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THE CHILDREN.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

When the task and the lessons are ended,
And the schools for the day is dismissed,
The little ones gather around me
To bid me good night and be kissed;
Oh! the little white arms that encircle
My neck in their tender embrace;
Oh! the smiles that are halos of Heaven,
Shedding sunshine of love on my face!

Oh! my heart grows as weak as a woman's,
And the fount of my feelings will flow,
When I think of the paths steep and stony,
Where the feet of the dear ones must go;
Of the mountain of sin hanging o'er them—
Of the tempests of Fate blowing wild,
For there's nothing on earth half so holy
As the innocent heart of a child!

They are idols of heart and of households,
They are angels of God in disguise,
His sunlight still sleeps in their tresses,
His glory still gleams in their eyes!
Oh! those truants from home and from Heaven,
They have made me more manly and mind
And I know, now, how Jesus could liken
The kingdom of God to a child.

I ask not a life for the dear ones
All radiant as others have done,
But that life may have just enough shadow
To temper the glare of the sun;
I would pray God to guard them from evil.
But my prayers would bound back to myself;
Ah! a seraph may pray for a sinner,
But a sinner must pray for himself.

The twig is so easily bended,
I have banished the rule and the rod;
I have taught them the goodness of knowledge.
They have taught me the goodness of God;
My heart is a dungeon of darkness,
Where I shut them for breaking a rule,
My frown is sufficient corruption,
My love is the law of school.

I shall leave the old house in the autumn,
To traverse its threshold no more;
Ah! how I shall sigh for the dear ones
That meet me each morn at the door!
I shall miss the "good-nights," and the kisses.
And the gush of their innocent glee
The group on the green, and the flowers
That are brought every morning for me.

I shall miss them at morn and at even—
Their song in the school and the street;
I shall miss the low hum of their voices,
And the tramp of their pattering feet.
When the lessons of life are all ended,
And Death says, "The school is dismissed!"
May the little ones gather around me,
To bid me good-night and be kissed.

The Farmer's Granges.

The farmers of the West in their new movements have called their associations "Granges." It is a very expressive, but more of an English than American word. It comes from *granum*, a grain, and its primary signification is probably that of a granary. Its broader meaning is a farm house and its out-buildings. Some illustration will show these two meanings. From the "Song of the Sower," so exquisitely illustrated by the Appletons, we have.

And from the distant grange there comes
The clatter of the thrasher's flail.

In Milton's Comus;

When for their teeming flocks and granges full

In wanton dance, they praise the bounteous Pan.

Measure for Measure, third act gives us:

will presently to St. Luke's where, in
The moated grange, resides this
Dejected Mariana.

Tennyson's "Mariana in the Moated Grange, with the blue fly singing i' the pane"—about the weakest thing he has written, will be remembered by all. Our farmers could not have chosen a more expressive word.

Jim. H., out West, tells a good yarn about a "shell bark lawyer." His client was up on two small charges, "frivolous charges," as shell bark designated, (forging a note of hand and stealing a horse.) On running his eye over the jury he didn't like their looks, so he prepared an affidavit for continuance setting forth the absence of a principal witness. He read it in a whisper to the prisoner, who, shaking his head, said: "Squire I can't swear to that dokyment." "Why?" "Kase it haint true." Old shell inflated and exploded loud enough to be heard throughout the room. "What! forge a note and steal a horse, an' can't swear to a lie! Hang such infernal fools." And he immediately left the conscientious one to his fate.

Miss Snittle's Protege.

Miss Peggy Snittle being in love with the minister, and determined therefore upon the performance of some signal act of grace, adopted a protege. She had no definite plan of how she should manage the young idea but she meant he should be trained after the manner of parsons in general, and Parson Gunn in particular. So, bright and early one morning she selected from the charitable institution of the village a little boy who was to be the young heathen upon whom she was to expend her time and patience, and thereby secure a small portion of the reward she so much coveted. Proselyting was a hard task even for the indomitable Miss Snittle; but Parson Gunn did such work every day of his life, and why should not she, who hoped some day to be robed in glory as the parson's wife? She did not even know the lad's history, nor had she any desire to inquire into his disposition or general character beyond the fact that he was a very needy orphan.

'What is your name?' she asked at last, after she had reached her cottage and ushered the urchin into the kitchen.

'Jack, ma'am.'

'Jack what, lad?'

'Nuthin, 'cept Jack, as I knows on.'

'What, no other name than Jack?'

'Yes, 'm, Flip, Squin, Pony——.'

'Saints defend us,' cried the astonished lady, 'what would the parson say if he could hear you talk! You must call yourself Snittle, after me do you hear?

'Then, I'se Jack Snittle, is I?'

'Yes. Now, then, suppose some boy should ask you directly what your name is, what would you reply?'

'I'd chuck him in the snoot, and say mind y'r biz, will ye.'

