

LITTLE MAKE-BELIEVE

OR

A CHILD OF THE SLUMS.

BY B. L. FARJEON.

CHAPTER IX.

Continued.

"That, as Little Make-Believe and Saranne have lived all their lives in Clare Market, and have never in all probability spent a day in the country—have perhaps never even seen the country—what a capital thing it would be to have them down here for a little while."

"It would be a capital thing, Wally."

"That it would, dad."

"That is how it came about that before the week was out, the postman, with a sharp double rap at the door of the house in Clare Market in which the sisters lived, asked whether Little Make-Believe lodged there."

"In course she do," said the woman who answered the door.

"Is she in?"

"Perhaps she is, and perhaps she isn't."

"Would you mind seeing?"

He had a desire to give the letter himself into the hands of the girl with a name so strange.

There is a legend that there exists in the force one who is at the same time a poet and a policeman, and that this remarkable individual has actually written songs for the music halls.

The present postman, who was new to the Clare Market district, may have been the man, and his poetical tendencies may have caused him to be curious about a person addressed as Little Make-Believe, and have inspired him with an idea that he might make a song out of her for a Lion Comique.

"I'll call her," said the woman, and she screamed down the stairs at the top of her voice, "Here, Make-Believe! Yer wanted!"

Up ran Little Make-Believe, and confronted the postman.

"Are you Little Make-Believe?" asked he.

"Yes, that's me."

"Well, here's a letter for you."

"A letter for me! Go on! Yer gammoning!"

"There it is, at all events."

And he pushed the letter into her hand, and continued his rounds.

He had not derived inspiration from her for a comic song.

Little Make-Believe stood for a moment or two in a state of stupefaction with the letter in her hand.

A letter for her! It was an event so strange and startling that it took away her breath.

Never in her life had she received a letter; she could scarcely believe that she was awake.

When she had sufficiently recovered she made her way downstairs.

"What was it?" asked Saranne.

"It's a letter," said Little Make-Believe, solemnly.

Saranne looked up and laughed.

"You're pretending," she said.

"Not this time, Saranne. Here it is."

Thanks to the good officers of Walter, both of them could read and write, and had the letter been in his writing they would have recognized it, but it was Mr. Deepdale who had written.

Little Make-Believe laid the letter unopened on the table, and the sisters gazed at it, half frightened.

"Who's it from?" said Saranne.

"What can it be about? I hope it ain't something bad."

Suddenly she clapped her hands, and danced in her seat.

"Somebody's fell in love with you, and has sent an offer of marriage!"

What was it that made Little Make-Believe tremble and turn red and white?

"Open it—open it," cried Saranne, "and let's see."

Of the two Saranne had proved by far the aptest scholar.

She could read and write much better than Little Make-Believe, and she spoke much better also.

It was not that Little Make-Believe did not take as much pride in the lessons given by Walter as Saranne did, but she was the breadwinner, and had less time on her hands and something more serious to occupy her mind.

Saranne, therefore, being the prize scholar, Little Make-Believe opened the letter, slowly and nervously, and gave it to her to read.

It was simple, terse and to the point.

"Dear Little Make-Believe and Saranne," it read, "we are, as you know, in the country, where we shall stop till summer is over, and my car has an idea in his head, which perhaps will please you. You don't see much of the country, which just now is very beautiful, and if you would like to come and stop here for a few days it would do you good. You have only to say 'yes,' and go to Mr. Dexter, who will arrange everything for you. A rambler or two in the woods will make you strong. Your friend,

"W. H. DEEPALE."

"Oh, my!"

"That was all they could say for several moments."

Saranne's face was scarlet with excitement and joy; Little Make-Believe was no less happy, but she showed it in a different way.

Her face was very pale, and her eyes were full of tears.

"Let's read it again," said Saranne. So they read it again, and read it a third time, and then Saranne cried:

"It ain't no dream! It's real!"

