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Beating the Nickel in the Slot.

"Gimme a nickel's worth of buckshot," said a St. Paul gamin wearing somewhat disordered raiment. His head, says the *Pioneer Press*, just topped the counter in a bazaar devoted to sporting goods.

"Oh, no," replied the proprietor of the gun store, "he has no firearms. He is going in to beat the nickel-in-the-slot scheme, and I suppose I am participant."

"How?"

"Why, he will put them on the street-car track; the car will convert them into the exact size of nickels and pennies; and, of course, you can anticipate the financial panic liable to ensue in St. Paul shortly, with a gum-machine at almost every corner."

Mercantile Troubles in China.

The Foochow (China) *Echo* says the losses incurred by tea men during this season are computed at \$20,000,000, and failures of other traders have amounted to more than half that sum.

Keep Pegging Away.

This world is a world full of pitfalls and snare. Of Lilliput pleasures and Gulliver snares: With people more ready to curse than to bless, With little to cheer you and much to depress, But the best thing to do is—believe me, I pray—Be brave, and keep pegging away.

The pithy creatures of envy, indeed, Will jeer or will carp if you fail or succeed; There are those without number who lack not the will: To give you a kick once you're started down hill!

Don't let them disturb you; don't mind what they say;

Turn your eyes to the light and keep pegging away.

Devotion to duty a lever will prove.

Be steadfast and patient, be h' pert and gay—

To business attend and keep pegging away.

With the honey of life must some wormwood be mixed.

As the daintiest rose by a thorn is transfixed;

But the honey's more sweet from the leech.

And the rose rudely pierced the most fragrant of all.

You'll find your reward great and lasting some day.

If strong in your faith you keep pegging away.

—John Tolman.

FREDDIE'S FORTUNE.

I was a young doctor, not overburdened with practice, when I sat half dozing in my surgery one stifling August afternoon, and was roused by a bustle in the street and a cry, "Here's a doctor! Ring the bell!"

By the time the ring was answered I was wide awake and had my "professional expression" on. Two men came in, and one held in his arms a limp, senseless figure, a boy, about 3 years old, covered with blood flowing from a gash in his head. I took the little fellow in my own arms and carried him to a sofa, while the men brought me water and seemed deeply interested in all my movements.

A broken arm and the deep cut on the head kept me busy some time, but at last my little patient was made as comfortable as possible, and was moaning with recovered consciousness.

"Have you far to carry him?" I asked one of the men.

"We don't own him," was the answer. "He was a running across the street and a horse kicked him over, Jim, here," indicating his companion, "he picked him up, and I come along to help find a doctor, 'cause Jim can't read."

"Needn't a-shoved that in!" growled Jim turning red. "Poor little chap, how groused!"

"I will give him something to quiet him presently," I said, "and will send word to the station house if his name is not on his clothes."

The men departed and I lifted my charge once more and went upstairs to my mother's room, over the surgery.

It did not take many minutes to enlist her sympathies, and we undressed the child and put him in her wide bed, hoping to find some mark upon his clothing. There was none, and when I saw this I spoke frankly, "Mother, there is just one chance for the little fellow's life, and that is perfect quiet. He will have fever, probably be delirious, and to carry him to a hospital, or even to his own home, may be fatal. I will send to the station house and then Dennis until I was ready to start."

I was making my final preparation for departure when I heard a piercing scream under my window and Dennis saying, "By jahers, she's fainted, the crather!"

While Freddie cried, "Mamma—pretty mamma!"

I ran out hastily to see an odd tableau. Dennis was supporting in his strong arms a slender figure in mourning, half leaning on the shafts, while Freddie clung to her skirts, sobbing "Mamma—mamma."

"Bring her in, Dennis," I said.

"I'll do that same, sur," was the reply, as Dennis lifted the little figure like a feather weight, and crossing the pavement came into the surgery. I shut out the curious people who followed, and Freddie clung fast to the black dress, never ceasing his loud cries of "Oh, mamma! It is my mamma; come home to Freddie! Mamma—pretty mamma!"

"You know I will nurse him, John," my mother said. "If his mother comes she must do as she thinks best but, until she does come, leave him to me."

I wrote a description of the child's long brown curlis and brown eyes, of the delicate suit of clothes in which he was dressed, and sent it to the station house. No call being made in three days, I advertised him for a week, and still he was not claimed. It was very strange, for the child's pure, delicate skin and dainty clothing seemed to mark him as the child of wealth.

But while he lay unknown, my little patient was strutting hard for life against fever and injuries. He was delirious for many days, calling pitifully for "Mamma—pretty mamma" begging her not to go away, and making our hearts ache by often crying "Oh, Ann Lucy; don't beat Freddie! Freddie will be good!" or, "Grandma, grandma, don't don't" in cries of extreme terror.

Mother would get so excited with indignation over these cries, that I saw the child had won a fond place in her warm heart.

"He was then ill-treated, John, the pretty darling!" she would say. "I hope the cruel people who could hurt such a baby will never find him again."

The second week of his stay with us was closing and Freddie had regained his reason and was on the road to recovery, when one morning a carriage dashed up to my door and two ladies alighted.

They were rustling silks of the latest fashion and were evidently mother and daughter. The younger lady was very beautiful, a perfect blonde and dressed in exquisite taste.

"Freddie," I asked, "is this mamma?"

"Yes," said the little fellow, decidedly; "of course it is. My own pretty mamma come from heaven!"

"Come from heaven!" she repeated with ashy lips and gasping breath.

"They told me he was dead, my boy, my Freddie—that he was run over and killed! The nurse saw him fall under the horse's feet."

"But you see he was not killed," mother said in a gentle tone; "but is well and strong again."

