FRANCES BOYD CALHOUN (Copyright, by Reilly & Britton Co.)

do, William Hill, than any boy the?

is," cried the other; "you all time

get nobody loose. What you want to

"You done it yo'self," defended the

get us hooked up in this thing for?"

"Squeeze in, Jimmy; we jes' boun' to

He backed the other child close to

the wall and pressed so hard against

him that Jimmy screamed aloud and

began to pound him on the head with

Billy would not submit tamely to

any such treatment. He reached his

hand behind him and gave the

smaller boy's cheek a merciless pinch.

The fight was on. The two little boys,

laced up tightly as they were in a

stout pair of stays, pinched and scratched, and kicked and jerked.

Suddenly Billy, leaning heavily against

Jimmy, threw him flat on his back

had up to this time watched the pro-

ceedings with an interested eye; now,

hinking murder was being commit-

smitted a howl that could be heard

talf a mile. It immediately brought

als mother to the open door. When

she saw the children squirming on

the floor in her only corset, her indig-

"You, Jimmy Garner, an' you, too,

yo' mammy tell you not to tamper

an' lemme git my co'set off o' yuh."

"Billy all time-" began Jimmy.

"Billy all time nothin'," said Sarah

replied, somewhat mollified at his in-

Littlejohn, she been married goin' on

five times. Dishere 'll make fo' gen-

tlemans she done buriet an' dey ain't

nobody can manage a fun'el like she

wid Brudder Littlejohn's co'pse."

Sarah Jane almost forgot her little au-

dience in her intense absorption of

her subject. "She say to me dis morn-

Reddinfiel', but I sho' is drawed some

han'some prizes.' She got 'em all

laid out side by side in de buryin'

groun' wid er little imige on ebry

grabe; an' Sis Mary Ellen, secin' as

she can't read de writin' on de tomb-

stones, she got a diff'unt little animal

a-settin' on eb'ry head res' so's she

kin tell which husban' am which.

Her fus' husban' were all time a hunt-

in', so she got a little white marble

pa'tridge a-restin' on he' head, an' hit

am a mighty consolement to a po'

er grabe which husban' hit am. Her

secon' man he got er mighty kinky,

she got a little white lamb a-settin' on

he grabe; an' de nex' husban' he

did n't have nothin' much fo' to dis-

gueese him f'om de res' 'cep'in' he so

show an' she might nigh rack her brain

him bein' a Hardshell Baptis' an' so

powerful slow, so she jest got a little

tarrapin an' sot it on him. Hit sho'

am a pretty sight jes' to go in dat

buryin' groun' an' look at 'em all, side

by side; an' now she got Brudder Lit-

tlejohn to add to de res'. He de onli-

est one what's got er patch o' whis-

kers so she gwine to put a little white

think could pearten' a widda 'oman

could go to de grabeyard any time yuh

want to an' look at dat han'some

e'llection an' tell 'zactly which am

Billy hastened to inquire:

Sarah Jane stopped for breath and

"Who else is dead, Sarah Jane?"

"Tain't nobody else dead, yit, as I

knows on, but my two cousins is tur-

rible low; one 's got a hemrage on de

lung an' de yuther 's got a congestin' on de brain, an' I 'lows dey 'll bofe

drap off 'twix' now an' sunup tomor-

pened to light on her corset. She at

"An' sposin' I had n't 'av' came in

here when I did? I'd 'a' had to went

once returned to her grievance.

Her eyes rolled around and hap-

which."

hit would be jes' to know dat yuh

in', she say, 'Marri'ge am a lott'ry, Sis

ing interrogations "You kn

ed, he opened his big, red mouth and

Bennie Dick, sitting on the floor.

his chubby fists.

and fell on top of him.

CHAPTER XVII .- Continued.

"Maurice loves you, too"-she hoped | want to get us hooked up in Sarah to conciliate him; "he says you are Jane's corset and you all time can't the brightest kid in town."

"Kid," was the scornful echo, "'cause he's so big and tall, he's got to call me a kid. Well, he'd jes' boy in front with rising passion. a-wastin' hi'self lovin' me; I don't like him an' I ain't a-goin' to never like git outer this 'fore somebody finds him, an' soon's I put on long pants it out." he's got to get 'bout the worses' lickin' he ever did see.

