

**TOM THE TEMPTER.**

"Oh! Daddy, please!"

"I am afraid I couldn't, Dick. You must remember that you are only a little man, and that broncho is very frisky."

"I know, dad, but Tom got a pony for Christmas, too, and he can ride anywhere he chooses."

"You forget that Tom is 12, while you are not yet ten. I am willing that you should ride when William can go with you, but you must not go alone."

So young Dick Wilmer tried to be contented, although there was a sore spot deep in his heart. All of his chums rode, and not one of them had to have a horrid man trotting along behind. It wasn't right that he should be treated like a baby, when he was fully as tall as Tom and the other fellows. No one could guess that he was nearly three years younger. He went sorrowfully out to Broncho's stall, and put his own curly head against the soft dark mane of the young thoroughbred.

For several weeks after his father's mandate had gone forth Dick turned a deaf ear to all of Tom's entreaties, and endeavored to forget the nest little footman while dashing through the long, winding country roads. But a day came when all of Dick's good resolutions were thrown to the winds.

It was Saturday. Mr. Brown, his tutor, had just left the house, and the lesson books were put away until Monday. So, with a free heart, Dick bounded downstairs, buckled on his high riding boots, slipped into his heavy coat and set his scarlet cap well back on his curly head. Mr. Wilmer had gone to Washington on business, and Mrs. Wilmer was out calling. Dick knew by experience that it would probably be dark before she would return, and it was too lonesome in the house. Even Mr. Brown, who had been expected to stay, was telegraphed for, as his wife was taken suddenly ill.

So when left alone Dick ran down to William's room, over the stable. His hand was on the knob, and he opened his mouth to call the groom. Just then Tom's mocking voice cried:

"Go on, boy; call your nurse!"

Dick wheeled around, his deep blue eyes all ablaze with indignation.

"I am not a baby, and you know it, Tom Stimer."

"Then why do you always have him," pointing a disdainful finger toward the closed door, "tagging after you? When you are a man you'll have a keeper, I suppose."

"I won't have you talking that way to me. I'm not a baby, and you know I don't want William—and I only have him because dad said I must!" cried Dick, sturdily.

"Don't you ever expect to have a mind of your own? I dare you to go to-day without him!" taunted Tom.

"Dad said I mustn't."

"William isn't there; he went out just as I came in, so he can't go, and you know Henry is driving your mother's horse."

"What shall I do, then?" Dick stood for a moment debating. It was a glorious day, cold and clear, except for a heavy bank of clouds slowly rising in the north. It was too lovely to stay stuffed up in the house all the afternoon.

"It won't hurt you. I'll take care of you, and we'll only go on the nearby roads. Come on, Dick," tempted the visitor.

"I ought not to," said Dick, slowly. It was so hard to refuse, for he wanted so much to go.

"Do as you like," said Tom. "I am going." And he carelessly threw himself on the waiting pony.

Just at that moment a low, sorrowful wailing came from Broncho's stall. That decided Dick; he would not be gone long. He would be very careful—oh, very careful.

At first his conscience pricked him a little, but once out in the soft, warm sunshine, and galloping swiftly down the long roads, he forgot his scruples and never before had he enjoyed a ride so much. It was strange that neither of them noticed when the sun sank behind the clouds until they were completely covered with a soft white veil of snow.

"Come, Tom, let's hurry home," called Dick, frightened at the thought of the hour.

"It's jolly now—I am not going until the ground gets covered," laughed Tom.

"I tell you it's going to be a bad storm. I am going home now, Tom, and you can come when you please." Dick wheeled his horse around as he spoke, and galloped in the opposite direction.

"Hi, I say, Dick, come back!" called the older boy, but he was already out of hearing. Tom shrugged his shoulders and rode merrily on.

It was dark when Mr. Wilmer reached home and found his wife in tears, and nearly wild from anxiety. It was bitterly cold, and already the snowfall was quite deep. Between her sobbing Mrs. Wilmer told him that Broncho had just come some with the snow.

Mr. Wilmer did not hesitate an instant. There was only one boy with whom Dick could have gone, and very soon the anxious father was catechising Tom Stimer.

"Dick hasn't got home yet?" Tom asked, a terrified look coming over his face.

"No. Did you make him go?"

Tom looked down. There was no use in denying it. Suppose Dick was lying hurt or frozen in the woods.

"Yes, sir; I asked him to go, but I didn't think it would hurt," said Tom, slowly.

"Come with me, sir, and show me where he left you," commanded Mr. Wilmer, sternly.

It was not an easy task, for the blinding snow made them almost lose their way in the most familiar roads. Hours were spent in the search, and Mr. Wilmer, Mr. Stimer, their servants and the neighbors looked until they were discouraged.

Suddenly a joyful yelp from Dick's dog, a great mastiff, brought the half-frozen and together, and the dim lantern light shed a faint red glow upon a small figure, lying half buried in a drift, white beside him, with head drooped, stood the mastiff.

Tenderly the father lifted his unconscious boy and carried him home. No one suffered so much as Tom during the doctor's consultation, huddled up in a little heap outside Dick's door. Hours wore by, and still no sound from the room. At length the door softly opened, and the kind old family physician came out.

