

A Hive of Busy Bees

Effie M. Williams

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A Hive of Busy Bees

Effie M. Williams

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How It Happened

[Illustration: Children looking out a window.]

The sun's gone under a cloud, called Grandpa cheerily over his shoulder, as he came into the dining room.

Grandma, following close behind, answered laughingly, Why, my dear, this is the brightest day we've had for two weeks!

But look at Don's face, said Grandpa soberly, and Joyce's too, for that matter glancing from one to the other.

Children, children, said Grandma kindly, do tell us what is wrong.

No answer.

Only, said Daddy at last, that they are thinking about next summer.

Grandpa threw back his white head, then, and laughed his loud, hearty laugh. You little trouble-borrowers, he cried, worrying about next summer! Why, only day before yesterday was Christmas; and by the looks of the dolls, and trains, and picture-books lying all over the house

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But, Grandpa, said Don in a small voice, trying not to cry, summer will be here before we know it you said so this morning yourself; and Daddy says he's going north on a fishing trip

And so, added Joyce sorrowfully, Don and I can't go to the farm and stay with you as we did last year, and the year before last, and every year since we can remember.

Joyce looked anxiously from one face to another. Daddy's eyes were twinkling. Mother looked rather sorry, and so did Grandma. But she knew at once, by the look on Grandpa's face that *he* understood. He only nodded his white head wisely. I see, he said. And some way, after that, Joyce felt that it would come out all right.

It did.

On the last morning that Grandpa and Grandma were there, Daddy said at the breakfast table quite suddenly, as if he had just thought of it Mother, suppose we let the children choose for themselves. You and I will go to the lake next summer, and catch the big fish; but if they would be happier on the old farm, why

Oo-oo-oo! cried Joyce delightedly. Don, you and I may go to Grandpa's house next summer, if we like!

How do you know? said Don rather crossly. Daddy hasn't said that we could.

Why, he said it just now didn't you, Daddy?

Not exactly; but that's what I was going to say, said Daddy, smiling into Joyce's shining eyes.

After that, it wasn't a bit hard to tell Grandpa and Grandma good-bye. Only until next summer, whispered Joyce when she kissed Grandma for the last time.

Long months followed, but June came at last. One happy day the children came home and threw their books down on the table; and Don raced through the house singing the last song he had learned at school:

School is done! school is done!
Toss up caps and have a run!

And now, said Mother that night, we must begin to get ready for our trips. Are you sure, children, that you still want to go to Grandma's?

Sure! whooped Don, dancing about the room; while Joyce answered quietly, You know, Mother, that nothing could ever change my mind.

Very well, said Mother. Tomorrow we must go shopping, for you will need some new clothes good, dark colored clothes to work and play in, so Grandma won't have to be washing all summer.

What fun they had in the days that followed! Mother's sewing machine hummed for many hours every day. And at last she got out the little trunk and began to carefully pack away the neatly folded gingham dresses, the blue shirts and overalls, a few toys and other things she knew the children would need. A letter had already been written to Grandma, telling her when to meet them at the station. And she had written back, promising to be there at the very minute.

When the great day came, the children were so excited they could hardly eat any breakfast. Mother wisely remembered that when she packed their lunch-box. The last minute, they ran across the street to tell their playmates good-bye. When they came back, Daddy had brought the car to the front of the house and was carrying

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out the little trunk. Mother was already waiting in the car.

It was getting near train time, so Daddy quickly drove off to the station. He bought the children's tickets, had the trunk checked, and then he gave Joyce some money to put into the new red purse Mother had given her as a parting gift. He slipped a few coins into Don's pocket, too, and the little boy rattled and jingled them with delight. How grown-up he felt!

The children were very brave, until the train whistled and they knew they must say good-by. Joyce could not keep the tears back, as she threw her arms around her mother's neck; but she brushed them away and smiled.

Joyce, dear, Mother was saying, I am expecting you to be my good, brave little daughter. Take care of Don. Remember to pray every day and be sure to write to Mother.

Joyce promised; and then, almost before the children knew what was happening, they were aboard the train, the engine was puffing, the wheels were grinding on the rails, and they were speeding along through the green countryside.

Joyce was trying very hard to be brave, for Don's sake. But a lump *would* keep coming in her throat, when she thought of Mother standing beside the train and waving her handkerchief as it moved away.

Although Joyce was only twelve herself, she really began to feel quite like a mother to eight-year-old Don. She must try to help him forget his loneliness. Soon they were looking out the window; and what interesting sights were whirling past! First there was a big flock of chickens; then some calves in a meadow, running away from the train in a great fright. A flock of sheep with their little lambs frolicked on a green hillside; and a frisky colt kicked up its heels and darted across the pasture as the train went by.

By and by, in her most grown-up way, Joyce looked at the watch on her wrist. It was just noon, so she opened the lunch-box; and dainty sandwiches and fruit soon disappeared. But they saved two big slices of Mother's good cake to take to Grandma and Grandpa.

After lunch, the train seemed to creep along rather slowly. But at last it stopped at the station where Grandma had promised to meet them. And sure enough, there stood Grandpa with his snowy hair and his big broad smile. Grandma was waiting nearby in the car.

It was late afternoon when they reached the old farmhouse, and Grandma soon had supper ready. After supper, Joyce helped to clear away the dishes; and then the little trunk was unpacked.

Grandma was watching keenly, to see if the children were lonely. Now, she said briskly, it is milking time. Run down the lane, children, and let the bars down for the cows to come through the lot; and we will give them a good drink of water.

Away scampered Joyce and Don; and soon the cows were standing at the trough and Grandpa was pumping water for them.

Let us pump! cried Joyce.

Fine! said Grandpa that will be your job every evening to water the cows.

After that, they watched the foaming milk stream into the shiny pails; and then they all went into the house together. It was almost dark now; two sleepy children said their prayers, and Grandma soon had them tucked snugly in bed.

The Sting of the Bee

[Illustration: The Sting of the Bee.]

Cock-a-doodle-doo! called Don in a shrill voice, dancing into his sister's room.

Joyce opened her eyes and looked about her. The bright morning sunlight was streaming in through the little pink-and-white curtains. Wh where am I? she asked sleepily, seeing Don standing there.

Where *are* you? cried Don merrily. Why, on the farm, of course! Don't you hear that old rooster telling you to get up? There he is, he added, pulling aside the curtain. He is stretching himself, and standing on his tiptoes. Grandpa says he's saying, 'Welcome to the farm, Don and Joyce!' Do hurry and get up! We must go out and help Grandpa do the milking.

Half an hour later, Grandma called two hungry children in to breakfast. After that, they were busy and happy all the morning long. Joyce helped Grandma to wash the dishes and tidy the house, and Don followed close at Grandpa's heels as he did his morning's work about the farm. He felt very grown-up indeed when a neighbor came by, and Grandpa told him he had a new hand.

After dinner, Grandma settled down for her afternoon's nap. Grandpa went to help a neighbor with some work, and so the children were left alone.

They began to run races in the wide grassy space in front of the old farm house.

But they made so much noise that soon Joyce said, I'm afraid we will wake Grandma, Don. We'd better be quiet.

Let's go to the orchard, said Don. We can be as noisy as we like there, and she won't even hear us. So away they scampered, to play in the shade of the old apple trees.

But Grandma's nap was not to last long; for soon she was awakened by a scream from the orchard. Hurrying out, she found Joyce dancing up and down, with her hand pressed tightly over one eye. Don stood watching her with round, frightened eyes. He could not imagine what had happened, to make his sister act like that.

But Grandma knew. Away back in the orchard, Grandpa had several hives of bees. Joyce had gone too near one of the hives; and a bee had done the rest.

Grandma did not say much. Quietly she took the little girl's hand and led her back to the house. Soon Joyce was lying on the couch, and Grandma was wringing cold water out of a cloth, and gently placing it on her eye. Before long the pain was gone; but the eye began to swell, and soon she was not able to see out of it at all.

It's all my fault that we went to the orchard, said Don, looking sober.

No, it's mine, said Joyce. I was afraid we would wake Grandma.

Well, laughed Grandma, I guess it was mine, because I forgot to tell you about the bees.

When it was time to get ready for bed that night, Grandma bathed the swollen eye again. I wish there were no bees, Grandma, said the little girl suddenly.

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Why, you like honey, don't you, dear? asked Grandma.

Ye-es, I like honey; but I don't like bees they sting so!

Bees are very interesting and hard-working little creatures, said Grandma; and if they are let alone, they will not harm anyone.

I didn't mean to bother them, said Joyce, but one stung *me*.

That's so, said Grandma; but they have certain rules, and you must have broken one of them. A bee's sting is the only thing she can use to protect the hive against intruders and the bee that stings you always dies. That's the price she has to pay to do her duty.

Oh! said Joyce, I'm sorry I went too near. But please, Grandma, tell me some more about bees.

There are lots of things to learn about them, said Grandma. They live in queer little houses called hives. They have a queen; and if she is stolen, or dies, they will not go on working without her. Only one queen can live in each house; when a new queen is about to come out of her cell, the old queen gathers her followers and they swarm.

The queen bee lays the eggs; and when the eggs hatch, the hive is so full of bees that it cannot hold them all. As soon as they find another queen, some of them must move out.

When the bees are swarming, they always take good care of their queen. Sometimes they settle on a limb of a tree; and while they are there, they keep their queen covered, so no one can find her. They send out scouts to find a new home; and as soon as it is found, they all move the re.

Sometimes Grandpa finds the queen, and puts her in the hive. Then she makes a sort of drumming noise, and the other bees follow her inside.

Was it the queen bee that stung me? asked Joyce.

No, the queen never uses her sting except when in battle with another queen bee; but the other bees take care of her, even if they must die for her sake. There are different kinds of bees in the hive. Drone bees cannot sting; and they will not work they are lazy fellows. In the fall they are all killed, so that during the long winter months they cannot eat the honey which the workers have gathered.

Bees are busy all the time. On sunny days, they gather honey; and on cloudy days they make little wax cells in which to store the honey.

That's why they say, 'busy as a bee,' said Joyce. It means 'busy all the time.' I didn't know there was so much to learn about bees.

I have been thinking about another kind of bee, said Grandma.

Do they sting, like the bees in the orchard? asked Joyce with a little shiver.

Their stings are much sharper, answered Grandma, and the pain lasts much longer. There is a hive full of these bees, and they are always very busy. But it is bedtime now. Wait till tomorrow night, and perhaps I shall tell you about one of them.

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Ten minutes later Don fell asleep, wondering what the strange sort of bee was like, and hoping it would never sting him as the cross bee had stung Joyce.

Bee Obedient

I have something to show you, said Grandma after breakfast the next morning. Come with me.

Oh, a little calf! exclaimed Don a moment later.

Isn't he cute? cried Joyce. See how wobbly his legs are. What's his name, Grandma?

Grandpa says he's not going to bother naming him, when he has two bright grandchildren here on the farm, answered Grandma, smiling.

Does he mean that *we* can name him? asked Joyce.

Yes, replied Grandma, he means just that.

Oh, Don, cried Joyce, what shall we call him?

I think Bruno is a nice name, said Don.

So do I; we'll call him Bruno, agreed Joyce.

I wonder if he would let me pet him, said Don, gently touching the calf on his small white nose.

