

THE FAMILY STORY

GETTIN' SHET OF MARY MASON.

IT was in a little house on a little street of a little Nebraska town—the Town of Bubble.

The little woman was crouched up on the carpet sofa in a limp heap. She looked ill, but sanguine—exhausted, but relieved. The remains of the mid-day meal were on the table. There were traces of ashes about the stove. The baby's gown was begrimed. In spite of these facts the mistress of the modest home smiled sweetly.

"Well," exclaimed her visitor, one comprehensive glance embracing the unwonted neglect of the place, "I heard you were not feeling well, but I did not know you required assistance with your housework. I supposed, of course, your friend Mrs. Mason was with you."

The little woman looked up with a sparkle in her eye.

"O, I'm well enough. I was sick enough up to last Tuesday. I've been gettin' better ever since. I'll have the table red off an' things straightened before Tom gets home. If I feel like it now I can let things be. There ain't no one to notice. Mrs. Mason, she don't come over. Truth is, we've got shet of Mary Mason. We just," in emphatic repetition, "had to get shet of Mary Mason."

The visitor was sympathetic. The little woman was confidential.

"Me an' Tom," she explained, "have lived on farms all our lives. So when we rented the farm and moved into town, I thought the change was fine. 'My! I says to Tom, 'ain't it nice to live in a large place. I never before suspected how comfortable it was to live reel near to folks, an' have them folks neighborly. Out'n the half section we might be two weeks 'thout seein' a body to speak to. An' here we've got 300 people in this town, an' two trains a day—not to mention the freights—an' houses all round us. It's awful nice," I says to Tom, 'but what's the nicest is Mrs. Mason. Why, she comes in that often I ain't got a bit of time to be lonesome for the stock. There's only herself an' her husband, so her work don't count. She can't read or write only Bohemy, an' she ain't got no use for that language since she married out'n her folks. Take it altogether, she's willin' to neighbor lots, an' that,' I says to Tom, 'will be mighty perkin' for me!'"

"Yes," assented her visitor, with a rising inflection on the monosyllable.

"Tom, he didn't say much. He's kind of slow-like. He jest said, 'What sults you, Eliza, sults me!' Well, Mrs. Mason she come. She kept comin'. Sometimes, if she got Samyel off early, she come in before our breakfast. She alius come in before I got the dishes done up. An' she stayed. She stayed all mornin'—even wash mornin's. Sometimes she talked. Right along she kept nibblin'. Sometimes 'twas a bit of cheese, or a couple of crackers, or a hunk of spice gingerbread, or the top off a jar of jelly. 'I can't hear you when I'm a-rubb'n,' I'd say. That never mattered a bit to her. She'd wait till I got through rubbin' an' was a-bilin'. But whether she talked or whether she didn't she alius come, sure as the daylight did, she alius kept a-nibblin', an' she alius stayed."

The narrator treated herself to a teaspoonful of medicine out of a bottle on the window-sill before she proceeded.

"Our girls get home from school at 12," went on the prostrated chatelaine, "an' I alius have lunch for 'em then. Sometimes it's reel good. Sometimes it's only scraps. Anyhow, it's the best me an' Tom can afford. Don't you think she stayed for every one of them lunches? My, yes. She still had to get dinner for Samyel till 1, an' she 'lowed that she most generally got peckish about noon. So she'd set down with the children reg'lar, an' then go across home to get dinner. Lots of times they'd be just a snag of pork, or a gumption of fried potatoes, or as much jam leavin' as you'd sneeze at. 'There ain't nothin' here, Mrs. Mason, to ask you to have a bite of,' I says to her often. 'O laws,' she answers, 'what's good enough for you is good enough for me!' An' she sets down."

Her visitor sighed softly.