"Say, does you kiss him like you does me?" he asked presently, looking up at her with serious, unsmiling

She hid her embarrassment in

"Don't be foolish, Billy," she replied. "I'll bet he's kissed you more'n Afty hundred times."

"There's Jimmy whistling for you," said Miss Cecilia. "How do you two boys make that peculiar whistle? I would recognize it anywhere.

"Is he ever kiss you yet!" asked the

"I heard that you and Jimmy whipped Ed Brown because he imitated your own particular whistle.

"How many times is he kiss you ""

him and tried to nestle his little body

Im too be anyway for your real nation knew no bounds. fweetleam 'sie sail 'Wig by the Ume you are large enough to marry I should be an old made You must have what you doin' in my house? Didn't Frances of Long for your sweetheart." "An let 700 late Manniel" he

She stopped to lay ber flushed cheek sammes his own

Modey, she softly said, "Maurice foliate stone to be married soon; I love him very much and I want you | their imprisoned bodies.

He pushed her roughly from him. you jes 'ceived me all the Jane, "'tain't no use fo' to try to lay time, he cried, 'an me a-lovin' you dis-here co'set business onto Billy; tester's anythody I ever see sence I's both o' you is exally in it. An' me born' An you a Sunday-school teach- a-almin' fo' to go to three fun'els dis er' I ain't never a-goin' to trus' no- week an' a baptizin' on Sunday. body no mo'. Good-by, Miss Cecilia." S'pose y'all'd bruck one o' de splints,

She caught his hand and held it how'd I look a-presidin' at a fun'el fast. "I want you and Jimmy to be my 'thout nare co'set on, an' me shape' little pages at the wedding, and wear like what I is?" dear little white satin suits all trimmed with gold braid"—she tried Jimmy, hoping to stem the torrent of to be enthusiastic and arouse his in- her wrath terest; 'and Line and Frances can be "Sis' Mary Ellen's las' husban', hale flower-girls and we'll have such Brudder Littlejoin-dat' a-who," she & beautiful wedding."

'Jimmy an' Lina an' Frances can be terest all the pages an' flower-girls an' "When did he die?"—Jimmy pursued brides an' grooms they wants to, but his advantage, you can't rope me in," he scornfully "He got 'way f'om here bout moonreplied. "I's done with you an' I sin't down las' night," she replied, losing never goln' to have me mo' sweet sight of her grievance in his flatter-

CHAPTER XVIII.

Closer Than a Brother.

It was a had, rainy day. Jimmy and kin; 'pears like hit jes come natchel Billy were playing in Sarah Jane's to her. She sho' is done a good part cable, she, however, being in happy by eb'ry single husban' too, an' she ignorance of the fact. Her large 's figgerin' to outdo all the yuthers stays, worn to the preaching the night before, were hanging on the back of a

"Ain't I glad I don't have to wear no corset when I puts on long pants?" remarked Billy, pointing to the article. 'Ain't that a big one? It's twice 's big 's Aunt Minerva's."

"My mamma wears a big co'set, too," said Jimmy; "I like fat womans 'nother sight better 'n lean ones. Miss Minerva's bout the skinniest woman they is; when I get married I'm going to pick me out the fattest wife I can find, so when you set in her lap at night for her to rock you to sleep you'll have a soft place to put your head, while she sings to you."

"The major—he's mos' plump widda 'oman fo' to know dat she can enough for two," said Billy, taking tell de very minute her eyes light en down the stays and trying to hook them around him.

"It sho' is big," he said; "I berlieve | woolly head an' he mighty meek, so it's big 'nough to go 'round both of

"Le's see if 't ain't," was the other

boy's ready suggestion, He stood behind Billy and they put

the stays around both little bedies, while, with much squeezing and giggling, Billy hooked them safely up the front. The boys got in front of Sarah Jane's one looking-glass and danced about laughing with glee.

"We're like the twinses what was growed together like mamma read me bout," declared the younger child.

Presently they began to feel uncomfortable, especially Jimmy, whose cat on he' grabe. Yes, Lord, of anyfat, round little middle was tightly compressed

"Here, unhook this thing, Billy, and le's take her off," he said. "I'm "bout to pop open."

"All right," agreed his companion.