The little fellow tossed his head and wobbled over to the other side of his mother. The children laughed merrily; and they were so interested in watching the little creature that Grandma had to leave them and go back to her work.

The hours passed by very quickly and very happily there were so many new things to do! Of course Joyce had to write a long letter to Mother, telling her about the sting of the bee, the new little calf, and many other interesting things.

Late in the afternoon the children remembered about the cows, and they thought they would pump the trough full of water ahead of time. It was such fun that they kept on pumping until the trough overflowed, and the ground around it was all muddy.

After supper, they let down the bars for the cows to come through. The cows had just finished drinking, when Don slipped in the mud and fell backward right into the trough. He kicked and splashed about, trying to get out; and Joyce got a good drenching when she tried to help him. Grandpa had to come to the rescue, and fish him out; and then they all had a good laugh even Don. The children could not watch the milking that night, because they had to go to the house and put on dry clothes.

Later in the evening, they reminded Grandma that she had promised to tell them a story. They drew their chairs close to hers, and she began:

It was to be a story about a bee, wasn't it? Well, this bee has a sharp sting, and it goes very deep.

I hope it will never sting me, then, said Joyce.

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I hope not, said Grandma. The boy and girl in my story were stung severely; but it was all their own fault, as you shall see.

Anna and her brother lived near a pond, and when the cold weather came it was great fun to skate on the ice. Oftentimes they would slide across it on their way to school. One morning, as their mother buttoned their coats, she said, 'Don't go across the ice this morning, children. It has begun to thaw, and it is dangerous.'

'No, we won't,' they promised.

When they reached the pond, Willie said, 'Why, see, Anna, how hard and thick the ice looks. Come on, let's slide across it.'

Instantly the bee began to buzz about Anna's ears. 'Bz-z-z-z-z! Don't do it!' said the bee. 'It's dangerous. You promised Mother.'

'We'd better not, Willie,' said Anna quickly. 'We promised Mother, you know.'

'But Mother'll never know,' said Willie.

'But you *promised*,' buzzed the bee again.

'Mother thought the ice was thawing,' added Willie. 'She won't care, when she knows it isn't. You may do as you like, Anna; but I'm going to slide across right now.'

When Anna saw her brother starting across the pond, she followed, in spite of the bee. But they had gone only a little way when the ice began to crack, and then to give way under them.

Anna turned and hurried back to the bank; but Willie had gone too far. She saw him go down in the icy water; and she ran to the road, screaming at the top of her voice.

A man was passing by at that moment. He picked up a board and ran to the pond as fast as he could. And he reached it just in time to save little Willie.

Dragging the lad up on to the bank, he called loudly for someone to come and help him. Two or three men came running; and they worked over Willie, until at last he opened his blue eyes and asked faintly, 'Where am I?' Then they took him home to his mother.

She thanked God for saving the life of her disobedient boy, but the danger was not yet past. For many weeks, Willie was a very sick little boy. When at last they carried him downstairs, he lay on the sofa day after day, pale and quiet sadly changed from the merry, romping Willie of other days. The springtime came; but it was a long time before he could go into the woods with Anna to hunt for wild flowers or sail his toy boats on the pond.

There was no more school for Willie that year. As Anna trudged off alone day after day, she seemed to hear again and again the buzzing of the bee about her ears 'Bz-z-z-z-z! You promised Mother!'

'I heard it so plainly,' she would say to herself. 'It must have been my conscience. But I wouldn't listen and I *almost* lost my brother.'

The old farmhouse kitchen was very quiet for a moment, after Grandma had finished her story. Nothing was heard but the ticking of the old-fashioned clock.

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I'm so glad it didn't happen *quite!* said Joyce at last. What was the bee's name, Grandma?

Bee Obedient, answered Grandma. It has sometimes stung boys and girls so deeply that the hurt has never been healed.

But, said Grandma cheerily, this bee will never bother you, if you listen to its first little buzz.

We will, Grandma, we will! cried the children as they drifted off to the Land of Dreams.

Bee Honest

[Illustration]

It seemed to Don that he had just fallen asleep when he heard Grandma's cheery voice calling, Breakfast! He dressed as quickly as he could; but when he got downstairs, all the others were waiting for him.

After breakfast Joyce dried the dishes for Grandma; and then she helped with the sweeping and dusting. Don helped Grandpa to grease the wagon and oil some harness; and he handed staples to Grandpa, while he mended some broken places in the fence.

The children were kept busy until dinner time; but in the afternoon they were free to do anything they liked. Today, they decided to play house in the orchard; so they got out some of the things that Mother had packed in the little trunk, to fix up their house.

But Don soon grew tired of that sort of play. Let's play hide-and-seek, he said.

All right, answered Joyce. I'll run and hide, while you count to one hundred.

Away she ran, and Don began to count. Just as he said, Ninety-five, she ran to the chicken-house door. It was standing open, so she stepped inside.

Now there was something in the chicken-house that Joyce did not expect to find. One of Grandpa's pigs was there, rooting around in the loose straw.

The pig was not looking for company; and he was so frightened that he ran toward the door pell-mell. Joyce, standing just inside, was in his way; and as he ran against her, she was lifted off her feet and thrown on to his back. Mr. Piggy dashed wildly out of the chicken-house.

Just outside the door was a large, shallow pan full of water, which Grandma kept there for the chickens. Joyce fell off the pig's back into the pan of water; and then she rolled over in the dirt.

Don stopped counting when he heard her screams, and Grandma came hurrying out. Poor Joyce! What a sight she was! And she was so frightened that it took Grandma quite a while to quiet her sobs. But a bath and a change of clothes made the little girl feel quite like herself again.

That evening when Grandma came up from the milking, she found the children on the porch waiting for another story.

Very well, said Grandma, I shall tell you a story tonight about Bee Honest.

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Many years ago there lived three little boys Joe, Henry, and Charles. They all started to school at the same time. For a long while they kept together in their classes; and they were very good friends.

But when they were about fourteen, two of the boys Joe and Henry began to go out nights; and it was always late when they got home. Charles stayed at home in the evening and studied his lessons for the next day, as he had always done.

Of course, the difference soon showed up in their school work. Charles always knew his lessons, while Joe and Henry fell far behind.

When examination time came, the boys begged Charles to help them.

'No,' said Charles firmly, 'I will never do anything like that. My mother says that my father wanted me to be honest; and I mean to be.'

'Aw,' said Henry, 'your father has been dead a long time; and your mother'll never know.'

'I say there's no harm in giving a fellow a lift in his examinations,' grumbled Joe.

'It would be cheating,' said Charles quietly; 'or helping you to, and that would be just as bad.' And with that he turned to his own work, and began to write diligently.

Of course Charles passed all his examinations with honors; and of course Joe and Henry failed.

After that, the boys tormented Charles in every way they could. They called him 'Mother's honest little darling'; and when they saw him coming they yelled, 'Go home and hang on to your mother's apron string.'

Mother knew, by Charles' sober face, that something had gone wrong. 'What is it, son?' she asked; and Charles told her what had happened. She told him how glad she was that he would not do wrong; and how proud his father would be of such a son.

'I shall never be ashamed of you,' she said, 'as long as you are perfectly honest. Sometimes you will find it rather hard; but just wait a few years, and you will see that it pays.'

Charles had been almost discouraged; but Mother's words made him feel quite strong and brave again. The next time he saw the boys, his honest blue eyes looked straight into their faces, unashamed and unafraid. They dropped their eyes, and hurried away as quickly as they could. They did not bother Charles again; for the principal had heard of their actions, and had punished them severely.

When school was out, the boys began to think about doing something to earn a little money. Henry was passing the drug store one day when he noticed a sign in the window 'Boy Wanted, Apply in Person.' He went into the store at once, and asked for the job.

The druggist took him to a little room back of the store. 'Here,' he said, 'is a chest of nails and bolts. You may sort them.'

The boy worked for a while, and then he said to himself, 'What a queer job this is!' He went back into the store and said to the druggist, 'If that is all you have for me to do, I don't believe I want the job.'

'Very well,' said the druggist, 'that is all I have for you to do just now.' He paid Henry for the work he had already done, and the boy went home.

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The druggist went back to the little room, and found bolts and nails scattered all over the floor. He put them back in the chest; and then he hung his sign in the window again.

The next day Joe passed by and saw the sign; and he too went in and asked for the job. The druggist took him to the little room and showed him the chest of nails, and told him to sort them.

When the boy had worked only a little while, he went back to the druggist and said, 'Those rusty old nails are no good. Why don't you let me throw them all away? I don't like this kind of job, anyway.'

'All right,' said the druggist; and he paid Joe for what he had done, and let him go. As he put the nails and bolts back in the chest he said to himself, 'I am willing to pay more than this to find a really honest boy.'

Later Joe and Henry, sauntering down the street together, saw the same sign in the window 'Boy Wanted. Apply in Person.'

'Guess he doesn't want a boy very bad,' said Joe. 'That's no job sorting those old rusty things. Did you find anything in the chest besides bolts and nails, Henry?'

'I'm not telling *everything* I found,' said Henry with a laugh.

Joe looked up, puzzled and a little alarmed. 'Now I wonder ' he began but broke off suddenly and started to talk about something else.

A few days later Charles passed by the drug store and saw the sign in the window. He went in and told the druggist he would like to have the job.

'Are Joe and Henry friends of yours?' asked the druggist, looking at him sharply.

'Oh, no, sir.' replied Charles quickly. 'We used to be good friends; but something happened between us that I don't like to tell; and they wouldn't have anything to do with me afterward.'

'I'm glad to hear that,' said the druggist. 'I rather think you're the boy I want.'

For two or three hours Charles worked steadily, now and then whistling a snatch of tune. Then he went to the druggist and said, 'I have finished the job you gave me. What shall I do next?'

The druggist went to the little room to see how Charles had done his work. The boy had found some boxes lying about; and he had placed the bolts in one, the nails in another, and the screws in a third.

'And see what I found!' exclaimed Charles. 'It was lying under those old crooked bolts in the bottom of the chest.' And he handed the druggist a five-dollar gold-piece.

The druggist took the money and said with a smile, 'Now you may place the bolts and screws back in the chest just as you have them arranged in the boxes.'

After he had done that, Charles was sent on a few errands; and then he was dismissed for the day.

A few days later the druggist gave Charles a key and said, 'You may come early in the morning and open the store, and do the sweeping and dusting.'

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At the end of the first week, when Charles received his pay-envelope, he found the five-dollar gold-piece along with the week's wages.

One morning not long afterward, when Charles was sweeping the floor, he found a few pennies lying near the counter. He picked them up and laid them on the shelf, and told the druggist about them. Another day he found some pennies, a dime, and two nickels. These too he laid on the shelf, telling the druggist where he had found them.

About a month later, when he was sweeping one morning, he found a bright, shiny new dollar. How he did wish he might keep it for himself!

'The druggist would never know it,' whispered a tiny voice.

But just at that instant, Bee Honest began to buzz around his ears. 'Don't forget what Mother told you,' said the bee. 'She said she would never be ashamed of you, as long as you were perfectly honest.'

Charles turned the shiny dollar over and over in his hand. The bee kept on buzzing 'Never do anything that will make your mother ashamed of you. Be honest! Be honest!'

'Yes,' said Charles at last, 'I will.' He laid the dollar up on the shelf; and when the druggist came in, he told him about it.

