

FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL

THE TRED AVON TOURNAMENT.

BY LYNN ROBY MEEKINS.

I WONDER what Walter is doing," said Mr. Rogers, as he laid down his newspaper. "It's been fully two hours since he went away."

"Walter's all right," replied Uncle Tobias. "I'll go on his bond for good conduct."

"Oh, you are boys of one feather, and I hardly think your bond would be worth much."

Uncle Tobias was rather an old-looking boy. His head was nearly bald, and what little hair he had was gray. He was Walter's uncle, and he was fully three years older than his brother, Walter's father. But he was one of those bright, sunny natures that do not care for the increasing years as long as they are able to make somebody happy. Uncle Tobias had come to the Rogers farm for a stay of several months, and had brought a fine horse to Walter, his nephew, aged fourteen. The two "boys," as Mr. Rogers called them, often went off for a day's riding, and beyond the fact that they entered the big strip of woods called Piney Forest no one knew their travels. Sometimes Walter would go alone, and an hour or so afterward Uncle Tobias would ride out and come home with him.

"I believe I'll go and find him," said Uncle Tobias, looking at his watch, and he called the negro servant Ephraim to get his horse ready.

Before the horse came three girls ran out on the porch.

"Where's Walter?" they asked in chorus.

"Gone away to escape from you, girls," replied Uncle Tobias.

"What have we done?" asked Miss Bartie.

"What have you done? Who put chestnut-burs in his bed last night? Who sewed up his pockets? Who set his alarm-clock at two in the morning? Who—"

"Well, please tell us who sent us a box of caramels made out of soap, and who put the pumpkin scarecrow at our window?"

"Yes; who gave him cotton muffins for breakfast?" continued Uncle Toby. And who—yes, you young beauties—who woke Uncle Toby—poor old Uncle Toby—at four o'clock in the morning and told him that there was fire in the house?"

"So there was—in the kitchen range," said Mary.

"Oh, was there? I have a great mind to punish you all right here and now."

With a scowl he walked toward them, as they huddled together for a moment in mimic dismay, and then with shrieks of laughter scattered, and fled away from him in different directions.

"Now don't you feel ashamed of yourselves? Don't you? If you don't I'll punish you again—I will indeed," he called after them. "But here 's my horse. I'm going to find Walter. Out in the woods we'll have some peace, and maybe we'll build a hut and stay there."

The three girls waved their handkerchiefs and threw unnumbered kisses at Uncle Tobias as he rode down the lane. When he got to the big gate, he turned and snook his riding-whip at them, but they greeted his action with a great flourish of their big hats, and one or two screams which were lost on the air.

Uncle Tobias used to say to Mr. Rogers that these three girls were enough to make any man love the entire female sex. He was never happier than when joining in their merrymaking or threatening them with all sorts of terrible things. He seemed to feel neglected unless they teased him or played some little prank upon him at least once a day. And they "adored" him.

The girls were just suited to one another. Their ages ranged from twelve to fifteen. Mary was Walter's sister. Bartie, her school friend, and Lucy, her cousin, were making her their usual autumn visit of two weeks. When they got together in the house, and had Uncle Tobias and Walter's subjects, they took complete charge, and Mr. and Mrs. Rogers quietly submitted to their rule.

The two boys did not submit; they carried out their part and added to the jollity of the home. Walter thought he was ahead of Bartie, but the night before, when he jumped into bed and found he had some chestnut-burs for company, he said to himself that he would have to get even for that or his reputation would be ruined.

"Girls," asked Mr. Rogers, after Uncle Tobias was gone, "why do you and the boys make so much noise?"

"They have a secret," said Bartie, "and we want to know it."

"What makes you think they have a secret?"

"Oh, we are sure of it. They go away to Piney Forest every day and stay there for hours, and when they come back Uncle's horse looks as fresh as ever, while Walter's is tired and worn out."

"Walter rides more, that 's all."

"Oh, no, it is n't. Uncle always knows where to find Walter, too. And they won't tell us anything. They've got some secret, and we are going to find out what it is."

At supper the girls tried their best to get the secret out of the two boys, but they tried the worse they succeeded. Then, giving it up, they turned the conversation on the tournament which was to take place the next day. It was the great event of the fall. It was not a mere exhibition given by outsiders, but a real contest of the horsemanship of that section. The young men who were to take part in it belonged to the leading families, and the sharpness of the rivalry made every home excited and interested long before the date for the riding. For years the tournament has been a pleasant institution in Maryland and Virginia, and to-day it is as much of a social event, with all the chivalry of the olden times, as it ever was. The tournament at Tred Avon was particularly attractive because Tred Avon is the center of a splendid grazing section, and the horses are noted for their speed and beauty; and, what is more, the handsome young men are there to ride the horses, and to crown the "Queens of Love and Beauty" who reign so delightfully in the neighboring homes.

