

Allen's Sacrifice

By Grace Scofield Holmes.

Oh, Al. Oh, Al. Tr-tr-tr-tr. Oh, Al. Allen heard the accustomed call and trill, to which he usually responded so eagerly, but he did not stir. He had never in all his short life been thinking quite so deeply as he was thinking now. Little Margaret, the rosy, dimpled little sister of whom he was so proud in his rough boyish way, had been tossing on the bed in a high fever, the golden curls all tangled and the big blue eyes seeing things that Allen nor no one else could see. The fever was gone now and Margaret was lying on the bed, very white and wan, and the good old doctor, whom they had known ever since they could remember, shook his head solemnly, and said many things about broth and jelly and fruit which would be needed before Margaret could be well again.

This was why Allen was thinking so deeply, for there was never more than money enough in his mother's little worn pocketbook to pay the rent and to buy their simple food, and since Margaret had been ill she had not been able to sew and earn any more money. Allen gave a deep sigh, for the problem was entirely beyond him. Just then his mother called him to supper and he walked slowly toward the house.

Mrs. Glen, a thin, tired-looking woman, shook her head sadly as she replied: "She does not seem so well to-night, dear, but perhaps she will be better in the morning."

Allen did not stay at the table very long, but hurriedly ate his supper and went into the little room where Margaret was. The fever seemed to have returned, and there was a vivid red spot on each cheek, and the blue eyes were unnaturally bright.

"Oh, Al, I am so thirsty," she moaned, "and water doesn't taste good any more. Can't you get me a glass of lemonade with a great big piece of ice in it?"

Allen ran out of the house with an aching heart. As he stood leaning dejectedly against the gate, the light from the flickering street lamp fell full on a sign across the street. Allen had often seen this sign before, but now as he gazed absently at it the idea of a great sacrifice came suddenly to him. There was a big sign announcing that the lot was for sale, and attached to it was a small sign, which read as follows:

\$10 Reward for the Arrest and Conviction of Any Person Injuring This Sign.

Ten dollars! What could he not buy with that! Margaret could have all the delicious fruit and cracked ice that she wanted, and when she got better all the strengthening wines and broths that the doctor said she needed. Of course he would be sent to jail, but he thought he could stand that, but if only Margaret could get well. But what if his mother and Margaret should be ashamed of him and everybody called him a jail bird? Well, even that he would bear for Margaret's sake. He thought for a long while and finally had it all planned. Just then there came another entreating call.

"Oh, Al, Oh, Al. Tr-tr-tr-tr. Oh, Al."

This time he responded with a long drawn out trill and the sound of hurrying footsteps announced the arrival of his chum, Roland White.

"Oh, Rol," he began, eagerly. "I want you to help me do something."

"Sure thing," said Roland, wondering whether it was to steal watermelons, turn somebody's horse loose or play hooky from school.

"I am going to take my knife and cut that sign up. Then I want you to take me to Squire Millett and have me arrested," said Allen, slowly and impressively.

"Gee, I guess not. Do you think I am the feller to do anything like that?" said Roland indignantly.

"But you must, Rol. Margaret is sick and has got to have things, and mother ain't got no money," Allen answered desperately.

At the mention of Margaret's name Roland's face softened perceptibly, but still it did not seem as if he could bring himself to do such a treacherous act.

"Don't you know you would be put in the lock-up, kid?" he said, thinking that would change Allen's rash purpose if anything could.

"I'm willing to go to the lock-up if it will make Margaret well," Allen answered stoutly.

Seeing that it was useless to argue further, Roland promised to do his part and the conspirators against law and order put their closely cropped heads together and arranged all the details of their plot.

The next morning being Saturday, they met by agreement in front of the sign. The great sacrifice did not appear so entailing by daylight as when the stars and moon shed a glamour over the earth. Allen bore himself heroically, however, for he had the consciousness of making a great retribution to sustain him. But Roland felt as though he was betraying his best friend to everlasting disgrace and shame.

The great moment had now arrived, and in the midst of a hushed silence Allen took his knife from his pocket, and with trembling hands cut long marks in the sign. When without a word the two little lads started for the justice's office.