"Then she would stay all afternoon. She was alius here when Tom come home to supper. Her husband took his supper at the hotel, so she used to fine us. Samyel never got back from the store before 11, so she'd stay at our house to pass the time. Tom, he'd go for the mail, an' come back, an' there she was. 'Read the noos!' she'd say. Tom, who is natchally polite, 'ud read it. He'd read, an' read, an' read! 'Land's sakes!' Mary Mason 'ud put in, 'go on! I could jest set here all night an' listen.' An' she did—pretty near!"

There was a mournful silence.

"On the farm," continued Mrs. Rob-

inson, "me an' Tom alius went to bed at 8. How was we to go to bed even at 10, with Mary Mason a-sittin' there? 'Land o' the livin'!' she'd say, seeln' me a-patchin', 'I'm glad I ain't got enny children to keep a-shavin' fer—they do take such a slew of work!' But when I got through the mendin', an' Tom had read every word in the paper, even the advertisements—there she was! Tom he'd yawn an' yawn, I'd tell as how I was dead beat, not havin' got much sleep the night before with the baby that was croupy. She never pretended to hear. By'n by, Tom, he'd go into our bedroom that's off the settin'-room, an' he'd haul off his shoes, an' sling 'em on the floor real hard. That didn't stir her. It was awful provokin'."

"It must have been!" her visitor acquiesced.

"Then they was the borryin'. Not that Mary Mason called it borryin'. She said she hadn't a bit of use for folks that borryed. She said when she wanted anything from a person she neighbored with that she just went in an' took it, reel friendly like. That's how our groceries kept a-mel'in'. 'Tain't worth while me buyin' a package of yeast that costs 5 cents,' she'd say, 'when half a cake will make a bakin' for me and Samyel. I'll take a bit of your'n.' The next time she come 'twould be flavorin'. 'No use of me gettin' a whole bottle of vaniller,' she'd say, 'when I only make a cake once a week. A teaspoon 'll do me.' Then there was tea. Samyel drank only coffee, an' 'twould be extravagance for me,' she says, 'to buy half a pound of tea for myself. I'll take a pinch of yours.' So she took a pinch—most every day. Pinches make pounds—enough of 'em. 'Pickles,' she often observed, 'I'm most especially fond of, but Samyel says they rust out the linen' of a body's stomach. So I've made up my mind I'll eat mine over here, an' then he won't know if the linen' o' my stomach is rusted out or not.' I wish," foebly concluded Mrs. Robinson, "that you'd look at that row of empty jars on top of the kitchen press!"

A depressing and significant silence followed.

"Me an' Tom," said the protesting voice, "wanted to talk it over, but 'twas only between 12 at night an' 6 in the mornin' we got a chance. 'Tom,' I says to him one night after she'd been in an' borryed our last half-dozen of eggs, sayin' she'd return 'em when they got cheaper. 'Tom, we got to get shet of Mary Mason!' Tom says, 'I don't know how we're goin' to do it unless we move back on the farm.'"

"But you couldn't well do that?"

"Not reel easy. So I begun to give her hints. I give her all kind of hints. I said as how I'd never been used to sasslety, an' that much of it made my head ache. I said as how Tom just loved solitood—that there wasn't anything he liked better than spending his evenings alone with me an' the children. I said late hours was fearful wearin' on our constitootions, an' that after this we was going to bed not later'n 9 o'clock. I said I couldn't return her visits because Tom hadn't no use for women that was alius gaddin'—an' besides it wouldn't be no use for me to go over seeln' she was never home. Then, an' lots of other gentle hints I gave her. She only says, 'O, stutlin'! I ain't one to make a fuss because a body can't keep up with the rules of ettiquette! I don't mind if you never come over. I won't get mad. I ain't that proud sort. Guess I'll take a bit of that roly-poly over for Samyel's dinner—it'll save me makin' sass.' It was that way right along. When she got through eatin' she was sure to want somethin' to take home for Samyel. 'You jest put an' extry tablespoon of coffee in the pot,' she'd say, 'an' I'll run over with Samyel's cup. That'll save me makin' some.' Well, when I told Tom that them mild sayin's of mine 'ud no more mix into her mind than you could make sulphur blend with water, Tom says, 'Tell her we're goin' to move back on the farm. Maybe then she'll begin to neighbor with the folks that has just got married across the alley.'"

