

For the Boys and Girls

A MINSTREL BOY OF LONG AGO.

BY FLORENCE ROMAINE

Twilight was falling one November afternoon many years ago, as three minstrels plodded along a rough, country road through a wild and uninhabited section of old England.

"Would that we might find shelter for the night!" exclaimed Richard, the tallest of the three, wrapping his cape more closely about his shoulders. "Me thinks a storm is approaching on the wings of the wind."

"Small chance have we of finding host or cottage on this lonely road," replied Pietro, the Clown, dubiously.

But Leon, a boy, striding on ahead, said nothing; only peered more eagerly into the thick woods at either side.

Suddenly he stopped and beckoned to the others.

"I can faintly discern marks of a path between these trees," he called back. "Perchance it may lead to some hut. What thinkest thou, Richard?"

"Praise be, if thou has found one," replied the big man. "Lead the way, and we will follow."

THE DESERTED COTTAGE.

Crunching through the dry leaves, Leon plunged into the forest. At first, he seemed enshrouded in darkness, but guided somewhat by the shadowy outlines of the great trees, standing like sentinels, he pressed forward, and had hardly gone more than a few steps further, when to his astonishment he emerged into a clearing. A low thatched cottage stood in the centre, and Leon gave a shout of joy.

"I have found it!" he cried, and in a lower tone, "There is no one within!"

Truly, the house seemed empty and forlorn, as if long since tenanted, even the door was open, swinging idly back and forth on rusty hinges.

"There may be no host to welcome us," laughed Pietro, coming close to Leon, "nevertheless, we are glad of a roof over our heads, and—"

He paused, raising his hand with a warning gesture, "But hush! Something is within. Listen!"

Breathlessly the companions stood on the threshold. Yes, something was inside the cottage, for they could hear distinctly now, a faint crying sound coming from a darkened corner.

"Perchance some animal has sought shelter here, even as we have," said Leon, entering fearlessly.

Just then Richard struck his flint and steel together and light flashed for an instant, revealing rough, timbered walls, earthen floor, and in the middle of a pile of straw a small, furry animal, who sat up and regarded the travelers with a look of startled surprise.

"Why, it's a baby bear!" exclaimed Leon.

Pietro lit a pine fagot from Richard's spark, and held it high in his hand. Methinks the little creature perhaps wandered away from home," he said, "for there are no marks of other animals about."

"If so, he may be hungry," added Leon. "A piece of bread might help to win his friendship." And kneeling on the straw he took a small bundle from the leathern pouch at his side, and unwrapped it carefully.

"Here, little one," Leon broke a bit of black bread from the loaf. "See, I will share my meal with you!"

At first the bear drew back until only the tip of a tiny nose was visible. But gradually, as if in answer to Leon's friendly smile and coaxing voice, he worked his way out again, and finally, with bright eyes fixed warily on Leon's, thrust his head forward and took the bread between his white teeth!

Richard and Pietro watched the strange scene, as the boy fed morsel after morsel to the hungry bear, and when all was gone, the furry creature came out of the straw altogether, laying his muzzle in Leon's hand, unafraid and content.

That night, in the world outside, snow began to fall, covering the trees and earth with a mantle of shimmering, silvery white. But the pale moon, shining through the window of the cottage, showed the wayfarers asleep, safe and warm—Richard and Pietro covered with their cloaks, and Leon, half-hidden in the bed of straw, with the baby bear cuddled close at his feet.

A few days later, and not many miles from the minstrels' woodland cottage, a little, flaxen-haired girl stood by the tower window of a great stone castle, looking out over the wintry landscape.

"To-day's feasting holds naught of happiness for me," she sighed, "for without my cousin Gwendolen I am lonely indeed."

"Let not thy father hear thee say as much, my Audrey," replied her companion quickly. "Thou knowest well, that since his quarrel with thy uncle, both he and Gwendolen are forbidden here."

