

An Awful Scene.

JIMMY BROWN.

I have the same old story to tell My conduct has been such again—at any rate, that's what father says; and I've had to go up stairs with him, and I needn't explain what that means. It seems very hard, for I'd tried to do my very best, and I'd heard Sue say, "That boy hasn't misbehaved for two days, good gracious, I wonder what can be the matter with him." There's a fatal listy about it, I'm sure. Poor father! I must give him an awful lot of trouble, and I know he's had to get two new bamboo canes this winter just because I've done so wrong, though I never meant to do it.

It happened on account of coasting. We've got a magnificent hill. The road runs straight down the middle of it, and all you have to do is to keep on the road. There's a fence on one side, and if you run into it, something has got to break. John Kruger, who is a stupid sort of a fellow, ran into it last week head first, and smashed three pickets, and everybody said it was a mercy he hit it with his head, or he might have broken some of his bones, and hurt himself. There isn't any fence on the other side, but if you run off the road on that side, you'll go down the side of the hill that's steeper than the roof of the Episcopal church, and about a mile long, with a brook full of stones down at the bottom.

The other night Mr. Travers said—but I forgot to say that Mr. Martin is back again, and coming to our house worse than ever. He was there and Mr. Travers and Sue, all sitting in the parlor, where I was behaving, and trying to make things pleasant, when Mr. Travers said, "It's a bright moon-light night, let's all go out and coast." Sue said, "O that would be lovely; Jimmy, get your sled." I didn't encourage them, and I told father so, but he wouldn't admit that Mr. Travers or Sue or Mr. Martin or anybody could do anything wrong. What I said was: "I don't want to go coasting. It's cold and I don't feel very well, and I think we ought to all go to bed early so we can wake up real sweet and goodtempered." But Sue just said, "Don't you preach, Jimmy; if you're lazy just say so and Mr. Travers will take us out." Then Mr. Martin he must put in and says, "Perhaps the boy's afraid; don't tease him, he ought to be in bed anyhow." Now I wasn't going to stand this, so I said, "Come on. I wanted to go all the time, but I thought it would be best for old people to stay at home, and that's why I didn't encourage you." So I got out my double-ripper, and we all went out on the hill and started down.

I sat in front to steer, and Sue sat right behind me, and Mr. Travers sat behind her to hold her on, and Mr. Martin sat behind him. We went splendidly, only the dry snow flew so that I couldn't see anything, and that's why we got off the road and on the side hill before I knew it. The hill was one glare of ice, and the minute we struck the ice the sled started away like a hurricane. I had just time to hear Mr. Martin say, "Boy, mind what you're about or I'll get off," when she struck something—I don't know what—and everybody was pitched into the air, and began sliding on the ice without anything to help them except me. I caught on a bare piece of rock, and stopped myself. I could see Sue sitting up straight, and sliding like a streak of lightning and crying "Jimmy, father, Charles, Mr. Martin, O my help me." Mr. Travers was on his stomach, about a rod behind her, and gaining a little on her, and Mr. Martin was on his back, coming down head first, and beating them both. All of a sudden he began to go to pieces. Part of him would slide off one way, and then another part would try its luck by itself. I can tell you it was an awful and surreptitious sight. They all

reached the bottom after a while, and when I saw they were not killed, I tried it myself, and landed all right. Sue was sitting still, and mourning, and saying, "My goodness gracious, I shall never be able to walk again. My comb is broken and that boy isn't fit to live." Mr. Travers wasn't hurt very much and fixed himself all right with some pins I gave him, and his handkerchief; but his overcoat looked as if he'd stolen it from a scarecrow. When he had comforted Sue a little (and I must say some people are perfectly sickening the way they go on), he and I collected Mr. Martin—all except his teeth—and helped put him together, only I got his leg on wrong side first, and then we helped him home.

This was why father said that my conduct was such, and that his friend Martin didn't seem to be able to come into his house without being insulted and injured by me. I never insulted him. It isn't my fault if he can't slide down a hill without coming apart. However, I've had my last suffering on account of him. The next time he comes apart where I am, I shall not wait to be punished for it, but shall start straight for the North Pole, and if I discover it the British government will give me a million dollars. I'm able to sit down this morning, but my spirits are crushed and I shall never enjoy life any more.—Harper's Young People.

A Darwinian Diversion.

The servant of my grocer, a sharp boy named Joe, told me he had lately seen in the streets a large and handsome pigeon with scarlet-tipped wings, purple tail-feathers, and a small well shaped comb, like a cock's, upon his head. This was a staggerer—a pigeon with a cock's comb! The freaks of color in feathers might be accounted for, but the comb! No, it was impossible; the columbae were too widely distinct from the gallinae. I questioned the lad. He declared it was true, and that he had seen the bird often. He calculated he knew a pigeon, and he knew what a comb was. This was a fine sleek bird, with a knowing look, and not a bit skeery.

If this is true, thought I, I will knock the naturalists endwise. A pigeon with a comb! I must have that bird. I will give him to Mr. Thornbury as a subject for a lecture. He will go back of Darwin, even, I will write to Darwin myself. It will be a favorable opportunity to get an autograph letter; for, of course, the great man will acknowledge my service in the cause of science.

