

THE LIGHT IN THE CLEARING

A TALE OF THE NORTH COUNTRY
IN THE TIME OF SILAS WRIGHT

By
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AUTHOR OF
"EVEN HOLDEN, D'NE AND I, DARREL OF THE BLESSED ISLES,
KEEPING UP WITH LIZZIE, ETC., ETC."

I discovered that I was in desperate pain and trouble and I got to my feet and ran. I didn't know where I was going. It seemed to me that any other place would be better than that. My feet took me toward the barn and I crawled under it and hid there. My lip began to feel better, by and by, but big and queer. It stuck out so that I could see it. I heard my uncle coming with the horses. I concluded that I would stay where I was, but the dog came and sniffed and barked at the hole through which I had crawled as if saying, "Here he is!" My position was untenable. I came out. Shep began trying to clean my clothes with his tongue. Uncle Peabody stood near with the horses. He looked at me. He stuck his finger into the honey on my coat and smelt it.

"Well, by—!" he stopped and came closer and asked.

"What's happened?"

"Bee stung me," I answered.

"Where did ye find so much honey that ye could go swimmin' in it?" he asked.

I heard the door of the house open suddenly and the voice of Aunt Deel.

"Peabody! Peabody, come here quick," she called.

Uncle Peabody ran to the house, but I stayed out with the dog.

Through the open door I heard Aunt Deel saying: "I can't stan' it any longer and I won't—not another day—ayes, I can't stan' it. That boy is a regular pest."

They came out on the veranda. Uncle Peabody said nothing, but I could see that he couldn't stand it either. My brain was working fast.

"Come here, sir," Uncle Peabody called.

I knew it was serious, for he had never called me "sir" before. I went

slowly to the steps.

"My Lord!" Aunt Deel exclaimed. "Look at that lip and the honey all over him—ayes! I tell ye—I can't stan' it."

"Say, boy, is there anything on this place that ye ain't tipped over?" Uncle Peabody asked in a sorrowful tone. "Wouldn't ye like to tip the horse over?"

I was near breaking down in this answer:

"I went into the but'ry and that pan jumped on to me."

"Didn't ye taste the honey?"

"No," I drew in my breath and shook my head.

"Liar, too!" said Aunt Deel. "I can't stan' it an' I won't."

Uncle Peabody was sorely tried, but he was keeping down his anger. His voice trembled as he said:

"Boy, I guess ye'll have to—"

Uncle Peabody stopped. He had been driven to the last ditch, but he had not stepped over it. However, I knew what he had started to say and sat down on the steps in great dejection. Shep followed, working at my coat with his tongue.

I think the sight of me must have touched the heart of Aunt Deel.

"Peabody Baynes, ye mustn't be cruel," said she in a softer tone, and then she brought a rag and began to assist Shep in the process of cleaning my coat. "Good land! He's got to stay here—ayes!—he ain't got no other place to go to."

"But if ye can't stan' it," said Uncle Peabody.

"I've got to stan' it—ayes!—I can't stan' it, but I've got to—ayes! So have you."

Aunt Deel put me to bed although it was only five o'clock. As I lay looking up at the shingles a singular resolution came to me. It was born of my longing for the companionship

of my kind and of my resentment. I would go and live with the Dunkelbergs. I would go the way they had gone and find them. I knew it was ten miles away, but of course everybody knew where the Dunkelbergs lived and any one would show me. I would run and get there before dark and tell them that I wanted to live with them and every day I would play with Sally Dunkelberg. Uncle Peabody was not half as nice to play with as she was.

I heard Uncle Peabody drive away. I watched him through the open window. I could hear Aunt Deel washing the dishes in the kitchen. I got out of bed very slyly and put on my Sunday clothes. I went to the open window. The sun had just gone over the top of the woods. I would have to hurry to get to the Dunkelbergs before dark. I crept out on the top of the shed and descended the ladder that leaned against it. I stood a moment listening. The dooryard was covered with shadows and very still. The dog must have gone with Uncle Peabody. I ran through the garden to the road and down it as fast as my bare feet could carry me. In that direction the nearest house was almost a mile away. I remember I was out of breath, and the light was growing dim before I got to it. I went on. It seemed to me that I had gone nearly far enough to reach my destination when I heard a buggy coming behind me.

"Hello!" a voice called.

I turned and looked up at Dug Draper, in a single buggy, dressed in his Sunday suit.

"Is it much further to where the Dunkelbergs live?" I asked.

"The Dunkelbergs? Who be they?" It seemed to me very strange that he didn't know the Dunkelbergs.

"Where Sally Dunkelberg lives."

That was a clincher. He laughed and swore and said:

"Git in here, boy. I'll take ye there."

I got into the buggy, and he struck his horse with the whip and went galloping away to the dusk.

By and by we passed Robin's Kate. I could just discern her ragged form by the roadside and called to her. He struck his horse and gave me a rude shake and bade me shut up.

It was dark and I felt very cold and began to wish myself home in bed.

"Ain't we most to the Dunkelbergs?" I asked.

