

(CONTINUED FROM SECOND PAGE.)

of myself; a story about something that happened to me when I was a little girl, and of all the harm that came of my old nurse's telling me about the old woman wrapped in a blanket who would come to carry me away if ever I was naughty and disobedient.

And then auntie, sitting with Robbie on her lap, told us her story:

When I was a little girl like Hattie papa and I were living alone here. When I say alone I mean that my poor mamma had died, and we were the only ones of the family left on the farm.

But we had a servant, who took care of the house, and old Maria, who took care of me and mended my clothes, and then there was the man who worked the farm, as papa's business in the village kept him away from home all day.

Now, Maria was very good and kind to me, and loved me very dearly, even though I was a wild little thing, always running away and getting lost, and giving her a deal of trouble, I dare say.

I suppose it was because I was so hard to manage and so very naughty that she first told me the story of the old woman in the blanket.

One night, after I had got into bed, and she had tucked me away and was going out with the light she stopped to say:

"I'm afraid if you ain't any better to-morrow than you've been today, Miss Jane, and if you don't stop runnin' into the woods, the old woman in the blanket will come after you." (I had been very, very bad that day, and I suppose poor Maria was at her wits' end to make me behave.)

"What old woman in a blanket?" I inquired, sitting up in bed.

"Never mind," Maria went on mysteriously, "I tell you there's an old woman in a blanket who comes after all naughty girls, specially them that runs away into the woods when they're told not to."

Then Maria went away with the candle and I lay alone in the dark with my mind full of the old woman in the blanket.

I was very good for a little while, and I suppose Maria thought she had done a fine thing in making up the story, as it seemed to have so good an effect upon my conduct. Indeed I thought a great deal about the old woman in the blanket.

Playing about in the fields in the daytime, I would sometimes forget all about her, but whenever I was quiet, and especially at night, I fell to imagining all sorts of dreadful things, about how she looked and what she would say and where she would take me.

Maria soon found that whenever I was unruly and disobedient all she had to do was to remind me of the terrible old woman in the blanket, so by and by I began to feel quite sure that at some time or other I would certainly be punished by her, and sometimes I was dreadfully frightened at night and used to cover my head up with the bedclothes, just as Robbie did a while ago.

Now, you must know, for I think I've told you, I was always expressly forbidden to go into the woods.

I didn't see very much of papa, as he was away all day, but I remember he often said to me:

"Jennie, you may play about the fields and over in the meadows as much as you like, but you must not go into the woods alone."

You see, there were snakes there, and besides, the woods were very dense (it was almost a forest), and there were so many paths that even a grown person might easily get lost there. How it was that I ever forgot my old woman in the blanket so entirely I don't remember, but anyway, one day I ran after a poor little rabbit that was lame and that couldn't go very fast, and as I wasn't thinking of anything but the little limping creature, whose home I was so anxious to see, I suddenly found myself in the midst of the forbidden woods.

I must have been running for a long time, for I found myself in a place that I had not known before, and I had made so many turns along the paths that I looked around bewildered, because I couldn't tell in what direction home lay.

"Oh, dear me!" I cried to myself, very much frightened. "I didn't mean to be disobedient. I didn't mean to come into the woods at all."

Indeed, I had not meant to come. I was seldom naughty deliberately, and most of the mischief I got into was the result of thoughtlessness and carelessness.

But anyway here I was in the woods, and I must get out of them. I looked and looked, and finally started out bravely to the left, as the way looked a little familiar. But though I walked on and on, and sometimes ran a little, it all grew more and more strange about me, and I finally stopped in dismay.

"I must be going the wrong way," I almost cried aloud, "and oh!" (I held my breath in terror) "what is that?"

A long, low rumble, and then the trees began to moan and shake their heavy branches, as if they, too, were trembling in fear.

Plash! Plash! A great drop fell upon my bare head. Suddenly there was a dreadful crash. In a moment everything grew dark, and then the thunder and the lightning and the furious rain all seemed to come together, and I was alone, all alone, lost in the woods, and night was coming on! Then I cried out as loud as I could in my terror.

"Oh, what a bad, naughty girl I have been!" I sobbed. And then I thought of the old woman in the blanket, and my tears dried in very fear, and I looked about trembling. I had made it up in my mind just what she would look like. She would be shriveled up and very old and all bent over, and the great blanket would cover her up from her head to her feet, and oh! this would be such a dreadful place to meet her! I almost believed that I could see her coming along through the trees. I threw myself on the ground and covered my face with my apron, and oh! what was that?

I felt a touch on my shoulder. I was almost dead with fright, when I heard a gruff but kindly voice say:

"Wall, sakes alive! If it ain't a little gal! Look up, sissy! What ails ye!" My heart gave a great bound of joy, and

looking up I saw a big, bearded face bending over me. The man had a dog with him and a gun. I couldn't speak. Another great crack of thunder came. I could only cling to him and cry.

