

## RUNNING TO THE FIRE.

A warm, sultry day in August; papa was taking his after-dinner nap in the library with a big red handkerchief spread over his head to keep the flies away from the bald place; for flies like bald places, you know, and how they can bite!—mamma was down stairs reading, puss lay comfortably stretched out on the rug where the sunshine fell warm upon her fur, and even Dick, the canary, sat drowsily upon his perch: everything was still when suddenly the front door slammed, a pair of little boots clattered on the stairs, and in burst eight-year-old Fred, all perspiration and excitement.

"O, papa! may I, can I, O, please, mayn't I run to the fire!"

The red handkerchief was whisked away in an instant leaving the poor bare place to care for itself, for Mr. Maynard owned a block of stores down town, and fires he dreaded more than even flies. "Where is it, my son?"

"O, they ain't none now; but maybe they will be, and Tommy Herriek he runs to 'em and his pa lets him and it's lots of fun! May I! Please, papa, I want to awful!" and the boy paused for very lack of breath, and waited with great anxiety for his father's answer.

"Certainly, certainly; but don't bother any more," and with a sigh of relief the tired gentleman threw himself back upon the sofa, and stretched the red covering over his head again, while Fred, delighted beyond thanks, rushed out to tell Tommy Herriek of his success, and to listen with longing ears for the sound of the bells.

But no bells rang. That day passed and many others, yet the city was not visited by the dreadful scourge. Fall came, and amid apples, melons, grapes, and all the lesser fruits of the season, Fred found pleasures on every hand, and forgot his wish so that even when the great bells did send their warning notes abroad they did not call it back to him. The matter had passed from papa's memory the very moment the boy's question was answered. Mamma never knew of it, and so time went on and winter came, overcoats and mittens, sleds and snow-balls took up the little boy's attention, and he had no thought of ever running to the fires that so often rage by night and day in that time of year.

It was December. The chill northeast wind had blown all day, bringing with it the flying snow-flakes, and as night settled down the storm grew more and more furious, and the great drifts blockaded paths and doorways up and down the town. The street-lamps threw but faint and fitful gleams through the darkness, and solitary pedestrians fought their way homeward with aching fingers and frost-chilled forms.

Fred sat by the open grate and gazed at the glowing embers. Suddenly out of the brilliant coals there came a memory back to him, a memory of the permission which papa had given so long, long ago—and he had never yet taken advantage of it: he had never been to a fire.

The longer he meditated, the stronger the desire grew. "O, if there was only a fire to-night!" and the boy's eyes danced in anticipation of the fun it would be to plunge into the deep snow and face the flying storm! How grand, too, in this fierce wind! O, a fire would be jolly if it could only come to-night! But his reverie was broken by mamma's call, "Fred, come! It's bed-time!" and away he went to be tucked warm and cosy in his nest, there to dream out the fancies that filled his little brain.

The hours slipped by. Twelve, one, half-past one. A distant clangor sounds through the night air. Nearer and nearer it comes; louder and louder until the boy's chamber is filled with the wild crash of the frightened bells, and Fred springs from his bed to see the snowfall aglow with the strange red light, to see the flying sparks drifting away overhead, to hear the uproar outside and to know that there is really a fire.

How quick he dressed! had it been the breakfast-bell which called the boy from his bed, an hour would hardly have been time enough to make his toilet, with mamma's help, too; but

now, within ten minutes, he was creeping from his room in overcoat and tippet, pants tucked in boots, and a warm cap tied tight over his ears.

Down the broad stairway, through the dim hall, and with a turn of the key the front door opened and closed, and Fred was running to a fire.

The wind whistled around the corners and tossed the drifting, blinding snow in his eyes; the cold pierced through overcoat and coat, chilling his body; the strange, weird light flared up and down in the night, but he kept on. Men passed him, great rough men, swearing as they ran; the engines plowed their way through the deserted roads; he heard the distant cries of the firemen, but still he kept on. More than a mile in and out of the winding streets he ran, until, at a sudden turn, the burning building burst upon the sight in all its wild and fearful beauty!

It was a wooden tenement house, six stories high, and ere Fred reached the spot the flames had wrapped it in a blazing robe. How the fire leaped from open window to window, or crept along the trembling roof! How the wind sucked in and out the dooways, and then rushed roaring away as if in terrible pain, carrying great clouds of sparks riding on the dun-colored smoke! How the engines rattled, the water hissed; and the firemen yelled! O, it was a wild storm and a wild fire, but little Fred enjoyed it all.

Notwithstanding the efforts made to overcome it the devouring element was conqueror, and within an hour the great roof fell with a mighty noise, sending a blaze of light to the very sky; and then the fire died down, the crowd moved noiselessly away, and soon Fred found that he was almost the only one left in the street. One good look at the ruins and he would go too.