"That very day—'twas a quarter to 12, a week ago yesterday—she come a-walkin' into the kitchen (she never knocked), a big plate in her hand. Like usual she had a whole big welcome for herself. 'I knowed,' she says, 'you was almin' to have a billed dinner today, an' I thought I'd jest run over and get enough for Samyel an' me out'n the pot while it was hot.' So up she marches to the stove, and takes the lid off'n the kettle, an' begins a-spearin' out the salt pork, the turnips, an' the cabbage. 'Sake's alive!' she says, prodin' round, 'there ain't no carrots. Why

ain't yet got some carrots? Me an' Samyel we're reel fond of carrots.'

"'Maybe,' says I, kind of sarcastic like, 'we'll have lots of 'em soon. That is, if we move back on the farm, like we're talkin' of doin'.'"

"Tom thought that'd be a knockdown blow. So did I. But 'twasn't. We didn't know Mary Mason. She smiled all over.

"'Gracious me!' she says, 'if that ain't luck! I told Samyel this mornin' I was clean beat out housekeepin' an' would like a chance to re-cooperate. Here it is! I'll go out to the farm with you an' stay for three months!'"

"Then I knew that my last hint had fall'n flatter'n the breakfast puffs you make from a newspaper prize recipe. I had felt my family peace a-goin', I had suffered my own health a-goin'—an' I seen my dinner a-goin', too. So, I riz in my wrath.

"'No,' I says, 'you ain't comin'—for you ain't goin' to be asked.'

"She bust out a-lal'in'.

"'Mercy me!' she says, 'What a one you are for jokin'! I never see the beat of you, Mis' Rob'son. I ain't so awful pertiekler that I wait for folks to ask me.'

"Then my temper rises. It come up like milk a-billin'. You don't know it's near the top till it runs over. 'I ain't jokin', I says. 'If we move back on the farm 'twill be to get shet of you!'"

"'What's that?' she says, an' stands there a-gawpin'.

"'I'll be to get shet of you!' I repeated reel deliberate. 'This is the last hint I'll give ye, Mary Mason!'"

"'Did she take it?' the visitor queried. A faint smile of triumph illumined the face reposing on the patchwork pillow.

"O, yes, she took it—along with the billed dinner. She said, though, that her faith in human natur' was shook. She said she'd never again try to neighbor with a woman who didn't appreciate the friendliness of persons more accustomed to sasslety. She 'lowed she never had much use nohow for folks who couldn't tell findoosickle from sauerkraut."

"So your ordeal is at an end?"

"We believe so," the little woman said hopefully. "It's a week since we had the billed dinner—most of which we didn't have. She ain't come over since, I'm gettin' my health back. Tom an' me is livin' happy an' peaceful again. We go to bed at half past 8. The children gets all their share at meal times. I red up when I feel willin'. Tom says it's too good to last. He says she'll come back one of these days. Do you think she will?"

"O, surely not!"

"I hope not," returned the little woman, smiling brightly. But the next instant she cast toward the door a furtive glance that was dark with dread. "We've got shet of Mary Mason I know, but—will we stay shet?"—Chicago Tribune.

In the Canaries.

A tourist in the Canary Islands says: "I know nothing more cheerful to the vagabond than the readiness of friendship among the common people of the Canary Islands. Go where you will abroad you may shake the hand of the beggar, loafer, peasant and cottager. All have the same free and hearty welcome for you. They seem to delight in outlandish acquaintance, and if you happen to be a woman you instantly appeal to their better selves. Here, as elsewhere, I have kindly memories of people whose names I never knew and who did not know mine. I remember driving by diligence with a brave and heroic-looking young gentleman, beautifully clad. He wore long boots, radiant linen, velvet breeches, a short, smart jacket and a wide-brimmed hat.