The druggist smiled and patted him on the shoulder. 'You are an honest boy,' was all he said. And at the end of the week, Charles found the shiny dollar in his pay-envelope, beside his usual wages.

A few weeks later, the druggist began to give Charles large sums of money to take to the bank for him. 'I have found that I can trust you, my boy,' he would say.

Charles worked in the store all that summer; and when school opened again, he helped the druggist mornings and evenings. His tired mother did not have to take in so many washings now; for Charles always gave her his money at the end of the week.

After he had finished school, the druggist gave him a steady job in the store, with good wages.

'Charles,' said the druggist one day, 'do you remember the day you sorted bolts and nails for me?'

'Indeed I do,' answered Charles. 'How glad I was to find work that day, so I could help my mother a little! And I shall never forget how surprised I was when I found a five-dollar gold-piece at the bottom of the chest.'

'I put it there on purpose,' said the druggist. 'I wanted to find out what sort of boy you were.'

'You did!' exclaimed the astonished boy.

'Yes; and when you brought it to me I was pretty sure that I had found an honest boy. But I wanted to be able to trust you with large sums of money, so I tested you still further. I left pennies and nickels and a dime on the floor; and last of all, a dollar. When you picked them all up, and laid them on the shelf, and told me about them I knew then that I could safely trust you.'

'I should like to ask you,' said Charles suddenly 'was there a gold-piece lying in the bottom of that chest when Joe and Henry sorted the nails, too?'

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'Yes,' said the druggist, 'each of them found a gold-piece there; and each of them kept it for himself.'

'So you lost ten dollars!' exclaimed Charles.

'Yes, lost ten dollars hunting for an honest boy. But it was worth it for I found one at last!'

Is that the end of the story? asked Joyce, as Grandma paused.

Not quite, said Grandpa, who had been listening. Tell them what happened to Henry and Joe.

Oh yes; I must not forget to tell you about them, said Grandma. Soon after Charles started working for the druggist, Henry was caught stealing some things from a department store. He was arrested; but his father paid the fine, so he was allowed to go free.

But his dishonest habits soon got him into trouble again. He broke into a house while the family was away, and stole some money. He was sent to a reformatory for boys; and he had to stay there a long time. After that, he never could keep a job long; for he was so dishonest that no one could depend on him.

Joe did not get into so much trouble in his boyhood; but after he became a man he forged a check, and was sent to the penitentiary.

How much better it would have been, said Joyce thoughtfully, if Henry and Joe had only listened to the bee in the first place.

Yes indeed; said Grandma, I have often thought of that; for I am sure the bee talked to them, as well as to Charles.

Maybe, said little Don softly, they didn't have a Grandma to tell them how to be good.

Maybe not, said Grandpa, smiling as he rose to take the little fellow in to bed.

Didn't they ever change into good men? asked Joyce.

I'm afraid not, answered Grandma. That's the saddest part of the whole story. They felt the sting of the bee as long as they lived.

Bee Truthful

[Illustration]

Every day Joyce and Don went out to meet the mailman; and how glad they were this morning when he brought them a letter from Mother! Mother and Daddy were having a good time at the lake; and there was a picture of Daddy smiling at them, as he held up a day's catch of fish.

What a string of fish! exclaimed Grandpa, when they showed it to him. And what fine big ones they are!

I wish, said Don, that we could go fishing, Grandpa.

Grandpa whispered something in his ear; and the little fellow began to dance about and clap his hands.

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What is it? asked Joyce excitedly.

Only that we're going fishing tomorrow, said Grandpa. We'll start out bright and early in the morning, take our lunch, and spend the day at the river.

Joyce and Grandma were busy all morning about the house; and in the afternoon they baked cookies, and got the lunch as nearly ready as they could for the trip. Grandpa and Don went out to the garden to dig bait.

They soon had a can full of worms; and then Don found a larger can, and filled that, too. When Grandpa said they had enough, Don covered the worms with loose dirt and set the cans out in the shed. Then they got out the fishing tackle.

Late in the afternoon, Grandma called the children and asked them to catch a chicken for her, so she could get it ready for their picnic lunch.

The children asked if they might pick off the feathers. They had watched Grandma do it so many times, they thought it would be an easy job. But when they tried it, they found it was not so easy after all. They turned the chicken round and round, picking first in one place and then in another. It took them a long time to get all the feathers off.

Then Grandma cut up the chicken and put it in a crock, and took it to the spring house to keep it cool. I will fry it in the morning, she said.

How quickly the day passed by! It was already time to do the evening chores. Grandma was trying to teach the brown and white calf to drink milk from a pail. Grandpa was busy in the barn, so she called the children to come and help her.

The calf was kept in a lot near the orchard. I want you to drive him to the corner of the fence for me, said Grandma. Then I will try to coax him to drink the milk.

But the little creature was not so easy to manage. As soon as they had driven him into the corner, he would back away; and off he would go again, across the lot.

After this had happened several times, Don said, Just wait, Grandma; when we get him into the corner again, I will hold him there.

So the next time, he grabbed the calf about the neck and jumped on his back. Instantly the calf turned and galloped across the lot. When he reached the farther side, he turned again, and Don rolled off on the soft grass.

Just then, Grandpa came to the rescue. He drove the calf to the corner and held him there, while Grandma coaxed him to drink from the pail.

We must go to bed early tonight, said Grandpa as they started for the house. We want to reach the river by the time the sun comes up.

But you'll tell us a story first, won't you, Grandma? asked Don.

Yes, said Grandma, as she sank into her comfortable old rocking chair in the kitchen.

About another bee? asked Joyce. Which one?

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Bee Truthful, answered Grandma. Boys and girls who will not listen to him often come to grief as the boy did that I shall tell you about.

Little Milton lived on a farm. His father had a number of mules, which he used in plowing his fields. Two of the young mules were very ill-tempered. Milton's father was very careful to keep the little pigs and calves out of their way, for fear the mules would paw them to death.

When Milton was almost nine, a little baby brother came into his home. His name was Marion. Milton loved the baby dearly, and never grew tired of playing with him.

Their father built a fence around the yard. They were careful to keep the gates of the fence closed, so little Marion could not wander away; especially after the two ill-tempered mules were put out to pasture in the lot just back of the house.

Late one afternoon, Milton was helping his father in the back lot. Daddy had to go and do something else, so he left the boy to finish the job.

'As soon as you have finished,' said Daddy, 'you may go to the house. But be sure to latch the back yard gate.'

Daddy did not get home until after dark. 'Milton,' he said, 'did you latch the gate when you came in this afternoon?'

Milton knew he had forgotten, but he thought to himself, 'If I tell the truth, I shall have to go out and latch the gate now; and I am afraid of the dark.'

Aloud, he said, 'Yes, Daddy, I did.'

'Are you sure?' asked Daddy.

'Yes,' said Milton again.

The little boy suddenly heard a bee buzzing in his ears 'Tell the truth, Milton; tell the truth!' But he said to himself, 'It won't matter if the gate stands open all night; I will latch it the first thing in the morning.' And so he soon forgot all about it.

The next morning, right after breakfast, Milton's mother sent him on an errand. Marion was still asleep.

'Where's Marion?' asked Milton when he came back.

'He woke a little while ago,' said Mother. 'After I gave him his breakfast, I let him go out in the yard to play it's such a bright morning.'

Instantly Milton thought of the gate; and he went to look for Marion.

A moment later he heard his father cry out in alarm; and looking toward the pasture where the two young mules were kept, he saw little Marion just inside the fence.

Daddy ran toward the baby as fast as he could; but he was just too late. One of the mules kicked Marion, and he fell over in a little heap. The mule, seeing Daddy coming, ran toward the other end of the pasture.

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Daddy picked up the limp little body and carried it to the house. The baby lay so still that at first they thought he was dead.

Milton was terribly frightened, and he cried almost all day; for he knew this dreadful thing had happened because he did not latch the back yard gate and because he had told Daddy a lie about it.

Poor little Marion was taken to the hospital. His spine had been injured, and it was many, many months before he could sit up. And never again was he able to run about like other children.

It was a long time before Mother and Daddy found out how the baby came to be in the pasture with the mules. But one day, after little Marion had been brought home, Milton told Daddy the whole, sad story.

'I'm very sorry,' said Daddy kindly, when he had finished. 'I wish you had told me the truth. I wouldn't have sent you out alone in the dark, son. I would have gone out and latched the gate myself.'

It was almost more than Milton could bear, to have his father talk to him so sadly and yet so kindly. The sting of the bee went deeper and deeper, as he watched his pale-faced little brother day after day. Always after that, he was careful to listen to the buzzing of little Bee Truthful.

Two very sober children said good-night to Grandma just as the clock struck half-past eight.

Bee Kind

[Illustration]

Don, said Grandma, shaking the little sleeper, it's time to wake up!

Don turned over, rubbed his eyes, and with a deep sigh settled back to sleep.

Here, here! cried Grandma, shaking him again. Do you want us to leave you at home all alone? We're going fishing today!

Instantly Don was wide awake. He bounced out of bed and began to dress as quickly as he could. In five minutes he was in the kitchen; but Joyce was there ahead of him, helping Grandma to pack the lunch basket.

Don was so excited that Grandma could coax him to eat only a few bites of breakfast. He was the first one in the car, ready to start for the river.

The sun was just peeping over the hills, when they drove into a pretty, shady nook on the bank of the river. This is always a good place to fish, said Grandpa. They stopped under a tree whose great, spreading branches leaned far out over the water; and soon they were untying the fishing poles and baiting their hooks.

I'll give a nickel to the one who catches the first fish, said Grandpa.

Suddenly Don's cork began to bob up and down in the water. Joyce felt a strong pull on her line, too. Almost at the same instant each of them lifted a fish from the water. Grandpa took the little perch from Don's hook, and a catfish from Joyce's; and with his big, hearty laugh he gave them each a nickel.

The hours passed so quickly that before the children knew it, it was time for lunch. But when Grandma spread out the chicken and sandwiches and cookies and lemonade in the shade of the big tree, they found that they were as

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hungry as bears.

After lunch, Grandma lay down in the shade and tried to take a nap, while the others went back to their fishing. But the fish did not bite so well as they had done in the morning.

They had already caught a great many fish, so they decided to go home early. Grandpa had been stringing the fish one by one, as they had caught them; and he had let the line hang down in the water. Now, when he lifted it out, the children were delighted to see how many fish they had caught.

That is a longer string of fish than Daddy has in the picture! cried Don.

We cannot use so many fish ourselves, said Grandpa. We shall have to share with the neighbors.

When they reached home, Don helped Grandpa to clean the fish. Grandpa skinned the catfish, and Don scraped the scales from the perch. When they had finished, Don had fish scales all over him even in his hair.

But this trouble was all forgotten at supper time, when Grandma set a large platter of fish on the table. Grandpa said it tasted better than the fried chicken.

In the evening, the children came to Grandma for their usual story. They sat down on the porch, with the soft summer dusk gathering about them.

I shall tell you a story tonight, began Grandma, about a bee that every child should listen to and obey. Its name is Bee Kind.

James and Richard lived near each other, and they were playmates. One day they were flying their kites in a vacant lot, when they saw a dirty little puppy. Richard began to stamp his feet and try to scare it; but as he could not chase it away, he threw stones at the poor little thing.

