

## \* CHILDREN'S PAGE \*

EDITED BY MISS CAROLYN W. KETCHUM.

### WILLIE'S TEA PARTY.

'Tis Willie's birthday and you see  
Three little boys come in to tea;  
But oh! how very sad to tell,  
They have not been behaving well.

The little boy whose name was Ned,  
He wanted jelly on his bread.  
The little boy whose name was Sam,  
He vowed he would have damson jam.  
The little boy whose name was Phil,  
Said, "I'll have honey! Yes, I will!"

But—  
The little boy whose name was Paul,  
While they were quarrelling, ate it all.

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### Old Aunt Susan's May-Basket.

Margaret and Mildred were sitting on the floor of the sewing-room, in the midst of heaps of fluffy tarlatan, with berry boxes and paste-board boxes of all sizes and sorts scattered about in hopeless confusion.

"Mamma, let's hang a May-basket for old Aunt Susan," said Mildred. "Oh, yes, Milly, a green one with cowslips in it," eagerly cried Meg, ever ready to help and always thinking up some one's preferences. Now, Aunt Susan was a poor old woman who lived at the edge of Oldtown and quite alone. She had lost her husband and sons long ago and had lived by herself ever since. She sewed, nursed, and in fact did most anything one wanted done, and thus kept the wolf from the door. She could tell the most wonderful stories about the little fairies that live everywhere—in the woods and in the green grass right at one's door, and everywhere one looks—good or bad, just as we feel.

All the children, far and near, loved her; and Milly and Meg loved her very dearly for they knew her very well.

"I think it would be nice," said Mrs. Lott, "to hang a basket for Aunt Susan, and a very pretty idea to fill it with cowslips, as she is so fond of them. Shall you—oh, Harry, we were speaking of May-baskets; the girls will make one for Aunt Susan." Said the son of the house, barely eleven, "Why, mamma, it's so silly! Why don't you have the girls do something worth while. Bob Train said today, he didn't know of a more silly thing than hanging May-baskets." And this small man who had lately begun to affect a great scorn for all old home customs, because Bob Train, his chum, and whose mother found little time to bestow upon him, thought it "silly" for boys to do such girl-baby things.

But Harry's mother found a great deal of time to spend with her children, so understood them well, and she knew that Harry, in spite of his fine scorn for such "silly" things as May-baskets, thoroughly enjoyed hanging them. So she wisely ignored the allusion to Bob Train's idea of the matter and continued helping the little girls plan their work. Meantime, our friend Harry stayed in the sewing-room, probably wondering if Bob Train was right after all, for Harry had always helped with the baskets, too, and it had been such jolly fun to think up some good joke for somebody's basket.

"I think we might place a May 'box' as well as hang a basket. We could put in a package of tea and some coffee, and wrap them in tissue paper, and wrap them lots, so it will be such a surprise when she opens each one, mamma."

"Yes, Meg, and we can put in some of the black walnuts we gathered last fall, too," said Milly. "And," continued mamma, "potatoes, and some rhubarb, rice and a little of several things that she can use."

"Oh, mamma, can't we give her the little shawl she wants so much? It's only a dollar, and it's such a pretty little brown and white one." "Well, Milly, how much money have you in your bank? and you, Meg?" Out they flew, upsetting work-baskets and what not in their eager haste. "Twenty-eight cents is all I have," ruefully exclaimed Meg. "And I have only thirty-six," said Mildred. "Mamma, I will have 50 cents in mine after I pay for my foot-ball, and we can just take that.—I don't want it anyhow," added Harry carelessly. "Then that's settled," said mamma, accepting Harry's aid without

a word of surprise. Then they all talked about Aunt Susan's box, every minute thinking of something to add to it, when suddenly mamma said, "but it will be so heavy, do you suppose Bob Train will help you carry it, Harry?"

"Yes'm I will, Mrs. Lott, and I'd like to put in a spool of thread, or—or—something too, for Susan sewed me all up nice one time when I was afraid ma would scold me 'cause I tore my coat," said Bob, who had come in search of Harry, and had stood at the door a few moments unobserved.

