

MY FRIEND.

My friend! the pattern of his kind,
Would I like him could be!
Feed sympathy and tenderness,
Hath drawn his heart to me;
Through many years I have not found
A truer friend than he!

His horny hands are used each day
In working among the soil;
He ne'er complains of fortune's frown,
Or of his mental toil.
But thanks the God who gives him strength
To follow honest toil.

His eyes oft sparkle with glad smiles,
Such are inherent there;
His manly brow has not a trace
Of soul-corroding care;
And symbols of a robust health
His visage seems to wear.

He is a parent fond and kind,
And trains his children well;
How much he loves his dear wife too
Is more than he can tell;
And he reckons all mankind as friends,
With those who near him dwell.

When sorrow comes he ne'er repines,
Or bends in grief his face;
And discontent can never hold
Within his heart a place;
So he works on with hope in sight
As trusts in God's rich grace.

I would that I could be resigned
Like him when troubles rise,
And look misfortune in the face
With calm and fearless eyes;
Contentment is an artist grand
Who gives life's darkest d'arks.

—George E. Lopus, in *Adeloide News*.

HOW LITTLE BOPEEP LOST HER SHEEP.

A great many times over the story has been told of what happened after little Bopeep lost her sheep, but I never have seen the slightest explanation of how she came to lose them. So, after much historical research, and long and patient investigation and study, I am at length prepared to state authentically how it was those sheep came to be lost.

Little Bopeep was the most devoted and careful of shepherdesses; no sheep so fine as hers anywhere in the country; and oh! how proud she was of them! There were so many of them that she had taken little Boy Blue into her service, and was training him to help her, but she never entrusted him with any responsibility, not she. But even little Bopeep was fallible, and there came a day when she was tempted at her weakest point. One morning, as she sat with her knitting under her usual tree, she was startled by a small figure tumbling over the rail fence and sprawling on the ground, and another immediately following in the same manner.

"What is the matter, Jack?" she exclaimed. "Can't you and Jill go anywhere without falling?"

"No," responded Jack, ruefully, rubbing a bruise on his knee, "I don't suppose we can—we never do. But say, Bopeep, there's to be a dance down in the grove this afternoon, and Mother Goose sent us to tell you."

"And be sure to come," added Jill, eagerly, wiping the blood from a scratch on her arm, "for Mistress Mary will be there, and she has got an elegant new dress, and is as proud as a peacock, but Jack who built the house is coming, and he says he'd rather dance with you a thousand times, Bopeep, than with Mistress Mary, for all her fine dresses, because you're the best dancer and have the best temper of all our people. But, Mother Hubbard has seen the new dress, and she says there's none so fine in town, and that Mistress Mary has put on very sweet manners lately, and at the fair last week, King Cole, who never could endure her before, took her in to see Punch and Judy, and bought her a pocketful of candy; and Mary says that if she does not cut you out with Jack this time, she'll know the reason why."

"Hush, hush, Jill!" said little Bopeep, blushing very pink, "don't say such hateful things of poor Mistress Mary; she's not so bad, if she is a little contrary, and what do I care for all that nonsense! Let Jack dance with her if he chooses. I can find plenty of partners."

"Oh, but how I should like to make her take Simple Simon for a partner!" cried irrepresible Jill; "only fancy it! why, he'd climb up her train a dozen times in every dance, and spill lemonade all over her. But do come, Bopeep, King Cole will be there, and Jack Sprat and his wife, and we'll have a splendid time."

"I don't believe I can, Jill," replied Bopeep, regretfully. "I don't dare to leave the sheep with Boy Blue; I've never tried him, and he might be careless."

"O well, try him for once, and come along. We must hurry, Jack, if we are going to get to Margery Daw's." Off went the two, tumbling back over the fence, and left Bopeep to her meditations. They were rather disturbing. She was a good-natured little thing, but still she did not exactly fancy Mistress Mary's disagreeable boasts. She knew that she danced a hundred times as well as Mistress Mary did in her best days, which were beginning to be a thing of the past; and as for her dress—well, she had a blue petticoat and straw-colored upper dress which she had only worn once, and high-heeled slippers with blue bows, and ribbons for her hair, and if she had not the finest dress in town, little Bopeep knew well enough that her face was always in party dress, with its pretty blue eyes and pink cheeks and crinkly golden hair, braided down below her waist. Mistress Mary cut her out with Jack, indeed! Bopeep laughed and blushed, and pulled her braid, for deep down in her heart she strongly suspected that there was nobody in the world who could take her place with Jack who built the house, and she did hate to stay away from the dance and let Mistress Mary think she was afraid of her threat. Besides, she did not see Jack very often; his house was a long way off from the field where she kept her sheep.

"Boy Blue," said little Bopeep doubtfully, "do you think you could take care of the sheep this afternoon if I go away and leave you with them?"