He tugged and pulled, but could get only the top and bottom hooks unclasped; the middle ones refused to budge.

"I can't get these-here hooks to come loose," Billy said.

Jimmy put his short, fat arms around him and tried his hand, but with no better success. The stays were such a snug fit that the hooks

seemed glued. "We sho' is in a fix," said Billy gloomily; "look like God all time let-

tin' us git in trouble."

co'set. Y' all gotta go right to y' all's mamas an' Miss Minerva dis very minute. I low dey 'll settle yo' hashes. Don't y' all know dat Larroes ketch

CHAPTER XIX.

Twins and a Sissy. Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Black were

sitting on Miss Minerva's veranda talking to her, and Lina and Frances were in the swing with Billy. The attraction proved too great for Jimmy; he impolitely left a disconsolate little visitor sitting on his own porch while he jumped the fence and joined the other children.

"Don't you all wish you could see Mrs. Brown's new twinses?" was his greeting as he took his seat by Billy. "Where 'd she get 'em?" asked Frances.

"Doctor Sanford tooken 'em to her last night."

"He muster found 'em in a holler stump," remarked Billy. "I knows, cause that 's where Doctor Shacklefoot finds aller ol' Aunt Blue-Gum Tempy's Peruny Pearline's, an' me an' Wilkes Booth Lincoln been lookin' in ev'y holler stump we see ever sence we's born, an' we ain't never foun' no baby 't all, 'cause can't nobody but jes' doctors fin' 'em. I wish he 'd a-give 'em to Aunt Minerva

stidder Mrs. Brown." "I wish he 'd bringed 'em to my mama," said Frances.

"I certainly do think he might have given them to us," declared Lina, "and I 'm going to tell him so, too. As much money as father has paid him for doctor's bills and as much old, mean medicine as I have taken just to 'commodate him; then he gives babies to everybody but us."

"I 'm awful glad he never give 'em to my mama," said Jimmy, "cause I never could had no more fun; they'd be struck right under my nose all time, and all time put their mouth in everything you want to do, and all time meddling. You can't fool me bout twinses. But I wish I could see em! They so weakly they got to be hatched in a nincubator."

William Hill, yuh little imps o' Satan, "What 's that?" questioned Frances. "That 's a someping what you wid me no mo'? Git up an' come here hatches chickens and babies in when they's delicate and ain't got 'nough Angry as she was, she could not breath and ain't got they eyes open keep from laughing at the sight they and ain't got no feathers on," expresented, as, with no gentle hand, plained Jimmy. she unclasped the hooks and released

"Reckon we can see 'em?" she sked.

"See nothing!" sniffed the little boy. Ever sence Billy let Mr. Algernon Jones whack Miss Minerva's beau we can't do nothing at all 'thout grown folks 'r' stuck right under your nose. 'm jes' cramped to death."

"When I 'm a mama," mused Frances, "I hope Doctor Sanford 'll bring me three little twinses, and two Maltese kittens, and a little Japanese, and a monkey, and a parrit." "Who's dead, Sarah Jane?" asked

"When I 'm a papa," said Jimmy, "I don' want no babies at all, all they 's good for is jus' to set 'round and yell." "Look like God 'd sho' be busy a-makin' so many babies," remarked

"Why, God don' have none 'a the

I think he B a beautiful little boy. championed Lina. "Call him over here, Jimmy."

"Naw, I don't want to. You all 'll like him a heap better over there; he's one o' these-here kids what the furder you get 'way from 'em, the better you like 'em."

"He sho' do look lonesome," said Billy; "vite him over, Jimmy." "Leon!" screamed his cousin, "you can come over here if you wantta."

The lonesome-looking little boy promptly accepted the invitation, and came primly through the two gates. He walked proudly to the swing and stood, cap in hand, waiting for an introduction.

"Why did n't you clam' the fence. 'stead of coming th'oo the gates?' growled Jimmy. "You bout the prissiest boy they is. Well, why don't you set down?"

"Introduce me, please," said the elegant little city boy.

"Interduce your grandma's pussy cats," mocked Jimmy. "Set down, l tell you."

Frances and Lina made room for him between them and soon gave him their undivided attention, to the intense envy and disgust of the other two little boys.