"We were nearly distracted on our return," said the young lady, "when we missed our darling; but an inquiry at the station house sent us here. The officer also showed us your advertisement. Where is our dear child?"

"He is here," I answered, "under my mother's care, and I am happy to say, doing well."

"When I heard he was ill I went to him at once, leaving my boy with my

An unmistakable look of disappointment crossed the faces of my visitors, but the elder one said, "can we see him, doctor?"

I asked permission to announce their coming to my mother, and left the ladies alone. When I returned, after some five minutes' absence, I was struck by the change in their faces. The younger one was pale as ashes, and the elder one had a set, hard look of determination, as if nerves by some sudden resolution.

I led the way to my mother's bedroom, where Freddie was in a profound slumber. The younger lady shrank back in the shadow of the bed curtains, but the mother advanced and bent over the child.

There was a moment of profound silence, then, in a hard voice the old lady said, "I am sorry to put you to so much trouble, Doctor Morrill. This is not the child we lost."

A heavy fall startled us, and I turned to see the young stranger senseless on the floor. Her mother spoke quickly.

"The disappointment is too much for her. We so hoped to find my grandson."

I did not reply. The delirious ravings of the child were still ringing in my ears as he pleaded with the harsh grandmother and aunt. I did not believe the old lady's statement, but having no proof to the contrary, was forced to accept it.

Long after my visitors had departed, the beautiful blonde still trembling and white, mother and I talked of their strange conduct.

"It is evident they want to deny the child," I said.

"I am glad of it," mother replied. "We will keep him, John. He shall have a grandma to love, not one to fear."

So the Summer and early Autumn wore away and Freddie was dear to us as he had claim of kinship. His rare beauty, his precocious intellect, and his loving heart had completed the fascination commenced by our pity for his suffering, weakness and loneliness.

He called us "Grandma" and "Uncle John," and clung to use with the most affectionate caresses.

Being blessed with ample means, mother and I had quite decided to formally adopt pretty Freddie when he had been a little longer unclaimed in our house.

Dennis, my coachman, was very fond of Freddie, and careful; so I was not afraid to leave my little charge with him while I was indoors, and he was very happy chatting with the good-natured Irishman and waiting my coming.

It was early in November, and mother had dressed Freddie for the first time in a jaunty suit of velvet, with a dainty velvet cap over his brown curls, when one morning I sent him out with Dennis until I was ready to start.

I was making my final preparation for departure when I heard a piercing scream under my window and Dennis warming up to his work, the whets assume first a red, then a blue hue, and finally the blood trickles down over his back in little streams. Again and again the lash, soft and pliable with the warm blood, curls around the naked form of the crouching and shrinking prisoner until either the allotted punishment has been inflicted or else the prisoner faints from the pain and torture.

He is then given over to the care of the doctors. From long practice the whipping master can make the whipping more severe in a given number of strokes on the person of one prisoner than another. In case he wishes to make the pain more intense, after one-half the strokes have been given he goes to the other side of the prisoner and makes a series of cross-cuts, making a number of bloody X's on the back.

I have seen a prisoner faint from the severity of the punishment and from loss of blood. After the whipping is over the prisoner is cared for, the blood on the rawhide is carefully wiped off, and it is ready for the next culprit.

When the whipping was done by an official who was intoxicated or under the influence of liquor, the punishment was always more severe. I have seen one of the officials stagger as he walked up to the whipping post, and I know he was greatly under the influence of liquor.

—Tragic Story of Diamond.

"There's the most beautiful diamond I have ever seen during an experience of thirty years with the sparkling gems," said a veteran diamond merchant, as he held up a stone that seemed to live in fire. From every facet radiated brilliant colors, and the hue of the stone was that steely blue which delights every connoisseur of the precious gems. The diamond did not weigh over six carats, but it was easily worth \$5,000.

The sound rang through the house, reaching my mother's ears as she sat in her room. She came hurrying down the stairs and entered the surgery just as Dennis deposited his burden in an arm chair.

Comprehending the situation at a glance, mother tenderly removed the heavy cape and bonnet, loosening a shower of brown curls round a marble-white face, still insensible.

At that moment the stranger opened a pair of large brown eyes, as brown and as soft as Freddie's own, and murmured, in a faint voice: "Freddie! Did I see my boy?"

Then her eyes fell upon the child and in a moment she was on her knees before him clasping him to her heart, kissing him, sobbing over him till mother broke out crying too, and I was obliged to assume my "professional expression" by sheer force of will.

"Come, come," I said gently. "Freddie has been very ill, and can not bear so much excitement."

This quieted the mother in an instant, and she rose, still holding the child's hand in her own.

"It is my boy!" she said looking into my face.

"Freddie," I asked, "is this mamma?"

"Yes," said the little fellow, decidedly; "of course it is. My own pretty mamma come from heaven!"

"Come from heaven!" she repeated with ashy lips and gasping breath.

"They told me he was dead, my boy, my Freddie—that he was run over and killed! The nurse saw him fall under the horse's feet."

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"He is here," I answered, "under my mother's care, and I am happy to say, doing well."

"When I heard he was ill I went to him at once, leaving my boy with my

husband's mother and sister. I knew they were not very fond of him, but I had no choice. I found my husband very ill, but he was recovering, when he had a relapse. During all his illness I heard only twice of Freddie—once that he was well, once that he had been killed in the street.

"I came home only two days ago, and they would tell me nothing of where my boy was buried—noting but the bare fact of his death. I—I—oh, do not blame me!—I was on my way to the river to end it all, when I met

the Whipping Post in the Missouri Penitentiary.

BRUTALITY IN A PRISON.

The Whipping Post in the Missouri Penitentiary.