Undoubtedly it was real, but for all that nothing would have surprised Little Make-Believe less than to see the letter and envelope suddenly whisked away.

It was too good to believe. They had never received a letter—and here was one.

They had never been in the country, and here was an invitation to go, not for an hour, or a day, but for a few days—an invitation from gentlemen who had proved themselves their dearest friends.

That two such stupendous, amazing,

almost incredible events should occur all in a moment required a good deal of getting over.

"Did you ever," asked Saranne, "pretend anything half so wonderful, Make-Believe?"

"No," replied Little Make-Believe, "I never did, Saranne."

It required such a very great deal of getting over that they had not got half, nor a quarter over it before a visitor entered unannounced.

It was Thomas Dexter, who had also received a letter with reference to the proposed holiday.

His appearance did not surprise them; it would be difficult to say what would have surprised them just then.

Directly Thomas Dexter entered Saranne said to him:

"I wish you would do me a favor, Mr. Dexter."

"What is it?"

"Pinch me—hard!"

Thomas Dexter pinched her hard, so hard that she gave a scream, and cried in the same breath:

"I don't mind, so long as it ain't a dream."

Thomas Dexter understood the meaning of these proceedings.

That the girls should be astonished was quite natural; he was astonished himself.

But it was a good opportunity for the sisters, and he was glad for their sakes.

When he had succeeded in somewhat calming them, he explained the object of his visit.

Their distant friends had shown not only kindness, but thoughtfulness, and he was the appointed agent to carry out their wishes.

"The question is," said Thomas Dexter, "as you've made up your minds to go—as they had made up their minds to go! what a thing to say!"—"The question is, what are you going to do?"

Their faces dropped. What were they going to do?

It was indeed a question, for the clothes they stood up in were all the clothes they possessed.

"It wouldn't do," continued Thomas Dexter, "to go as you are. You must each of you have a decent frock and a decent pair of shoes, and a decent hat or bonnet. How is it to be done?"

Down to earth they came, straight from their seventh heaven.

It was Saranne's eyes now that were filled with tears, and Little Make-Believe's face that was red.

"Yes, Mr. Dexter," said Little Make-Believe, sadly; she hardly dared to look at Saranne, "it's very good of you to remind us. We can't go as we are, and we ain't got nothink better to wear than what yer see. It'd make people talk, and Mr. Deepdale'd be sorry he'd asked us. I'm afeared, arter all, we shan't be able to go."

"Oh, don't say that Make-Believe," sobbed Saranne, "don't say that!"

"It must be sed if it's got to be sed," said Little Make-Believe's response.

"Saranne, my dear, yer know, don't yer, that I'd sell my two hands if anybody'd buy 'em so as I could get yer a frock and boots and a hat? I would, sir, indeed, indeed I would!"

"I quite believe it," said Thomas Dexter.

"I wouldn't mind staying at home while Saranne went; I'm happy enough so long as I know she's enjoying of herself. But if it can't be done, it can't be done; we couldn't do nothink 'arf so wicked as to give Mr. Deepdale and Master Walter cause to be ashamed of us when they set eyes on us. And they couldn't do nothink else but be ashamed if we was to go down to them with such things as those on us."

A speech which only caused Saranne's tears to flow more freely.

"Can't you see no way, Make-Believe?" asked Thomas Dexter.

"No, Mr. Dexter," replied Little Make-Believe, mournfully, "I can't. It's as fur out of my reach as the stars. We ain't got a friend in the world, except you, and Mr. Deepdale and Master Walter, and you've done more for us than ever we'd a right to expect. That being in the country where everything's so beautiful and sweet—it must be, though me and Saranne has never seed it—they should think of us at all shows the feeling they've got for us. God bless 'em for it! There's the pawnshop—but we ain't got nothink to pop. If they'll take me, I'd go and pledge myself this minute, but they know their book, the pawnbrokers do. No, Mr. Dexter, there's no way as I can see."

"As to pretending, now. Ain't there nothing to be made out of that?"