The justice had a very sharp nose and a very sharp beard, very sharp eyes and a very sharp voice. Altogether his sharpness was quite sufficient to strike terror to a culprit's heart.

It so happened that "court" was in session. One of the petty lawsuits which were of frequent occurrence in the village was being tried. The twelve jurors, with all of whom the boys were acquainted, had been sworn in and sat with solemn importance in their places.

The legal lights in Alta conducted affairs very unceremoniously, and "Squire Millett stopped and asked the boys what they wanted.

"Please, sir," said Roland, trembling very much but speaking his lines exactly as he and Allen had rehearsed them. "I caught this boy cutting up the sign on the vacant lot south of his house, and we—I mean I—I want the \$10 reward." He ended with a painful little gasp, feeling that he had very nearly betrayed himself.

The squire turned to the village constable, a fierce-looking six-footer, of whom all the children were mortally afraid, a fact which amused him immensely, and said in a loud, commanding voice, "Guard the prisoner until this case is finished."

Allen and Roland stood with clasped hands and drooping forms in front of Constable Carnes, who glared at them fiercely. But way back in his eye—so very far back that the boys did not see it—there was a funny twinkle.

At last the case was brought to a close, but in obedience to a sign from the squire they all remained seated.

"Let the prisoner step forward," commanded the squire.

Allen stepped out in the room and Roland came with him, holding his hand tightly, for he intended to cling to his friend until the doors of the jail closed between them.

"Prisoner, tell the court whether you are guilty or not guilty."

"Guilty," said Allen chokingly.

"Can you prove any extenuating circumstances?"

Allen had never heard of "extenuating circumstances," and the words as spoken by the squire had a dreadful sound. Could it be possible that they would hang him? He turned cold and his teeth chattered so that he could not reply.

"Let the witness be sworn," next commanded the squire, and Roland tremblingly took the stand.

"Now you may tell the court what you know of the case."

In a little piping voice which he vainly tried to make steady Roland testified to having seen Allen take his knife and mutilate the sign.

"You are his best friend, are you not? What schoolboys call a pal?" said the squire, who had known the boys since they were babies and was sure there was something more than appeared on the surface.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you not think it rather strange for a boy to betray his best friend?"

Poor Roland now realized to the utmost the shame and degradation of his position.

"I wanted the \$10," he stammered. "What do you intend to do with it?" pursued the squire relentlessly.

"Buy ice and fruit and things for Allen's sick sister." And in spite of his efforts to appear composed the tears rolled down Roland's cheeks.

"Ah, that is the point I wanted to reach," said the squire, in a terrible voice.

"Constable, you may take the prisoner and the witness into another room while the court and the jury talk this matter over."

Totally unconscious that there was anything unusual about the proceedings, Allen and Roland were led out of the room by Constable Carnes, who bestowed such scowls and flashes of his black eyes upon them that they were more frightened than ever.

After what seemed years and years they were again summoned to the court room.

"Prisoner, you may stand and receive the sentence of the court," thundered a fierce voice.

"In view of your extreme youth, the fact that it is your first offense and also that the court is pleased to consider as extenuating circumstances (those terrible words again, thought Allen with a shudder), it has been decided to allow you to go free. It is expected, however, that you will never appear before the court on such a charge again."

Before the boys could recover from their astonishment the squire turned to Roland and said: "To you, sir, I now give the reward promised for the conviction of any person mutilating the sign."

The boys had expected a great, great big ten-dollar gold piece, but, strange to say, the money was composed of quarters and 50-cent pieces, and even some dimes, more like the collection taken at church than anything else, they thought. Roland did not stop to question its appearance, however, but emptied it into his pocket handkerchief and tied it securely.

"Thank you, sir," said Roland.

"Give my love to little Margaret and tell her to hurry and get well," said the squire, and the boys thought that his voice did not sound as sharp as usual.

Then, hand in hand, the boys walked out, and never spoke until they reached Allen's gate.

"Gee," said Roland, drawing a long breath. "I guess I know how that feller Judas must have felt."