"No—not yet," he answered.

I burst into tears and he shook me roughly and shoved me down on the buggy floor and said:

"You lay there and keep still; do you hear?"

"Yes," I sobbed.

I lay shaking with fear and fighting my sorrow and keeping as still as I could with it, until, wearied by the strain, I fell asleep.

What befell me that night while I dreamed of playing with the sweet-faced girl I have wondered often. Some time in the night Dug Draper had reached the village of Canton and got rid of me. He had probably put me out at the water trough. Kind hands had picked me up and carried me to a little veranda that fronted the door of a law office. There I slept peacefully until daylight, when I felt a hand on my face and awoke suddenly. I remember that I felt cold. A kindly faced man was leaning over me.

"Hello, boy!" said he. "Where did you come from?"

I was frightened and confused, but his gentle voice reassured me.

"Uncle Peabody!" I called, as I arose and looked about me and began to cry.

The man lifted me in his arms and held me close to his breast and tried to comfort me. I remember seeing

door of his office and set me down at his desk. The cold air of the night had chilled me and I was shivering.

"You sit there and I'll have a fire going in a minute and get you warmed up."

He wrapped me in his coat and went into the back room and built a fire in a small stove and brought me in and set me down beside it. He made some porridge in a kettle while I sat holding my little hands over the stove to warm them, and a sense of comfort grew in me.

He dipped some porridge into bowls and put them on a small table. My eyes had watched him with growing interest and I got to the table about as soon as the porridge and mounted a chair and seized a spoon.

"One moment, Bart," said my host. "By Jingo! We've forgotten to wash and ye're face looks like the dry bed of a river. Come here a minute."

He led me out of the back door, where there were a wash-stand and a pail and tin basin and a dish of soft soap. He dipped the pail in a rain barrel and filled the basin, and I washed myself and waited not upon my host, but made for the table and began to eat, being very hungry, after hastily drying my face on a towel. In a minute he came and sat down to his own porridge and bread and butter.

When he had finished eating he set aside the dishes and I asked:

"Now could I go and see Sally Dunkelberg?"

"What in the world do you want of Sally Dunkelberg?" he asked.

"Oh, just to play with her," I said as I showed him how I could sit on my hands and raise myself from the chair bottom.

"Haven't you any one to play with at home?"

"Only my Uncle Peabody."

"Don't you like to play with him?"

"Oh, some, but he can't stand me any longer. He's all tired out, and my Aunt Deel, too. I've tipped over every single thing on that place. I tipped over the honey yesterday—spilt it all over everything and soiled my clothes. I'm a regular pest. So I want to play with Sally Dunkelberg. I want to play with her a little while—just a wee little while."

"Forward, march!" said he and away we started for the home of the Dunkelbergs. The village interested me immensely. I had seen it only twice before. People were moving about in the streets. One thing I did not fail to notice. Every man we met touched his hat as he greeted my friend.

It was a square, frame house—that of the Dunkelbergs—large for that village, and had a big dooryard with trees in it. As we came near the gate I saw Sally Dunkelberg playing with other children among the trees. Suddenly I was afraid and began to hang back. I looked down at my bare feet and my clothes, both of which were dirty. Sally and her friends had stopped their play and were standing in a group looking at us. I heard Sally whisper:

"It's that Baynes boy. Don't he look dirty?"

I stopped and withdrew my hand from that of my guide.

"Come on, Bart," he said.

I shook my head and stood looking over at that little, hostile tribe near me.

"Go and play with them while I step into the house," he urged.

Again I shook my head.

"Well, then, you wait here a moment," said my new-found friend.

He left me and I sat down upon the ground, thoughtful and silent.

In a moment my friend came out with Mrs. Dunkelberg, who kissed me, and asked me to tell how I happened to be there.

"I just thought I would come," I said as I twisted a button on my coat,

and would say no more to her.

"Mr. Wright, you're going to take him home, are you?" Mrs. Dunkelberg asked.

Continued next week

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Leaves Monmouth	North Bound	Leaves Independence	South Bound
6.50 a. m.		7.30 a. m.	
1.50 p. m.	" "	2.25 p. m.	
5.15 "	" "	5.48 "	
10.00 a. m.	South Bound	10.34 a. m.	
3.15 p. m.	" "	3.51 p. m.	
6.30 "	" "	7.12 "	

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Prayer Meeting Wednesday,	-	7.30 p. m.

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C. U. E. Meeting,	-	6.30 p. m.
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A Kindly Faced Man Was Leaning Over Me.

the Silent Woman pass while I was in his arms.

"Tell me what's your name," he urged.

"Barton Baynes," I said as soon as I could speak.

"Where do you live?"

"In Lickspitt."

"How did you get here?"

"Dug Draper brought me. Do you know where Sally Dunkelberg lives?"

"Is she the daughter of Horace Dunkelberg?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Horace Dunkelberg," I amended.

"Oh, yes, I know her. Sally is a friend of mine. We'll get some breakfast and then we'll go and find her."

He carried me through the open

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