

Jake's Luck.

"WHATSOEVER will Mr. Squimps say? Oh, girls, to think of it—poor washed-out Amanda Liza, with her check aprons and faded calicoes—to think of her turning out an heiress! Whew! it takes my breath away. What'll Jake do now I wonder?"

Miss Jenny Smith was an acknowledged leader in the Squimps Academy. She had maintained her rotund person and round good-natured face in spite of sour bread and scant rations. We thin and starving girls looked up to her as a star of the first magnitude. We clustered round her in high conclave, as she sat on a desk in the school-room during the temporary absence of our worthy preceptor.

"Oh, she'll never think of Jake again," cried a sharp-faced girl in the corner.

"I'll bet she will," rejoined Miss Smith, slapping her hand energetically on her old grammar. Miss Smith had "big brothers," which may partly account for the vim with which she was wont to express herself. "But oh, don't I wish it was me! To think that Amanda Liza, that I used to lend my old collars to—"

"Young ladies, Miss Bimm!" cried a warning voice; whereat Jenny, with more haste than dignity, abandoned her lofty position, and there was a general stampede for seats, as Miss Bimm, the head teacher, came sailing in, followed by Mr. Squimps, the principal, black, tall, and solemn as the shadow of a lamp-post. Now for stricter rules, longer lectures on propriety, and a general surveillance founded on "certain recent occurrences."

What would Mr. Squimps say! Ay, to be sure that was always a question of importance, and Mr. Squimps always said a good deal. Here was an especial theme for his eloquence; for this case of poor Amanda Liza, who had been his bondservant for ten years, cuffed and cornered, making no sign, and at last turning out to have relations of her own and a heap of money, and leaving his establishment "for good and all" in his absence, a *lettle* too much for human nature, as he declared. For Mr. Squimps did not disdain to descend to "familiar colloquialisms" once in a while as a relief from the high mental strain of too much Latin and lexicon.

Mr. Squimps should have been a public speaker—so his wife declared, so all his friends affirmed—only the trouble was he would never have known when to stop. There was no "cork up" to him the girls declared. Once given a little rope, a little vexation, an accidental jarring of his arrangements, and Mr. Squimps flowed out into limitless rivers of rhetoric. He argued his point down to the last whistle, wound up splendidly, touched up his side whiskers, looked round for applause, turned over his wristbands, and before you knew it, began again.

This was a splendid opening this of Amanda Liza's—a girl whom he had taken out of "pure charity when her folks died of fever, a girl whom he had educated, brought up in his very family, and—and—and Mr. Squimps felt himself possessed on this occasion of all the stock in trade necessary for an orator.

"And Mr. Squimps like a father to her too!" cried Mrs. Squimps elevating her shriveled little hands.

Mrs. Squimps was a small wrinkled lady, rustling of an afternoon in a stiff voluminous silk, so little, so shriveled, she seemed to rattle in it as she walked, like a shriveled kernel in a walnut shell. She had the benefit of Mr. Squimp's eloquence the greater part of life, and was much like a worn-out text—thin and thumbed and faded.

The good lady was humbly aware of her deficiencies. A mere bit of quartz, she did not attempt to shine even in her husband's refugence. All real authority in her department was delegated to Miss Bimm, who carried things with an air, taught "higher branches" and took the lead.

Mrs. Squimps meekly took the kitchen, eminently fitter, as her husband declared, for that department, which was the foundation of all others. The foundation, prepared under Mrs. Squimps supervision, was not very substantial. But elegance was the aim, gentility the law at the academy, as Mr. Squimps observed, and no one asked twice for the same dish. An army of hungry girls, he remarked privately to Mr. Squimps, would devour all before them unless properly restrained. Under this aspect sour bread and chilled pancakes were judicious.

Amanda Liza, the girl about whom we were all just now in a furor, had assisted Mrs. Squimps and the maids in the kitchen of a morning, likewise of an evening; between these she generally sandwiched the thin hour of study which was denominated her "education." She was a slim drooping little thing, who never spoke up for herself; and if Jake hadn't spoken up for her once in a while, I think she would scarcely have held her own even under Mrs. Squimps motherly sway.

"Old Jake," as we called him, was a black-eyed, ragged lad of eighteen, the *fac-totum* of the school-general fag, boot-black, and boy-of-all-work to the establishment, with an occasional elevation to coachman.

