For the Boys and Girls

THE BLUE MITTENS

BY A. E. C. MASKELL

It was a cold day in midwinter that a little child, poorly clad, was walking along a country road, crying bitterly with the cold. Her hands were red and swollen, and there was no chance to warm them, since she wore no coat, and was carrying a bundle that required the strength of both little arms.

As she reached a great wood, and the wind whistled and shuddered through every shred of her faded plaid dress, her quick ear caught the sound of sleigh-bells, and the next moment a pair of milk-white ponies came prancing along, with the cunningest little sleigh, in which sat two or three handsomely-clad ladies, not much larger than Bessie herself.

The horses were going so fast that they hardly seemed to touch the ground. Bessie only had time to catch a glimpse of a little lady, robed in costly fur, raise her handkerchief to her face, and the sleigh, ladies and all, had disappeared, but lying right there at Bessie's feet was a pair of brand-new blue mittens.

The child caught them up eagerly, and turned them over and over in her cold, blue hands.

Never had she seen such mittens before—soft as down, and as exquisite in workmanship as the richest lace. Bessie had only wonder, as she hugged them tightly to her bosom.

"They are mine—all mine!" They will just fit me, I know," she said, softly, to herself, and was about to draw them on, when the thought occurred to her that they were not hers, after all, but belonged to the little woman in the sleigh.

Then came tears or bitter disappointment, and many words from the scolder, suggesting that the little girl would never know where she had stolen them, and that it was very foolish to be so foolish about such little things. But Bessie was true to her conscience, and after the voice of the scolder was stilled, she resolutely tore a piece of paper from around her bundle, and was carefully wrapping them up, when she felt something hard in one of the mittens, and thrusting her forefinger and thumb in, she drew out a ring, set with diamonds, that sparkled and quivered in the ray of the last thing of light.

Bessie caught her breath in astonishment and admiration, as she exclaimed:

"I am in luck to-day, for this is a real one, and it will pay poor, old grandma heaps and heaps of comforts," and placing the ring back in the mitten, she wrapped all up in the bit of paper, and deposited them in the bosom of her dress for safe keeping, from which she began to run with eager speed.

How fortune was soon disposed of at home, for now she had room for her treasure tight in her bosom. The poor child had suffered from many a blow, and now there were tears in her eyes as she took a stock of pretty dresses and dainties, and asked "will it pay anything of dearest grandma, and much as for her grandchild, that Bessie found it angels more welcome to hear the voice of her grandmother than the sweetest music in the world.

But a glimpse of the pretty stitch, laid up before a large jewelry establishment, decided the little girl at last.

With a touch of shame in her cheeks that she had hesitated once in the path of duty, she entered the store, and going up to one of the pretty ladies she tucked her rich ermine back, and said:

"Please ma'am, here are a pair of mittens you dropped from your sleigh."

"And, may, why did you not keep them," asked the little lady, with one of the most charming laughs in the world.

"Because it would not have been right."

"How do you know but I do not think so, too? Are they of any value to you?"

"Oh, no, ma'am, that never could be, for in one of them is a costly ring, which your ladyship must have lost from your own finger."

"Better and better. Little girl, honesty is one of the rarest of the virtues. You must be rewarded. Here, take the mittens, and I will keep the ring. But mind, if you find any more rings you are not to return them to me, but do just what you please with them."

"Yes, ma'am," answered the little girl, gaily, taking the whole as a good joke; "and, thank you, ma'am, for my hands have been so cold, and I never dreamed of possessing such a beautiful pair of mittens as these," and she began drawing them over her little purple hands, when again she felt something hard, and something slipped on her finger.

The color rushed clear to her forehead, as quickly snatching off the mitten she gazed upon her finger with astonishment. Then timidly she held up her hand before the little lady.

"It is," laughed the little sprite. "Dorman, here, knows the value of money for you would rather; but whatever do, never part with the mittens, and the queen of fairies, and live hundreds of miles from here. There is a charm about the mittens that reward the owner with a beautiful gift every good deed she does, and as you are such a good little girl, I will keep the mittens and patting the little red cheeks, she tripped out of the house, followed by all of her attendants, and soon the tinkling sound of sleigh-bells died away in the distance.

Nothing could induce the little girl to believe it was not all a beautiful dream, kept the blue mittens and a little heap of gold the jeweler had given her for the wonderful ring.