"I am Lina Hamilton," said the lit tle girl on his right.

"And I 'm Frances Black, and Jimmy ought to be 'shamed to treat you like he does."

"I knows a turrible skeery tale," remarked a malicious Billy, looking at Lina and Frances. "If y' all wa'n't girls I 'd tell it to you."

"We are n't any more scared 'n you William Hill," cried Frances, her interest at once aroused; "I already know 'bout 'raw meat and bloody bones' and nothing 's scarier 'n that."

"And I know 'Fe, Fi, Fo, Fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be he dead, I'll ground his bones to make me bread," said Lina.

"This-here tale," continued Billy, glueing his big eyes to those of the little stranger, "is one Tabernicle learnt fer a speech at school. It 's all bout a 'oman what was buriet in a graveyard with a diamant ring on her finger, an' a robber come in the night-" The child's tones were guttural, thrilling and hair-raising as he glared into the eyes of the effeminate Leon, "an' a robber come in the night an' try to cut it off, an' ha'nts was groanin' an' the win' moan 'oo-oo

Leon could stand it no longer.

"I am going right back," he cried rising with round, frightened eyes, "! am not going to sit here and listen to you, scaring little girls to death. You are a bad boy to scare Lina and Frances and I am not going to associate with you;" and this champion of the fair sex stalked with dignity across the yard to the gate.

"I 'm no more scared 'n nothing,' and indignant Frances hurled at his back. "You 're just scared yourself."

Jimmy giggled happily. "What 'd I tell you all," he cried, gleefully. "Lina and Frances got to all time set little 'fraid cats 'tween 'em," he snorted. "It 's just like I tell you, he 's the trouble," explained Jimmy. "He 's sissyest boy they is; and he don't just got him a baby factory in heaven | care who kiss him neither; he'll let



Billy Would Not Submit Tamely to Such Treatment.

angels jus' all time make they arms and legs, like niggers do at the chair factory, and all God got to do is jus' glue em together, and stick in their souls. God got 'bout the easiest job

"I thought angels jes' clam' the golden stair and play they harps," said Billy. "Ain't we going to look sweet at

Miss Cecilia's wedding?" said Frances, after a short silence. "I 'll betcher I 'll be the cutest kid in that church," boasted Jimmy conceitedly. "You coming, ain't you,

off, twell she happen to think 'bout Billy?" swain, gloomily, "Aunt Minerva ain't spindliest legs I ever saw." got nobody to leave me with at home.

I jes' wish she 'd git married." "Why would n't you be a page, Billy?" asked Lina. "Cause I did n't hafto," was the

snappish reply. "I bet my mama give her the finest present they is," bragged the smaller boy; "I reckon it cost 'bout a million

"Mother gave her a handsome cutglass vase," said Lina. "It looks like Doctor Stanford would

ve give Miss Cecilia those twinses for a wedding present," said Frances. "Who is that little boy sitting on your porch, Jimmy?" asked Lina, noticing for the first time a lonely-look-

ing child. "That's Leon Tipton, Aunt Ella's little boy. He just come out from Memphis to spend the day with me and I'll be awful glad when he goes home; he's bout the stuck-up-est kid they is, and skeery? He 's 'bout the 'fraidest young un ever you see. And look at him now! Wears long curls like a girl "You think of more fool stunts to to my own cousins' fun'el 'thout nare clo'es dirty."

factory down by the railroad, and | Can't no woman at all 'cepting my mama and Miss Cecilia kiss me. But Leon is 'bout the kissingest kid they is; why, he'd just as soon 's not let Frances and Lina kiss him; he ain't got no better sense. 'Course I gotta let Miss Cecilia kiss me 'cause she's bout the plumpest Sunday school teacher they is and the Dible say 'If your Sunday school teacher kiss you on one cheek turn the other cheek and let her kiss you on that, too,' and I all time bound to do what the Bible say. You 'd better call him back, Frances, and kiss him, you and Lina 're so stuck on him."

"I would n't kiss him to save his "I gotter go," answered that jilted life," declared Frances; "he 's got the

CHAPTER XX.

Rising in the World. The painter had just finished put-

ing a bright green coat of paint upon the low, flat roof of Miss Minerva's long back-porch. And he left his ladder leaning against the house while he went inside to confer with her in regard to some other work.