"Men of breeding might go as far as his native village to acquire his perfect manners. Wondering who this picturesque and operative young man might be, I afterward questioned the diligence driver (a rascal I had reason to suspect of stealing my bag, with all my things, and the wonderful bargains in Orotava lace and embroidery I had driven), and learned that he was a village butcher. So with all the trades people here, I wanted to match some stuff sold me by a woman of Orotava down at Santa Cruz, and was informed I could apply to Don Pablo, or Don Pedro, and then to Don Nicholas of the Puerto. Surnames are suppressed—every one is still as well born as they were on the peninsula in the days of Lope de Vega—and the German ambassador, asking for a servant's credentials, was presented with proof of his descent from a Gothic king."—Good Words.

A Lucky "Spec."

Several days ago the schooner Robert I. Carter struck on Alden's Rock, and to all appearances was a total loss. Nautical experts agreed that she would leave her bones there, and her owners stripped her and sold the bulk to Charles Bartlett, of this city, who bought it for \$70 on "spec." Last night's wind and tide floated the schooner off, and to the amazement of the salts, she came drifting up the harbor. Bartlett had her towed in. She is worth \$45,000, and has besides a cargo of 1,200 tons of coal, most of which is salable.—Portland (Me.) special Boston Herald.

The old-fashioned copper, or 1c piece, was a little more than an inch.

LASSOED A MOUNTAIN LION.

The Daring Exploit of Two Intrepid Californians.

Two men living in Green Valley, in the mountains east of San Diego, had a lively experience with a mountain lion recently. They were on their way to the Griffin ranch on horseback, and Mrs. Hobbs, mother of one of them, was with them. Young Hobbs was riding ahead, with Griffin behind him, when a sudden turn in the creek bed through which they were passing took Hobbs out of sight for a second. In that brief space there was an unearthly howling and screeching, followed instantly by the rearing and plunging of the horses. Mrs. Hobbs shrieked in fright and there was a general hubbub.

A mountain lion had jumped out upon young Hobbs, uttering ferocious cries as it leaped on the horse's shoulders, and used its hind claws with great rapidity. Hobbs' leg, fortunately was encased in long boots of heavy leather, which resisted the lion's onslaught. The horse in plunging dislodged the screaming brute, which darted back under the shadow of a cactus thicket. Hobbs reached for his gun to prepare for another attack. Griffin had his hands full in looking after Mrs. Hobbs, whose horse had become unmanageable.

Placing her at a safe distance in the rear, he returned and hastily put up a scheme with Hobbs to take the big brute alive. Hobbs was to draw it from the thicket, while Griffin, with a lariat ready, was to rope it. Griffin retreated a few steps, making his lariat ready, while Hobbs, with a warwhoop, dashed toward the clump. The lion, crouching in the shadow, screamed with rage and jumped out toward him, frothing at the mouth and spitting. The horse trembled with fear.

At that moment Griffin spurred forward, threw the lariat with steady aim, and in another second had the lion struggling in the dust with a tight rope around its body. It clawed and screeched, making a frightful uproar, but Griffin, sinking the spurs in deep, dashed down the road, dragging his feline captive over rocks and cactus. Hobbs ran back, got his mother, and returned, bringing up the rear. Griffin kept up a lively dog trot in order to keep the line taut, while the lion wasted its energy clawing at the rope, occasionally making a sally toward the horse in front of him.

Hobbs, by attacking it from the rear,

be made to travel either forward or backward or sideways, as desired.

Two turrets, fitted inside with ladders leading to air-tight doors, support a platform, from which are long rope ladders leading to the water. In this fashion the boat can withstand the heaviest seas. The method of propulsion is somewhat expensive in its waste of steam power, but that is a secondary matter, when the main consideration is the prompt rescue of shipwrecked sailors without risking the lives of the rescuers. The odd-looking craft is now on view in one of the Atlantic cities.