The next night being May-day night and time for all May-day fairies to be at work, the four, Milly, Meg, Harry and Bob, started gaily out with a pretty basket in each hand; some full of flowers, others with popped corn and candy, and some with candy dolls and all sorts of funny jokes. Oh, such fun as it was, hanging a basket on a door-knob, ringing the bell and then scurrying away. Of course each door was quickly opened—for what boy or girl doesn't watch the bell on May-night—and the pursuit began. But our boys and girls were swift runners and were not once caught; so they were soon through, all but hanging Aunt Susan's. And, of course they must go home for those.

How excited they grew as they neared her house! Would she be away from home? No; there was a light in the window. Softly, softly they tip-toed up the gravelled walk to the step, then when the basket was carefully hung and the box placed on the top step, all but Harry hid behind the large elm trees in the yard so they could see Susan when she should discover the things. Harry rapped loudly, then he, too, hurried behind a tree.

In another moment the door opened and there stood Susan, expecting to see some one, for Susan had not thought of May-baskets.

After peering about and seeing no one she glanced down and was more amazed than before.

"Lawdy me! Dew tell! The fairies have been around for certain sure. A rare big May-basket for old Susan! Well, well; humph—my, but it's heavy! Dear me, what am I a breshin' agin? Lawdy, another! a rare baskit this time—and cowslips! Bless the child's heart, that's Meg's doin's. I told her once about little Sam's a likin' of 'em so. Well, I'm that proud, now!"

And then she closed the door and they couldn't hear another word, but they could see her through the window, and she looked quite "that proud" as she took package after package out of the box and unfolded its many wrappings; for Meg had insisted they must be done up very much.

As they came to Bob Train's gate, he said, "say, let's hang 'em every year."

C. W. K.

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#### WHAT HE SAW.

One little star came out to see  
How fair the night was going to be.  
He smiled at the church and at the steeple,  
He peeped at the homes and at the people.

He saw and heard somebody cry,  
And—back he popped into the sky.  
"Oh, don't come out!" cried the little star,  
It's much more pleasant where we are.

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#### "Tree Top" and "Seamy Bark."

"Oh, how joyful it is to feel that I'm still of some use in the world," squeaked Edna's doll-cradle, as she rocked it to and fro.

"Well, it's all very well to feel so about the matter, but I'd far rather be growing in my old place on 'Castle Oak,' in the woods where little Mabel used to play under its shade," grumbled Lois' cradle.

"That sounds very interesting, tell us about your Miss Mabel, old grumbler."

"Well, Mr. Scoffer, then I will, since you're so kindly interested. I grew near the base of 'Castle Oak' for full three feet upwards, and was always broad and strong and dressed in the loveliest rough bark, so thick, and draped

in so many folds, that little blue-eyed Mabel chose me as the best one of all for the walls of her own castle room; for she found the style of my cloak just right for her tapestries.

She set up her china in one place, hung her pictures in another and made of Roots and me just as cosy a little home as you'd see in many a day's journey. Every sunny day she came to play beneath old 'Castle's' shade and told us about her plans, and made us every one, Roots, Branch, Trunk and even Leaves feel that we were doing a noble thing to grow, that we might thus give pleasure to so fair a queen.

"Old Tree Top whispered down to Roots and me one night, that the wind had told him sad news: That 'Castle Oak,' as sweet little Mabel had called us all, was to be cut down the next morning, for we had been sold to a man who wanted fine oak for cabinet making.

"'Twas a great blow to us all; we had grown there for so many years, a pet for more than one; the king of the forest, and now to be hewn down and sent adrift, after being pierced by nails, torn by many saws and scraped and polished until we wouldn't recognize each other. To leave the birds that had nested for generations in our Branches, and our old friend the Wind, whom we loved in spite of his many moods—his tempests and his whispered confidences equally dear,—our coats to be stripped off, ourselves dismembered and—at a cabinet-maker's mercy!"

"The men appeared before us early in the morning of that fresh June day, and began their torturous work. I will spare you the details of all that has come to me since then, but must tell you that little Mabel cried out her childish grief on poor old Stump and said she would never, never love another tree as she did old 'Castle Oak.'"

"Well, well, my friend," said Mr. Scoffer in a husky voice, "your story is very sad; but can't you be satisfied with the joy you afford little Miss Lois, and be glad you have met so happy a fate instead of being used for stove-wood as if fit for nothing better?" Oh, don't preach," snapped Grumbler, "no doubt I could have been more badly used."

"I see, old chap, you're a little under the serf today, but come, listen to this little mother's happy chatter and be thankful."