She looked at him reproachfully and said, so pathetically that Thomas Dexter resolved to torment her no longer.

"Don't make game of me, sir."

"I don't mean to do so. Don't think that of me. But now, Little Make-Believe, I'm a-going to pretend."

She smiled pitifully.

"Who knows? Something might come of it. But yer mustn't look at me; it's a new game to me, and it might spoil the luck."

Little Make-Believe laid her head on the table, not in obedience to his wish, but because grief impelled her to do so.

Saranne's back was turned, and she could not see him.

"I pretend," continued Thomas Dexter, "that on Thursday, as sure as ever it comes round, you and Saranne shall be taken to Victoria station and put in a second class railway carriage, with tickets for Rochester. I pretend that yer shall both of yer have new frocks, and new boots and new hats. I pretend that before yer go to sleep to-night yer shall write a little note to Mr. Deepdale—you've got his address in that letter—thanking him for his invitation and telling him you're coming. I pretend that yer shall go to-morrow, or before yer two hours oider

—there's plenty of shops open; it's only eight o'clock—yer shall go out and buy the frocks, and the boots, and the hats, if you don't care to wait. I pretend that you've got money to pay for 'em. I pretend that yer shall come to me and confess that I ain't making game of you. And thirdly and lastly, as the preachers say, if my pretending ain't as good as your pretending, my name ain't Thomas Dexter, and I'll never try to pretend no more."

A deal silence followed; there was not a sound in the room except that of Saranne's suppressed sobs.

Surprised and relieved at the silence—for while Thomas Dexter was speaking she was in an agony of torture—and moved by Saranne's sobs, Little Make-Believe raised her head, and was about to clasp Saranne in her arms, when she started to her feet with a cry of almost delicious ecstasy.

For on the table lay a sheet of note paper and an envelope, stamped, and by their side lay two golden sovereigns.

"Look, Saranne, look!" exclaimed Little Make-Believe, beating her hands together, and pulling Saranne from her chair. "He wasn't pretending at all, and he wasn't mocking us! Oh, Saranne, Saranne!"

The revulsion of feeling was, indeed, almost too much for her; she laughed and cried in a breath, and Saranne, seeing that heaven had opened its gates to them, laughed and cried with her.

It was a long time before they were sufficiently composed to speak calmly of the matter.

"I didn't think it was in Mr. Dexter," said Saranne, "to be so out-and-out good to us. I'd like to kiss him."

"He was very kind," said Little Make-Believe, "but the two sovereigns don't come out of his pocket. Yer mustn't forget that."

"He gave 'em to us, Make-Believe."

"And Mr. Deepdale sent 'em to us. Don't yer see what it says in the letter? 'Yer've only to say yes, and go to Mr. Dexter, who will arrange everything for you.' Well, instead of our going to him he's coming to us. Now, Saranne, we must write the letter to Mr. Deepdale."

"Oh my, Make-Believe! What shall we say?"

"I don't know; we must think. You're the best writer, Saranne. Take hold of the pen. It wouldn't do to write something out of a book or a newspaper, would it?"

Little Make-Believe walked up and down the room, and puckered her brows, and closed her eyes, and rubbed her forehead, and looked into the corners of the ceiling, as many a perplexed writer has done before her while Saranne put the pen in her mouth, and gazed anxiously at the brain-worker.

Little Make-Believe wanted to think of something very grand to say, but nothing grand would come; her mind had become a perfect blank.

"Make haste, Make-Believe, or all the shops will be shut."

This quickened her somewhat, and she said, "You'd best commence with 'To-night.' That'll show we're writing to-night!"

Saranne, after much preparation, put her pen and paper and then discovered she had no ink. Little Make-Believe ran out and bought a penny bottle, and by the time she returned had formulated her ideas.

"Now then, Saranne, 'To-night, Respected Sir, and dear Master Walter—"

"That's nice," said Saranne, "and dear Master Walter. Go on."