"Ay," responded the little girl, "would that something might bring them back again!"

"But come, child," the nurse took her gently by the hand, "let us go down, lest thy father think it strange we tarry."

Together they descended the broad staircase and entered the lofty hall, where already Audrey's father and his henchmen were seated around a long table.

FEASTING IN THE HALL.

Logs blazing in the huge fireplace burnished the silver with fiery glow. There was a din of many voices, and laughter echoed among the rafters, but as Audrey and the nurse came in, Duke Henry sprang to his feet.

"At last thou art here," he cried, pulling out the chair beside him. "Now may the light of thy presence make bright our feasting! Bertram, fetch food and drink for Lady Audrey, at once, and quickly."

With a word of thanks Audrey slipped into her seat, but was quiet as the meal wore on, although song and story beguiled the time and merriment ran high at the long table.

"Thy daughter's smiles have fled," whispered the nurse softly to the Duke. Then with a braver note in her voice: "It was not so when her cousin Gwendolen lived here; the child misses a youthful companion and—"

"Cease!" muttered the Duke angrily. "I will not hear that name! Bertram, call the minstrels in, perchance they can bring joy to the heart of little Audrey!"

All eyes turned to the doorway. And at that instant, our old friends, Richard, Pietro, and Leon, leading the baby bear, advanced toward the company.

Pietro began the performance, throwing many colored balls into the air—one, two, three, a half-dozen at a time, weaving them into curious patterns above his head, and catching them lightly and easily with swift fingers. He finished, and Richard took his place, making the men roar with laughter at his drolleries.

And then Leon stepped forward, sweeping the strings of his lute with firm, thought gentle touch, while his voice floated clear and true through the great hall.

Peace be to all, and joy.
In every heart to-day
Let strife forever cease to be,
And love remain alway.

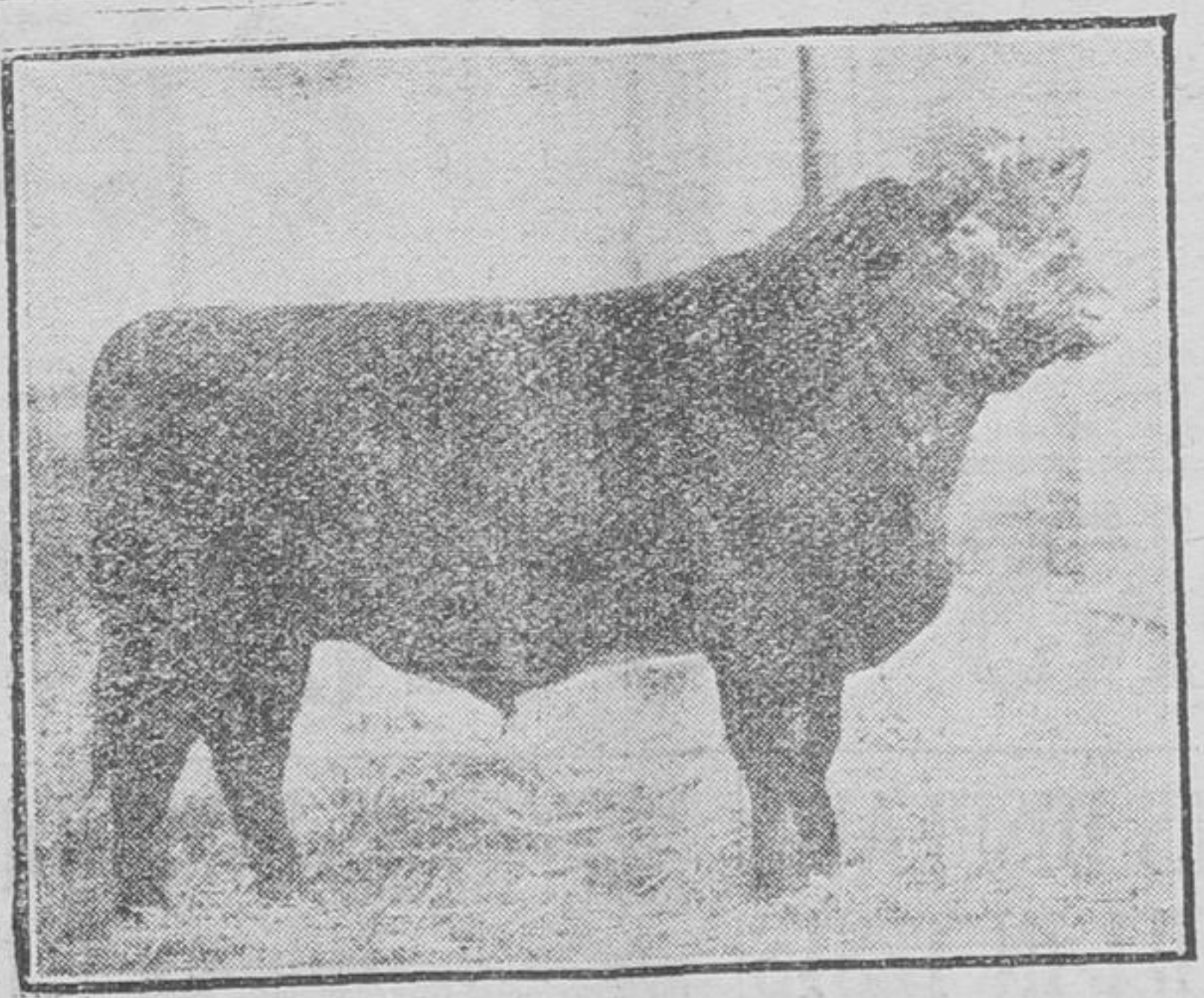
As the sweet tones melted away the swarthy men were silent, and Audrey clasped her hands, smiling happily.

