

IN THE LIGHTHOUSE.

It was the last day in the old year, and yet it did not seem much like winter, though the maple trees were bare and the flowers all dead. The oaks were covered thickly with leaves. True, when the wind blew it rustled through brown, dry foliage very different to the living tints of months back, but when you looked at the soft, muddy roads, or the clear blue sky, you scarcely realized that it was just past Christmas.

John Hudson, keeper of the lighthouse at Fishing Point, was brushing his weather-beaten coat (once black, now almost "sage-green"), and giving parting directions to John Hudson, Jr.—called "Jack" by his family. "Now mind and don't set the house on fire while I am gone. I must fix that chimney when I get back, or we'll be burned out yet, and don't take to fooling with the oil—there isn't very much of it left now. There's that cord of wood in the yard; I guess you had better fill the wood boxes, and pick up a bit. I expect the inspector will be round before long, and we want to have everything taut and trim when he comes. Get your dinner when you're ready; I may be back in time, and I may not, with all these errands to do in the village, but, anyhow, I shall be home this afternoon. Good-bye, sonny, and he tramped briskly away through the trees.

"Stub! Stub! here, sir. You must stay home with me. Father don't want you. There's a rat, sure! I live! Sick it, Stub! S-s-s-sick it!"

"Now," said Jack, after an exciting chase in which boy and dog had howled and barked at one another, "now, Stub, we'll wash the breakfast dishes—won't we?"

Stub looked a knowing assent, and sat gravely on a chair (which he first knocked the cat off, while Jack washed and dried the few dishes as deft as a girl. He had lived there as long as he could remember. His earliest recollection was looking at the bright reflector up-stairs, and seeing in it a sweet, smiling face, with tender blue eyes, near his own. His next memory of the face was in a coffin, pale and still, while his father held his hand, and the minister from the village talked in a low, sad tone. But this was years ago, when Jack was as he would inform you "only a little fellow." Now, from this dignified age of ten years he felt himself arrived at man's estate. His father was formerly a sailor, but in consequence of losing one of his fingers in the icy regions of the north he had to accept the position of lighthouse-keeper—loving the sea too well to think for a moment of any work further inland. Such stories as he used to tell Jack in the winter days, when they would be cut off by snowdrifts from the rest of the world. Such thrilling adventures delighted the boy's ears, and he would listen to his father's tales with rapt attention.

Stub, however, was not so easily won over. He had a tremendous whale capsize a boat's crew, and two men got drowned, of the mutiny that once broke out on the Fair Breeze, and the sneaking Italian who got put in irons for starting it. Jack would go to bed with a "creepy" kind of feeling after these stories, but the morning light always drove away the shadows, and he would vow to himself never to let such ridiculous stories frighten him again. "Stub, let's play Robinson Crusoe in the yard, now that the dishes are all washed; Jane to the cat, you can come, too, if you want," said Jack, opening the door. Stub accepted the invitation for himself and Jane by making a dart at her as she lay blinking near the stove, and rushing her out doors with scant ceremony.

"This shed here shall be the cave, and I'll wear father's fur cap and be Robinson Crusoe. You can be Friday, Stub. You are black and don't know much; and Jane shall sit up here on the woodpile and be the parrot. Now, Friday, you just stay there while I go to get some sticks for the wood-box; and Jack, making his work into play, worked with a will, while the waves romped and tossed about on the shore like merry children, and a live gray cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, rose slowly in the north and made another dash of color in the brilliant sky.

"Why, I declare, if it ain't going to snow! The clouds have come, and they look heavy, too, as if they were just bursting with the piles of snowflakes hid away in them. My! won't it be jolly coasting, though! It hasn't been half a winter yet—no snow, except a little that melted right away, and none of the ponds frozen over. I guess I had better see if my sled's all right; and away Jack ran on this hollow pretence—a self-delusion about the condition of the "Artful Dodger," for had he not examined it daily for the past two months and longed impatiently for a chance to use it? "My! there's a snowflake, as sure's the world, and there's another, and another swarm of 'em!" exclaimed happy Jack to his small but select audience of Stub and Jane. They were very amiable, and frisked and gambled with as good an appearance of happy innocence as could be desired.