'Oh, dear me, what have I done to take this creature on my hands; but then,' she added after a pause, 'he'll be a cherub when he is converted.'

Jack had not been accustomed to family prayers, that was certain, else he would not have rolled over so regularly each time that he was told to kneel down; and, before many days had passed, Miss Snittle found it necessary to keep one eye on the young man, even while he was at his devotions.

Jack's place was intolerable to him. He could not understand why he was made to lead a life that was so disagreeable, when he had been very well contented where he was before.

But he was inclined to be good natured, and although Miss Snittle found it necessary to call in the parson frequently to talk over the welfare of his soul, he might not have been unruly at all had not the alternative been forced upon him. The truth is that Miss Snittle was so absorbed in her admiration for one minister that she thought it would be a great triumph to make another of Jack, and so she built air castles that would have amazed the young rascal had he known of them.

Now, Miss Snittle did not care a pin for the boy, outside of the part he was to play in the furtherance of her scheme, and somehow Jack had found this out. Children are wise sometimes, and this youngster knew as well perhaps as the idlers about the village that her was the sport of a whim, and that Miss Snittle's only feeling for him was one of utility.

She said it was for the glory of God she was working, but Jack interpreted her motives differently, and tho't that it was to Parson Gunn he was indebted for her efforts in his behalf.

He was sent, as other children in the place were, to the free accademy; but in the afternoon he was not permitted to play in the street, as he dearly loved to do, or hang on the ends of wagons, as he so much desired. In view of the brilliant career in store for him he must read; listen to his elders (who happened to be aged spinsters and in some degree rivals of Miss Snittle,) and repeat a hymn for the amusement of any chance visitor. To further instruct the child in the duties of his future calling, his patron made him a surplice and white gown, such as the choir boys in great churches wear, and in order to deeply impress him with a sense of reverence, she further added to his ungainly appearance by making him a high crown cap of stiff white muslin. In this costume he was bedecked and made to mount the stool placed behind the piano, and give out texts and repeat verses and roll his eyes skyward, with the look, maiden Snittle said, that had won for Parson Gunn all his fame.

'But I don't want to be a Gunn, ma'am,' said Jack, 'nor nuthin' else like t'other folks.'

'But you shall be, and there's the end of it,' and forthwith Miss Snittle became unusually vigorous in her devotional instructions, and made the luckless rascal pray for his soul as though under sentence of immediate death.

One day it was so pleasantly warm, and the bright sunshine looked so inviting to the eye of the little martyr, that he could scarcely keep them from off the window The snow was gone off the ground, and the spring feeling was asserting itself strongly in the bosom of the child.

Snittle didn't think of all this; and while Jack was mentally wishing he had been born a bird, or even a chicken, and could not resist pushing up the window nearest him, she arranged his clerical garb, and ordered him to proceed with the lessons of the day.

She did not see the urchins drawing near the open gate, or know that as many as could get there were stooping under the window, hearing all that was going on. Jack did, and hated himself for the plight he was in. He could not tell her of his audience, for she would then believe he had planned the meeting; nor could he avoid the duty she forced him to perform. With a bitter feeling in his heart he was compelled to mount the stool, rest one hand on the piano-pulpit, point the other heavenward, give out the hymn and then hear her sing, in a monotonous drawl, the lines he had been taught to read.

The youngsters outside could stand it no longer. They gave a wild whoop and yell, and ran in every direction; one or two of the most hardened ones going so far as to stick their heads in the door, and ask if Parson Gunn was to *hum*.

Jack sprang out of the window as she rushed to the door; and, with surplice, gown and cap, went flying down the main street of the village, followed by all of the boys, shouting at the top of their lungs. As fast as his legs could take him he hurried along, surprising everybody, but scaring nobody half as much as himself.

'It's Snittle's boy!' was the cry.

'No, t'ain't; it's her *Amen!*' shouted a butcher boy, who was passing just then; and the news flew from mouth to mouth, until half the town was out on the sidewalk, laughing over the occurrence. Even Parson Gunn himself saw the curious spectacle, and rushed from the street to hide the laughter he could not suppress

'It's Snittle's Dominie!' shouted the mischievous children as he passed. 'Dominie it, Pony, and don't muddy your night gown!' screamed a little news girls, who joined in the race.

'Hold on to your mansard, Squinty, when you go under ther awning,' yelled a boot black, whose brushes had been kicked into the gutter in the scramble. So away they all went, pell-mell, and poor Jack, utterly exhausted, ran along, obliged, to hear it all, and most heartily wishing himself back at the asylum again. But he was followed by such an army of *gamins*, that he was glad to escape into a store and divest himself of his uncomfortable adornments.

'It's my preachin' clothes, sir,' he, said to the merchant, who stood laughing immoderately beside him, 'but I can't take 'em back to Miss Snittle's. I guess I'll go to work at something else.'