A stone struck the puppy on his head, and hurt him very badly; for he began to turn round and round, whining and howling pitifully. Richard laughed, as if he thought it a great joke.

'Shame on you!' cried James, 'for treating a poor little puppy like that!'

'You're a sissy,' said Richard, 'or you wouldn't care.'

'You may call me what you please,' said James, 'but I shall never hurt a poor little dog that can't help himself. Maybe he's lost.'

With that, he lifted the little creature in his arms and carried him home. The puppy's head was bleeding where Richard had struck him with the stone. James washed the blood away and gave the little dog something to eat, talking to him kindly and petting him all the while.

When his father came home that evening, he told James that the puppy showed marks of being a very good dog; and that if the owner never came, he might keep him for his own.

James was delighted. He named the dog Rex, and at once began to teach him to do all sorts of tricks. Rex learned to walk on his hind feet, sit up straight and beg for something to eat, play 'dead dog,' roll over, chase his tail, and run through a hoop.

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In a few months, Rex had grown to be quite a large dog. By this time, James had taught him how to swim; and when the boy would throw a stick into the water and say, 'Go get it, Rex,' the dog would bring it back in his mouth.

All the boys in the neighborhood liked Rex; and he liked them all except Richard. Whenever he came around, the dog would growl and show his teeth.

Two years later, one warm Saturday afternoon in April, James called Rex and started for the pond. Oftentimes fishing parties visited this pond, so a number of small boats were tied among the willows fringing the shore. On this particular afternoon, Richard and his little brother Harry had also gone to the pond; and Richard untied one of the boats to take a ride. Of course he had no right to use a boat that did not belong to him; but he thought that no one would ever know.

Just as James came around a clump of willows, he saw the little boat tip over; and Richard and Harry fell in, at the deepest place in the pond. James knew they could not swim; so he began to call for help as loudly as he could. Rex ran back and forth whining, looking first at James, then at the boys in the water. Suddenly a happy thought struck James. Pointing to the two boys, he said, 'Go get them, Rex!' Immediately the dog jumped into the water and began to swim toward the boys. He soon had Harry's collar between his teeth, and was swimming back to shore.

James helped Harry to his feet; and then, pointing to Richard, he said, 'Go get the other one!'

Richard had gone down the second time when Rex reached him; but as he came up to the surface of the water, the dog caught him and began to swim back. It was a hard task, as Richard was heavier than Harry; but at last Rex brought him safely to shore.

All this time James had been calling for help; and now several men came running toward the pond. They began working with Richard, and after some time he came back to consciousness.

'Who got me out of the water?' he asked, as soon as he could speak.

'Rex,' answered James.

Tears rolled down Richard's face as he said brokenly, 'Just think! I almost killed him when he was a little puppy! I know one thing I'll never do such a thing again.'

Everybody petted and praised Rex for what he had done. Richard's father bought a beautiful new collar for him. But although the dog had saved Richard's life, he never would have anything to do with him afterward. He could not forget how cruelly the boy had treated him in his puppyhood.

Daddy promised to get a puppy for me soon, said Don. I shall name him Rex, after the good dog in the story.

And I'm quite sure, said Grandma, that you'll always be as kind to him as James was to Rex. But I know a little man that will be asleep in about five minutes. Hustle him off to bed, Grandpa, or you'll have to carry him upstairs.

Don said a sleepy good-night; and sure enough, five minutes later he was fast a-sleep.

Bee Polite

[Illustration]

When the children came down to the kitchen in the morning, they found that Grandpa had eaten his breakfast, and had gone out to build a pig-pen behind the barn. Don hurried out to help him; and Joyce went to the spring house to do the churning for Grandma.

The little girl plunged the dasher into the thick cream, lifted it, and plunged it again, until her arms ached. At last the dasher began to look clean, and tiny particles of golden butter clung to it and she knew that the butter had come. Then she took the butter paddle and the bowl and cooled them in the spring, just as she had seen Grandma do. She lifted the butter from the churn with the paddle and began to work it to get the milk out. She had watched Grandma do this many times, and it had looked very easy; but she found it quite another thing, when she came to doing it herself.

After she had worked for some time, she had a solid roll of butter. She salted it, and worked it some more; and then she called Grandma to come and see it.

I could not have made better butter myself! said Grandma. So Joyce had something new to write about, in her next letter to Mother.

After dinner the children went to the orchard to play. They found an ant hill; and it was very interesting to watch the ants as they worked.

One ant was carrying a bread crumb several times larger than herself, and the children were watching eagerly. The old turkey gobbler came strutting toward them; but they did not notice. Joyce was bending over, watching the industrious little ant, when suddenly the gobbler perched upon her back and began to beat her with his wings.

Grandma! screamed Joyce.

It was a comical sight that Grandma saw when she came to the door. There was Joyce, running toward the house, with the gobbler after her, and Don coming behind.

The gobbler was right at Joyce's heels, when suddenly the little girl dodged behind a tree and began to go round and round it, keeping the tree between her and the gobbler. At last Don found a stick and chased him away.

When Grandma had comforted Joyce, she explained that it was the little girl's red dress that the gobbler didn't like. Joyce declared that she would never wear that dress again while she was on the farm. She never did; and so the gobbler did not bother her any more.

At bedtime, the children were ready for their usual story. They clambered up on to the arms of the old rocker on the porch, while Grandpa sat down on the step.

What do we hear about tonight? asked Grandpa. I believe I like to hear the stories as well as Don does.

All boys are just alike big and little, said Grandma with a smile. My story this time is about Bee Polite.

Oh, said Don, I know a little verse about politeness. I learned it at school:

'Politeness is to do and say

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'The kindest thing in the kindest way.'

Then politeness means kindness, doesn't it, Grandma? asked Joyce.

Yes and more than that, replied Grandma. A polite person is never rude. The story is about two children who were stung by Bee Polite just once but they never forgot it.

Daisy and Dan were twins. When they were babies, their mother took them from their home in the East to live in a far Western state. They could not remember their grandmother, who still lived back in the old home town. All they knew about her was what their mother had told them; and she often wrote long letters, and sent them lovely presents.

One day they received a letter from Grandma, saying that she was coming to spend a few weeks with them. They could hardly wait for Thursday to come when she was to arrive at the station.

The train was due at six o'clock in the evening, and Mother promised the twins that they might go to meet Grandma. After school she sent them to the store to buy some things for supper, and she gave them ten cents to buy candy.

Now there were some children living in the neighborhood who were very rude. For this reason the twins were never allowed to play with them. But today, on their way to the store, they met these children, and all went on together.

They crossed a vacant lot, where there was a pile of crushed rock. Near the rock pile, they met an elderly woman carrying a small satchel. She spoke kindly to them; but one of the boys answered her very rudely, and then stuck out his tongue at her. The lady turned to him and said, 'My boy, you need someone to teach you how to be a gentleman.'

'Oh, do I?' said the boy roughly. And picking up a stone from the rock pile, he threw it at her. Another lad did the same, and still another.

Now the twins had been taught to be polite especially to old people. Just now little Bee Polite began to buzz about them. But when children are in bad company, it is always hard for them to hear the small voice of conscience. For a moment they stood and watched the boys throw rocks at the old lady; and then they began to throw them too.

No matter how hard she tried, Daisy could not throw a stone straight. But Dan had a better aim, and he threw a rock which struck the old lady's hand.

When the twins reached the store, there were several customers ahead of them; so they had to wait their turn. It was nearing supper time when they came out of the store with their bundles. The rude boys had waited outside for them all that time; and the twins gave them some of their candy.

When Daisy and Dan reached home, they were much surprised to find a visitor there. It was the old lady whom they had treated so unkindly. Mother was crying, as she bathed the hand that had been hurt by Dan's rock.

'Children,' she said, 'this is your dear grandmother who has come to see you. She came on an earlier train than she expected; and she inquired the way, and walked out from the station alone. Some rude children treated her very unkindly on the way. You will have to very good to her, to make up for it.'

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'Well, well,' said Grandma kindly, 'is this Daisy and Dan? I should never have taken them to be my grandchildren.'

The twins expected her to add, 'So *you* are the naughty children who threw stones at me.' But she did not say it; and Daisy and Dan hurried out of the room as quickly as they could.

So the good times the children had expected to have with their grandma were spoiled in the very beginning. After that, whenever they went into the room where she was, they felt very uncomfortable.

'I don't understand why the twins act so strangely,' said Mother one day, as she and Grandma sat mending together. 'I am really ashamed of them. They had planned to do so many things to make you happy during your visit. But they seem to keep away from you all they can.'

Daisy, who was passing outside just under the window, heard every word distinctly. Her heart pounded like a hammer, and she held her breath, to hear what Grandma would say.

Grandma went on mending, without saying a word. 'Dear Grandma! She won't tell on us for throwing stones at her,' said Daisy to herself. 'Then I'll tell, that's what I'll do!' she added with a sob.

An instant later, Mother was surprised to see the little girl dash into the room with tears running down her cheeks. She threw herself down by the chair and laid her head in her mother's lap. She was crying so hard that for a moment she could not speak.

'There, there, little girl,' said Mother, 'what has happened? Tell Mother all about it.'

Then Daisy told the whole story. When she had finished, she threw her arms around Grandma.

'I'm so sorry, dear Grandma!' she cried.

Just then Grandma looked up and saw Dan standing there. He had come in so softly that no one had noticed.

Grandma held out her hands to him; and he burst into tears. 'It was my fault, lots more than Daisy's,' he sobbed. 'I threw a stone before she did; and besides, it was my stone that hit your hand.'

Grandma talked to the twins for a long time, then, in her own quiet way. She told them that children who were in bad company were almost sure to do wrong themselves; and that polite boys and girls usually grew up to be the best men and women.

'I know that such a thing will never happen again,' she said, kissing them both; 'so now it is all forgiven and forgotten.'

But the twins could not forget. Two or three weeks later, Grandma went home. She still wrote letters and sent presents, just as if nothing had ever happened. But for many years long after Daisy and Dan had grown up every time they thought of their dear grandmother, they felt the sting of their rudeness and cruelty to her.

Joyce winked the tears out of her eyes, as she threw her arms around her grandma's neck. 'I could never treat you like that, dear Grandma!' she cried.

Neither could I, said Dan soberly, kissing her good-night.

Bee Gentle

[Illustration]

In the morning, another letter came from Mother. Daddy and I are getting lonesome for you, she wrote.

We're having a better time than Mother and Daddy are, laughed Don. If they had come with us to Grandpa's, they would not have been so lonesome, would they, Joyce?

I should say not! answered Joyce. The days go by too fast for that; and besides, something is always happening. If it's nothing else, the old turkey gobbler chases me around the tree. Don and Grandma laughed heartily and Joyce joined in.

Grandma had promised to make some cookies this morning; so with Joyce on one side of her and Don on the other, she mixed up the dough and rolled it out on the large board. Then she got some cutters from the pantry, and cut out the cookies in all sorts of shapes. There were different kinds of animals: a bird for Joyce, and a queer little man for Don. His eyes, nose, and mouth were made out of raisins; also the buttons on his vest. Then she put the cookies in the oven to bake.

When they were done and Grandma took them out, Joyce's bird stuck to the pan and its tail came off. And Don's man had grown so fat that he had burst one of the buttons off his vest.