A burning log crashed in two, sending a shower of sparks up the chimney.

"Let strife cease to be, and love remain alway," repeated the Duke, to himself. He turned to Audrey. "Would I make you happy, little one, if I should send for your uncle and cousin?" he asked, a gentler expression on his dark face.

"Oh, Father," Audrey threw her arms around his neck, her eyes shining. It was answer enough.

Duke Henry stroked her hair tenderly. "So be it, my child," he replied, and to the henchman at his side: "Bertram, thou shalt go now with a message to my brother and his daughter,



ONTARIO BULL SECOND AT CHICAGO

Above is shown "Brown-dale Guard," the yearling bull owned by James and Stanley Douglas, of Caledonia, Ontario, which won the junior championship at the International Stock Show in Chicago, being beaten for the grand championship only by the Prince of Wales' "King of the Fairies." Brown-dale Guard also won championships in Toronto and in London. Three generations of the Douglas family have been engaged in shorthorn breeding.

bidding them good cheer, and wel-come to our house again!"

Many happy days the three minstrels remained at the castle. Leon taught Audrey and Gwendolen to play the lute. Brown Bruin became a great pet with everyone, and the torch of peace burned bright, lighted by the song of a Minstrel Boy of Long Ago.

A LAUGH AT JEALOUS HUSBANDS

The golden wedding reception had tired both of them a little—the mass in the village church in the morning, then the breakfast, with the immense table in the fashion of olden times. At the head of the board sat the old couple. Next came the cure, the children, the grandchildren, friends, neighbors and tenants. One hundred covers were spread by a caterer from Paris, on trestles across the lawn.

To spare the chief figures in the fete the repast was a breakfast, not a dinner. The village fiddlers had played their repertory. After numerous healths the guests had departed, some by auto and some by train. The caterer had loaded his paraphernalia into enormous trucks and the gardeners had cleaned up the littered park.

Count Stephen was seventy-eight years old. He was still handsome, with his fine white imperial.

