

Under the Window Sash

By Matthew White, Jr.

FRED APPLEBY was 15, tall, strong and from Philadelphia, while Tom Wilton was one year younger and from New York; but during the summer, the Applebys and the Wiltons occupied adjoining cottages at Lake Beach, and thus Fred and Tom always set off their Fourth of July firecrackers together.

The former seemed to know how to do almost everything, from constructing a big kite to sailing a boat; so, when the Wiltons decided to take a fortnight's trip to the White mountains, and were compelled to shut up their house meantime, as the servants unexpectedly left in a body, it was quite natural that Tom should ask Fred to keep an eye on it.

"You remember how angry that English coachman was when father discharged him last week?" he hurriedly explained, just before the train left. "Well, he might hear in some way about our all going off, and, although I don't suppose he'd risk breaking in himself, he may send a friend of his down from the city, you know. So keep—"

But at that moment the cars moved off, and Tom had to run for them. Fred, however, fully comprehended what was required of him, and resolved to prove himself worthy of the trust.

His mother being a widow, he had for the past two years been "man of the house" at home, and, indeed, his height and weight combined were calculated to keep small boys very respectful in his presence.

As soon as he had seen Tom safely gain the rear platform of the last car, Fred walked back to the cottages, which stood apart from the other houses in the village, the Wilton's being bounded on one side by a wood.

There was neither fence nor hedge to separate the grounds from the Applebys' and after making sure that every shutter had been closed, Fred strode back across the lawn to his own piazza.

"They might almost as well be open, though," he reflected, "as all one has to do is to slip his fingers through the slats and lift the latch. They ought to have nailed them up as they do in the winter; but stop! I don't believe a man could get his hand in. So I won't worry about that point of approach."

support his head and shoulders, otherwise serious consequences might have ensued. As it was, Fred already began to feel a sort of compassion for the not ill-looking boy, so early taught to walk in the paths of evil, when suddenly his sister Maud, attracted by the repeated shouts for Mike, came stealing cautiously around the corner of the house.

"Fred, Fred!" she called, in a timid voice, "what is the matter?" "I've got him!" replied her brother. And at the same instant Miss Maud caught sight of the burglar's heels.

"O-h-h!" she screamed, and started to run home. But Fred called her back, and told her to bring him a piece of rope as quickly as possible. She vanished at once, and then Mike appeared on the scene.

Speedily breaking in upon all the old Irishman's exclamations of wonder, Fred briefly explained how he had captured a young Englishman in the very act of entering the house by force, and that as soon as the fellow was bound he was to guard him until a constable could be summoned.

"An' indeed that I will, sur!" answered Mike, cheerfully. "An' yez say he's afther bein' an Englishman? Oeh, sure an' nowould Ireland can pay back a bit av the grudge she owes ag'in 'em!" "No, Mike, I don't want any violence used if it can be helped. The fellow's quite young, you see, and may be reformed yet. But here comes my sister with the rope."

And Fred dextrously caught the clothesline Maud threw him at a safe distance, where she had taken up a post of observation in company with Mrs. Appleby; who was full of commiseration for the prisoner, coupled with entreaties to her son to be careful and not break his back with the window sash.

"Now, Mike, you hold his legs while I raise the window and slip this noose around his body." "Oh, do look out, Fred," cried Maud at this point, "or it will catch about his neck and hang him!" "An' shure, 'twould only be a bit afther his toime," declared Mike.

Fred continued: "Are you ready, there? Hold him tight now." And the window shot up, the noose went in, and the next moment Fred and his prisoner were brought face to face.

"Why, how very respectable-looking he is!" whispered Maud to her mother. "What a shame!" said Mrs. Appleby. "I wonder if he can't be sent to a sort of reformatory school, instead of to jail?"

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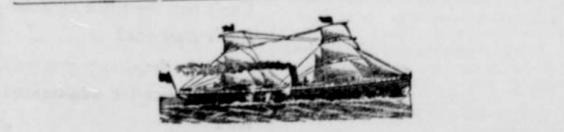
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