequent cultivating, turn them under as fast as they make their appearance; the other being to crowd them out by growing some crop that will not give the weeds a chance to grow. No system of cultivation will kill all the weeds if a crop is desired—such as corn—for the grass and weeds will only be kept down so long as cultivation lasts, especially as corn is usually "laid by" a time when the weeds are producing seeds, thus establishing themselves for the succeeding year.

A test of what supposed clean culture of corn may be, simply cut down a row of stalks and a row of weeds will remain. As a single weed produces thousands of seeds the labor of destroying the weeds must be repeated next season.

(To be Continued.)

**HIS WIFE'S FAULT.**

They were speaking of the possible member.

"He never looks on the bright side," said one.

"No," added another. "Moreover, if there's any way for him to shift the blame for his misfortunes on others, rest assured he'll do it."

"Quite so," concluded a third. "Why, the other day they told me of his wife's devoted nursing of him during his recent attack of rheumatism. In spite of his fault-finding, his spouse did everything she could to alleviate his pain. Often his sufferings would cause the poor thing to burst into tears as she sat by his bedside. Well, one day a friend dropped in to see how the invalid was getting on.

"'Badly, badly,' wailed the pessimistic one. 'And, do you know, it's all my wife's fault!'

"Impossible!" gasped the friend in surprise.

"Quite true, I assure you," murmured the sick man. "It is this way. Damp places are bad for me; yet there that woman sits and cries out to make the air moist."

**THE COST AND PROFIT.**

Profit depends upon circumstances. The hen that lays the largest number of eggs does not always give the greatest profit. One dozen eggs in winter, at thirty cents a dozen, is greater profit than two dozen when eggs are fifteen cents a dozen. The sum derived is the same amount of money received in both cases, yet the profit is not what it is derived in the gross sum, but that which is produced above the cost; hence, a hen is profitable according to the season during which