A long time ago, when the children's mother had been Grandma's little girl, she had lived on this very farm. In those far-off days she had planted a lilac bush and a cluster of prickly pear. Grandpa did not like the prickly pear, but he had let it grow all these years because his little girl had planted it.

Isn't the grass nice and soft here? said Don. It feels just like a velvet carpet. Watch me turn somersaults on it.

With that, he began to turn somersaults, going in the direction of the prickly pear. Joyce called to him to be careful, but it was too late; he came down right in the middle of the cactus plant. The long thorns pierced him like sharp needles; and although he tried to be brave, he could not keep back the tears.

There was nothing to do but pull out the thorns one by one, and it took Grandma quite a while to do that. And although Don turned many somersaults afterward, he was always careful to keep away from the prickly pear.

When story time came, Grandma, gently rocking back and forth, began: I shall tell you tonight about a bee that it is very necessary to have in the home; and it is also much needed by those who have anything to do with animals. Its name is Bee Gentle. Have you ever noticed how gentle Grandpa is with all his animals?

Yes, I have noticed it, said Joyce. And the horses love him for it, too. Whenever he goes to the pasture, they trot up to him and begin to nose about his pockets.

He usually carries something in his pockets to give them, said Grandma. He has raised all his horses from little colts; and he has always treated them kindly. Some men think they must treat animals roughly, to make them obey; but that is not so.

Jake and Jenny were a brother and sister who loved each other dearly, but they were quite different in disposition. All the animals about the place were afraid of Jake, for he treated them roughly, and sometimes beat them. But they loved Jenny because she was gentle with them. The dog would follow her about, and the cat would

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curl up on her lap and purr itself to sleep. When she went to the pasture, the horses would trot up to her and rub their noses on her shoulder. She often gave them lumps of sugar, or other dainties that horses like. No matter how wild or shy they were with others, Jenny could always catch them easily.

Of all the horses in her father's pasture, Jenny loved best a beautiful swift-footed mare called Fanny. Sometimes she would ride about the country on Fanny's back. But as gentle as the mare was with Jenny, she was afraid of Jake and would not let him catch her in the pasture.

'It would be much better,' Jenny would often say to her brother, 'if you would not treat the animals so roughly. See how easily I can handle Fanny just because I am always gentle with her.'

'Oh,' Jake would answer with a laugh, 'that is all right for a woman, Jenny; but a man, you know, must show his authority.'

Very early one morning, Jake's father came into his room. 'Jake,' he said, shaking the boy, 'wake up, son! Mother was taken very ill in the night. Catch Fanny and go for the doctor as quickly as you can.'

The hired man was sleeping in the next room, and he heard what Jake's father said. He also got up and dressed, and hurried out to the pasture to help Jake catch the mare.

The two were gone quite a while. At last they came back to the house, and Jake said, 'I can't catch Fanny, Father. She has jumped the ditch a dozen times. What shall I do?'

'Try again,' said his father. 'I can't leave Mother long enough to go to the pasture; and she must have help soon.'

Just then Jenny came in. 'I will catch Fanny for you, Father,' she said, and hurried out to the pasture.

'Fanny, O Fanny!' she called; and the beautiful creature turned her head and trotted toward her. But an instant later, to Jenny's surprise, she galloped away across the field. Glancing behind her, Jenny saw Jake and the hired man coming up the lane.

'She sees you coming,' called Jenny; 'that's why she won't let me catch her. Go back to the house and wait; I'll bring her to you.'

Jake and the man went back; and Jenny went further into the pasture, calling, 'Fanny, O Fanny!' Instantly the mare turned and trotted toward her. She came close; and when Jenny gave her a lump of sugar, she rubbed her nose against the little girl's shoulder.

Quickly she put the bridle on the mare, and led her through the lane to the barn. Then she harnessed her and hitched her to the buggy, and called to Jake. The boy hurried out, looking rather pale and worried; and as he stepped into the buggy Jenny stroked the mare's neck, saying gently, 'Now go along, dear Fanny, and do your best for Mother.'

Fanny rubbed her nose against Jenny's shoulder again, as if to say, 'I will, little mistress; you may depend on me.' Then as Jake lifted the reins, she trotted down the road at a rapid gait.

Jake found the doctor just sitting down to breakfast. When he heard the boy's story, he did not stop to eat. He rode right back with Jake, and in a short time he was at the mother's bedside. She was indeed very ill. 'If I had been a little later,' said the doctor in a low tone, 'I could have done nothing for her at all.'

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When Jake heard that, he went into the kitchen, sank down on a chair, and leaning his head on the table, he sobbed like a child. Jenny found him there a little later.

She stood there beside him, gently stroking his hair. 'Jake,' she said at last, very softly, 'don't cry any more, because God was very kind to us and didn't let it happen. But just think what might have been, if I hadn't been able to catch Fanny this morning. Don't you think it would pay to always be kind to the animals?'

Jake nodded; he could not trust himself to speak.

The sting of little Bee Gentle went very deep. Never again was Jake cruel to animals. He tried hard to make friends with Fanny; but she would have nothing to do with him. She remembered how roughly he had treated her in the past; and being only a horse, she did not understand that he never would do so again.

How glad Jenny must have been, said Joyce, that she had treated Fanny kindly! Because Fanny brought the doctor, the doctor saved her mother's life.

And besides, added Grandma softly, people are always glad when they know they have done right.

Bee Helpful

[Illustration]

What are you going to do with that rope? asked Don, as Grandpa came from the shed with a coil of rope on his arm.

Come with me, and you will find out, answered Grandpa. And you may call Joyce, too, if you wish.

Don ran to the house to get Joyce, and soon the two came back together. They followed Grandpa down the lane toward the pasture where he kept his pigs. The children kept asking him what he intended to do, but he would only answer, Wait and see.

Grandpa had a good many grown hogs, and ten little pigs. He opened the pasture gate and called to them, and they all came out into the lane, grunting and squealing. Then he coaxed them toward the pig-pen that he had been building. He closed the gate, and turning to the children said, Now if you watch me, you will see what I intend to do with the rope.

When the children were both safe on the other side of the fence, Grandpa climbed into the pig-pen and coiled the rope a number of times in his hands. Then he cast it from him, and it fell over one of the little pigs. He drew it in, and the pig was caught. Then he lifted him and placed him in the pen. How the little fellow squealed, and how hard the old hogs tried to get to him! Some of the larger ones started toward the fence where Don and Joyce were perched on posts. Grandpa laughed to see how quickly the children scrambled down.

Now, said Grandpa, you see why I wanted the fence between you and those hogs, don't you? If they could get to you, they might tear you in pieces; for they want to take care of the little pigs.

Grandpa coiled the rope again, caught another of the little pigs, and then another and another, until all ten of them were in in the pen. Then he opened the gate and turned the others back into the pasture.

Grandpa had caught the pigs so easily only once or twice had he had to try a second time. I don't see how you could catch them when they were running away from you, said Don. I couldn't catch them if they were

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standing still.

Perhaps not, said Grandpa. But I can catch you if you try to get away from me. Just try it.

At that, Don began to run as fast as he could; but he had not gone far when he felt the rope slip over his shoulders, and he was lifted off his feet.

What fun! shouted Joyce. Now try it on me.

Grandpa spent quite a while catching first one and then the other. Joyce was the hardest to catch, for after a few times she learned how to dodge the rope.

Why did you put those little pigs in the pen? asked Don, following close at his heels.

They are getting in the cornfield, answered Grandpa, and eating too much of my corn.

But can't you keep them out? asked Don.

No, said Grandpa; for when I mend one place in the fence, the little pigs are sure to find another place big enough to squeeze through. So the only way I can keep them out is to pen them up. Don, you may carry water for the little pigs and they will need plenty, too, because it is so warm.

That pleased Don, and he began at once to fill the trough which Grandpa had placed in the pen.

That evening, Grandpa and Grandma and the children sat on the porch, listening to the chirp of the katydids and the call of the whippoorwills.

Grandma, said Don, what kind of bee will you tell us about tonight?

Bee Sleepy, and go to bed, said Grandpa, with a wink at Grandma.

The children laughed. No, said Don, I don't want to hear about that bee not yet.

All right, said Grandma, we'll have our story first; but we must begin right away, because it is almost bedtime. The bee I am thinking about tonight comes often to us all especially to little children.

Once there was a boy named Alfred who was the only child in his home. He was very selfish; and often he was determined to have his own way. But he had his good points, too.

Alfred lived in the country; and during the Christmas holidays, he visited a friend of his who lived in the city. Then his friend in turn visited him during the summer vacation.

As soon as his company came, Alfred thought it was quite too much for his mother to ask him to help her. He forgot how very ill she had been, and how frail she still was. Indeed, it was hard for him to think of anything but having a good time with his friend.

The two boys had planned to spend a certain day at the creek, fishing. Of course they were eager to start as early as they could that morning. After they had gathered together everything that they needed for their trip, they went out to the kitchen and found Alfred's mother packing a lunch for them.

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'Alfred,' she said, 'I wish you would help me a little with the work before you go. I am afraid that I shall not be able to do it all alone. Would you mind stopping long enough to wash the dishes and clean up the kitchen for me?'

Alfred began to pout, but his mother continued, 'I really wish you were not going fishing today. Your father will be away all day; and I would rather not be left alone, for I do not feel as well as usual. But I will not keep you, if you will wash the dishes before you go.'

'Now, Mother,' said Alfred angrily, 'why do you ask me to do that, when you know I want to get started early? If I have to wait half the day, I don't care to go at all.'

Just then the bee began to buzz about Alfred's ears. 'Help your mother! Help your mother!' it said. But Alfred did not pay any attention. 'Let the dishes go,' he cried. 'I don't care whether they are ever washed or not.' And picking up the lunch which his mother had packed so nicely for him, he started toward the creek. He did not even look back to say 'good by.'

The boys found fishing very good that day. They caught a fine string of trout, ate their lunch, and in the middle of the afternoon were ready to start for home. Alfred was much pleased with their catch, and on the way home he said over and over, 'Won't Mother be glad we went fishing today, when she sees our string of trout? She is so fond of trout.' But even while he was saying it, he could not forget the tired look on his mother's face, or the hurt look in her eyes when he had refused to wash the dishes for her.

When the boys reached the house, it seemed strangely quiet. They found the dishes cleared away, and the kitchen neatly swept. Alfred's mother was lying on the couch, and she seemed to be resting very comfortably.

'See, Mother,' said Alfred, 'isn't this a nice string of trout?'

But Mother did not answer. Alfred spoke to her again. Still no answer. He touched her hand then, and found it icy-cold.

Then the awful truth dawned upon him his mother was dead! She had died while he was fishing; but she had done the work that she had asked her boy to do.

All his life, poor Alfred felt the sting of the bee that had buzzed about him on that summer morning. What hurt him most deeply was that he would never again have a chance to help his frail little mother who had done so much for him.

I'm so glad, said Joyce, that I still have my mother, and that I can do things for her when she is tired.

It's a sad story, Grandma, said little Don, but I'm glad you told it to us. I'm going to remember it always.

Bee Grateful

[Illustration]

Another morning came to the farm another day for the children to roam about the fields and enjoy themselves in God's big, free out-of-doors. How much more pleasant than having to play in their own yard in the city, these hot summer days!