Was a happy child as she ran every of the way home to her grandma, laid the glittering gold in her lap, "Here, granny, every cent." "It is," she cried, "and the cunning little mittens, are mine? Just see how they fit me. And, oh, there is another ring. I have been a good girl again, granny, what I did to deserve her ring."

"It was my kind of little girl to give her money to her grandmother, I think the fairies would reward a very good deed."

Bessie danced with delight, then went and purchased such things as grandma wished.

There were no more cold rooms, no scarcity of clothing. Everything began to wear a look of thrift.

Long before the neighbors heard all about the good fortune falling to her grandma.

Many, of course, were envious, the nearest of kin, Bessie and her grandmother, had much trouble—at first, by strangers, which Bessie forgave and again by making presents of pretty ribbons and things.

One or two years older Bessie was more troublesome than any of the others, as she conceived the idea of stealing the mittens.

One day, when Bessie went to get her to put them on, they were gone, she could not account for their disappearance.

Her grandmother chided her for her carelessness, and she shed bitter tears as she searched high and low.

While she and her grandma slept, Gretchen Gascombe had stolen the wonderful mittens for herself.

In a burst of delight she hastened to her own room, locked herself up in her own room, and eagerly drew on the mittens, but what a disgust when a diamond ring; her horror when a snake dropped from the mitten itself around her pretty arm.

She flung the reptile from her with so many and dreadful hideous-looking words that a horror, wicked words that and a dreadful hideous-looking followed.

Gretchen was livid with rage. She threw the mittens on the floor, and stamped until her whole room seemed alive with hideous things. Then she picked the mittens, and flung them far of the window, where a white dove found them and carried them to a place right under Bessie's window, in low, soft, cooing sounds that she thought she heard the dove say:

"Good deeds are rewarded with good; evil deeds with evil. The girl next door does nothing but evil and can expect nothing else in return. Take your mittens, pretty maid, and may they bless you in the future as they have in the past."

Marriage of Venice.

Up to a recent period the people of Venice followed a peculiar custom which dated previous to 300 B.C. The Adriatic was known as the Gulf of Venice and Venice claimed exclusive jurisdiction over it. On Ascension day it was the custom for the doge to marry Venice to the sea, in the last scenes of great pomp and ceremony. The doge would throw a wedding ring into the waters to signify the marriage.

A Poem Worth Knowing.

"Loved, and Born Again."

Here is a poem so simple that a child can read it, and understand it in a childish fashion, yet so profound that the wisest cannot fathom its depths. It was written fifty years ago by William Brighty Rands.

The lad and lass were forced to part,
They kissed and went along;
The sight went into the poet's heart,
And it came out a song.

The sun, down-sloping in the west,
Made gold the evening air;
The sight went into the painter's breast,
And grew to a picture fair.

The mother murmured to her child,
And hushed it yet again;
The sound, as the musician smiled,
Grew music in his brain.

The damsel turned, her hair to bind,
A flower was in her zone;
There grew from out the sculptor's mind,
A damsel carved in stone.

The song was said, the tune was played,
The girl in marble stood,
The sunset in the picture stayed,
And all was sweet and good.

And God, who made these things to be,
The damsel and the sun,
Color and sound, and you and me,
Was pleased to see it done.

And all the angels would be glad
If, in the world He built,
Although there must be some things sad,
No drop of joy were spilt.

But all the beauty of the earth,
And skies, and hearts of men,
Were gently gathered at its birth,
And loved, and born again.

Raw Material.

Fashion through the ages has ransacked "frozen and torrid climes" alike, to supply the fabric of vestment or gear for civilized mankind. No sort of wild creature has been safe against hunter or trapper, unless the law forbade the destruction and appointed a closed season, with heavy penalties for violation of the ruling. But a curious feature of the spring fashions of 1926 is that they utilize the skins of creatures that have generally been regarded as pests, of which the world would be well rid were they exterminated. It seems a literal fulfillment of the prophecy of Genesis, that the heel of mankind shall be set upon the serpent, when one finds the boas and pythons of Amazonia made into shoes. All sorts of water snakes and desert lizards that bred terror or repulsion seem to have commercial value after all. The Gila monster and the rattlesnake may some day be farmed as we now rear the silver fox. At present, only the liver of the shark has a market value, in a limited area, but possibly in days to come we shall give chase to lizards eagerly as men have pursued the whale.

The history of commerce offers numberless examples of the discovery of values in what was once a despised and neglected product. A notable instance is gasoline; and we are barely beginning to save the fuel-waste in smoke. If current modes in footwear shall teach us not to dismiss as a mere pest the teeming life of swamps and water-courses where it is not pleasant nor safe for man to abide, we shall profit by an object lesson which applies in various fields of industry.