"It's getting dark very quickly; not 4 o'clock yet. I guess it's going to be a pretty big fall this time, and—whew! Stub, hear the wind; sounds squally, don't it?"

Stub looked with an air of gravity through the windows, and seemed to be of the opinion that it certainly did appear threatening.

"What keeps father so late, I wonder? If it keeps on getting dark as fast as this the light will have to be fixed pretty soon."

Thick and fast fell the snowflakes, hurrying, scurrying down, as if in haste to see which could first reach the earth. Every now and then a violent gust of wind would come that clung to some of the trees, and near at hand the waves surged and dashed and tossed themselves on the shore and against the rocks.

"I know the lamp ought to be lit. I'd better go right away and do it," said Jack, addressing his companion. As they raised no objection Jack started, materials in hand, and they followed—to see, no doubt, that everything was done fairly and squarely. Up the stairs went the trio: Stub ahead, snuffing and peering into all the dark corners, Jack, with the lamp and oil in his hand, following warily, and Jane, with a dignity suitable for a lady of her years, bringing up the rear. Jack knew how to work. He watched his father daily, and had sometimes been allowed to help him; so, in a very short time, a friendly glow of light poured through the windows of the little tower, and laid bare the deep, treacherous rocks with blunt distinctness, while they strove vainly to hide beneath the stormy waves.

"I suppose we might as well get supper ready now, against father comes," and Jack laid the cloth neatly and cut the bread with a will. Like a few rare and isolated boys of his age, being hungry was Jack's normal condition, relieved at occasional intervals by being satisfied. Supper was waiting—father's tea was boiling and bubbling on the stove (Jack's limited knowledge of cooking had not

taught him that tea should never be allowed to boil, Jack's basin of broken bread in readiness for the scalding milk, some dried beef as a special treat and plenty of good bread, cheese, and butter besides. Inside, all was warm and cozy, cheery and home-like; outside, stormy and blustering.

"Seven o'clock, and father not home yet! Well, the light will burn an hour yet without fixing. Father says it would burn longer than that, but it's safest to look at it every four hours, and he's sure to be here before it wants looking to." So Jack got his favorite book from the shelf, and sat down for a cosy read in his father's arm-chair near the stove. It certainly was very exciting—where Crusoe and Friday discovered the arrival of the one and twenty savages, and disturbed them at their revolting repast. But Jack got up so early mornings, and was so active all the day, that no wonder his ideas began to stray and his eyes to blink and close. Stub had settled himself near for a little quiet meditation—nose between two black, outstretched forepaws, and gaze fixed on nothing in particular; while, Jane, having just made her toilet for the night by careful washing and patting, dozed peacefully behind the stove. Tired Jack slept, and dreamed he was Crusoe, and had just built a beautiful sled, and he and Friday coasted down among the cannibals and sent them flying on all sides; and the old clock ticked, ticked, while out doors the snow blew in whirls, and a weary man fought his way against the wind and sought to find again the beaten path to his home. Hour after hour passed, till the faithful hammer striking 10, woke Jack in bewilderment at not finding himself in his own little bed.

"What's the matter?" he said, shaking himself and standing. "Why, how late it is! What can have happened to father?"

Stub roused up, but could not answer the question, so wisely kept silence—people don't always, you know.

"The light! the light! Oh, suppose it's gone out. I must go up this very minute to see, though it's awfully dark, and the stove's gone out, too; but I can't stop to make it up now. Come, Stub, you can go with me if you want to, said diplomatic Jack, who really didn't like to go through all these dark passages and stairs alone, but who wouldn't have Stub know it for the world.