"We're that grateful to yer," continued Little Make-Believe, "that we don't know what to say, except that we're coming, and we shall never, never forget your kindness. From the bottom of our hearts—and that'll do, I think," said Little Make-Believe, pulling up suddenly.

"We must write our names, Make-Believe, or they won't know who it's from."

So they wrote their names, one under the other, and put the letter into the envelope.

Then they went out to post it and to look at the clothes shops.

"I hope the postman won't stick to it," said Little Make-Believe, as, after some hesitation, she dropped the letter into the pillar box; "I've a good mind to wait here till he comes, to see if he doesn't take it out of the bag and pocket it himself."

But with the delightful task in view of spending money in clothes she gave up that idea, and walked away from the pillar box with many a lingering look behind her.

To be continued.

The Coming Existence.

A recent storm prostrated telegraph wires, and for three days New York City was without communication with the great commercial cities of the South and West. The wireless telegraph in another year will be in working order all over the United States, and weather conditions will be powerless to interrupt communication. The rapid development of suburban railway traffic has got beyond the ability of the steam locomotive, and the electric machine is ready to take up the work. New York's great population could no longer be kauled in steam cars, and the electric lighted and electric motor trains of the Subway give relief. The surface of the earth is no longer able to carry people back and forth, and the flying machine will relieve the earth's surface of its burden. After a while the food the world produces now will not support the population, and the chemists will find a way of sustaining life on less food or of making the present supply of food deliver more life-giving qualities.—New York American.

Say These Quickly.

See if you can say these sentences fast:

She sells sea shells by the seashore. Seven selfish shellfish showed some shrimp sideways.

Prudently peel prime potatoes. Royal rulers rarely really read riddles.

Faint flames frequently feed fierce fires.—New York World.

The Berlin authorities have declined the request made by the Manufacturers' Union for permission to erect tall steel frame buildings of American design in Berlin.

A FAMOUS ORANGE TREE.

Its Romantic History and Its Numerous Descendants.

In the nursery of "Fruitlands," Georgia, stands a peculiar orange tree, which has had a more romantic history and is represented by more varied descendants than almost any other tree in the country. It is a thorny bush, green even in winter, although its leaves are gone, and looks more like a hedgeplant than an orange tree, in spite of the tiny yellow balls which ornament its branches.

When Japan was thrown open to Western commerce, its quaint plants and shrubs were among the first things to attract attention to it. Tiny orange trees, so small that they grew in tubs and could be set on a stand in an ordinary room, yet so perfect that they produced blicssoms and fruit in season, and so garlanded that they were evidently very, very old, were brought to America to ornament the conservatories of plant-lovers. American gardeners sought in vain the stock which was the basis for these dwarfs. The Japanese were willing to export the product, but they kept the secret safely at home. It was evidently a grafted tree, and from its seeds a variety of things, none of them like the rootstock, were obtained.

Some of the earliest of the importations came to Fruitlands. Many died. One of those which died was thrown out on a heap of rubbish, became buried, and was forgotten. After a while, however, an odd plant was discovered to be coming up in the rubbish-heap, and on investigation it was found that the dwarf tree had sprouted from the roots. Of course all the fruit, and consequently the seeds of the plant, had come from above the graft, and so had been hybrids, partaking chiefly of the characteristics of the bud instead of the root; but this new stalk came from below the graft, and was own child of the root—a bit of the genuine, long-sought stock.

That carefully nursed and grafted fruiting is the odd-shaped bush in the Fruitlands garden. As soon as it began to bear fruit its seeds were planted and guarded as carefully as the original stalk. Year after year all the seeds were planted, and even the seeds of the new plants, till at last the nursery was well stocked with the thorny Citrus trifoliata.

Commercial growers are blends of many varieties. A delicate tree bearing a sweet fruit may be grafted upon a hardy root, and thereafter the new plant will be hardy and bear sweet oranges. Seedlings from it may be worthless, but trees propagated by cuttings retain the sweetness and the hardy qualities. Citrus trifoliata is extremely hardy and very productive. So upon the seedling of this tree has been grafted almost an infinite variety of the cherry fruits to obtain commercial trees.