It is the story hour.  
"Come, bring your dollies' cradles, now, sweeties, and mamma will tell you about the queer bye-lo cradles she had when she was a little girl," said the mother of these little friends of ours, Edna and Lois.

"When I was a wee child like you, little girls, my mamma took me to visit grandpa, who still lived in the country on the farm where she had lived as a child. I had so many dollies, just as you girlies have, but unlike you, I had no cradle. Grandpa was going to make me one, but one day when I was picking wild flowers in the grove down in the hill-pasture, I sat down to rest under a great oak tree, with great big roots that grew partly out of the ground and made such cosy looking nooks between each other and the tree.

"The tree on the shady side had such nice seamy bark, too, that I could stick my fingers in it, and I idly poked them here and there until as high as I could reach, the bark was stuck full of them. It was such a cosy little place that I made it my play house. I put my bits of china and glass and my cut-out pictures in that pretty piece of bark, laid my doll-babies in those root cradles and had the cosiest little house that ever was seen. There were no little children at grandpa's for me to play with, so the oak and I became very fond friends. I told it all my secrets, and gave it a name, and told it to be my castle for I was a princess fair; and its bows must be my many rooms, its leaves my servants, its twigs my gallant knights.

"I was very happy with my dear old friend, the King Oak;—'Oh,' said Scoffer sadly to Grumbler, 'I had begun to think I was listening to your little Mabel's story of 'Castle Oak' '—'S-s-sh, listen, murmured grumbler in bated breath.'—and felt very snre he thought as much of me, and never once dreamed that our good times were to be ended soon. But one morning 'twas almost half noon when I started to my play-house under dear old 'Castle Oak'—Lois, how your cradle does squeak!"

Stop rocking it for a bit, dear;—"Control yourself, old boy," anxiously cautioned Scoffer.—and little girlies! my dear old friend lay on the ground,—my airy castle cast down; my knights, many of them crushed, my rooms topsy-turvy, my servants sadly agitated, my old friend Roots forlorn; my castle-turret Tree top (so high it took brave knights a lifetime to reach it,) lying as low as Stump itself; and dear old Seamy Bark, my tapestry, sawed off. For, children dear, the tree was sold to a man who uses fine wood for making beautiful furniture—a cabinet maker; and only Stump and Roots were left."

"Oh, mamma, do you think Castle Oak grieved, too, like you did?"

"I don't know, dearie, we'll talk about it another time, for I've told you a long story and it's far and away past girlies' bed time now, so no more tonight.

Soon silence reigned in the nursery. But what was that, a mouse squeaking? No; but Grumbler's tearful, happy voice. "Dear old Solomon, for I cannot call you Scoffer now, it is more than I deserve; at last, after lying at the old cabinet-maker's so many years unused, neglected, to be thus brought to this glorious use—a cradle for little Mabel's own blue-eyed child! But you have taught me a lesson, and I think my unmerited happiness has made me humble at last."

"Well, o'd chap, I guess it would seem more homey if you were to call me Tree Top instead of the fond names you've given me, for claim identity with old 'Castle Oak Turret.'"

C. W. K.

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#### HOW TO DO IT.

Jack Spride  
Liked nothing fried.  
Which made his faithful wife decide  
To boil the doughnuts quick and hard.  
In a pot of hot and hissing lard.  
He found them on the pantry shelf,  
And ate them, holes and all, himself.  
"I can't abide a thing that's fried,  
But these are boiled,"  
Quoth Mr. Spride.

ANNA M. PRATT.

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#### Auntie Maud's Story.

'Twas such a dark and stormy afternoon, and though it was only three o'clock, the children were tired of their play and were longing for something to do, when Dorothy happened to think of Auntie Maude. Away she ran to find her and to beg her to tell them a story. At last she found her in the library and exclaimed, "a story, a story about a girl, Auntie Maude!"

"No, about a boy," said Roll.  
"A story of 'venture,'" teased Rob.  
"But why not one of a girl and a boy and a 'venture,' too," asked Auntie Maude.

And this is the story she told; a true story, too.