Jack reached the foot of the ladder, and was slowly mounting, when his foot slipped and he fell. Stub looked at him helplessly and waited for him to pick himself up. Jack had kept hold of his lantern, and fortunately it had not been extinguished; the oil ran off in a little stream, and he was able to see his way. "What ails my foot?" said he, making several ineffectual attempts to stand. "My, how it hurts!" and he held it in his hand while he bravely kept the tears back. "I guess I've sprained it, or something. What shall I do? I could manage to slide down stairs again and wait there till father comes. But then the light; that ought to be attended to. Oh, why ain't father back?" and he winced with pain as a sudden twinge came to his ankle.

"Oh, dear, it's tough work," said he, as with the oil-can slung across one arm he tried to climb the ladder with one foot and one knee.

"I guess I better give it up—psah! what's a little good for anyway, if he can't put himself out of the way for other folks once in a while. How the tower shakes! What a night it is!"

The ascent was made at last and the light reached. "Just in time," said Jack; "the oil's all but finished. I guess I didn't put as much in as father did," and he hopped around the narrow space and trimmed the lamp. It took him some time, and the boy's fingers were getting stiff with cold, while his ankle kept bringing a look of pain across his face.

"I shall freeze before I get it done," groaned Jack, putting his finger-end into his mouth to warm them. "My foot! my foot!" he shrieked, as forgetting it for an instant, he had stepped on it. Stub in the room below gave a howl of sympathy, and dashed frantically at the foot of the ladder to reach his comrade.

"I can't stand it any longer! Oh, father, father!" and Jack fell unconscious on the floor.

All was silent once again in the house; no voice save the old clock tick-ticking the seconds away—the last minutes of the old year.

Loud blew the wind in the face of a foot-sore man, bruised by an outstretched branch, unseen in the darkness, and striving, with unsteady steps, to reach his home. Out at sea a noble vessel was battling with the storm, and happy hearts, unconscious of danger, were thinking of the glad meetings of the morrow and the joy of the dear faces that should welcome their return in the bright new year. Anxious hearts were beating in secret, as the pilot and the captain peered the deck uneasily, and peered through the storm, and—

Questioned of the darkness, which was sea and which was land.

"Fishing Point light ought to show to the north," said the captain.

"I've been looking for it, returned the pilot, "but the snow is so blinding I've not been able to see it yet. There it is!" he exclaimed, after some minutes more of weary watching, and the snow-cloud seemed parted by a warm gleam of light. And miles away, in storm-rocked tower, lay a prostrate form, cold and motionless, while the joy bells of the glad new year were ringing in the hopes and triumphs of a thousand hearts.

Bravely the glad ship Dauntless sailed into port on that morning with flying colors and friendly cheers from the shore.

"A pretty narrow escape we had last night—so the pilot tells me," said a passenger to his friend, after a hearty greeting. "All but lost off Fishing Point. The light shone on the rocks just in time, or we should not have been here now."

But Jack never knew anything of this. All he knew was that his father said, patting his head: "God bless you, sonny! If it hadn't been for the light shining through the darkness of that awful night, I shouldn't have been alive to take care of you now." And Jack thought this quite made up for the long, weary weeks of pain before he could use his lame foot again.

The Latest "Fad." (Cincinnati Enquirer.)

Do you know the latest fad for alleged smelling bottles? Brandy! At all events, I saw one that was utilized as a flask. It was carried by as chipper a young thing as ever you saw. She sat next to me. I noticed that she once put it to her mouth instead of her nose, and that she sucked in place of sniffing. Instantly I fell—or say two fingers—of the contents disappeared, like a baby dining from a nursing bottle. Then she demurely transferred the nozzle from below her upper lip to above it, and pretended to be refreshing herself by means of the smell. But the odor, as I couldn't help knowing it, was brandy. Nobody could deny, anyhow, that she took a "stuffer."

Texas Siftings: Sleep is merely an armistice in the battle of life.

THE ART OF OILING SHOES.

A Bootblack Tells the Secret—Why Kerose Oil-Barrels Are Painted Blue. (Chicago News.)