Orchards all over the country, and in fact in all parts of the world where oranges are grown, are stocked with descendants of Citrus trifoliata, although of course not all are from this stock so oddly obtained, for about the time this fortunate accidental discovery was made in Georgia other gardeners succeeded in wringing the secret from the Japanese and bringing over seedlings.

The question of the payment of actors during rehearsal time is one that naturally agitates actors and actresses a good deal; and when one hears, as one frequently does, of a play in busy rehearsal for six or eight weeks, often involving heavy and late night work, the case for the payment of such labor certainly seems a strong one. To add to the severity of such instances, the performances thus laboriously prepared sometimes fail to attract the public, and all that the actor has to show for eight or ten weeks' work may be a couple of weeks' pay. One manager does, we believe, pay half salaries after the third week. That seems generous; probably fourth salaries would be regarded as sufficient. One result of some such arrangement would be that, for the sake of the management, the rehearsal would be compressed within a shorter period of time, and would be less casually conducted than it sometimes is at present, and that, too, would be a benefit all round. There are, of course, difficulties in the way, and ones as well as pros in this as in every other proposed reform; but it should not be impossible for our theatrical managers—whose general good will to their companies is beyond all doubt to arrive at some businesslike compromise in the matter. As things stand at present they certainly involve hardship to a large number of members of the theatrical profession.—London Pall Mall Gazette.

Princess Longed to Be a Reporter.

Princess Charles of Denmark was recently seen at a railway terminus bidding adieu to a distinguished guest. Looking around with a bored expression she saw a newspaper reporter scribbling away for dear life in his notebook. She, too, drew a tiny note-book from her pocket, wrote a message upon a leaf, and folded it into a tiny pellet. The reporter watched every motion with glistering eyes. Some important bit of news, he was sure, was about to be given him. Sure enough, the princess threw the pellet of paper directly at him, with an unusually good aim for a woman, and immediately turned the other way, absorbed in her hospitable task. The reporter straightened out the crumpled leaf. On it were these words: "I wish I were a reporter!"—New York Globe.

Subterranean Dwellings in Ireland.

An interesting find of subterranean dwellings of primitive man has been made in County Antrim, thus, in all probability, establishing the presence at one time in that part of Ireland of a race which occupied a great part of the European Continent before the appearance of the earliest Celt. It is held by many authorities that the Lapps are the living representatives of the early race to which these underground dwellings are ascribed. It seems also extremely likely that a large proportion of the fairy lore of the later races is derived from the actual existence of these "little people" in holes in the earth in the out-of-the-way places to which they had retired for safety.—London County Gentleman.

THE GREAT DESTROYER

SOME STARTLING FACTS ABOUT THE VICE OF INTEMPERANCE.

Room: The Big-Hearted Fellow—New York Doctors Hold an Important Discussion on Subject of Alcohol—One of the Evil Threatening Civilization.

He dines on rich dishes and wears the best clothes;

He cares not for money—he spends as he goes;

He has a great partner and little ones fair, And a home neat and tidy, but seldom goes there;

He frequents the clubs and visits the play, And the firms with each coquette who falls in his way.

The while his true wife sits at home in her room—

But then he's a big-hearted fellow, you know.

How swift flies the time when the champagne he quaffs!

How he jokes with the boys! How he sings!

But when at his own hearth, how altered his tone!

If the children approach him he utters a groan.

If his wife even hints, while he pores o'er the news,

That the coal is all out, that the children need shoes,

He raves like a madman and swears till

But he's a big-hearted fellow, of course.

At length, when his means are exhausted,

To borrow from others, less free, but more wise

Than himself. Then he finds that there isn't a friend,

Of all that say through, who has money to lend.