The Rogers household had been fully interested in the tournament, and had discussed it for days. This was the night before it came off. They talked it all over, and the girls spent the evening in guessing about it and trying to name over the people they would meet.

The morning came. Everybody was up early. The servants had the baskets loaded with fried chicken and cake and Maryland biscuits and pies and fruit and a lot of other things, for there must be an abundance not only for the party, but for the friends whom they would invite to share the luncheon. The girls came forth looking, with their new dresses and rosy cheeks, as beautiful as fresh flowers. Walter was there, too. He went up to Bartie and asked to look at her scarf.

As soon as he got hold of it he quietly wound it around his arm and marched off.

"Bring that back," she commanded.

"Oh, not now. Let me have it awhile."

Just then the other members of the family appeared, and Mr. Rogers, who was always particular to be on time, called out:

"Here, girls, get on board or we shall be late. Help them up, Tobias. There, mother"—he always called

more picturesque than his rivals.

"The Knight of Northampton, prepare to charge!" shouts one of the judges.

The knight's horse jumps from the long line into the open field with his head turned toward the arches.

"Charge, Sir Knight!"

Down he comes through the course at full speed: He misses the first ring, gets the second, misses the third, reins up his horse, and takes his position at the right of the third arch. Then other knights make trial for the rings, with varying success, but none taking two rings until the Knight of No Name is reached. He is the most famous rider in the country, and everybody is watching him. He justifies his fame—for he secures all three rings. The next knight gets two, the next one; and then the big man with the big voice calls out:

"Knight of Piney Forest, prepare to charge!"

Walter's horse leaps forth. The girls tremble with excitement, Uncle Tobias risks a broken limb by climbing to the highest seat.

"Charge, Sir Knight!"

Ah, how splendidly the horse responds! There is no halting, no shambling, but a clean, swift, steady run. Like a flash he darts toward the first arch, Walter erect and cool, the scarf flying, and the lance straight



"THE KNIGHT OF PINEY FOREST" TAKING THE THIRD RING.

Mrs. Rogers "mother." "Now, Tobias. Walter! Where is that boy?"

"Master Walter told me to tell you, sah, that he was goin' to ride down on his hoss, sah, and not to wait for him, sah!" said Ephraim.

"Very well," said Mr. Rogers. "Go ahead, Eph."

They arrived at the tournament ground in good time, and secured a fine position. What a crowd it was! All the neighborhood was there—fathers, mothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, families, sweethearts, children, and city folks.

There were hundreds of carriages, hundreds of horses—all the people dressed in their best, and all chatting and taking away and guessing at the results of the contests. In front was the level field with the three arches, from the center of each of which hung a little red ring. The knights were to run their horses full speed through this course in turn, each trying to take all three of the rings upon his lance. The sky was bright, the air glorious, and the crowd ready and eager for the riding.

"Here they come!" shouted somebody down the line.

There, over the crest of the hill several hundred yards away, rode the knights, mounted on the finest horses of the country, wearing brilliant colors and waving plumes, and balancing their long spears with graceful precision.

Slowly the knights came, two by two, while the band played stirring music. A pattering of applause accompanied them. Suddenly, as they reached the stand, they wheeled in one long line, and, with caps off, saluted the orator of the day.

But before he began his speech, which was the charge to the knights, something happened to our party.

"Do my eyes deceive me, I wonder?" exclaimed Uncle Tobias. "Who is that little fellow near the end of the line?"

"Why!—it 's Walter," cried the others, in a chorus, and a quiet laugh rippled over the face of Uncle Tobias as he enjoyed their surprise.

"He 's wearing my scarf," said Bartie.

"Quiet over there, please," said some one across the way. "Listen to the speaker."

Yes; the gentleman in the frock-coat is getting eloquent. He is telling the Sir Knights about the chivalry of the olden days, about the fair fame they must maintain, and about the lovely young ladies whose beauty must spur them on. And at last, with a great flourish of adjectives and a shower of compliments, he bids them ride to win.

The band plays. The knights salute and wheel into parade. Slowly they march to the lower field and take their places in one long line, the horses side by side, eighteen noble beasts with eighteen gaily costumed and athletic riders. Walter gets plenty of attention, for he is a boy among young men, and his handsome, manly bearing merits comment and praise, while the pretty scarf fluttering in the breeze makes him a bit

and firm. All eyes follow him.

"One!" counts the crowd in chorus.

On the horse goes—Walter calm, the scarf flying, the lance steady.

"Two!" counts the crowd, louder than before.