A one-armed bootblack having taken the contract to oil the shoes of a reporter, after the preliminary brushing began by rubbing the leather with a wet cloth. When asked what it was for he explained: "When I began this business," said the operator, pausing a moment to cast an admiring glance at the high, aristocratic arch of the newsgatherer's instep, "I used to keep on rubbing the oil into the leather until a man told me to stop. I thought they'd wanted to give satisfaction. Some of my customers complained that the oil soaked through their boots and saturated their socks. I thought perhaps I had been putting on too much oil, but the same fault was found in several cases where I had been more careful. Finally an old shoemaker whom I knew came along and I asked him what I ought to do to save my trade. He first made me to a shoe until I had wet it first. The reason was that the water would penetrate the leather and, remaining there, keep the oil from soaking through. Besides the water would soften the leather and open it so that the oil would go the leather more good. My trade has prospered ever since."

"I was oiling a man one day and he asked me the question you did. When I explained the reason he said that they used the same principle as that of painting kerosene oil barrels. I told him I thought they were painted blue just to look nice. He said it was to prevent the barrels from leaking. During a long voyage or a long journey by rail sometimes half a barrel of oil would leak through the pores of the wood and evaporate. So some sharp fellow began to study some way of preventing such loss. He first painted the barrel blue on the outside and then filled it with water and allowed it to stand until it had soaked up all it would. Then the oil was put in. The water kept the oil from soaking in the wood, and the paint on the outside kept the water from coming out. He got a patent on his discovery, and now he sits in his office and draws his royalty of 1 cent on every barrel made to hold kerosene oil for shipment. He's got a mighty soft lining on oil barrels."

At a recent reception in New York a distinguished member of the bar told a story at the expense of a fellow advocate, who was invited to some entertainment, his invitation being accompanied with the usual request "r. s. v. p." Never having before met the cabalistic initials, he inquired what they signified. "Why, don't you know?" was the reply. "It is a direction as to dress; roundabout, shirt, vest and pants." "But a lucky Jim," says he, "I have everything but the roundabout." A distinguished railroad man, who stood by, capped this with another. On one occasion he invited all the employees of the road to his house to listen to a little talk by Peter Cooper and others. Just at that time there had been some discussion as to a reduction of salaries, and the invited were suspicious, especially as they could not make out what what the "r. s. v. p." in the corner of the invitation meant. So they held a meeting, and after much cogitating one man said "Here, boys, I know what that means: reduction of salaries very profitable. They will get us there, give us something to eat and drink, and we will be roped in before we know it; don't let us go," and go they would not until the superintendent had been seen, and the matter explained.

He Was Too Reliable. (Texas Siftings.)

Mose Schauberg has a pawnbroker establishment attached to his dry-goods emporium, which, like all concerns, is run for revenue only. One day Jim Payson applied to Mose for a loan on a fine diamond ring. Much to Payson's surprise, Mose refused to make any advance on the ring. After Payson had left, Gilhooky, who was present, asked Mose: "Why didn't you let Payson have the money on that ring. It is worth the loan he asked several times over."

"Because he was too reliable," "I don't understand you."

"Well, you see an unreliable man don't come back to more to redeem what he has pledged, den he keeps dot forfeited pledge and I makes more den 300 per shent; but ven a man vash reliable, choost like dot Schim Payson, den he comes pack, maybe in a week, pays me mine money, and goes off with his valuable property, and I makes choost so good as noddings. Ven you yanis to make money dot pawnbroker pishness in, you must only deal with peebles vat vash not reliable. Dose reliable peebles steals their brobery away from you every dime."

Arrested Civilization. (Edinburg Review.)

If we ask why the Chinese have remained in a strange immovable condition for so many centuries, the answer is clear, though it may seem at first a little inadequate. The Chinese are clever, cultivated, skillful craftsmen, admirable imitators, but they have no imagination, and that explains everything. They are perfectly satisfied with the dull routine of a monotonous laborious life, so long as they have enough to eat and to buy opium, and to gamble away a few cash now and then with the dice or dominoes, or over the glorious combats of two valiant crickets. They are a practical folk, and so long as things are pretty comfortable they do not see the use of vain aspirations.