Kept Her Self-Respect.

The cost of self-respect is a thing that few of us consider as often as we should. Years ago a scrub woman in a New York office building took out an insurance policy on the life of her thirteen-year-old daughter. There were three other children, and the mother's earnings were so small that five cents a week was all she could devote to the policy. In time the daughter married a worthless man; and the other day she died. Through all the years the mother had kept up her payments of a nickel a week, and when the bill for the funeral expenses came she had $218.40 with which to pay it. Her daughter had had a decent burial, and her mother had preserved her self-respect. That is character.

Source of Income.

"No, sir," said Dr. Jalap. "I wouldn't have that apple tree cut for money."

"But you never get any fruit from it," argued Brown; "the boys steal all the apples before they are half ripe."

"That's just it," replied the doctor, with a quiet smile; "the tree stands me in a good thousand dollars every year."

The Truth.

"James, spell cloth," said the teacher. James was silent.

"Come, come," said the teacher. "You know the word. What is your coat made of?"

"Father's old pants," replied the boy.

WORLD'S EIGHTH RICHEST MAN

Maharajah of Baroda, who celebrated last week the golden jubilee of his reign. The ceremonies are said to have been marked by great splendor, with rich and poor taking part. The maharajah, well known in England, is a very modern potentate.

MEN AND WOMEN OF TO-DAY

From War to Peace.

Many of you will be interested to learn that Mr. Grindell Matthews, whose "Death Ray" created a sensation in two continents a year or so ago, has turned his attention to more peaceful pursuits.

One of his latest ideas is what is called a Leninlaphone, an instrument by means of which music can be produced by the action of beams of light falling on the apparatus. He is also working on a device by which a boat can be steered by beams.

His Experience.

Good stories of the sea come naturally to Earl Beatty, and one of his best concerns a certain officer of the King's Navy who had for many years suffered from chronic sore throat.

At last, while on leave in London, he determined to see a specialist about it, and accordingly paid a visit to Harley Street.

The doctor he consulted, being a great believer in simple remedies, asked him if he had ever tried salt-water gargle.

"Well," was the reply, "I've been torpedoed six times."

The Bell.

Mr. Stanley Baldwin's affection for English things is shown by this story, which he told at a private gathering recently.

Standing on a hill near Florence, he heard a bell ringing. "Such a bell as was never on land and sea, a bell whose every vibration forced an echo in my innermost heart. It was the most beautiful bell I ever heard."

His hostess then told him that it was an English bell, bought by Italian from the owner of a very ancient English abbey.

Quaintly Named.

Many clerics can, from personal experience, tell of strange names bestowed upon infants at their baptism. But few, I venture to think, could equal the following instance, told by the Bishop of Sodor and Man.

A mother who was on the lookout for a name for her child, saw on a door of a building the word "No-mo." It attracted her and she decided to adopt it.

Some few days later, passing the same building, she saw the name "King" on another door. She thought the two would sound well together, so the boy was baptised "Nomo King Smith."

On her way home from the church where the christening ceremony had taken place, she again passed the building. The two doors on which she had seen the names were now closed together, and what she read was not "Nomo King" but "No Smoking."

Seeing is Believing.

Lord Desborough, who has recently formulated a scheme for controlling the Thames floods, is the only man alive who has twice swum across the rapids of the Niagara river immediately below the Falls.

The story of how he came to repeat the hazardous feat is well worth repeating.

He was about to return to England, after successfully accomplishing his first swim, when an American professed his incredulity.

"No man could swim the rapids below the Falls from bank to bank, the thing's impossible," he said bluntly.

Lord Desborough shrugs his shoulders. "Then I had better go back and swim them again," he retorted, "just to convince you."

And he did!

He—"The Charleston must be good for the joints."

She—"Yes, all of them are making money out of it, I understand."

Current Joke.

"Do you charge batteries here?"

"Sure thing."

"Then put a new one in my car and charge it to dad."

The earliest military book in the British War Office is dated 1573.

Transfiguration.

Cold blue the night,
Steel blue the moon;
My breath was white
As moth cocoon,
A night so chill
My careful tread
Creaked—and was still
Creaked—and was dead.
Then, window-glow,
Through festooned frost,
Above, below,
Half seen, half lost
In forest lake,
In lake and fern,
In fern and brake,
A tendril's turn
Revealed your hand
And then your face
In fairyland
Of frozen lace.