Swifter sweeps the steed—Walter calmer yet, the scarf in a straight line, the lance firmer than ever.

"Three!" shouts the crowd, and the applause breaks forth from hundreds of throats and resounds in a thousand clapping hands.

"Good for Walter!" bellows Uncle Tobias.

"Oh, I 'm so glad!" "Is n't it lovely?" cry the girls.

"The boy can ride," remarks Mr. Rogers.

"I 'm really proud of him," says his mother.

"Don't get too proud yet awhile," answers Uncle Tobias. "It 's n't quite over."

Walter's good start might mean a bad ending. In fact, it looks very much that way in the second tilt. The Knight of No Name takes three rings again. When Walter's turn comes there is the same excitement. He starts down the course superbly.

"One!" Yes, he gets it.

"Two!" No, he misses it. Uncle Tobias groans.

"Three!" He takes it; and the crowd cheers again, although not so loudly as before.

"What a shame!" grumbles Uncle Tobias.

"I think he rode very well," said Mrs. Rogers, coming to the rescue of her boy.

"Of course he did, of course he did; but he had no business to miss that ring."

"I believe they put it on crooked," says Bartie, and the girls echo her sentiments.

"Well," says Uncle Tobias, "let us be quiet and hope for something next time."

They hope. The Knight of No Name misses a ring and takes only two, making his score eight. When Walter's turn comes everybody is in a hubbub. Will it be a tie? Uncle Tobias forgets all about the people around him. His eyes and ears are all concentrated on Walter.

"Knight of Piney Forest, prepare to charge!"

"Steady, now, my boy, steady," mumbles Uncle Tobias.

"Charge, Sir Knight!"

At full tilt comes the horse, with Walter the coolest person on the field.

"One!" counts the crowd.

"Two!" it says again.

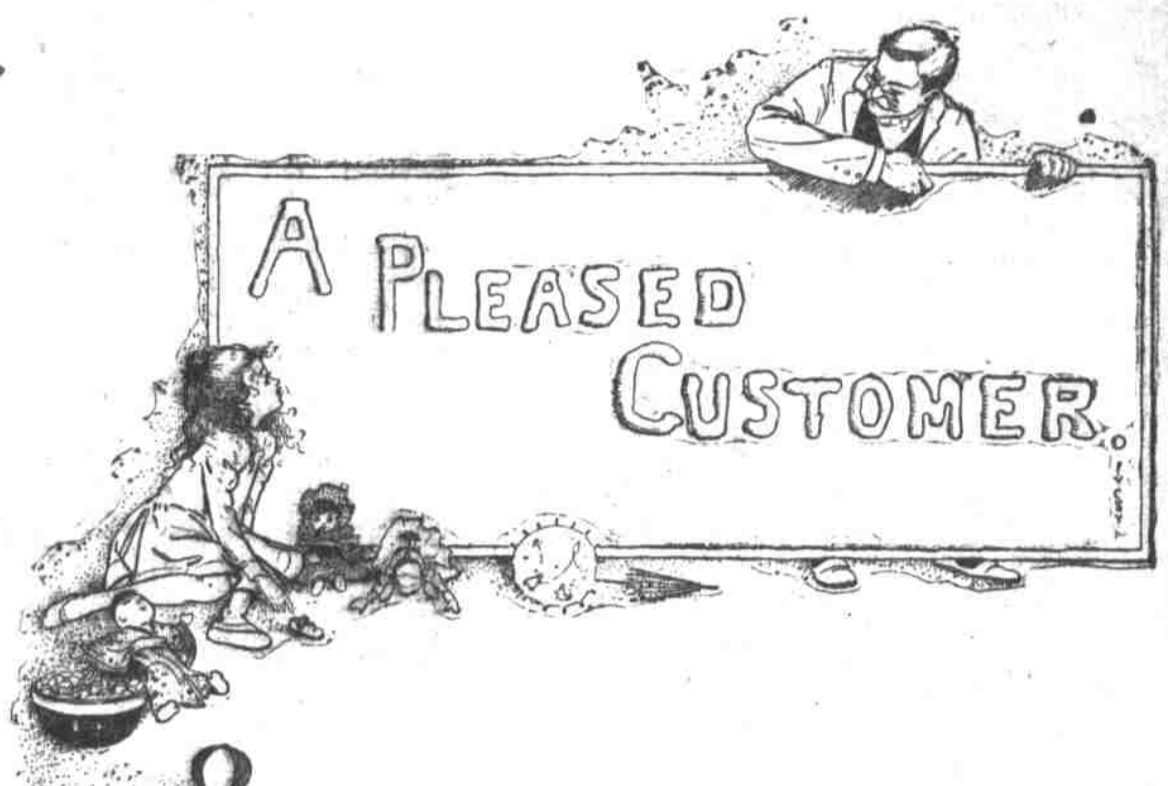
"Three!"