"Joe," said I, "if you can catch that bird in a trap—alive, I mean, and without injury—I will give you ten dollars."

The boy's face brightened with a keen intelligence, and he said, "I'll try." I visited Mr. Thornbury, and gave him the news. Our discussion was animated and long, but it need not be reproduced here.

I had stipulated with Joe that, in case he should catch the bird, he should take the trap direct to my friend's house.

Meanwhile the pigeon had been seen by many persons, and it was noised about in the grocery and provision stores of the South End that his phenomenal ornaments had excited great interest among savants. Joe had, moreover, expatiated upon his expected reward, and had promised to take his "gid" to the theatre on the strength of it.

When at length Joe made the capture, and started off with the prize in the grocer's wagon, he was followed by a curious crowd. I got the word, and started also. By the time I arrived there were a dozen persons in the front yard. Joe had already alighted with the box, and taken it indoors.

Mr. Tooke Thornbury, in his best blue coat, and with eyes that gleamed behind his huge glasses, stood waiting for the trap to be opened.

There the pigeon was, as bright a creature as ever was seen with purple tail, scarlet-tipped wings, and a coral comb. The bird ran about the room without fear, but did not choose to be handled.

Mr. Thornbury's emotion was extreme. "Shades of Hunter and Buffon, of Owen, Agassiz, and Aristotle!" he ejaculated. "Am I too he one of you—known to after-times as one of the great co-ordinates in science? The columba thornburyi shall mark a new era in classification. Now we will see if the director of the Stubbs Institute, who has refused to invite me to lecture, will delay any longer the acknowledgment of my talents!"

Meanwhile the lively bird kept hopping

about, gracefully eluding capture. Mr. Thornbury was unconscious of the gradually increasing audience, as he talked and meditated by turns. The entry and doorway were filled with eagerly curious folk.

There was a slight rustle, then a voice, and quick footstep. A buxom and saucy girl about twelve years of age, in a short dress, and wearing long braids of yellow hair, rushed in, saying, in a tone that was like scolding and crying at once, "I declare it's too bad! Billy, pretty Billy, come!"

She held out her hand, and the bird rose on his wings and alighted on her finger. "There! there!" she said, soothingly; "Pretty-Billy, kiss me!"

The bird put his bill to the full red lips, and gave an audible coo of delight.

"Now, Joe Saunders," she said, turning to the grocer's boy, "you see if you don't catch it! My pa says there's a law against setting traps for birds in the city. Yes, poor Billy!" she said, caressing the bird again, "they were going to cut you up" (giving a spiteful glance at Mr. Thornbury), "but they sha'n't—no, they sha'n't!"

My feelings went through as many phases as the colors of a dying dolphin. There was a pathetic as well as a comic side to the scene. The face of Mr. Thornbury was a study for a picture of vacuity. He was at his wit's end.

I ventured to calm the girl's wrath by admiring her pet. "Those are very unusual colors," I said, pointing to the purple and scarlet tips.

"Oh, I did that," said the girl, gayly. "Papa's carmine-ink on the wing feathers, and violet on the tail feathers. Aren't they pretty? Kiss me, Billy!"

"But this extraordinary comb!" gasped Mr. Thornbury.

Here the girl laughed outright, while her merry eyes shone and her fresh color came.

"Pretty nice, isn't it? I cut it out of red felt. See the nice smooth ridges—just like a real comb! It's stuck well, hasn't it? Fish-glass doesn't soak off. Nice Billy!"

And the pretty fiend dandled the ornithological monster up and down, while he clung to his perch on her finger, and now and then fluttered his carmine-tinted wings and spread his violet tail.

"Say good-by to the gentlemen," said the girl mischievously; and away she went.

There was not much to be said (from a scientific point of view), and I was in haste to settle with the grocer's clever boy and be gone.

I feared that Mr. Thornbury would be prostrated with the shock, but it is singular to observe the elasticity of great minds.—F. H. UNDERWOOD, in Harper's Magazine for April.

Where Stanley Is.

The Philadelphia Press prints a letter from Yuseph H. Reading, of the Gaboon and Corisco Mission, dated December 17, 1880, in which the following tidings are given of Stanley's expedition up the Congo. The missionary says: "Count de Braya, an Italian explorer, arrived here yesterday from the Congo River. He went up the Osgowe River as far as he could get in a canoe, thence overland, six day's journey, to the Congo, down the Congo to the sea, and so here by steamer, thus making complete circuit. The point at which he reached the Congo was five days' journey inland from Stanley Pool. Coming down the river he met Stanley and his party 25 miles from a place called Avedi. He stayed with them one day. Stanley's party were in a mountainous country and obliged to travel overland, for the river was full of rapids. Their progress was slow. There were no provisions to be had where they were. The men were eating rice, and the donkeys corn and hay, all brought out from Europe. He reports one of the missionaries of the English Baptist Mission shot in the groin by the natives. The Count goes up the Osgowe again to-morrow to continue his explorations. He represents the country far up the Osgowe to be a table-land, 24,000 feet above the sea, free from fever, and supporting a large and peaceful population."

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