"Lost, I s'pose?" he asked, taking me up in his strong arms.

"Yes, y-es, sir!" I finally stammered.

"Umph!" exclaimed my deliverer. "Wall, I reckon I'd better take ye to the cabin and dry ye off, and then we'll see where ye belong."

The dog bounded ahead, and the big, kind faced man carried me easily on one arm, and, shouldering his gun, made great, bold strides through the woods.

He must have known them well, for a black night was coming on and the rain was blinding. We had gone only a little way when a bright and ruddy light appeared. Here we were at the "cabin."

The door opened into a cheerful kitchen, and at the threshold stood a young girl holding a lantern.

"Here ye are, pop!" she cried in welcome. "Look out, Jack!" to the dog, who, covered with mud, made a leap at her.

"Why, pop! what on earth have you got there?"

"Gal," was the only reply of the big man.

"Gall Lost? Oh, the poor little thing!" cried the girl, and then I was put in a chair by the kitchen fire, and my wet shoes and stockings were pulled off and so was my dripping gown, and I was wrapped in a big, warm shawl and given a cup of hot milk to drink.

They were very kind and gentle to me, rough people though they were, and neither papa nor I ever forgot their goodness to a poor little stranger.

When I could speak without shivering I told them my name and where I lived.

"I shouldn't have come into the woods," I ended. "I've been told not to, but I was running after the rabbit to see where he lived, and I ran on and on and forgot."

"Why, pop," exclaimed the girl, "it's Mr. Harvey's little girl."

"Oh, yes," said the man, "I know squire Harvey."

"Please, sir," I asked, "are you the hunter?"

"Aye, I s'pose so," answered the man. "leastways, I hunt most of the time."

"Then," I said, beginning to cry again, "then I'm far from home, way at the other side of the woods." I had heard of the hunter's cabin. "Oh," I went on, "what will they say at home? They will be so frightened! What shall I do?"

The man went to the window and looked out.

"The storm is ragin'," he said, and indeed we could hear it.

"I tell ye, little gal, you'll have to wait till mornin'. No one could ever get through them woods to-night."

I felt dreadfully, careless as I was. I knew how they would suffer at home, and yet there was no help for it.

I cried and sobbed, and after a while the girl carried me up the little rickety pair of stairs to her own tiny room.

There were only two rooms up stairs—the girl's where I was taken, and her father's. It was a poor little room, but quite clean, and the bed was very, very narrow.

"There," said the kind hearted girl, tucking up my little body under the warm quilt. "I reckon I'll have to sleep on the floor; I've got some bedclothes down stairs put away, so I'll git 'em out. Now, I'll just leave you the candle, and I'll be up in an hour or two."

Then she went away, and left me alone in the strange little room. I looked about me as I lay. It all seemed so odd and my head felt so queer, and now and then a cold shiver would run up and down my body.

I couldn't sleep; my eyes were wide open.

There was an old rag carpet on the floor, and over in the corner a funny old fashioned chest of drawers and a poor little table on which the candle stood, and one worn out chair.

Bang! bang! went the shutters! Oh, how the wind howled, and then would come the sudden, fearful crashes of thunder that seemed directly above my bed!

I trembled so that my teeth chattered. I should have been very warm, for the coverings on the bed were thick and plenty, but still I felt very, very cold and shivered dreadfully. It was silent except for the noise of the raging storm without.

I was frightened up there, all alone, in that strange place.

The candle flickered and made ugly shadows on the wall, and, oh! I wished that the girl would come up stairs. I thought of papa and Maria, and longed for the day to come that they might know I was safe and sound.

And presently I knew nothing, for a few moments, it seemed to me.

Bang! bang! went the shutters again. I sat up, wide awake, with a dreadful terror in my heart.

In the moment that I had slept I had dreamed of the old woman in the blanket. I was not cold now; I seemed to be burning up, and I tried to call out. I wanted some one to come to me; I was so afraid, what with the storm and my dream and the strange, lonely place.

My voice seemed very faint and weak, so I crawled from the bed, and it was hard to move. The candle was still flickering on the table, and cast but a dim light into the little passageway.

I reached the stairs, but all seemed silent below. Nothing was to be heard but the rumbling of the thunder and nothing was to be seen, but—what was that?

There, there in the corner! Something white, bent over, and, yes, a blanket, a great yellow blanket, covering it up!

I had left the door ajar and a faint ray from the candlelight rested upon the old woman! The old woman in the blanket! I only remember screaming out loud, as Robbie screamed a little while ago.