"Why, Tom, what are you doing here?"

"Is he—dead?" sobbed Tom.

"No, my boy; he is very much alive, and in a few weeks he will be as well as you are. Was it you who took him?"

"Yes, doctor," said Tom, manfully; "I despise myself for it; he didn't want to go, and I taunted him into it. I am much older than he is, too. Don't you think he will always hate me?"

"I think, on the contrary, that you and Dick will be better friends than ever. You have learned that the way of the transgressor is not an enviable one," remarked the old doctor, sagely.

And the doctor's prediction came true, for in their boyhood, university and manhood days Dick Wilmer and Tom were inseparable.—N. Y. Tribune.

**THE CATFISH AND THE CAT OF POCHUCK**

When the man who alleges that his residence is over toward Pochuck came this time he seemed laboring under an emotion which he was endeavoring to suppress.

"It's news from Pochuck," said he, dropping into his chair and mopping his face on his sleeve. "It's news from Pochuck, and it's great. But I wouldn't 'a' believed it. No, sir, I wouldn't 'a' believed it."

"And I won't!" said Baldy, the landlord, quickly and positively.

"But I seen it!" said the alleged Pochuck citizen, reproachfully.

Yet doubt stood revealed on the landlord's face plainer than the warts on a crook-neck squash.

"You believe there's holler stumps, don't you?" asked the man.

The existence of hollow stumps couldn't be denied, even by Baldy, the landlord.

"And as to yaller cats," the man went on, "There ain't no doubt about yaller cats, is there? And yaller cats has kittens, don't they?" said the wanderer from over toward Pochuck.

"Not if their name is Tom, they don't," said De Witt Green, of Jolly Farm, who is bound to have things kept straight or know the reason why.

The Pochuck citizen having settled that point to the satisfaction of all, it was admitted that there could be no doubt that yellow cats had kittens.

"And there's catfish, ain't there?" the man asked.

"You'd think there was," said Baldy, the landlord, "if you'd be here some time when I've been fishing for 'em!"

Some folks would have wondered why nobody said anything after that for quite a spell, and why even the man from Pochuck grinned; but the landlord didn't seem to notice this behavior.

"And as to families of young catfish," said the man, after awhile. "Sech things has been heard of, hadn't they?"

Of course they had. Certainly.

"Catfish and their young lives in water, don't they?" asked the bearer of news from Pochuck, intent on setting himself straight.

No one had any record of catfish living more than a day or so on land.

"And nobody that has read about Noah and the flood has any doubt that water gits high, now and then?" asked the man.

The fact was well known.

"Well, then," said the Pochuck citizen, with a look of triumph at Baldy, the landlord, "I seen 'em all!"

"When did you see the water?" asked Baldy, the landlord, maliciously, and Farmer Bill Leonard, who lives opposite Goose Pond Mountain, said: "Shame!" and Farmer Green said: "Tut, tut, Baldy!"

The man who stakes his word on his home's being over toward Pochuck cracked the thumb on his right hand and three fingers on his left, as if defiantly, and said:

"Them's the news I've brung over this time, and I wouldn't 'a' believed 'em. First place, I'd been down to a Sprout Hill stone frolic. If you've never been to a Sprout Hill stone frolic it's a little hard to give you all the pints a Sprout Hill stone frolic has.

"When I got home from the frolic in the evening, Uncle David looked me over and I see he was kind o' begrudin' me.

"I see it was a hummer," says he. "I said it was and I went to bed and forgot to milk the cows. Next morning I thought I'd walk over to the river to see if the water had fell much, 'cause it had been uncompromisin' high. I see that it had fell considerable, 'cause a big holler stump that had been all covered with water was showin' above it for more than two foot, but the holler in the stump was full of water yit.

"I sot down to rest a spell, and as I sot there what should I see but a catfish raise up in the water inside that holler stump and peek down over the edge o' the stump. I never seen a bigger catfish than that one, and I've seen some ol' gozzin' big ones in them Drowned Lands waters.

"When the catfish seen how far below the top o' that stump the river had got, it looked scared, I tell you, and it dropped back into the holler.

"That catfish has been hatchin' its young ones in that stump, not thinkin' about the high water, I'll bet a hoos," I says, and it has been ketchin' there unbeknownst to it."

"I hadn't more than said it, when up to the top came the catfish again, and she had her mouth full o' young catfish. She give a flop, and out o' the stump to the water she went. She released her mouthful o' young ones, gathered herself together, and sprung back into that stump. In less than ten seconds out she jumped ag'in with another mouthful o' young ones, released 'em and back into the stump.

"Five times that catfish went in and out o' the holler stump before she got all of her young ones out safe, and away she swim, the whole big litter of kitten fish follerin' along in her wake.

"This was interestin', and I sot there wonderin' on it when down on to a dead tree that lay out from the bank into the river maybe ten foot or more a yaller cat came troopin'. She was the yalliest cat I ever see and the little kitten that was followin' right at her heels was just as yaller as the cat was.