In that long-ago time when the children's mother had lived on the farm, Grandpa had given her a pony of her own to ride to school in the village. Old Ned was still on the place. Grandpa was always ready to saddle and bridle

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him, whenever the children wished to go for a ride.

Today, as the children wandered to the back of the orchard, wishing for something to do, Ned stood on the other side of the fence and neighed at them. That gave Don an idea.

O Joyce! he cried, let's ride Ned around in the pasture.

Without a saddle? exclaimed Joyce.

Of course, answered Don in his most grown up tone. Why not?

All right, said Joyce a little doubtfully.

They went out through the barn lot, leaving the gate open behind them. Then, letting down the bars, they soon found themselves in the pasture.

Joyce led old Ned to the fence, holding to his mane. She climbed up on the fence, and then onto the horse's back. Don quickly climbed on behind her.

In his younger days, Ned had been taught a number of tricks, which he still remembered. He would shake hands, and nod his head, and ride up the steps. And when a rider was on his back, if he gripped his knees in Ned's sides, the old horse would gallop away as fast as he could.

Always, before this, the children had ridden with a saddle; and so they had never had to hold fast with their knees. But today Joyce knew she would have to hold on tightly, so she pressed her knees hard against old Ned's sides. Instantly he started to gallop across the pasture. He went up the lane, through the open gate into the barn lot, and on to the watering trough. Joyce still held to his mane with all her might, gripping him tightly with her knees. Don bounced up and down behind her, with his arms about her waist.

When Ned reached the watering trough, he stopped. Suddenly he lowered his head, and both children slipped off into the trough. It was about half-full of water, and Joyce fell in face downward. Such sputtering, puffing, and blowing, as they scrambled out of the trough! And there stood old Ned, looking at them as if to say, How did you like your bath?

Grandpa came hurrying up to see if they were hurt. He told them that old Ned was only doing as he had been taught when he was a colt; and that they could not expect him to do otherwise, if they rode him like that.

That evening, as twilight settled down, Grandpa and Grandma and the children sat on the porch and listened to the lonely call of a whippoorwill from the neighboring woods.

I see the Big Bear, said Don and the Little Bear, too.

What is the Milky Way, Grandma? asked Joyce.

When men look through telescopes they find millions of stars so close together and so far away that not one star can be seen by the naked eye. The Indians used to say it was the path which all Indians must travel after they died, to reach the Happy Hunting Grounds.

See how bright the stars are in the Dipper! exclaimed Don.

When I was just a little girl, said Grandma, I learned a rhyme about the Milky Way:

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The Man in the Moon that sails through the sky
Is known as a gay old skipper.
But he made a mistake,
When he tried to take
A drink of milk from the dipper.

He dipped it into the Milky Way,
And was just prepared to drink it,
When the Big Bear growled,
And the Little Bear growled,
And it scared him so that he spilled it.

The children liked the queer little rhyme, and said it over until they knew it by heart.

At last Grandpa said, I guess it's about time to turn in for tonight.

Oh, no, said Don not till Grandma tells us our story.

All right, said Grandma; I shall tell you this time about a little bee called Bee Grateful. It has a very sharp sting, as you will see.

Far away, under sunny Italian skies, there is an old, old town by the name of Atri. It is built on the side of a steep hill.

A very long time ago, the king of Atri bought a great golden-toned bell and hung it in the tower at the market-place. Fastened to the bell, there was a long rope that reached almost to the ground.

'We shall call it the bell of justice,' said the king.

He proclaimed a great holiday in Atri, and invited everyone to come to the marketplace and see the bell. It shone like gold in the bright sunlight. When the king came riding down the street, the people whispered to one another, 'Perhaps he will ring the bell.'

But he did not. Instead, he stopped at the foot of the tower and raised his hand. All the whispering and talking stopped; for the people knew that the king was about to speak.

'My good people,' he said, 'this bell belongs to you. No one must ever pull the rope unless he is in trouble. But if any one of you man, woman, or child is ever treated unjustly, you may come to the marketplace and ring the bell. The judges will come together and listen to your story; and the one who has done wrong will be punished, whoever he may be. That is why this is called the bell of justice.'

Year after year passed by, and the great bell still hung in the tower. Many people who were in trouble had rung the bell; and in every case, the judges had been perfectly fair, and had punished the one who had done wrong.

The rope had hung there so long in the sun and rain, and had been pulled by so many hands, that it was almost worn out. Some of the strands were untwisted; and it had grown shorter and shorter, until only the tallest man or woman could reach it.

'We must have a new rope,' said the judges at last. 'If a little child should be wronged, he could not reach high enough to ring the bell. That would never do.'

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At once the people of Atri set about to look for a new rope; but there was none to be found in all the town of Atri. They would have to send someone to a country across the mountains to get the rope. But that would take quite a while; and what should they do, while they were waiting?

One man thought of a plan. He ran to his vineyard and came back with a grapevine. Then he tied the vine to the rope.

'There!' he said, 'the smallest child will be able to reach it now, and ring the bell'; for the vine, with its leaves and little tendrils, trailed on the ground.

The judges were pleased. 'Yes,' they said, 'that will do very well, until we can get a new rope from the country beyond the mountains.'

Near the village of Atri, higher up on the hillside, there lived an old soldier. When he was a young man, he had traveled in far-distant countries, and had fought in many wars. And he was so brave that his king had made him a knight.

He had had one true and faithful friend all through those hard and dangerous years. It was his horse. Many a time the brave steed had saved his master's life.

But now that the knight was an old man, he no longer wished to do brave deeds. He cared now for only one thing: gold, *gold*, GOLD. He was a miser.

One day, as he passed his barn, he looked in and saw his faithful horse standing in his stall. The poor creature looked almost starved.

'Why should I keep that lazy beast any longer?' said the miser to himself. 'His food costs more money than he is worth. I know what I will do. I will turn him out on the hillside, and let him find his own food. If he starves to death why, he will be out of the way!'

So the brave old horse was turned out to graze as best he could on the rocky hillside. He was sick and lame, and he grew thinner every day; for all he could find was a tiny patch of grass or a thistle now and then. The village dogs barked at him and bit at his heels; and naughty boys threw stones at him.

One hot afternoon, the old horse limped into the market-place of Atri. No one was about the streets; for the people were trying to keep as cool as they could in the shelter of their homes. As the horse went picking about trying to find a few blades of grass, suddenly he discovered the long grapevine trailing on the ground at the foot of the tower. The leaves were still green and tender, for it had been placed there only a short time before.

The horse did not know that the bell would ring if he pulled the vine. He only knew that here was a juicy bit of dinner for him, and he was hungry.

He nibbled at the end of the vine; and suddenly, far up in the belfry, the huge bell began to swing back and forth. From its great throat, golden music floated down over the town of Atri. It seemed to be saying:

'Some one has done me wrong! Ding dong ding dong!'

The judges put on their robes, and hurried out of their cool homes into the hot streets of the village. Who was in trouble, they wondered?

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When they reached the market–place, no one was there; but they saw the starving old horse, nibbling at the tender grapevine.

'Ho, ho!' cried one, 'it is the miser's brave old steed. He rings the bell to plead for justice.'

'And justice he shall have!' cried another.

'See how thin he is,' said a lad with a kind heart.

By this time, many people had gathered in the market–place. When they saw the old horse, a murmur of astonishment swept through the crowd.

'The miser's steed!' cried one to another. 'He has waited long; but he shall have justice today.'

'I have seen the old horse wandering on the hillside day after day, in search of food,' said an old man.

'And while the noble steed has no shelter,' said his neighbor, 'his master sits at home, counting his gold.'

'Bring his master to us!' cried the judges sternly.

And so they brought him. In silence he waited to hear what the judges would say.

'This brave steed of yours,' they said, 'has served you faithfully for many a long year. He has saved your life in times of danger. He has helped you to hoard your bags of gold. Therefore, hear your sentence, O Miser! Half of your gold shall be taken from you, and used to buy food and shelter for your faithful horse.'

The miser hung his head. It made him sad to lose his gold; but the people laughed and shouted, as the old horse was led away to a comfortable stall and a dinner fit for the steed of a king.

Hooray! cried Don. Good for the brave old horse! Grandpa, I'm so glad you aren't a miser! He was thinking of old Ned, with his sleek, shining black coat.

Bedtime! announced Grandma, as she led the way into the house. Good–night, children and happy dreams to you!

Bee Loving

[Illustration]

When the children ran down to meet the mailman in the morning, he handed them another letter from Mother. She and Daddy were going home next Friday, she said; and they must be there Saturday, to start school on the following Monday.

Only three more nights to be here, said Joyce, taking the letter in to Grandma. I want to go home and see Mother and Daddy, but I wish I could stay on the farm, too.

And only three more stories about bees, added Don. We must remember them all, Joyce, so we can tell them to Mother.

What do you want to do today, children? asked Grandma.

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After our morning work is done, said Joyce, with her most grown-up air, we must finish weeding the flower-bed.

Grandma, called Don a little later, come and see how nice it looks where we pulled the weeds yesterday.

Grandma stood a moment thoughtfully looking down at the half-weeded bed of flowers.

Children, she said suddenly, If you wanted a flower this morning, where would you pick it in the part of the bed that is full of weeds, or in that patch over there that you have weeded so nicely?

I would pick my flower where there aren't any weeds, answered Don, wondering why she asked. I would take that pretty big red one right over there.

And so would I! declared Joyce, pulling up a stubborn weed.

But why wouldn't you take this one? said Grandma, as she parted the weeds and showed another red beauty.

Well, answered Don, I s'pose it's just as pretty, but some way the weeds make it look ugly.

That's just what I was thinking about, said Grandma. I have seen children who were like this flower in the weeds. They had beautiful faces; but they let the weeds of disobedience, selfishness, deceit, and pride grow all about them until you could not see their beauty for the ugly weeds.

This garden makes me think of two cousins that I knew once. One was obedient, unselfish, and kind to everybody; and although she did not have a beautiful face, she was loved by all who knew her. The other girl had a beautiful face; but she had such an unlovely disposition that nobody cared for her, and so she was left very much to herself. Her beauty, like this lovely flower, was quite hidden by the ugly weeds growing up all around her.

These weeds in the flower-bed were very small in the beginning; but they grew and grew, until now they are taller than the flowers. And the weeds in God's child-gardens are small at first, too. To begin with, there springs up the weed of telling a story that is not quite true. If it is not pulled up at once, soon it grows up into a big ugly lie weed. Other weeds disobedience, selfishness, and unkindness spring up around it; and soon the beautiful flower is hidden by the tall weeds. And when the Master of the Garden wants a lovely flower-child to do a kind deed for Him, He never thinks of choosing one that is surrounded by weeds.

What a nice story! exclaimed Joyce. But it wasn't about a bee, Grandma.

Yes, it was, said Don Don't Bee Weedy.

But there haven't been any Don't Bee's in the stories before, said Joyce. Besides, I wouldn't call that Don't Bee Weedy; I'd call it Bee Clean.

That's a good name for it, said Grandma. I hope you'll always keep your lives clean from the weeds that children so often allow to grow up around them.

Grandma went back to the house, while the children set to work weeding the rest of the flower-bed. They were very careful not to pull up any of the flowers with the weeds. When they had finished, the flower-bed looked beautiful, cleared as it was of all weeds and grasses.