Jake was subject to a state of chronic

outbreak, restive, forgetful of rules, and "dreadful sassy," the maids declared. But Jake had his ideal, and that ideal was Miss Mandy Liza. Her pale, patient face, her soft, quiet voice, were potent with him. The girl was really poorer than Jake, lower in the scale, and with no apparent chance of rising from her bondage; but she recited with the young ladies, and it was Jake's high ambition to help her through with her chores and get her into class. Jake's guardianship of the girl was an acknowledged fact in the school and village round about. No boy dared play any tricks on Amanda Liza.

"Jest you wait till I get my luck, an' I'll teach you!" was Jake's admonition, accompanied with a clenching of his sturdy fist that ably seconded the argument.

The girl took it very quietly in her gentle way, and seemed to have a kindly regard for Jake—mending his coat occasionally, or darning his stockings—a thing Jake gallantly declared "She shouldn't do never again; he wouldn't have no ladies waitin' on him."

Ladies! The girls used to nudge each other and smile; but for all that they were very good to Amanda Liza, whose faded dress and meek ways set her apart from the noisy youthfulness of the rest of us. We never begrudged the extra polish which Jake in his capacity of boot-black bestowed upon her shoes; and we did not laugh when these same shoes made their appearance one day adorned with a pair of resplendent steel buckles, which were afterwards discovered to have been abstracted from the coachman's rig, in which Jake occasionally did duty, and to which, I am sorry to add, he was ignominiously obliged to restore them.

Occasionally on some rare holiday, we girls had the privilege of a drive out into the country, when the Squimps' superannuated sorrel, covered with an elaborate netting to conceal its deficiencies, and pricking up its tasseled ears with quite a show of spirit, would set off on a brisk trot, animated no doubt, by the prospect of a greasy nibble along the road. Gay times were those. Jake was at his jolliest, and we all—old Dobbin included—forgot our "short comings" and long lectures, and grew hilariously together. Even poor Amanda Liza, quietly stowed away in the back seat, brightened up in the sunlight, and was meekly merry. Once I remember old Dobbin cantered along so briskly that he upset the whole party on a mossy bit of rising ground, and whisking his long tail facetiously, quietly betook himself to pasture, while we picked ourselves up as best we could.

"We might have had worse luck," said Jake, as he picked Amanda Liza, out of the heap, shook her out, and wiped the dust from her black apron, leaving the rest of the party to look after themselves, which we did, scolding and laughing by turns, and giving, quite by accident, the front seat beside Jake to Amanda Liza the rest of the way. Ah! the twilight that summer evening was warm and mellow, the fields were gilded, the meadows fragrant, and we heard a refrain of the grand eternal poem on the jolting seat of the old wagon, though Jake was silent the rest of the way, looking furtively now and then at the girl beside him, and being very attentive to old Dobbin. Poor Jake! Amanda Liza had shot up clean out of his reach since then, and what we wanted to know was whether the girl would remember him now in the days of her elevation.

A wealthy uncle, a splendid home, and money on her own account—ah! no wonder we had not seen Amanda since.

"They touched her off like a sky-rocket and she vanished," said Jake ruefully.

Had she vanished for good? Then poetical justice was a myth, and Amanda's patched shoes and faded dresses were no more worthless than she. We waited. We watched the windows furtively. We pricked up our ears at every ring of the door, but weeks passed, and the golden coach-and-six in which our Cinderella was to arrive did not rattle up to the Squimps Academy.

I think we had almost given it up, and Amanda Liza's base forgetfulness and ingratitude were becoming an old story, when one day at noon Jake came rushing among us, hot and shining, and holding between his thumb and forefinger a dainty billet. He looked like an embodied "harrah" at that moment.

But to tell the truth, Jake could not quite make out the writing, for with all his "opportunities," as our worthy principal designated his vicinage to wisdom and learning in the capacity of shoe-black, the lad was unable to decipher manuscript—hadn't the patience, he declared.

Jenny Smith read the letter for him amid general applause. Justice and righteousness had triumphed, it appeared, and Amanda Liza had proved herself a "regular brick," as Jenny with brimming eyes, observed, handing back the precious scrap of paper to Jake, who carefully wrapped it in his ragged handkerchief. The letter contained a brief invitation to the lad, urging him to come and see his old friend. A day was appointed for the visit, and the street and number where she was to be found were written in a round, school-girl hand. A fashionable and wealthy quarter

of the city, where Jake was not likely to be very familiar.