"When Joe and Sue Watson were 9 and 6 years old, their parents moved to Kansas to live out on a ranch. This was a very great change for them all, for they went to western Kansas, where there were no trees, just sand-hills, grass, thistles and cactus; and no pretty little runs or brooks like they used to wade in on grandpa's farm. But Joe and Sue found a great deal to interest them in their new home, and so did not miss companions as they had expected to, for there were no boys or girls for them to play with as their nearest neighbor lived five miles away.

"The sod corral and sod stables were being built when they arrived, and it was such fun to watch Jim Crow plowing up the sod and to ride behind his oxen when they hauled the big pieces of turf to the spot. One ox was "Cherry" and the other he called "Buck;" it amused the children very much to hear him call out "Gee, Cherry" and "Haw, Buck" and to see them turn to the right or left as he had said.

"Other men were at work digging a great big well, and when it was finished they put in a wind-mill and built long troughs for the sheep to drink from when the wind-mill pumped the water. All over the prairies were hollows, long and broad, which were called "buffalo wallows," because they had been made by the herds of buffalo, wallowing to brush away the flies and mosquitoes and to shed their coats; for you must remember, there were no trees or such things for them to rub against. Those

wallows were made when millions of buffalo roamed over the plains.

"Joe and Sue often pretended the buffalo were stampeding straight toward their well and would hide in the "dug-out," that wasn't far away, and would imagine all sorts of fanciful things; and sometimes they would seem so very real that Sue would get a bit nervous and suggest they play something else.

"The great flocks of sheep and the bands of wild horses, and the many herds of cattle and antelope appeared very wonderful to these eastern children and afforded them a few adventures, too. Would you like to hear about their two small carriage horses? They were such pretty little bays, Baby and Ray. They were used for nothing but driving and for the children to ride, and were given the best of care. The children petted them a great deal and were very fond of them indeed. When summer came, Joe and Sue went most every evening with their father to picket the horses out on some hill-side for the night. One morning they were nowhere to be seen and could not be found even after a diligent search; and every one supposed the band of wild horses had coaxed them to run away from their kind little friends.

"The children were very lonesome for a long time—no Baby or Ray to feed, no nice pet horse to ride or drive.

"But sometime the next winter after Joe and Sue had gone back east to stay, a man found both of the horses with a band of wild horses he had captured; and he first recognized them by the old tattered halter on Ray, and when he saw the other bay horse so very like, which kept so near the "halter-horse," he knew for certain who they were. The children never saw them again, but were very glad to hear of their being such good friends still.

"Once Mr. Watson took a trip to Colorado, and when he returned he brought each of the children a young magpie. Their chatter, chatter, chatter was very amusing to the children, and when a ranch neighbor told them the magpies would learn to talk if their tongues were slit, they thought them the most wonderful pets they had ever had. But their tongues were never slit; and not very long after the birds were brought to them, Jen fell into the rain-barrel and was drowned. Poor Mag grieved for her companion and refused to be comforted. She would sit on the peak of the wood-house roof and wouldn't even come down to eat or drink. But after a time she seemed more cheerful and came down to eat and would let the children pet her as before. But there came a sad day when Mag flew away with a flock of magpies.

"One afternoon when Mr. and Mrs. Watson had driven to the town, and the herders were all out with the sheep, Joe said, 'I'm tired of staying in the house, let's go out and slide off of the hay-stack.' And so Sue hurried into her little red coat and hood, and off they ran to the stack, which stood near the sod corral. You know what fun it is sliding off the hay, and what warm cozy play it is for a cold, windy day, so you can understand how they failed to realize that the sun was sinking low and that they should be in the house. Just as they were ready for another slide they heard—thud, thud, thud on the ground and looking up saw a cow come pelting across the prairie almost by the house. They soon found that she was after water and was running straight to the troughs. But when she saw the children on the stack, she was startled and alarmed almost as wild animals are at the sight of a man, and stopped with head in air and giving an angry snort seemed to demand of them their business there. Joe loved to tease, and knowing how afraid Sue was of cows, thought he would tease her. So he waved and waved her red hood on the pitch-fork to attract the cow's attention and succeeded in a way he did not anticipate; for the cow came tearing over to the stack and with angry bellowings pawed and hocked the hay. Joe wished he hadn't been so mischievous; but he saw a way out of the danger if they were very quick. They jumped from the opposite side of the stack into the corral and scooted across into the stable, where they stayed until their father came home. By that time the cow had gone away and only the trampled stack showed in what danger they had been. But you may guess that Sue was ever