Lamb Wine. (Cincinnati Enquirer.)

The Manchoux, who conquered China, make a kind of drink from the flesh of lambs, either by fermenting it, reduced to a kind of paste, with the milk of their domestic animals, or bruising it to a pulpy substance with rice. When matured it is put into jars and drawn off as needed. Gerbilson says that the rich Mongols leave nothing to ferment with their sour milk before they distill it. This is undoubtedly the spirit said to be made from the flesh of the sheep by the Tartars in China, of which the emperors were so fond.

Cost of the Great Eastern. (Exchange.)

The cost of building and launching the Great Eastern, over \$4,300,000. An outfit of \$3,650,000 broke the original company before she was launched. Another company took up the work, spent \$600,000 and collapsed. Then a last company, with a capital of \$500,000, finished and launched the leviathan of the sea in 1880.

Made Famous. Oliver Wendell Holmes once made famous the great jockey and rider, Budd Doble, by referring to him as the man with the cold-in-the-head name.

The Greatest Cold. The greatest cold yet produced by man, 328 degrees below zero, was obtained by two Russian physicists by the use of liquid oxygen.

Chewing-Gum for Dyspepsia. (Harper's Weekly.)

If anybody has dyspepsia, and has tried all sorts of cures, and still suffers abominably, he need not despair. A member of the New York County Medical society has declared that for all cases of dyspepsia which come to him for treatment he recommends chewing-gum. The Maine lumbermen, he says, chew spruce gum, and that they never have dyspepsia. We say that dyspeptic persons in general need not yet despair, because probably the average dyspeptic reader of this has not yet tried chewing-gum.

A Treasonable Document. (Pilegends Blatter.)

Her Kreutzhuber is a member of the secret police. Being on his way home after midnight he observes on the street-lamp a placard. "Ha! these scoundrels of Societas have posted a placard denouncing his majesty," said Kreutzhuber to himself. Being determined to destroy the placard he painfully climbs up the lamp-post, and, having secured the treasonable document, he reads "Fresh Paint."

Living High on a Paper of Needles.

After the battle of Chickamauga, one of "our men" found a needle-case which had belonged to some poor fellow, probably among the killed. He did not place much value upon the contents, although there was a paper of No. 8 needles, several buttons, and a skein or two of thread, cut at each end and neatly braided, so that each thread could be smoothly drawn out. He put the whole thing in his breast pocket, and thought no more about it. But one day, while out foraging for himself and his mess, he found himself near a house where money could have procured a fine meal of fried chicken, corn pone and buttermilk, besides a small supply to carry back to camp. But Confederate soldiers' purses were generally as empty as their stomachs, and in this instance, the lady of the house did not offer to give away her nice dinner. While the poor fellow was inhaling the enticing odor and feeling desperately hungry, a girl rode up to the gate on horse-back, and bawled out to another girl inside the house:

"O, Cindy, I rid over to see if you couldn't lend me a needle. I broke the last one I had to day, and pap says that ain't nary nother to be bought in the country hereabouts."

Cindy declared she was in the same fix, and couldn't finish her new homespun dress for the same reason.

The soldier just then had an idea. He retired to a little distance, pulled out his case, and stuck two needles in the front of his jacket, then went back and offered one of them, with his best bow to the girl on the horse. I might away the lady of the house offered to trade for the one remaining, and the result was a plentiful dinner for himself, and, in consideration of a thread or two of silk, a full haversack and a can of milk. His old mess was well supplied, and our forager began to look sleek and fat. The secret of his success did not leak out till long afterwards, when he astonished the boys by declaring that he "had been living like a fighting cock on a paper of needles and two skeins of silk."

"R. S. V. P." (Pundit's Rambler.)

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