—Forman Brown.

Case of Necessity.

"So you've joined the Salvation Army! Well, well."

"Yep, I drew this trombone in a raffle and the neighbors won't let me practice at home."

How a Candle Burns.

Most people get the impression, from watching a candle burn, that the flame consumes the wick. But, as a matter of fact, the flame feeds upon the wax itself, or the paraffin, so that in a very good candle there will be no wax to run over and run down the sides in melted streams to gather in an unsightly mass at the bottom. When a candle is first lighted, the wick is white and clean, but after that the wick will be black and greasy. If you watch the candle closely, you will see that when it is first lighted the heat of the flame from the wick melts the paraffin, and as the paraffin melts it forms a tiny bowl around the wick. In this bowl a small pool of melted paraffin accumulates, and as the flame burns, this melted paraffin is drawn up into the wick toward the flame. Nearing the flame, this melted wax passes into a vapor, or gaseous state. As a vapor, the paraffin is said to be combustible, and burns with the flame that seems to be coming from the candle wick.

Really, the wick acts as a center for the flame, and is so placed that at the same time it melts the paraffin, draws it up, and vaporizes it for burning. But, of course, the wick burns slowly, too, which explains its black color—for all ashes of wood, paper, and similar things are black when they are only partly burned. If the wick burns faster than the supply of paraffin, some of it must run over and make these queer bumps and knolls of wax when the candle cools. Thus, it may be seen that a candle is truly a miniature lamp, for it has its bowl of "oil" (the melted paraffin) and its wick. The wick in a kerosene lamp acts precisely as our candle wick, for it sucks up the oil from the reservoir underneath and brings it to the flame for burning.

The Travelers.

It is the function of the poor
To wish the rich good-by,
On shore to stand and wave a hand,
A tear drop in the eye,
As outward bound goes Uncle John
Or good Aunt Mary Ann;
With one brave yell, to shout "Farewell"
And "Write us when you can."

The rich may take their pleasure off
The poor at home must stay,
They sigh in vain, the ship to train
Takes none of them away.
But at the gate [illegible] Aunt Kate
Who journeys Stateward [illegible]
We kiss and cry and say "Good-by"
And "Don't forget to write."

Now Uncle Al's [illegible]
Around the world to roam,
And here I stand and wave my hand,
Compelled to stay at home.
He'll feel the salt breeze on his face,
He'll sail the seven seas,
"Good-by!" I'll shout and [illegible]
A feather in the breeze.

And you who answer [illegible]
When travel's call [illegible]
Long may ride upon the tide
When I am asleep.
And when at last I [illegible]
May those who stay "Good-by"
Turn back to shore [illegible]
Without too great a sigh.

—Ella A. Gross.

Remember Canada.

No longer is it thought necessary that one should go abroad to complete his musical education in European conservatories. Canadian schools of music are now among the finest, and best equipped in the world, and have a very large enrolment. We are a music-loving nation and it is difficult to find a child who is not studying music in some form or another. Greater "appreciation" in our schools is being made to develop a love for the classics and finer music among the children. Canadian composers are among the best, and travellers in European countries are often surprised and amused to hear Canadian dance music and songs and classical compositions in the cafes, theatres and music halls of France, Italy and Italy. Not only have we more musical organizations in proportion to population than the United States, but we have more musical organizations than any country in the world.

Old Shoes Are Bad for Indoor Wear.

[illegible]

INDIANS REAP BIG HARVEST IN 1925

CROP OVER THE MILLION BUSHEL MARK

Advancement and Growing Prosperity Evidence of Efforts Put Forth by Government.

The Indians of the Prairie Provinces in 1925 reaped over a million bushels of grain, roughly 850 carloads, on their farms, fifty thousand of livestock. Canada, taking the stand that the Indians were the wards of the nation, has for them probably more than any country, civilized or uncivilized, has done for its aborigines. The policy of the Government has always been not to pauperize the Indians, but to place them in a position of self-reliance under the new conditions. The Department of Indian Affairs has had an uphill task, and it is only years ago the Indians [illegible] to be taking [illegible] farming and stock raising, but the tribes, and particularly within the last few years, the effort of the Government and effort of the Indians themselves has made itself apparent.

Interesting Details

Some of the details are informative. The population in the last census was 22,334 in the Prairie Provinces, 11,673 in Manitoba, 5,300 in Saskatchewan and 5,300 in Alberta. Of these Indians [illegible] Indians [illegible] Indians [illegible]