One bright morning I opened my eyes, and was surprised to find myself in my own bed, and in my own pretty room at home.

I felt too tired to speak, and just

closed my eyes and tried to remember what had happened.

Presently I heard voices.

"Poor little dear!" Maria was saying. "I'm so glad the fever has gone. Master has been so worried. This morning he went to the village for the first time since Miss Jane was brought home with the fever."

"Oh, yes," replied another voice, a voice I had heard in my dream, and indeed it was the voice of the hunter's daughter. "She's all right now, I reckon."

"Tell me," said Maria. "Tell me again, just how it came on."

"Well, you see," answered the girl, "I had put her in bed safely, and then I went down and got pop's tea. It was stormin' dreadful. After a while I fetched out the pillows and blanket that I was a-goin' to make my bed of on the floor, and took 'em up stairs, and stood them in the passageway, and then I went down again to finish a bit of mending, while pop read the paper. All on a sudden we heard a dreadful scream, and when we ran up the stairs we found the poor little gal laying in the passageway moanin' and tearin' in the fever. Then, next morning, pop came over and told you, and the little thing was fetched home."

"And very good and kind you have been, my dear, and we are very grateful," said Maria.

Then it all came back to me, my dream, my waking and stealing out to the head of the stairway, and my vision of the terrible old woman in the blanket standing in the corner.

I astonished them and frightened them both very much by suddenly sitting bolt upright in bed.

"What did you say?" I eagerly asked the girl. "What did you say about putting the bedclothes up in the passageway?"

"Bless the child!" cried Maria. "She's in the fever yet, and doesn't know what she's a-talking about."

"Yes, I do," I declared. "I saw something in the corner, something white, with a blanket over it, and—and I thought it was the old woman."

Then the girl told me how she had put a white case on the bolster she had got out for her bed, and how she had taken a couple of blankets and come up stairs with them. But seeing that I had fallen into a light sleep and hearing me moan, she had been afraid of waking me then, and so had placed the things in the corner, intending to come up by and by.

After a while, when the girl had gone, I called:

"Maria!"

"Yes, my deary," she answered, coming quickly to my side.

"Maria," I asked, solemnly, "is there any old woman in a blanket?"

"No, no, my deary," cried Maria, very sorry for her thoughtlessness. "I only said it to make you mind, and it was very wicked of me."

Robbie had fallen asleep, but the rest of us were listening eagerly to Aunt Jane.—New York World.

**Credulity.**

Usually, in bewitching a person, it was thought necessary to possess something closely connected with the victim, as a lock of his hair, a nail paring or even a small quantity of his saliva.

The belief engendered by the shamans often had very serious consequences to innocent persons. If a shaman told a patient that he was afflicted by a disease which a certain man or woman had charmed into him, the consequences to the supposed offender were often serious enough, and such beliefs led to many deaths.

This is particularly the case in Africa, where the same belief occurs, and thousands are yearly sacrificed, because they are supposed to have afflicted others with disease spirits, or to be the authors of misfortunes of one sort or another.

The power too "hoodoo," that is, bewitch, is believed in by a very large number of the negroes of this country. In fact, such beliefs are common to the ignorant everywhere, be they red, white or black.

We should not be too ready to despise the Indian who holds them, since faith in charms, fortune telling and similar nonsense survives today among civilized people who ought to know better, and many are they who thrive by the practice of such arts. Credulity does not die with sorcery and barbarism, but lives on, and will continue to live until men grow much wiser than they have yet grown.—H. W. Henshaw in Youth's Companion.

**Cheaper Rings Are Bought.**

A jeweler tells me that the fashion of buying expensive diamond rings by young men just engaged is gradually dying out. "Understand me," he said, "the girls still get their engagement rings, and they are pretty, too; but they don't average over \$70 or \$80 in price. Time was when the haughty bride to be would have turned up her dainty nose at any ring that cost less than \$200, but now, although there is just as much romance and just the same passion for diamonds in her composition, the New York girl rightly reasons that she is living in a practical age, and that a cheaper ring and a more expensively furnished flat will give her the most satisfaction. I know a man with an income of \$10,000 and the satisfaction of being engaged to a millionaire's daughter. How much do you think her engagement ring cost him? Just \$150, and the bride went into ecstasies over it."—New York Star.

**Not Very Objectionable.**

Little Boy—Mamma, I had the nightmare last night, awful.

Mamma—That's because you had so much cake and preserves.

Little Boy (hastily)—Nightmares don't really hurt, you know; you only think they are goin' to, same as playin' ghost. I like nightmares. They is real fun.—New York Weekly.

An instance is on record of a pigeon flying twenty-three miles in eleven minutes, and another flew from Rouen to Ghent, 150 miles, in an hour and a half.

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