Countess Sophie Edmee was seventy-two. She was very slight in figure, a little bent, but her blue eyes sparkled vivaciously in her delicately wrinkled face.

They sat alone that evening in the salon, which was packed with flowers.

"My dear Sophie Edmee," said the count, "we are in the twilight of life. I don't want to let this day end without thanking you for all the happiness you have given me. There are few women with virtues like yours."

"You have always been very good," answered the countess. "I ought to thank you, too, Stephen. You have loved me and cherished me, and have never been jealous."

The old man got up gallantly and kissed his wife's hand.

"Thanks, my dear Edmee. But who could be jealous of a wife as constant as you?"

She smiled.

"A husband less perfect than you, my dear Stephen."

Count Stephen smiled in his turn.

"I have never had cause for jealousy. Your life has always been open and loyal, without any secrets."

"Without any secrets? I wished it to be so."

"I don't mean to say that I always understood your motives." . . .

"For example?"

"You remember the porcelain service which you had painted, about thirty-five years ago, by that young Polish artist? He spent three months here doing the work. I made no complaint about it. He was also a good musician and I owed him many pleasant evenings. Do you remember?"

She sighed.

"I remember Ladislav."

"It is true, his name was Ladislav. You have a good memory. Well, when the first sets were finished you became displeased with his painting. You let him do only the thirteen pieces for soup, fish, meat and dessert. He went away. You have never used the service. It is in the dining room, and except for annual cleanings it has slept there for thirty-five years. It is the only thing in which you seemed to me a little fantastic."

The old lady smiled silently at these memories. Then she lifted her head and looked squarely at the count.

"Stephen," she said, "we are so old that I can tell you everything, just as if it concerned another person. Ladislav went away at my request."

"Why? He had not finished painting the service?"

The countess sighed again.

"Come," she said, "we will talk it out."

"This evening? Certainly, if you wish to do so."

The count carried a lamp into the dining room and the countess looked for the key to the china closet. They took out the porcelain pieces, on which the delicate fancy of the Polish painter had traced exquisite garlands of flowers.

Sophie-Edmee arranged the pieces on the table, inspecting them carefully, changing their positions and putting them in a certain order.

"What difference does it make whether this plate is to the right or left of this other one?" asked the count. "Aren't they all alike?"

But she continued to shift them. Finally all were in place.

"It is a shame," said the count. "The service is charming. I admit having felt annoyed that he never finished it. Why send Ladislav away so soon? He ought to have done the 104 pieces before we let him go."

Sophie-Edmee fixed her still beautiful eyes on her husband.

"Look, Stephen," she said. "Each piece carries in the decoration a letter which you have never noticed."

He adjusted his monocle.

"That is so. A capital letter on the dishes and small letter on the plates."

"Take a pencil and write down the letters in the order in which I have placed the pieces—in the same order in which Ladislav presented them to me."

Full of curiosity, the count wrote down, line by line:

"Love is all;
It is happiness.
With a laugh at jealous husbands,
Here is my heart."

The count dropped his pencil and let his monocle swing.

"By the Pope's shadow!" he cried, "that is a piece of insolence! An insult in my face! And I never knew it!"

The countess smiled broadly.

"That is why," she said, "I asked Ladislav to go away before he had finished the 104 pieces. I was sufficiently warned by his quatrain of fifty-two letters."

She added, tactfully:

"I am really old now since the only little secret of my life has been revealed."

Already Stephen was piling up the

Easy Lessons in - AUCTION BRIDGE

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Author of "Ferguson on Auction Bridge"

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ARTICLE No. 11

We cannot all hold good cards but we all can hold our tempers. Many a game and rubber is lost by bad temper, an inexcusable fault from every angle. The writers of this well exemplified the other night. Two fairly good players had cut together for several rubbers and were not only holding bad cards but also getting bad "breaks." After several such hands, one of the players lost his temper completely and began to blame his partner for their bad luck. This naturally didn't help so they went from bad to worse. Finally, after one hand in which a very bad and unexpected "break" of cards caused a big loss, the hot tempered player said: "Well, partner, I have lost all confidence in you." The very next hand, the partner made an Informatory double but the hot tempered one refused to bid, saying: "I know very well what you want me to do but I'll be hanged if I follow your ignorant orders." As a result of this childish loss of temper their opponents went game and rubber. Don't allow yourself to lose your temper at the card table. There's no better way to lose not only your money but also your friends.