Jake sat himself at work without loss of time at blacking his boots, albeit the appointed day was somewhere about a week ahead. But it would take a deal of fixing he explained confidentially, to get ready, and he hadn't much to fix with. Jake's normal condition was that of a dandy certainly. He could only, as a general thing, be sure by the prospect of a drive to "red himself up," as Mrs. Squimps said. To be ragged and let alone was his heaven. But this time he rose to the greatness of the occasion—he brushed and scoured, washed out his sole white shirt, dusted and straightened his battered old hat, and mended his trousers.

Deeply interested in Jake's fortunes, we watched the proceedings.

"But Jake," said Jenny Smith one day, "what are you to do for a coat?"

Unhappy suggestion! Jake looked aghast. He hadn't thought of that. Certainly he couldn't make his appearance in that overgrown coachman's rig, in which he was wont to illustrate the academical respectability on the road. And he had nothing else. No necessity had ever before developed itself for anything save shirt sleeves and a woolen jacket.

An awful pause came over our deliberations for Jake. Miss Smith whistled, and finally suggested her water-proof—we all were ready to fling ours at his feet—but Jake couldn't go muffled like an Italian brigand. He shook his head.

Night closed without any solution of the difficulty, but we trusted that somehow the lad's quick wit would find a way out of it.

The next morning, however, a new sensation turned us from the contemplation of Jake's disasters. The house had been robbed. We were all terribly scared, and Mr. Squimps was in a fever of declamation and wrath. His coat, his best-beloved blue-black coat, in which he was wont to dignify trustee meetings, ornament his pew of a Sunday, and pay visits of state to his patrons—his coat had been stolen! His coat, a man so devoted to the interests of education that he scarcely had time to go to the tailor's; to think that an ungrateful unappreciative, idle world should have permitted him to be robbed. He raved, he stormed, he threatened vengeance, he lectured us on the degeneracy of the times, and forgot our Latin.

Vague forebodings of lurking assassins, masked robbers, and frequent skirmishes into the wardrobe and dormitories about this time kept us all in a nervous flurry, to the exclusion of all thought of Jake. But late one twilight afternoon, as we sat huddled in the windows of the long school-room waiting the supper bell, we saw him issue from the out-house. Oh horror! Oh, apparition of terror! For with its tails nearly touching the ground, its long sleeves overlapping his hands, Jake wore without a doubt, the missing coat, boldly marching in his stolen finery down toward the road in sight of us all.

In sight of sharper eyes, too, it seemed, for not far from the house Mr. Squimps himself pounced upon him.

Poor, kind, light-hearted Jake! We held our breath that day and the next, for Jake had been marched off to prison, and Mr. Squimps' eloquence and mortality were in full flow. He said a longer grace than ever at dinner, and we were glad when, hungrily eyeing the scanty board, we heard the visitor's bell summon him to the parlor. I think we were in better appetite than usual that day, and left little behind us for our Mentor as we filed up stairs toward the school-room. Passing the parlor door there rushed out upon us a little figure a trailing silk dress and a bonnetful of nodding French flowers. It was Amanda Liza.

"Oh, girls," she cried, hysterically, bewildered with an apparent desire to embrace the whole troop. "Poor Jake!"

Mr. Squimps, tall and solemn, rose with dignity, and closed the parlor door upon their further conference. We heard them make this consoling remark:

"I always knew he'd come to no good."

It seemed that Amanda had learned of Jake's misadventure through some stray newspaper, where the well-known name of the virtuous and vengeful Squimps had met her eye. She comprehended the situation, and came to the academy to plead for her old friend. We waited the news of Jake's fate breathlessly, nodding and whispering among ourselves. For there would be a trial of something terrible, of course we hardly knew what. Mr. Squimps was away all the afternoon, the classes were demoralized, and we stood idly gazing out of the window at four o'clock, when a carriage came up the drive. To our amazement Jake sat on the box, elate and erect. He sprang down and opened the door with a flourish, and out stepped Mr. Squimps.