"The old cat prounced out on to the log as far as she could git, and that brung her close to the water

She scrooched down, and the kitten squatted on the log just behind her and said nothin'.

"There's goin' to be some doin's here," says I. "I feel it in my bones," I says.

"And sure enough, it wasn't long before the doin's begun. They started in with the old cat jabbin' one of her paws down and snatchin' somethin' out o' the water.

"As she riz her paw I see it was full o' somethin' that wiggled and squirmed like all possessed, tryin' to git away. When the cat see what it was that she had she spread a smile all over her face. Her paw was full o' young catfish, and if there is one thing that creeps or flies or swims or runs that a cat likes better than another it's catfish.

"The old cat picked out a couple o' the fish and passed 'em back to her kitten on the log, and gobbled the rest o' the handful herself. They tickled her palate so that she dabbed both paws down in the water and brung up a mess o' young catfish in each one, and her and the kitten got away with them and smacked their lips.

"Then I looked a little closer and I seen the old catfish that had rescued her family from the holler stump. She was layin' by the log, lookin' scared, and I seen that most of her family o' young ones was missin'.

"That cat," says I, "is swoopin' that catfish's family off the face o' the earth, so to speak," says I, "as sure as wasps stingin'!" says I.

"The old catfish hadn't jest got on to what was goin' on yit, but when the yaller cat on the log reached down and scooped out another handful of the catfish's family and dived up with her kitten, that old catfish actually turned white around the gills.

"She seen it all at last, and with one all-wollopin' slash of her tail she jumped onto that log like a britchey cow goin' over a barnyard fence, and Je-e-willikens horax! maybe she didn't swat that yaller cat! She swat that yaller cat off o' that log as if she hadn't been nothin' more than a feather.

"Then the catfish stepped back into the water and waited to see. The yaller cat scrambled back on to the log, and her dander was up as high as it could git. Oh, but she was mad.

"She prounced up and down the log a minute, and at it ag'in she went, scoopin' out young catfish and scatterin' 'em to the winds so fast that I see there wouldn't be one o' 'em left to tell the tale unless the old catfish got her second wind pretty quick and done somethin'.

"And she got her second wind, and riz up ag'in that yaller cat ag'in most exilaratin' for to see. Seems to me for five minutes there wasn't nothin' to be seen on that log but a whirlin' streak o' yaller sort o' mixed up with a whirlin' streak o' black, and cat-cussin'. Merciful man! I jest had to plug my fingers in my ears, I couldn't bear to hear it so!

"When the whirlin' and back-talk quit, the catfish was back in the water. There was catfish hide stretched here and there on the log 'most enough to make a saddle, and enough yaller had scattered about to stuff it with. The yaller cat was sort o' lickin' herself here and there, and the catfish was glarin' at her.

"The kitten was standin' on the log with her back 'way up, and her tail swelled like a rollin' pin, and she was spittin' away at that catfish fierce as wildcats. The last one o' the catfish's family had been swept off the face of the earth.

"The catfish, seemin' that the old cat's kitten was still left, made up her mind that she'd put an end to the cat's family and sort o' even things up, so she sprung back on to that log, grabbed the kitten, and swallowed it, whole and alive, right before its mother's eyes.

"Jumpin' back into the water, the catfish turned and stuck her big head out, close by the log, and as the old cat was tearin' her hair, as you might say, or leas'twys what little she had left, and was mournin' and moanin' for her lost kitten, the fish opened her mouth from ear to ear, so as the cat could hear her kitten cryin' 'way down in the catfish's depths. Say! I could hear that kitten cry myself, way over on the bank where I was settin'!

"Well, that voice of her kitten was more than the bereaved yaller cat could stand. She prounced square on top of the catfish and they both went down together.

"I didn't see nor hear nothin' more of either of 'em for maybe three minutes, and I made up my mind that the cat had gone to join her kitten, when I see a ripple on the water, and the next minute the yaller cat come to the top.

"She swam ashore, and she had the catfish in tow. The catfish was dead, and considerable clawed up.

"The yaller cat drug it out on shore. Then she ripped it open with her claws, and out stepped the kitten, big as a life and twice as natural. It was dazed a little fer a spell, but soon got it's bearings, and trotted away with the old yaller cat as if nothin' had happened, and I didn't see 'em no more.

"There," concluded the man from Pochuck, "them's the news I've brung over this time. Don't you believe I seen 'em?"

Baldy, the landlord, lit his cigar butt, put it in his mouth and said:

"Yes, I do. But you wouldn't 'a' seen 'em if you had stayed away from the stone frolic."

This view of the case seemed to affect the man from Pochuck so that he got up quick, and without even inquire if there were any points around here in any way resembling those of the kind he said he had run against at Sprout Hill, he turned his face Pochuckward.—N. Y. Sun.

**Notice.**

My wife, Julia Cyrus and I have separated for all time to come, and I will not be responsible for her in anyway, or any debts she may contract.

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**Estray Notice.**

Grizzly, Nov. 6, 1902.

Came to my place about the middle of October. One red three year old cow marked with split in right and underbit in left ear, branded big circle on right hip. Owner will please call and pay charges and remove same from my premises or the animal will be sold according to law.

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