"I knew he 'd do it!" shouts Uncle Tobias.

"A tie!" exclaims the crowd.

And the cheers go up and the applause drowns all conversation, as Walter and his opponent ride up to the judges' stand.

Of course the tie causes great excitement. Sixteen knights retire from the field. The Knight of No Name, a handsome man of twenty-seven, and the Knight of Piney Forest, a manly fellow of fourteen, are the con-



BY TUDOR JENKS.

"I was a wonderful shop that I went to to-day; I don't like to think it was nothing but play, For I was so rich I could buy what I chose— Whatever in Asia or Africa grows. There were rings, there were toys, there were sugar and tea,

There were rich silks and laces all offered to me. And the price? At the most 't was a penny or two; Failing these—why, a bit of white paper would do!

The merchant was young, not seven years old, But for manners and graces one could not have told That the storekeeper was not a time-honored dame Whose ancestors prouid in the "Mayflower" came.

"What will you have, sir?" And when I said, "Well, I 'd like first to know what you have here to sell," She replied: "We have candy (here, papa, this rice), And beautiful dolls, at a very high price!"

"And, wait till I think—yes, I know—some fine coal (that is, the building-blocks, piled in my bowl); And here 's a glass slipper that was Cinderella's (I mean this doll's shoe), and some tiny umbrellas; There 's tea—very strong—and some coffee, all ground, And real sugar lumps—but they 're two cents a pound;

And oh, lots of things! Please buy something—do! Don't laugh, papa dear!—please play it 's all true!"

HOW DO YOU KNOW

There's a boy in the house?
By the cap that is hanging downstairs in the hall
By the gun and the pistol, the bat and the ball;
The Indian war-dance, the toy-cannon's roar,
That are heard, now and then, through the nursery door;

By the engines and drums and the tool-chest and nails,
The steam-cars and tracks and the boats with trim sails;
By the volumes of Cooper which from cover to cover
Have been read and re-read by an Indian-lover.

"But you must take care, if you value your head,
When I open the door there's a scramble and shout;
I'm attacked by a brigand, and I'll never doubt
Who clutches me fast, as a cat does a mouse—
Well, these are good signs there's a boy in the house!"

There's a girl in the house?
By the beautiful doll with the movable eyes—
A French doll that sleeps, and that talks, walks, and cries;
By the toy-house and trunk and the stove and the chairs;

By the needle and thread, in the nursery upstairs;
By the doll-hats and furbelows made every day
For Annie and Sallie and Bessie and May;
By the soft little laugh and the sweet little song,
Which never to grown folks or boys could belong.

"And if you run up to the nursery floor,
And go to the room, and then open the door,
Aunt Dorothy says, "Well, when I take a peep,
And see a wee mother-a-rocking to sleep,
Her own little doll, as still as a mouse—
Why, then I am sure there's a girl in the house!"

restants. Walter has the larger share of sympathy, but the crowd is disposed to encourage both with plentiful applause.

The Knight of No Name rides again. He gets the first—the second—and misses the third. Uncle Tobias remains perfectly still, and the girls hope and hope.

The Knight of Piney Forest prepares to charge. A thousand eyes are upon him. He is as calm as a statue. Like the wind his horse dashes down the course. The scarf flies straight, the lance is steady.

"One!" says the crowd.

"Two!" it almost shouts

"Three!"

And now there is a wild cheer sure enough. Uncle Tobias pommel, with his big stick and cheers with his hearty voice. The girls clap their hands until they are red as the roses in their cheeks. Mr. and Mrs. Rogers look very happy, for their friends crowd around to congratulate them on their son's riding.

When Walter reaches the stand he is in the midst of

a babel of compliments. All want to shake hands with him, and his schoolmates almost pull him off his horse. For the first time in the day he begins to get flustered, for he cannot take all this praise half so well as he could take the rings.

After a while, with many handsome words, the judges give him the first prize, a pretty arrangement of white fancy-work, and he makes his way over the field to join his party. He holds the wreath behind his back in one hand and carries Bartie's scarf in the other. His mother greets him with a good, sound kiss.

"Well, done, my boy," says his father. "Oh, Walter, who would have thought it!" exclaims his sister. Uncle Tobias says nothing, but stands behind the girls and winks.

And then Walter says to Bartie, "I 'd like now to pay you back for those chestnut-burs," and he holds the scarf toward her; she reaches for it, and Uncle Tobias quickly removes her big hat, and almost before she knows it Walter has placed the wreath upon her head, and she is crowned Queen of Love and Beauty,



A GENUINE VIRGINIA CREEPER.