

THE OLD BARN.

The light flashed in, past each shrunken board. And blazed in the fragrant bay. There the wifely hens their eggs had stored.

PETERSON'S BOOBY.

The people of Lowerton were more or less given to talking among themselves about the boy. And in talking about him they always evinced a deep pity for the parents, because they had born to them one who was of weak and foolish intellect.

He was now a boy of a dozen summers, and far from attractive in outward appearance, being singularly grotesque of form, and in his movements, awkward in the highest degree.

He went to the village school, and on all occasions conducted himself with a decorum which ought to have put to shame many of his schoolmates. It is open to grave doubt, however, if he ever required a knowledge of the alphabet, since, notwithstanding the fact that his teacher sought most assiduously to instill into his mind an acquaintance with at least the simplest rudiments of the mother tongue, she failed most signally in her efforts to elevate the intellectual condition of one who had been far less endowed in this respect than his fellows.

The years went by, and Tommy was now nearing his sixteenth summer. He no longer attended school, possibly for the reason that he had grown tired of the never-ending monotony of study which fell to his lot.

His mother had passed to her grave leaving her husband to alone watch over and care for the one whose existence, it must be confessed, had brought to her life the pain of grievous disappointment. In the foundry near his home Clem Peterson toiled day after day for the support necessary to himself and the dependent upon him, while Tommy—an idle nobody—wandered here and there about the village as curiosity prompted him, the sport of the small boys, and the butt of the large ones.

At length winter relaxed her rigorous hold upon the year. The air grew milder, the snow began to melt, the ice-bound streams to burst from their long imprisonment, while spring, in all the plenitude of her joyance and beauty, stood waiting in the distance the glad proclamation of earth—'Return!'

alarming intelligence that "Booby" had fallen into the river. Instantly all the men dropped their work, and started to go to the rescue of the unfortunate youth.

"Oh!—he's got out—he's got out! Got out all himself, too, I reckon!" shouted the lad, as he gazed toward the river some rods away. The men paused short, and bent their eyes in the direction referred to, and, sure enough, who should be seen coming hurriedly up the path leading from the river but the veritable Tommy holding his arms extended as he walked, the water dripping from his face and garments like rain, and the poor fellow an object certainly of pity, yet merriment.

"Feller citizen!" remarked Ruben, with an air of great seriousness and dignity as Tommy drew nearer. "Here-in is fulfilled the lofter prophecy once delivered by our valued associate (turning toward Burns) respective our young friend. (Now looking in the direction of Tommy.) Though startlin', it was a brave act on his part! He did it! Behold the—cuss!"

Several persons were led to indulge in laughter, and that of an immoderate character, because of Ruben's speech, though the greater number, out of regard, I think, for Peterson, refrained from any exhibition of hilarity. But the father apparently unmindful of the unkindly pleasantry on the part of the speaker, as also the merriment it had occasioned, went to his boy and taking him by the hand as if he had been the very paragon of sons, led him gently past the crowd of onlookers to his home, God had sent to him to care for and love.

Summer glided into autumn, and autumn died in the embrace of winter. In the foundry at Lowerton, Clem Peterson continued to toil as he had done, though he was not the same man even that he had been. His hair had grown very gray, his form was bowed, his movements were less sprightly, while in his heart there brooded more and more deeply the sorrow which, like a slow yet certain poison, was wearing his life away. But Tommy was the same personality as formerly, only in physical stature he had grown until he was taller than most youths of his years. No special incident had occurred in his history since the adventure narrated, save as this had been several times repeated in his case, and on one occasion, in late summer, when a circus had visited Lowerton, he had allowed himself to be too familiar with the elephant, the result being he was suddenly and ungracefully lifted several feet into the air, and, descending to terra firma, he had been severely reprimanded by the keeper for his daring impudence.

At length winter relaxed her rigorous hold upon the year. The air grew milder, the snow began to melt, the ice-bound streams to burst from their long imprisonment, while spring, in all the plenitude of her joyance and beauty, stood waiting in the distance the glad proclamation of earth—'Return!' Upon the high hills skirting the valley of the Huron the dissolving snows descended the steep slopes, and the little river, which in summer-time and early autumn was as peaceful and fairy-like as a poet's dream, commenced to overflow its banks and enlarge its borders until it was as a sea. For more than fifty miles back from its mouth, at the head of Lake Erie, like a demon unfettered and free, the Huron rolled and plunged on hour after hour, sweeping in its mad career everything in its path. At no point in its course did its waters rise to such a height and spend their fury with so much strength as at Lowerton, where, in the brief space of forty-eight hours, property accessible to their influence and aggregating thousands of dollars in value was destroyed, families rendered homeless and poor, and human lives swept ruthlessly into eternity.

On the evening preceding the first day of the flood the people of the village retired to their homes at an early hour, little realizing the terrible events of the morrow. It was no unusual thing for the Huron to overflow its banks at this season of the year, but to do more than this was so rare an event it had not happened in over twenty years. Early the next morning, as in groups the excited inhabitants hastened to the scene of desolation and danger, and gazing up and down the valley beheld home after home surrounded by the merciless elements, and the occupants thereof worse than prisoners, it needed but a glance, as it were, on the part of those who were safe beyond all harm, to understand that steps must be taken immediately for the relief of the sufferers. In less than half an hour more than a dozen boats, manned by skillful men, put out in various directions to the rescue of those who, with hearts full of anxiety and fear, were watching and waiting for deliverance. Among those who that hour stood gazing out upon the awful scene was the poor dejected youth, Tommy Peterson. Standing with arms akimbo, his head stretched forward, his eyes staring wildly about, and the wind playing with his long, unkempt yellow hair, he presented a picture which savored indeed more of the ludicrous than the serious.

Did he really understand the significance of all that was taking place, or was he prompted to lend his presence to the occasion because there was something going on?

By ten o'clock that forenoon fifteen families—with the exception of six members—residing in humble yet comfortable homes in the valley, homes of which they had become possessed through the hard, slender earnings of years, these had been removed to the village and cared for under hospitable roofs. They had been saved from the frenzy of the flood, but the rest, consisting of property, either had been or was soon to be borne away a wreck upon the deep and mighty current. So men who, at early daybreak, had at tempted to ford the stream to the village in search of help had lost their lives in the effort, and the bodies were not recovered until the subsiding of the waters on the seventh day.

One among the many eminent church dignitaries who have given their public endorsement to the wonderful efficacy of St. Jacobs Oil, in case of rheumatism and other painful ailments, is the Right Reverend Bishop Gilmore, Cleveland, Ohio.

Prof. George L. Voss, whose manual on railroad engineering is authority the world over, was one day puzzling over the time card on the wall of the Boston and Maine station, without making out what he wanted to know, when the president of the road, Mr. Furber, came by and accosted him.

"I am very glad to see you," the professor said. "I wish you would help me out with this time table. I cannot make head or tail out of it."

"The president joined in the investigation, and for some moments the pair floundered about among a. m.'s and p. m.'s with no satisfactory results whatever. "Oh, I never can make anything out of these things," President Furber exclaimed at length. "Let's ask somebody!"

"When do you think congress will adjourn?" Senator Hoar was asked. "I don't know now," he replied. "There were \$40 sent into the conscience fund yesterday, and I suppose we will have to stay until Senator Blair gets up a bill to give the money away to somebody."

"When do you think congress will adjourn?" Senator Blair was asked. "Oh, it's impossible to tell now," he answered. "I see that Senator Hoar has given notice of his intention to deliver a speech." [Washington Hatchet.

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