WAIF FROM WOUNDED KNEE.

Little Lost Bird Was Found on the Famous Sioux Battlefield.

The battle of Wounded Knee Creek which took place six years ago between the Sioux Indians and the grizzled veterans who had fought under the gallant Custer, is still fresh in the mind of our readers.

The Sioux uprising, as it will be recalled, had its inception in the Ghost dance. Orders had been issued for the disbanding of Big Foot's band. The order aroused hostility among the



THE WOUNDED KNEE WAIF.

Sioux, and without hesitation the "medicine" man threw a handful of earth into the air. This was a signal for the Indians to fire. The United States troops, Custer's old regiment, under command of Col. Forsythe, charged back, and after the battle was over "nothing that wore a blanket was alive." The slaughter of the Indians was terrific. The next day a terrible blizzard set in, and for four days the dead were left alone in the ravine where the battle had waged.



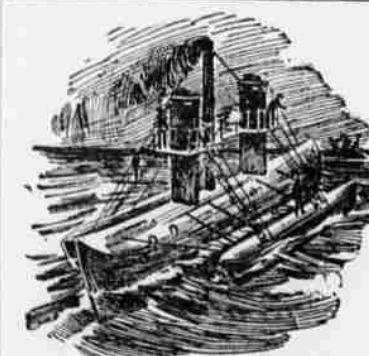
HE LASSOED THE LION AND CAPTURED IT ALIVE.

distracted its attention, so that before long the ranch house was reached. There another lariat was secured, and the lion was conquered and placed in a cage. It was a fearful spectacle, covered with dust and blood and uttering fierce growls as it turned its great yellow eyes upon its captors. It was very lean, and hunger had evidently impelled its luckless onslaught.

LIFEBOAT OF NEW DESIGN.

Cylindrical Life-Saving Boat Which May Be Propelled Sidewise.

The old-fashioned lifeboat, which too often upsets and drowns gallant fellows bent on saving the lives of others, may soon have to give way to a curious-looking craft which has been built. The new life-saver consists of three iron cylinders strongly knit together. The largest one in the center is divided into five air-tight compartments, and holds the boiler and machinery. The two



LIFE-SAVING BOAT.

smaller ones on either side are intended to give it stability. There is neither paddle-wheel nor screw; not even a rudder, all of which things are apt to be injured in bad weather. Instead there is a large central pump, which forces jets of water through certain orifices. In this way, by closing one set of openings and uncovering another, the boat can

On the fourth day a babe was found on the battlefield. A bullet had killed the squaw, but as she fell she had gathered her blanket closely about the child. This, with the heavy covering of snow, had kept the baby warm. It was almost perished from hunger, but soon rallied when placed in the care of some Indian women. As the women crooned over it, and slowly nursed it back to life they constantly wailed, "Zintka Lanuni," meaning "poor lost bird." Col. Colby, who was in command of the United States troops, and wife, were touched by the incident, and as the parents of the babe, both full-blooded Sioux, had perished in the battle, negotiations were made for the purchase of the little one. This was accomplished, and for six years little Zintka has been cared for with devotion by her foster parents.

Little Lost Bird has grown to be a very bright child and will receive a thorough education under the direction of the foster mother, who is a well-known woman suffragist. Her home is in Beatrice, Neb.

Pins.

Pins, previous to 1824, were all made by hand, and were, consequently, very costly. Pin-making machines have been brought to a state of perfection. They now receive the wire from the spools, cut it into proper lengths, make the head and point, polish the pins, and, by a most singular piece of machinery, gather up, at one motion, a proper number to compose the row, fold the strips of paper and pass the pins through. A slight movement of the roller bearing the paper pushes it forward a little further. It is again caught up by the clamps and another row of pins pressed into position. It is claimed, for some of these pin-making machines, that they can manufacture 500 pins a minute.

A 1c bronze piece is three-quarters of an inch in diameter.