And so he did, there and then, and with Miss Snittle's consent, it is believed, for she was never afterwards heard to allude in any manner to her unhappy experience with her protege, or to inquire after his subsequent fate.

Feet vs. Feeling.—"Breaking in a Pair of Boots."

One of the most irritating temper-spoiling conflicts into which fashion pushes poor civilized men and women, is, I have lately discovered, that which rages between the feet and the fellings.

The opinion seems to be settled that small feet are handsomer than large ones. Of course we are not yet debased to the Chinese standard, but only tending to it, so that those individuals who have naturally the smallest feet in proportion to their size and stature are fortunate. Perhaps no fault can be found with this opinion in point of artistic taste. At any rate fashion has asserted it as a maxim, and that is sufficient for our present purpose for just here comes in the difficulty. Those unfortunate humans who, on arriving at years of discretion, are dissatisfied with the size of their pedal extremeties, incontinently fall back on that hoary artifice of a foolish world which persuades them that if the feet are not small, the defect may be partly overcome by making them look small by some device. The device constitutes, now-a-days, the shoemaker's art and mystery, which art this view of the matter, may be said to have made great strides.

If you order a pair of boots, I can describe your experience beforehand. You go and have your measure taken. The man on the bench is anxious to please, and has the most perfect confidence. You explain to him that, your feet being tender, you desire an easy fit. 'Oh, certainly! Of course!' and down go the figures. After a reasonable time you call for your boots. They are finished and look handsome enough. At the shoemaker's suggestion you try them on; to speak more exactly, you try them part way on. Then you are compelled to back off until the obliging shoemaker, who takes all this as a matter of course, had daubed your stocking with pulverized soapstone or something similar, and handed you a pair of boot-hooks, over which you bow yourself, lifting until you are very red in the face. The man of leather, who knows his part, meanwhile gets on his knees, and further assists by rubbing vigorously until at length you have the exquisite sensation caused by your poor heels slipping inside the 'counter.' Then with two or three vigorous stamps the boot is on. The shoemaker, in positive glee, rubs it a little more to make sure there is no wrinkle, then steps back, casts an admiring gaze, and assures you all is right. The boots are a 'splendid fit;' 'like a glove;' 'like a duck's foot in the mud;' 'Jaumet's best French uppers, and oak tanned soles;' 'after they are broken in they will be easy, and such a fit.' (After they are 'broke in,' mind you.)

Your foot, as it protrudes from your trowsers, does certainly appear much daintier than usual, and although the joints of your toes show through Jaumet's best uppers like little knuckles, your feelings are immensely tickled thereby. Unwilling to remove so elegant a fit, or doubting your ability to put them on again unaided, you decide to wear them home, thus getting them partly 'broke in.' So you wrap the old pair in a piece of brown paper and take your departure, indulging in pleasant fancies of the effect such dainty leather must have on the susceptibilities of Maria Jane.

But before you reach home your feeling have had their day, and your feet begin to assert themselves You discover that they ache badly, in fact, are partly benumbed, so that they feel like wooden feet, or like a tooth which the dentist has 'wedged.' This intensifies each minute, and when you finally limp into your own friendly room the 'fine' boots come off in a hurry and go slam into the closet. They flattered your feelings, but oh, how they hurt your feet.

After a dozen or more such experiences you began to philosophize upon the matter, and end by uttering the following aphorisms:

1. Never 'breake in' boots or shoes. If they are not easy when new, don't take them, for the boots will break your feet oftener than your feet will brake the boots.

2. If you go on 'breaking in' boot leather, you will need a special last made with all sorts of knobs and protuberances to correspond with your distorted joints. Then you will be sorry.

3. If you have large feet, admit it in all honesty, and have your boots made accordingly. Then you will be happy.

Fight Between a Whale and a Sea Serpent.

The following description of an encounter between a whale and a sea serpent is extracted from an affidavit of a Captain West, of Hallowell, Maine:

About 6 o'clock in the afternoon Cape Ann bearing west southwest about two leagues, steering a course north northeast, saw directly ahead, distant about three-fifths of a mile, an object which I have no doubt was the sea serpent so often mentioned by others engaged with a whale that was endeavoring to elude the attack. The serpent threw up his tail from twenty-five to thirty feet in a perpendicular direction, striking the whale with tremendous blows rapidly repeated, which were distinctly heard, and very loud, for two or three minutes. They then both disappeared for several minutes, moving in a west southwest direction, when they reappeared in shore of us. and about under the sun, the reflection of which was so strong as to prevent our seeing so distinctly as before, when the tremendous blows were repeated and as clearly heard as before. They then went down again for a short time, and again came up to the surface under our larboard quarter, the whale appearing first and the serpent in pursuit. Here our view was very fair. The serpent shot up his tail through the water to the height before mentioned, which he held out of the water some time waving it in the air, and at the same time, while his tail remained in this position raised his head rather leisurely, fifteen or twenty feet, as if taking a view of the surface of the sea. After remaining in this situation a short time he again sunk into the water, disappeared, and was not afterwards seen by any on board. The serpent's body was larger, in my opinion, than the mast of any ship I ever saw, his tail appeared very ragged and rough, and was shaped something like an eel's, and his head like that of a land serpent's Being well acquainted with whaling, I think the whale was endeavoring to escape, as he spouted but once at a time on coming to the surface. The whale's back was distinctly seen, as well as his spouting, and the last time he appeared he went down before the serpent came up. The above was seen by all on board amounting to fifteen or eighteen persons as well as myself with the exception of one woman. During our view the combatants had passed a mile or more. The whale was a humpback and a pretty large one.

Mark Twain's Tribute to Woman.

At the annual banquet of the Washington Correspondents' Club, the following toast was read: "Woman: The pride of the professions and the jewel of ours." To which Mark Twain responded as follows:

Human intelligence cannot estimate what we owe to woman, sir. She sews on buttons, she ropes us in at the church fairs, she confides in us, tells whatever she can find out about the little private affairs of our neighbors, she gives us a piece of her mind sometimes, and sometime all of it. In all relations of life, sir, it is a just and grateful tribute to say of her she is a "brick!"

Wherever you place woman, sir, in whatever position or estate, she is an ornament to the place she occupies, and a treasure to the world. Look at the names of history! Look at Desdemona! Look at Lucretia Borgia! Look at mother Eve! I repeat, sir, look at the illustrious names of history! Look at Elizabeth Cady Stanton! Look at George Francis Train! And, sir, I say, with bowed head and deepest veneration, look at the mother of Washington! She raised a boy that could not lie; but he never had a chance. It might have been different if he had belonged to a newspaper correspondents' club.

[Mark looked around placidly upon his excited audience, and resumed:]

I repeat, sir, that in whatever position you put a woman, she is an ornament to society, and a tresure to the world. As a sweetheart she has few equals, and no superior. As a wealthy grandmother with an incurable distemper, she is gorgeous. As a wet nurse, she has no equal among men. What, sir, would the people of the earth be without women? They would be scarce, sir, almighty scarce! Then let us give her our support, our sympathy—ourselves, if we get a chance.

But, jesting aside, Mr. President, woman is lovable, gracious, kind of heart, beautiful, worthy of respect, of all esteem, of all deference. No one here will refuse to drink her health right cordially, for each and every one of us has personally known, loved and honored the best of them all—his own mother.

A Detroit girl named Marion Dixon, who was formerly one of the most beautiful and accomplished of the young ladies of that city appears continually in the police courts for drunkenness

Mosquitoes are very lively in Louisville, and the people are sorry for the harsh things they sung and said about the beautiful snow.

Death of Shack Nasty Jack.

Again are we called upon to perform the painful duty of announcing the death of one who, if not altogether lovely was chief among a fraction of thousand spirits who are not yet made perfect. We refer to "Shack Nasty Jack," the genial wholesouled, or perhaps (considering his mixed parentage) we should say half-soled copper colored gentleman, who recently died peacefully, and in pieces, in his little lava bed. Jack did not wray what little drapery he had about him and lie down to pleasant dreams, and his demise was hastened by a seven-inch shell that entered and exploded in his diaghragm, ruining a degestive apparatus that had never been disturbed by banquets of roast dog, salt horse, washed down by copious draughts of fiery untamed benzine and needle-gun whiskey. As we recall the virtues of the deceased our pen unconsciously drifts into the Leger form of mourning, and we are led to exclaim—

Dearest Shack, thou has left us,
No more horses thou wilt steal.
But twas Gilem that benefit us,
He can all our sorrows heal.

First we thought it was Sshonchin.
Then we heard 'twas scar-faced Charles,
But the latest news, Shack Nasty,
Says 'tis you have quit earth's snarls.
Gone but not forgotten.

Friends of the family invited to attend covered carriges for all who wear gloves.

Born of poor, but honerable parents, "Jack" manifested at an early age those traits that in after years made him famous, and would in time have sent him to Congress if his soul had not been shelled out of his ephemeral shell by a cast-iron namesake. He served his tribe as tax collector, President of a base ball club and was about organizing a Young Men's Horse Plagiarizing Association, when he felt a sensation of goneness at the pit of his stomach, and was gone. Possessing many of the virtues that marked the Credit Mobilier operators, Schack Nasty was also as generous as the increased salary voters, who only drew their back salary to pay off the public debt, and the news of his sudden death will cause a thrill of anguish in many bosoms—anguish that he was not premitted to die slower and by inches.

A Comic paper, in interest of the temperance cause, is announced in London.