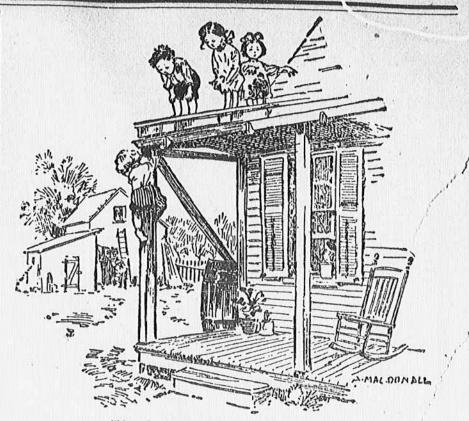
Billy, Jimmy, Frances and Lina had been playing "Fox and Geese." Running around the house they spled the ladder and saw no owner to deny them.

"Le 's clam' up and get on top the porch," suggested Jimmy. "Aunt Minerva 'll put me to bed if :

do," said Billy. "Mother 'll make me learn a whole

page of the catechism if I climb a ladder," sald Lina, "My mama 'll shut me up in the closet, but our mamas are n't bound

to know 'bout it,"-this from Frances. 'Come on, let 's climb up." "I ain't never promise not to clam' no ladder but — Billy hesitated.



"You Can't Clam' Down Nothin' at All."

"You-all 'bout the skeeriest folks they is," sneered Jimmy. "Mama 'll whip me going and coming if she finds out 'bout it, but I ain't skeered. I

dare anybody to dare me to clam' up." "I dare you to climb this ladder," responded an accommodating Frances. "I ain't never tooken a dare yet," boasted the little boy proudly, his foot on the bottom rung. "Who 's going to foller me?"

"Don't we have fun?" cried a jubilant Frances.

"Yes," answered Jimmy; "if grown folks don't all time be watching you and sticking theirselfs in your way." "If people would let us alone," remarked Lina, "we could enjoy our-

selves every day." "But grown folks got to be so pertic'lar with you all time," cried Jimmy, 'they don't never want us to play to-

gether." He led the way up the ladder, followed by Frances and Billy; and Lina brought up the rear. The children ran the long length of the porch leaving their footprints on the fresh, sticky paint.

"Will it wash off?" asked Frances, looking gloomily down at her feet, which seemed to be encased in green moccasins.

At that moment she slipped and fell sprawling on top of the roof. When the others helped her to her feet, she was a sight to behold, her white dress splotched with vivid green from top to bottom.

"If that ain't jus' like you, Frances," Jimmy exclaimed; "you all time got to fall down and get paint on your dress so we can't 'celve nobody. Now our mamas bound to know 'bout us clamming up here."

"They would know it anyhow," mourned Lina; "we'll never get this paint off of our feet. We had better get right down and see if we can't wash some of it off."

While they were talking the owner of the ladder, who had not noticed them-and was deaf in the bargainhad quietly removed it from the backporch and carried it around to the front of the house.

The children looked at each other in consternation when they perceived their loss.

"What we goin' to do now?" asked

"If this ain't just like Billy, all time got to perpose to clam' a ladder and all time got to let the ladder get loose from him," growled Jimmy, "We done cooked a goose egg, this time. You got us up here, Billy, how you going to get us down?" "I did n't, neither."

"Well, it 's Miss Minerva's house and she 's your aunt and we 's your company and you got to be 'sponsible." 'I can clam' down this-here post,' said the responsible party.

"I can climb down it, too," seconded Frances.

"You can't clam' down nothing at all," said Jimmy contemptuously. "Talk 'bout you can clam' down a post; you 'd fall and bust yourself wide open; you 'bout the clumsiest girl there is; 'sides, your legs 're too fat."

"We can holla," was Lina's suggestion.