"Course I can!" responded Boy Blue, pulling his jacket down and looking very important, "I can take care of them just as well as if you sat there and looked at me." Still little Bopeep hesitated, but Boy Blue promised so earnestly to watch the sheep every minute, that she consented at last to try it.

"But you know there's the gap in the fence, Boy Blue," she said. "It is not very strongly fixed, and the old ram may break through."

"I'd like to see him break through, with me here!" proclaimed Boy Blue, flourishing an ugly-looking stick, and Bopeep, reassured, ran away to her little house to get dressed.

In good time, she started for the grove, and on arriving, found a large company already assembled. There was Simple Simon staring at everybody in the stupidest way, with his mouth wide open, and occasionally edging up to some pretty girl, who immediately edged away from him. There was little Tom Tucker, perseveringly singing for his supper, which no one seemed disposed to give him; and the crooked man, who, if he started toward some merry maiden in the distance who looked attractive, was sure to bring up against a tree or tumble over some of the children of the Old Woman who lived in a shoe, because his legs were so extremely crooked that nothing could induce him to walk straight, and nobody wondered at his going a crooked mile, for it would have been entirely impossible for him to go any other kind of a mile. Then there were Jack Horner and Muffet, and a host of others, all of whom you have heard of before, and Mother Goose and Mother Hubbard were bustling around and welcoming everyone who came. It was not long before Mistress Mary came sweeping in with her train; this was quite a new thing among Mother Goose's people; nobody had worn trains but queens, who had little pages to carry them,

and it was considered quite impertinent of Mistress Mary, besides being very silly to put herself among the others in that way. But the dress was certainly very handsome; it was slashed and puffed in a wonderful way, and Mistress Mary, even if she was quite contrary, never looked better in her life. In less than five minutes after her arrival, Jack who built the house, made his appearance. Well, he was worth a little quarreling over, if anything is worth it, which I doubt. He was tall and straight and handsome, and a will of his own looked clearly out of his bright dark eyes. It was owing to that will that he built his house without any help, and a good strong house, too. But he was not contrary, like Mistress Mary; he kept his will where it belonged, and did not let it constantly fly up in other people's faces, as she did. He managed his will, but she let her will manage her. He chanced to walk straight past Mistress Mary in going toward Mother Goose, so he stopped and spoke to her very politely, but instead of going back to her after speaking to Mother Goose and Mother Hubbard, he began to look in every corner till he found little Bopeep. At last he saw her, sitting on a stump talking to Mary and her lamb, and now and then glancing slyly out of the corners of her eyes to see where Jack was. She jumped up and shook hands with him as he came near, and her pretty pink cheeks grew a shade pinker.

"I want you to dance the first dance with me, Bopeep," said Jack, holding her hand fast, "will you?"

And Bopeep said she would; so when the cat began to tune his fiddle, and Tom the piper's son to finger his father's pipe, which he had learned to play, and King Cole, as master of ceremonies, put his fiddlers three in a row with the other musicians, and called out,

"Take your partners for Money Musk!" Mistress Mary, who had refused two or three small fry in the confident expectation of Jack's coming back, was horrified to see him lead out little Bopeep, and to find herself without a partner. There was no help for it, so she leaned languidly back against a tree, remarking to the Old Woman who lived under the hill that she never liked to dance the first set, it fatigued her so soon. But dance after dance went by, and Mistress Mary was sought as a partner by King Cole, by the man who was wondrous wise, and by the butcher, the baker, and candle-stick maker, but never by Jack. The fact was, Mother Hubbard, who had a fondness for little Bopeep, had whispered in his ear Mistress Mary's unpleasant remarks, and he was determined she should rue them. But finally, as Mistress Mary became crosser and more contrary, and her partners consequently grew fewer, little Bopeep, standing in her place, just ready to dance her seventh dance with Jack, looked across and saw her sitting alone in all the glory of her new dress, and the kind little heart under the straw-colored bodice relented.

"Jack," she whispered, standing on tiptoe, as he bent down to hear, "do go and dance with Mistress Mary, just this once; and I'll take Simple Simon for a partner."

Jack was on the point of saying, "No, thank you!" with great decision, when he looked down into the sweet, appealing eyes, and he relented—but not to Mistress Mary.

"You dear, good little thing!" he whispered back, "I will, just to please you," and off he went and presented himself to Mistress Mary with great politeness; but she had seen him standing ready to dance with little Bopeep, and knew that he must have been sent; so, though she danced with him, it is to be feared she did not get much satisfaction out of it. As for Bopeep, she seized on the delighted Simple Simon, and twisted, and pulled and pushed him through the dance, and scolded and made fun of him, and laughed at him, until he and she and all the rest were screaming with laughter.

At length it was time to go home, and Jack insisted on walking all the way back with Bopeep, and just as they reached the little foot-bridge across the brook, and it was beginning to be dusk, he put his arm around little Bopeep's waist, and bent down his handsome high