Crossing the street, he pushed his way toward where the house had been. Dull red coals, a great smoke and charred timbers was all that remained. As the boy gazed upon the desolate scene, a cry came to his ear, a child's cry. He started and turned about; there it was again! What could it be? Moving cautiously along the sound became more and more distinct, until, close under an old shed and wrapped in a rough blanket, that smelled strongly of smoke, Fred found a little baby; left there to die, or forgotten by some half-crazed mother whose shelter had that night been destroyed! The great heart of the boy grew tender as he lifted the ragged bundle in his arms, and with soothing words to the little wail he turned at once and started for home.

It had been hard work coming to the fire through the deep snow, the storm and the darkness; it was doubly hard returning; yet Fred floundered bravely along. Once or twice he fell, but with unwavering courage rose up and pushed on again. At last the corner was reached; which way should he turn, up or down? He debated the matter for some time, but at length, growing cold and worried, started hurriedly off in what he thought was the right direction. Was it right! On, on, turning here and there, following, as nearly as he could remember it, the course that he had come, the little boy waded through the night and the snow. But the streets all looked strange; the great houses loomed up gloomily on either hand; the storm grew thicker, and only the wild wind answered when he called. He had really lost his way.

Crying with terror, staggering through the drifts, and half frozen with the cold, Fred kept in motion; he must find some one or he might die! How the snow whirled, and the tall trees swayed and groaned in the gale! Would he never get home, must he stop here! Faster and faster came his breath, and the little legs trembled as the drifts grew deeper and the piercing cold more intense. The baby did not cry now, but he hugged the bundle closer to him to keep it warm, and tried to struggle on; yet the battle was almost over, and his eyes were growing dim, when suddenly a form appeared before him, a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder, a gruff voice said "Whose boy is this, out so late

at night!" and with a cry of joy Fred cast himself upon the friendly breast; and sobbed out his story in the policeman's ear.

When the tale was told next morning to papa and mamma around the cozy breakfast-table and before a blazing fire, it seemed almost a dream; but the fair baby stranger who drank so greedily of the fresh milk was proof that it had been a reality.

The child was never claimed; but to-day Fred calls a beautiful girl "Sister," and "Snow-flake," and sometimes tells the story of how he found her that wild night when first he ran to a fire.—*Christian Union.*

## JETTY.

A STORY FOR THE WEE ONES.

Jetty was our big black cat. He and Bessie were the very best of friends; he always sat up beside her at the table and had a share of her milk—and as B. was very generous, she sometimes let him drink first.

But one sad day a big white cat named Mr. Hound called on Mr. J. and he found the latter had such a nice home, he believed he would live with him. But H. was a very bad cat, and would always take J.'s supper, and poor J. often went to bed very hungry. B.'s papa tried to make H. go away, but the hateful cat would always come back. One night with his naughty claw he scratched one of poor J.'s eyes out! This was too much for the poor cat; he resolved to leave his home and go out in the wide world to seek a refuge. And then how sad poor B. was! She could not be comforted. Poor J. had a hard time when he went away, for he had to sleep out in the woods at night, and sometimes it rained very hard and he was nearly drowned. After he had been away three weeks, a great snow storm came. The trees were all covered with ice and snow and J.'s toes were frozen nearly off; there were no more mice for him to catch now; he had taken a dreadful cold, and it had settled on his lungs. He felt if he could only see B. once more, he could die happy, or may be H. would take pity on him now when he was so poor, sick and blind, and half dead with diphtheria. So one night when B.'s papa was down at the spring house, he saw J. coming slowly up the railroad. He ran to meet him, lifted him in his arms and took him to the house, and after he had had a saucer of good sweet milk, papa took him in to B. And oh! how happy they were that night! B. was fairly wild with delight, and poor J. could only go around, too overjoyed to know what to do. Old H. was driven away, and as B.'s papa was a doctor, he soon cured J. and made him the happiest of cats; and if it had not been for his poor blind eye you never would know that anything had happened to him.—*N. Y. Tribune, Jr.*

JEFFERSON'S ADVICE TO HIS YOUNG DAUGHTER.—I do not wish you to be gayly clothed at this time of life, but above all things and at all times let your clothes be neat, whole and properly put on. Some ladies think they may, under the privileges of the *deshabille*, be loose and negligent of their dress in the morning. But be you from the moment you rise till you go to bed as clean and properly dressed as at the hours of dinner or tea. A lady who has been seen as a sloven in the morning will never efface the impression she has made with all the dress and pageantry she can afterward involve herself in. I hope, therefore, the moment you rise from bed your first work will be to dress yourself in such style that no circumstance of neatness be wanting.

ANTHRACITE IN EUROPE.—Recent analysis of the anthracite coal of Valais, Switzerland, show a very close resemblance to that of Pennsylvania. Trials with American heaters show that it can replace the Pennsylvania coal. It has also been successfully tried on locomotives.