"And have grown folks laughing fit to pop their sides open? I 'm 'shame' to go anywheres now 'cause folks all time telling me when I 'm going to dye some more Easter eggs! Naw, we better not holler," said Jimmy. 'Ain't you going to do nothing, Billy?" "I 'll jest slide down this-here post

and git the painter man to bring his ladder back. Y' all wait up here." Billy's solution of the difficulty seemed the safest, and they were soon

released from their elevated prison. "I might as well go home and be learning the catechism," groaned Lina. "I 'm going to get right in the closet soon 's I get to my house," said Fran-

ces. "Go on and put on your nightshirt, Billy," Billy took himself to the bathroom and scrubbed and scrubbed; but the paint refused to come off. He tiptoed by the kitchen where his aunt was cooking dinner and ran into his own

He found the shoes and stockings which were reserved for Sunday wear,

and soon had them upon his little feet Miss Minerva rang the dinner-bell and he walked quietly inco the diningroom trying to make as little noise and to attract as little attention from his aunt as possible; but she fastened her eyes at once upon his feet.

"What are you doing with shoes on, William?" she asked.

Billy glanced nonchalantly at her. "Don't you think, Aunt Minerva," he made answer, "I 's gittin' too big to go thout any shoes? I 's mos' ready to put on long pants, an' how'd I look, I'd jest like to know, goin' round' barefooted an' got on long breeches. I don' believe I 'll go barefooted no mo'

—I'll jest wear my shoes ev'y day." "I just believe you won't. Go take them off at once and hurry back to your dinner."

"Lemme jest wait tell I eats," he begged, hoping to postpone the evil hour of exposure.

"No, go at once, and be sure and wash your hands." Miss Minerva spled the paint the in-

stant he made his second entrance and immediately inquired, "How did you get that paint on your feet?" The little boy took his seat at the table and looked up at her with his

sweet, attractive, winning smile. "Paint pertec's little boys' feets," he said, "an' keeps 'em f'om gittin' hurted, Aunt Minerva, don't it?"

Miss Minerva laid down her fork and gave her nephew her undivided attention. "You have been getting into mischief

again, I see, William; now tell me all about it. Are you afraid of me?" "Yas 'm," was his prompt response, 'an' I don't want to be put to bed

neither. The major he would n't put little boys to bed day times." She blushed and eyed him thoughtfully. She was making slow progress with the child, she knew, yet she still felt it her stern duty to be very strict with him and, having laid down cer-

tain rules to rear him by, she wished to adhere to them. "William," she said after he had made a full confession, #1 won't punish you this time for I know that Jim-

my led you into it but-' "Naw'm, Jimmy did n't. Me an' him an' Frances an' Lina's all 'sponsible, but I promise you, Aunt Minerva, not to clam' no mo' ladders.

CHAPTER XXI.

Pretending Reality. The chain-gang had been working in the street not far from Miss Minerva's house, and Lina, Frances, Billy and Jimmy had hung on her front fence for an hour, watching them with eager interest. The negroes were chained together in pairs, and guard-

ed by two, big, burly white men. "Let's us play chain-gang," suggested Jimmy.

"Where we goin' to git a chain?" queried Billy; "t won't be no fun thout a lock an' chain."

"I can get the lock and chain off 'm Sarah Jane's cabin.' 'Yo' mama don't lo you to go to

her cabin," said Bill "My mama don't care if I just borra a lock and chain; so I 'h going to get going to get

"I 'm going to be the perlice of the gang," said Frances. "Perlice nothing. You all time talk-

ing 'bout you going to be a pendice," scoffed Jimmy. "I'm going to be the perlice myself." "No, you are not," interposed Lina,

firmly. "Billy and I are the tallest and we are going to be the guards, and you and Frances must be the prison-"Well, I ain't going to play 'thout I can be the boss of the niggers. It 's

Sarah Jane's chain and she 's my mama's cook, and I'm going to be what I please." "I 'll tell you what do," was Billy's suggestion, "we'll take it turn about; me an' Lina 'll first be the perlice an'

y' all be the chain-gang, an' then wo ll be the niggers an' y' all be the bosses." This arrangement was satisfactory so the younger boy climbed the fence

and soon returned with a short chain and padlock. Billy chained Jimmy and Frances to gether by two round, fat ankles and put the key to the lock in his pocket.

"We must decide what crimes they have committed," said Lina, "Frances done got 'rested fer shootin' craps an' Jimmy done got 'rested fer 'sturbin' public worship," said the

other boss. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

Color Contrasts. She (tartly)—Don't congravalate yourself that everything is going to be lovely when you reform.

He (startled)--Why not? She-Boruse rosy futures den't 60

with purple pasts.