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I surely don't want any ugly weeds to grow in *my* garden, so I shall always listen to Bee Clean, said Joyce softly, as she walked slowly toward the house.

Will you make us a kite, Grandpa? asked Don after dinner.

Yes, do! cried Joyce. It will be such fun to fly it.

Well, said Grandpa, you children hunt around and find some sticks. Then ask Grandma for some paper and paste and string; and bring them out to the woodshed, and I'll try my hand at making a kite.

After it was made, they had to let it lie in the sun for a while, to dry. Then they took it out to the pasture. There was a soft breeze blowing, and Grandpa said the kite ought to fly. Don took the string and ran along with it for quite a distance. The wind lifted it a little; but after it had darted back and forth, it fell on the ground. This happened several times, and at last Grandpa said, It's too bad, children, but my kite won't fly. But I'll see if I can make something else for you.

Then Grandpa took some thin boards and whittled out darts. He took a short stick, and tied a string to it; and then he fitted the string in a notch which he had cut in one end of the dart. He threw the dart up in the air, ever so high. It came down just a few yards from Don. The sharp end stuck fast; and there it stood, upright in the ground.

Don was as much pleased with this as he would have been with a kite that would fly. Soon he and Joyce were shooting darts into the air, to see whose would go the highest.

They had so much fun that the afternoon flew by very fast. It was nearly suppertime when Don gathered up the darts and took them to the house with him. He carefully put them away in the little trunk, saying, I'll show the boys how to throw darts when I get home.

That evening, as they sat on the porch in the quiet twilight, they heard the faint tinkle of a cowbell in the distance. They talked a while, and then they sang some songs together.

It's story time, isn't it? said Grandpa by and by. And who is going to get stung tonight? he asked, winking at Joyce.

I hope *I* don't, she laughed, remembering the time the bee had stung her on the first day of her visit.

No one shall be stung tonight, said Grandma. I have a very sweet little bee to tell you about. And because the little girl in my story listened to its buzz, it made honey for her all her life. Its name is Bee Loving; and it can do things that nothing else in the world can do. You know people can sometimes be *loved* into doing things that they could not be persuaded to do in any other way.

Gene was a very little girl who had been left alone in the world. She had never seen her father; and her mother had died when she was only two and a half. Some kind people had taken care of the little girl when her mother was ill; and when she died, they tried to find her relatives, to ask what should be done with Gene. But they could not find any trace of them.

When Gene was three, these kind people wanted to go away for a couple of weeks, and they asked a lady to take care of the child while they were gone. The lady was very glad to do this, for she loved little children. And so Gene came to stay in the big mansion where the lady, her husband, and grown-up daughter lived.

The lady's husband did not like children very well, and it always annoyed him whenever little Gene came near him. She had a sunny disposition and a very sweet smile, and she tried to make friends with the man; but he

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would not pay any attention to her.

He always read his paper in the morning before he went to work, and in the evening after he came home. Little Gene would peep up at him under the paper, with her sweetest smile. He would lay the paper down, and walk away; but soon he would come back and pick it up and begin to read again. And in a moment, there little Gene would be, peeping up at him again with her lovely smile.

One day when Gene had been living in the home about a week, the man was reading his paper and she was peeping under it with her usual smile. Suddenly he laid the paper aside and took her in his arms. He kissed her on her forehead, saying tenderly, 'It doesn't matter how hard a man tries to keep from loving you; you just love your way right into his heart.'

Gene threw her small arms about his neck, and laid her curly head on his shoulder, saying in her pretty baby way, 'Gene woves oo, big man.'

That completely won his heart; and when the two weeks had passed and Gene's friends came after her, he did not want to give her up. So he decided to keep her and bring her up as if she had been his own little girl. This also pleased his wife and grown-up daughter very much, for they had loved little Gene from the beginning.

Gene is grown now, but she still has the same sunny disposition and the same sweet smile, which make her beloved by all who know her. Nothing but love could have won for her the beautiful home she has had all these years. And to this day, Bee Loving is still helping her to win her way through life. The greatest victories are always those that are won through love.

I know someone that I love, said little Don, throwing his arms round Grandma's neck.

So do I, said Joyce as she kissed Grandma good-night.

Bee Content

[Illustration]

Listen to the mocking bird! exclaimed Joyce, early the next morning. It sounds as if he would burst his throat. Sometimes his song is loud, and then again he whistles softly, like our canary.

As they listened, the bird whistled shrilly, like the cardinal; then he trilled like the canary, and chirped like the sparrow. He gave a call like the hen quail's, and sang a song exactly like the song of the bluebird. Then he twittered like a number of smaller birds, sang the song of the robin, and came back to the whistle of the cardinal.

Did you ever hear such a wonderful song? cried Joyce. I could listen to him all day long.

I like to hear him sing in the daytime, too, laughed Grandma; but during the night I don't enjoy it so much. Last spring the mocking birds built their nest in the same tree where that little fellow is singing now; and such music, all night long, during the time when they were nesting! It was beautiful, but it kept me awake many an hour when I should have been sleeping. Mocking birds usually build their nests near houses, to protect themselves from robbers.

Robbers! What kind? exclaimed Don.

Sometimes larger birds; and sometimes cats, or snakes. You can always tell when a robber is about, by the fuss

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the old birds make. Last spring I heard a great commotion in that tree, and I went out to see what was the trouble. I looked about for quite a while before I discovered the nest; and all the time, the birds were darting here and there and giving their sharp little cries of distress. When at last I found the nest, I saw a big black snake crawling toward it. I got the garden rake and pulled him loose from the limb; and when he fell to the ground, I killed the cruel thief.

Joyce stepped out into the yard, to get a better look at the little songster as he sat swinging at the top of the old apple tree. Just then he flew across the orchard and down to the creek, alighting among the willows along the bank.

That afternoon the children went to the creek, to see if there were any water lilies in bloom. As they neared the clump of willows, Don said, Let's be quiet, and see if we can find the mocking bird. So they walked softly, and talked in whispers; but they did not catch a glimpse of the lovely songster. Suddenly Don stopped and pointed to a big green frog sitting on a lily pad in the middle of the creek.

Oh-h-h! exclaimed Joyce. Instantly there was a splash, and the frog was gone. There were splashes all around, as other frogs disappeared in the water.

The children hid behind the willows, and waited quietly for some time. Soon they saw a big green fellow swim toward the lily pad and climb up on it. Others began to swim about in the water, and a number of them came out along the bank.

Suddenly Joyce caught sight of something else, which made her forget the frogs. Just beyond the spot where the frog sat perched on a lily pad, there was a lovely water lily in bloom.

O Don, she whispered, do you think we can get it?

I'd rather have the frog than the lily, answered Don.

Yes, but you can't get him, you know, said Joyce. Will you help me to get to the lily?

Don nodded, and came out from behind the willows where he had been crouching. Instantly there was another splash, and Mr. Froggie was gone. In a moment there was not a frog to be seen anywhere.

To get the lily, the children had to cross the creek and then step out on an old log. The creek was so shallow that they knew there was no danger of drowning, even if they should fall into the water; so Joyce steadied the log with her hands, while Don stood on it and reached for the lily. It took him some time to get it, for it had a tough stem which was very hard to break. But Joyce was so pleased when he handed her the beautiful lily, that he felt repaid for all his trouble.

About three o'clock the children found some empty spools and went to the corner of the orchard, and sat down in the cool shade of the lilac bush. Soon they were blowing many-colored bubbles and flying them in the air.

Tabby, Grandma's pretty Maltese cat, lay curled up in the shade. One of Don's bubbles lit on her back, and then burst. By and by another lit on her nose, and burst immediately. The old cat jumped to her feet and began to sneeze. Then she sat down and washed her face with her paw, as if to say, Thank you, I'd rather wash my face without any soap.

That evening, as they sat on the porch, Joyce said a little sadly, It will not be long now before we shall hear the noisy street cars again, instead of the katydids and whippoorwills. Only one more night after this, and we shall be home.

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Yes, added Don only two more stories about the bees. He clambered up on to the arm of Grandma's rocking chair, while Joyce sat down at her feet.

We're ready for our story, Grandma, said Don.

All right, answered Grandma. I shall tell you this time about a little bee called Bee Content. Its buzz is often heard among children at play, when things happen that no one can help. Some will not listen to it, and so they complain and make everyone about them miserable.

Willie was a poor boy who lived on a farm. Although he had to work hard, helping his father, he always went about whistling or singing. His clothes were old and patched; and he did not have things to play with, as other boys have. But he did not mind being poor, because he had parents who loved him dearly.

One day when Willie was working in the field, he looked up and saw a great cloud of dust. A team was running away. The horses were hitched to a buggy; and as they came rushing toward him, the thought flashed into Willie's mind that he must try his best to stop them. A short distance down the road, there was a bridge. If the horses should run into the railing,' he thought, 'they would tear the buggy to pieces, and perhaps hurt themselves.'

The boy leaped over the fence, and braced himself; and as the horses came near, he grabbed one by the bridle and held on tightly. This was a very brave thing to do; for if he had missed catching hold, he might have been thrown under the horses' hoofs and trampled to death. His weight swinging on the horse's bridle soon stopped the team.

Soon a man came running along the highway; and when he learned what Willie had done, he said, 'You are a brave boy. What do I owe you for your trouble?'

Willie smiled his friendly smile as he answered, 'I did not stop the horses for pay, sir. I thought of the railing on the bridge; and I was afraid the horses would break the buggy, and hurt themselves.'

Noticing that Willie's clothes were badly worn, the gentleman said, 'Will you not let me give you some money to buy clothes?'

'I have a better pair of shoes than these and a better suit of clothes, for Sundays,' answered Willie. 'And these clothes are all right to work in.'

'But you will need some new books for school this fall,' said the gentleman.

'I have some books that were given to me,' replied the lad; 'and Mother glued in the loose leaves, so that I can use them very well, thank you.'

'Wouldn't you like to have a ball and bat?'

'I made a ball from some old wool that Mother gave me,' answered Willie; 'and I whittled out a bat which answers the purpose very well.'

The gentleman laid his hand on Willie's shoulder, saying kindly, 'My boy, I understand now why you have that smile; for you have learned a secret which few people know the secret of contentment. I shall have to call you The Contented Boy.' And with that, he drove away.

A few days later, a large box came to the village, addressed to Willie. The express agent sent word out to the farm, and Willie's father drove in to the village to get it.

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When Willie opened the box, he found a large card lying on top on which were written the words: *To the Contented Boy, From a Grateful Friend and Debtor*. He knew then that the box had come from the man whose team he had stopped a few days before.

It contained a new suit of clothes, some shirts, overalls, stockings, a warm cap and mittens, and a new baseball and bat. When he lifted out the overcoat he felt in the pockets and discovered a five-dollar bill.

How pleased Willie was! As he went back to his work in the field, he whistled more cheerily than before.

But that was not all. At Christmas time, a wonderful bicycle came from his new friend. You will believe me when I tell you that he was the happiest boy in the country.

That's the best story you have told us yet, said Don. I think Willie was a brave boy.

And he deserved everything he got, added Grandma; for he had learned the secret of being content with a very little.