"The girl pleaded so hard that I have decided not to prosecute," said Mr. Squimps; and if a splendid new coat fresh from the tailor's and a plump silken course of unknown manufacture had anything to do with this decision we were not informed of it.

"And I'm going to live with Miss Mandy Liza forever!" cried Jake, when he

came among us, his face lit with a glory as if he were departing for heaven.

Would Amanda Liza dress him in a blue coat and brass buttons, and make him her coachman at good wages? Ah, what a rise for poor Jake! Amanda Liza was his saint, his angel, the hem of whose garment he touched reverentially. There was no commonplace element about such love as this, and Jake would be content to let down her carriage-steps and look after her ponies all the days of his life, we thought. And that was the last we saw of him at the Squimpses'.

But years after, when I was traveling in Australia with my husband, Mr. Smith and myself were invited to the ranch of the magistrate there, whose broad estates covered miles of mountain and meadow, and who owned almost literally "the cattle upon a thousand hills." In the lady of the mansion, a delicate and dainty personage, I recognized with a cry of surprise and delight my old school-mate, Amanda Liza; but I did not know the portly dignitary upon whose arm she hung until I heard her laughingly whisper—"Oh, Jake, don't you remember old Squimps's?"

Jackman's Dog.

ENSIGN JACKMAN was a Vermont farmer. He had a good dog, that for some reason bore half of his own name, being plain Jack; and it would be no reflection on the old man's sense if we should say that the creature knew half as much as he did. Jackman once owed his life to Jack; and it all came about by his taking him with him to his wood-lot, which was a good way distant from his house. Almost every day during the winter the farmer and the dog went off together, always returning safely with the great loads of wood until one afternoon, as they were jogging homeward, the sled canted on a stone, and the uppermost log on the load rolled off on the ensign's side, taking him unawares, knocked him down, and held him there wedged in between the runner and a huge boulder which almost overhung the path.

As he fell he instinctively shouted "Whoa!" to the oxen; and they stopped at once, then and there. If they had started at all, the sidling log would have been precipitated upon his head; but, trained and most obedient of creatures, like all good oxen, they minded what was said to them, and halted, with the toppling logs ready to roll off at the first movement. But, though they might stand there all the afternoon, as probably they would, when night drew near they would go home. Besides, there was no help in them.

While this had been happening, Jack had been off careering about the woods, hunting hares and starting up partridges, and having a most delightful time; but now when the ensign whistled for him, he came bounding back to the sled, saw what had happened, and that he could not get at his master, and started for home with the speed of a race-horse.

Mother Jackman saw him coming down the road, and he seemed to her to be almost flying. His lameness did not hinder him then. He cleared the ground like a deer running for his life. She knew that something was the matter, and rushed to the door; but, instead of stopping there, he shot past and kept straight on, by several houses and shops, to the shoemaker's. Meanwhile she caught up a shawl and started for the woods.

Jack had evidently gone through with some reasoning which brought him to the conclusion that it was a case in which a woman could not help, not even his own mistress. And so he sped by everybody else to the one man who had befriended him.

He burst into the presence of the shoemaker, pulled at his shirt sleeves, and ran to the door whining. The man put on his coat and followed. At the grocery store, next door, he stopped long enough to tell of the dog's conduct; then borrowed a horse and sleigh which stood waiting while the owner was making purchases, and drove on after Jack.

Men came out along the road until there was quite a party on the way, some in sleighs and some on foot. When the old lady was overtaken, she was picked up and conveyed along.

Jack led the way. There stood the patient oxen in their tracks; they had not lifted so much as one of their feet in all that time. And there lay the ensign, quite insensible now, just where he had fallen.

The pew rent of Plymouth Church in 1859 was \$11,137; in 1859, \$26,000; in 1868, \$48,000; in 1872, \$59,000. In 1868, a quartette was introduced in the choir, whose aggregate salaries with that of the organist are \$7,000. Rev. S. B. Halliday, who assists in the pastoral work, and the sexton receive \$7,700. The salary of Mr. Beecher was at first, in 1847, \$1,500; it is now \$20,000 making the whole amount of salaries \$35,000. The number of members in 1847 was 21; and in 1873 was 3,300. The number of Sunday-school pupils is 1,319, besides 890 connected with mission schools. There are several deaconesses elected annually who receive no salary.

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