So he lives on "free lunches" and "sponges" his drinks,

Till, rum-rum-rum, he into a pauper's grave

And leaves to his sad wife the record he bore

As a big-hearted fellow—just this, and no more.

—Francis S. Smith.

A Physician's Symposium.

The New York County Medical Society discussed the question of alcohol in an important symposium held recently at the New York Academy of Medicine.

Professor Chittenden, of Yale University, took up the question of "Alcohol in Health," and declared that alcohol should not be used except under the advice of physicians. Dr. Peabody, in speaking of "Alcohol in Disease," showed that for a large number of ailments substitutes had been found less injurious and more effective.

Mr. Atkinson, the chemist of the New York Board of Health, pointed out the dangers of "wood alcohol," showing its poisonous effects on dogs. This was apparent in the fact that alcohol should not be used except under the advice of physicians. Dr. Peabody, in speaking of "Alcohol in Disease," showed that for a large number of ailments substitutes had been found less injurious and more effective.

Dr. T. D. Crothers spoke of the indifference of the profession toward the subject of alcohol, and declared that it was a medical topic, and yet less than 200 physicians in the country had taken interest enough in the subject to appear as teachers and students, while on the other hand over a million persons were joined in associations and efforts to remedy its evils.

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Hon. Dr. Lancy Nichol, former District Attorney of New York, spoke of the injurious effects of alcohol seen from a legal standpoint, and declared that no good work could be expected from persons who had been expected through the State "Substitutes for Alcohol" was discussed by Dr. Fitzpatrick. He claimed that pure water, fresh air and improved hygienic influences would diminish the demand for spirits, and discussed at some length the various drugs which were superior to alcohol as tonics and stimulants.

Professor Lusk, of Bellevue College, in the discussion which followed, spoke of the evils of alcohol. Dr. T. D. Crothers spoke of the indifference of the profession toward the subject of alcohol, and declared that it was a medical topic, and yet less than 200 physicians in the country had taken interest enough in the subject to appear as teachers and students, while on the other hand over a million persons were joined in associations and efforts to remedy its evils.

This symposium was remarkable as showing the changed sentiment among physicians concerning alcohol. Evidently the subject is attracting attention in the profession to a degree of greater prominence than ever before. None of the speakers, excepting Drs. Crothers and Mason were known as opponents of alcohol in their public writings, and yet all recognized the evils and in a way more or less timid pointed out the possible means of escape.—The New Voice.

Schoolboy Drunkards.

Alarming revelations as to the consumption of alcoholic beverages among the young in Germany were made at a meeting of the Teachers' Total Abstinence Society held at Bremen recently. One of the speakers stated that it was a common thing for infants to be given beer in their bottles, and that in the national schools in Dresden, Saxony, there is not a single child who has not tasted alcohol. Out of forty-two boys in one class at a Leipzig school, were the ages of the pupils are from seven to eight, fourteen confessed to having been drunk on beer or gin.—London Mail.

Temperance Notes.

The greater part of Manitoba is under prohibition. The W. C. T. U. of Ireland will hold a bazaar in Dublin to raise money with which to carry on an aggressive temperance campaign. Local option for Kent County, Delaware, is the first of a number of proposed similar bills to be presented to the Legislature of that State.

Archbishop Farley, of New York, has just issued a church order prohibiting selling beer at parties as a means of money raising in Catholic parishes. It is stated that in Great Britain seventy-five per cent. of all classes of pauperism are due to drink, and in Germany ninety per cent. In Germany every year and supplies the lunatic asylums with something like 3000 victims.

Concerts in saloons in Milwaukee must stop. This is Chief of Police Janssen's order. Neither male nor female vocalists will be allowed in any saloon. Many of the so-called theatrical turns in these concert saloons were of a low order, and the saloon-keepers took advantage of the concerts to conduct disorderly resorts.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR MAY 21:

Subject: Jesus Before Pilate, John xviii, 28-32—Golden Text, John xviii, 37—Memory Verse, 37—Commentary on the Day's Lesson.