Several of the hands that caused this strong difference of opinion, were rather interesting and instructive.

Hand No. 1

Hearts—8, 5, 3
Clubs—10, 7
Diamonds—9, 3
Spades—A, 8, 6, 5, 4, 3
: Y :
: A B :
: Z :

Hand No. 2

Hearts—K, J, 8, 2
Clubs—A, J, 9, 3
Diamonds—K, J, 7, 6
Spades—7
: Y :
: A B :
: Z :

Hand No. 3

Hearts—A, 9, 6, 2
Clubs—K, J, 8, 4
Diamonds—9, 7, 5, 2
Spades—10, 5, 3
: Y :
: A B :
: Z :

Hand No. 4

Hearts—K, 7, 5, 3
Clubs—7
Diamonds—A, K, J, 8, 3
Spades—J, 7, 6
: Y :
: A B :
: Z :

No score, first game. Z dealt and bid one spade, A and Y passed and B bid two diamonds. Z, two spades, A three diamonds, Y three spades and all passed. A opened the ace of diamonds and all followed. What should A now lead to the second trick?

No score, first game. Z dealt and bid one heart, A one spade and Y and B passed. Z bid two diamonds, A two spades and Y and B passed. Z now bid three diamonds, A passed, Y bid three hearts and B bid three hearts. Z dealt and bid one club, A one diamond, Y one heart and B one spade. Z now bid two hearts, A two spades, Y three hearts and B three spades. Z now bid four hearts. What should A now bid with the foregoing hand?

An analysis of these four hands will be given in the next article. They are not tricky but usual, ordinary hands that come up constantly. Study them over and be ready to compare your reasoning with the writer's opinion.

Answer to Problem No. 7

Hearts—7, 4, 2
Clubs—Q, 7, 2
Diamonds—none
Spades—Q, 6
: Y :
: A B :
: Z :

Hearts—none
Clubs—J, 4, 3
Diamonds—J, 10, 5, 4, 3
Spades—none

There are no trumps and Z is in the lead. How can YZ so play the hand that they will win five of the eight tricks against any defense? The solution of this problem has already been given but a possible defense by B was suggested for analysis. At trick one, Z should play the king of clubs and Y should play the seven. Z should then follow with the seven of spades. A should win this trick with the king. It was suggested that A should now play the king of hearts and follow with the nine. If Z plays the six of hearts on A's king, and wins the second round of hearts with the ten,

Mozart Interrupts An Opera.

"Play D sharp, you wretches!" shouted a young man one night in the audience of an opera house, and he sprang to his feet as he shouted. The audience hissed, and attendants came hurrying towards the interrupter, while cries of "Turn him out!" resounded through the theatre. But when the audience recognized him, their anger vanished and a tumult of applause greeted him. It was Mozart. The opera was his own. At a certain important point in the score some of the instruments had played a wrong note!

Reds Bit Ant Dust.

Fine dust found at the bottom of ant's nests and taken internally was a popular cure for snake bite among the early American Indians.

The Lacey mica mine, near Sydenham, in Frontenac County, is said to be the largest amber mica mine in the world. Canada is one of the three principal mica producing countries of the world, the others being India and the United States.



The Best Location for Him.
Newly Fledged Surgeon—"I don't intend to settle down until I find the best possible location."
Friend—"I can point it out to you at once—the most popular railroad crossing in the country."

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A Typographical Error.

REG'LAR FELLERS—By Gene Byrnes.