Bee Prayerful

[Illustration: Bee Prayerful]

Another morning came; the morning of the last day Joyce and Don were to spend on the farm. They followed Grandma about the house, eager to do something to help. After the usual work was done, and they had taken turns at the churning, Grandma said she would make cookies to pack in their lunch-basket the next day.

So she gathered together eggs, sugar, flour, milk, butter, baking powder, and spices. Quickly she made the dough and rolled it out on the board. The children stood close to her watching as she cut out the dough in different shapes.

She made quite an army of cookie men; and after they were baked, she covered them with icing. She made their eyes out of cinnamon drops; also the buttons down their vests.

Aren't they lovely? cried Joyce. Put plenty of them in our lunch-basket tomorrow, won't you, Grandma? Then we can take some home to Mother and Daddy.

Yes, said Grandma, and there will be enough for your little friends, too.

In the afternoon the children's trunk was brought out, and Grandma helped them to pack. There were so many things they wanted to take home with them, that this was quite a task. At the last moment, just as Grandma was ready to close the trunk,

Don ran and got the kite that Grandpa had made. Maybe Daddy will know how to make it fly, he said. But there was no room for it in the trunk, so he had to take it back to the woodshed.

I can put it away in a safe place, he said. It will be waiting for us when we come back next summer.

That evening the children did all they could to help Grandpa with the chores. They gathered the eggs, pumped water, filled the wood-box, and did many other things.

You are certainly fine little helpers, said Grandpa when they had finished.

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When you get home, added Grandma with a smile, you must tell Mother and Daddy that we need you to help us on the farm.

We will, promised the children with beaming faces.

When they had gathered on the porch for their last evening together, Joyce stole up to Grandma's chair and said softly, Tonight you must tell us the very best bee story that you know.

It couldn't be better than the one about Bee Content, said Don.

I shall tell you about the bee that is perhaps the most important of all, said Grandma thoughtfully. It does wonderful things for those who listen to its buzz; but those who refuse to listen are sure to be sorry afterward. It is called Bee Prayerful. The children were eager to hear the story, so Grandma began at once:

William Sutherland was a boy who lived in the state of Maryland. When he was thirteen years old, he gave his heart to God and became a Christian. After that he would often steal away alone and spend a few minutes talking to God.

When he was fourteen, Willie began to work in the bank as an errand boy. The banker soon found that he was honest, and trusted him with large sums of money. One of his errands was to carry the payroll to a mill town several miles away. He made this trip every two weeks; and he always set out in the afternoon, and returned the following morning.

There were no automobiles in those days, and no good roads. William had to ride a pony, leaving the main highway and riding over a trail that had been blazed through the forest.

As he started out one afternoon, his mother said to him, 'Son, I'm afraid to have you carry so much money over that lonely trail.'

'Oh, there is no reason to worry, Mother,' replied the lad cheerfully, as he swung into the saddle. 'You know I have always made the trip safely before.'

'Yes,' replied the good woman, 'but I feel fearful today. I shall be praying for you while you are on your way.'

William waved to her, as he turned his pony about and started on his journey. He had placed the payroll in his saddle bags; and as he looked at them he said to himself, 'How glad I am that my master trusts me with so much money.'

He whistled and sang, as he rode along; but as he neared the lonely forest trail, a strange feeling of fear came over him. He reined in his pony and sat still for some time, wondering just what he ought to do. Then Bee Prayerful began to buzz about his ears. He had heard its little voice many times before, and he had learned always to listen and obey. He rode on to the spot where he must leave the highway and set out upon the forest trail; and then he slipped from the saddle and knelt down beside the bushes growing there.

'Dear God,' he said aloud, 'I don't know why, but I feel very much afraid. Take care of me, as I ride through this lonely place. I believe You will, because You have written in Your Book, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'

And as William knelt there, alone with God, all feeling of fear melted away. He arose, mounted his pony, and rode on with a light heart.

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The mill men knew he was coming, for they could hear his cheerful whistle before his pony came into view. He gave the payroll to the foreman, spent the night in the little town, and the next forenoon returned safely to his home.

His mother met him at the door. 'Son,' she said, 'something peculiar happened to me yesterday while you were away. I was very busy, but a little voice seemed to tell me that I ought to stop my work and pray for you. I felt that you were in danger, and that I should ask God to keep you safe. So I laid my work aside, went into my room and knelt down, and stayed there until I was sure that you were quite safe.'

Then William told her how he had felt just before he reached the lonely forest trail, and how he had knelt down among the bushes and asked God to protect him. After that, they often talked about this strange happening, and wondered what it could mean.

William worked in the bank for quite a long while, and then he went away to college. After he had graduated, he became a minister. Soon after this, God called away his good mother to her home in Heaven.

One day William received a letter stamped with the postmark of a town in a distant state. 'I am very ill,' said the writer, 'and the doctor says I shall never recover. I must see you, as I have something very important to tell you before I am called away to meet my God. Please come to me as quickly as possible.' There was no name written at the end of the letter. It was signed, 'A friend.'

William turned the letter over and over in his hand. He knew no one in that faraway place, and for a time he was very much puzzled. Then he did as he had been in the habit of doing for many years he slipped away to spend a few moments alone with God. And a voice in his heart kept saying, 'Go; someone is in need, and your work is to minister to every soul who asks for help.'

'But whom shall I ask for, when I arrive?' asked William, still perplexed. And the voice answered, 'Only go; God will take care of the rest.'

Hastily packing a few things in his traveling bag, William boarded a train and started for the town in the far-distant state. Arriving at the end of his journey, he stepped out upon the station platform. He was astonished when a gentleman came up to him and said courteously, 'Is this Reverend Sutherland?'

'Yes,' replied the minister, 'I am he.'

'I have been sent to meet you, sir,' said the stranger. 'I have met every train during the past week. Will you come with me?'

A few minutes later, he led the minister into a darkened room where a sick man lay. As they tiptoed into the room, he looked up eagerly, and his breath came fast. Holding out his hand, he asked in a feeble voice, 'Is this Reverend Sutherland?'

'It is,' said the minister gently, clasping the thin white hand. 'Where have I met you before, my friend and what can I do for you now?'

'You have never met me before,' said the sick man, and his voice sank to a whisper. 'I saw you only once and that was many years ago. But I have kept track of your whereabouts all these years. I have sent for you now, sir, because I am dying.'

The sick man sank back upon his pillows and rested a moment; then, fixing his large eyes on the minister's face, he went on:

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'Mr. Sutherland, one afternoon many years ago you were entrusted with a large sum of money to take to the foreman of a certain mill. In a wild and lonely spot, you slipped from your saddle and knelt down by some bushes and asked God to protect you. Do you remember it?'

'As if it had been yesterday,' said the minister. 'But, my good friend—what do you know about it?'

'Far more than you do,' said the sick man sadly. *I heard that prayer.* I was crouching among the bushes nearby, with my rifle pointed at your heart. I had planned to kill you, take the money, and ride away on your pony. But while you were praying something passed between us; I did not know what it was, but I believed that God had sent it to protect you. I sat in those bushes, too weak to pull the trigger, and watched you ride away perfectly helpless to do any harm to you. But it has haunted me ever since the thought of what I wanted to do, and what I should have done if God had not answered your prayer. I could not meet God without telling you all this. Can you forgive me?'

Again William grasped the hand of the dying man, saying in a husky voice, 'My friend, as God has forgiven my sins, I freely forgive you. Ask now for God's forgiveness, and be at peace.'

The minister stayed with the man for some time, talking and praying with him; until at last the light shone in his dark soul, and God forgave his sins.

He died soon after that, and William Sutherland was asked to preach his funeral sermon. He chose as his text those words from the book of Proverbs: 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.'

The children sat very still for some time, after Grandma had finished her story. I think Bee Prayerful is the best of all, said Joyce at last. I shall remember that story as long as I live.

I hope you will, dear, said Grandma. No matter where you go no matter how busy you are always listen to the gentle buzz of Bee Prayerful.

We will, Grandma, said the children soberly.

And now, said Grandma, it is bedtime for two little folks who will have to be up bright and early in the morning. You know the train leaves at eight o'clock.

Good—night, katydids and whippoorwills, murmured Don a little drowsily. We shall come back to hear you sing again next summer.

With that, two tired children crept upstairs and tumbled into bed; and very soon they were in the Land of Dreams.

Home Again

[Illustration: Home Again]

The sunlight was streaming in at their bedroom windows, when Joyce and Don awoke the next morning. They dressed quickly, and ran down to watch Grandma pack their lunch for the trip home. At the breakfast table, they talked of all the nice times they had had during the past few weeks; and they promised to persuade Mother and Daddy to come with them to the farm next summer.

When everything was ready, Grandpa lifted the little trunk to his shoulder and carried it out to the car; and soon

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they were on their way. When they reached the station Grandpa bought the tickets, checked the little trunk, and gave the children a story book to read on the train. Dear Grandpa and Grandma! They always knew just what to do to make the children happy.

As the train whistled in the distance, Don caught Grandpa's hand and held it tight. Joyce threw her arms around Grandma and whispered, Dear Grandma, I love you! And I've had such a happy time!

The train pulled up, and the conductor called, All aboard! After Grandpa had helped them on to the train, and had gone back to the station platform, the children waved and threw kisses through the window. As the train moved away, they pressed their faces to the window and watched Grandpa and Grandma as long as they could. But they soon were left behind, the train moved faster, and the little village passed out of sight. Happy vacation days on the farm had come to an end.

For a few moments the children had to fight to keep back the tears. Then Joyce opened the book that Grandpa had given them, and soon their loneliness was forgotten.

There was a story about a little lame dog that came to a man's house one cold winter night and whined about the door. He let it in, bound up its foot, and gave it some food and a comfortable place to sleep.

The man liked the dog so well that he decided to keep it. One night, when everyone was asleep, the house caught fire; and the dog awakened the man in time to save the whole family from burning to death.

There were stories about cows and horses; and a long, long one about the interesting animals to be seen at the zoo.

One story was so funny that when Don read it, he burst out laughing; and the other passengers looked at him and smiled. It was about a mischievous monkey at the zoo. One day a gentleman who wore a wig came by, carrying his hat in his hand. The monkey reached through the bars and caught hold of the wig, pulling it off his head.

When it was time for lunch, Joyce opened the basket that Grandma had packed for them. They spread out a napkin on the seat in front of them, and ate their lunch off this table in the most grown-up fashion. Grandma had tucked in several surprises; and how good the cookie-men tasted!

In the middle of the afternoon they began to pass through the suburbs of the city, and soon familiar sights came into view. When the train backed into the station, there stood Mother and Daddy waiting for them.

O Mother, cried Joyce with a bear hug, I've had a good time, but I'm so glad to see you again! Don, big boy that he was, had jumped into Daddy's arms. Soon the little trunk had been placed in the car, and they were driving toward home.

What did you enjoy most of all, during your vacation? asked Mother, as they were eating supper that evening.

Fishing, replied Don quickly.

Joyce did not answer; she sat quite still, with a far-away look in her eyes.

And what did my little girl like best of all? asked Mother at last.

O Mother, said Joyce, her eyes shining, I was happy every minute even when the old turkey gobbler was chasing me around the tree. But what I liked best was to sit out on the porch in the evenings, and listen to the katydids and whippoorwills, and watch the stars come out one by one. And then it was so nice to sit close to Grandma's old rocking-chair