"And I think I can imagine how a really and truly thief or murderer feels when he thinks he is going to be hanged or sent to prison for life," said Allen. "But let's go in now and show the money to mother and Margaret. And say, we might just as well tell 'em."

And, once more clasping hands, they walked up the path to the house.—Chicago Record-Herald.

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT.



ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

St. George he was a valiant knight,
He wore a coat of mail,
And rode into the thickest fight,
Where bullets fell like hail.

For fearsome beasts that raved and roared
He didn't care a rap,
But slew them with his mighty sword
At just a single slap.

One day, as he was walking by
A dismal wood, he saw
A Dragon bold, with bloody eye
And fire-breathing jaw.

Upon its tail some salt he flung,
The monster's rage to quell;
A ribbon round its neck he hung,
And eke a silver bell.

Then 'twas a most familiar sight
To all who passed that way,
To see the Dragon and the knight
Upon the lawn at play.

—Young Folks Herald.

MUSIC FROM A TWIG.

Tennyson in "Locksley Hall" has the speaker ask his comrades to "sound upon the bugle horn" when they want him. Few girls and boys will ever try



Fig. 11

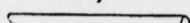


Fig. 12

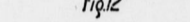


Fig. 13

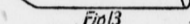


Fig. 14

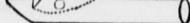


Fig. 15



Fig. 16

their powers on a real bugle horn, but all can readily make a twig sound an alarm. Get a piece of ordinary willow tree (Fig. 11). Be sure it is flawless and perfect; with a sharp knife slice

been on exhibition there before in some time. A number of dogfish and skates and an angler have been captured and brought in by fishermen. They have been placed together in the tank on the side of the building opposite to the entrance. The dogfish appears to be the most active of the group. They suggest baby sharks as they speed about the tank. One of the interesting things about the dogfish is that they bring forth their young alive in litters of half a dozen. Not being mammals, the young, which are several inches long, are born with egg sacks attached. From these they draw nourishment until their own food. Then the depleted egg sack falls off. A dogfish was born at the Aquarium a short time ago. Unfortunately, it died.

The skates do not move about the tank so much as the dogfish, but, unlike the angler, they do not hug the bottom all the time. They are thin and flat. The undulations of the fish when swimming suggest the flying of a bird. Some of the skates are termed "barndoor" skates by the fishermen, because of the expansiveness of their bodies. When resting on the bottom of the tank, as they do when not in motion, they blot out a large part of its white surface. Their eyes, which are several inches back of the sharp snout, are almost invisible. The outlet of the gills are on top near the eyes. They are closed by slides, which open and shut like eyelids.

The angler is the queerest of the lot. As every one knows, he has the name of angler because of two peculiar appendages on his head, which, when raised, have the appearance of little fishing rods, with bait attached. These they are said to use in enticing fish into their mouths. These appendages usually lie flat on the back. The fish is shaped much like a bellows, the tail being the nozzle. He has an enormous mouth in proportion to his size. It extends half way across his head. Mr. Spencer, the superintendent, in talking about the angler a few days ago, said that the mouth of this fish reminded him of a story. "Two

FIFTY DEGREES BELOW ZERO.

An American Woman Found It Not Really Uncomfortable.

Mrs. P. M. Mullen, whose Omaha home is at No. 1914 Grace street, returned for a visit on Friday from her present home in Alaska, bearing with her a trunkful of trophies and curios of the land of the Arctic Circle. Mrs. Mullen accompanied her husband to Alaska a year ago last July, where he went as Register of the Land Office at Rampart. Last June Mr. Mullen was transferred to the office of Receiver at Juneau, where he is now stationed.

Mrs. Mullen, who was placed in the light of a returned heroine by the many friends who crowded her home on Sunday afternoon, expressed herself as having been very agreeably surprised with Alaska.

"I don't know what I expected to find," she remarked, "but I confess that it was not my idea that there would be much of civilization or refinement or culture, and I had been taught to believe that fifty or eighty below zero was unbearably cold. I went there prepared to be a martyr and a frontier woman, and ready to rough it, and I come home thinking it's the finest country in the world."

"The climate at Rampart, which is a city in the interior, is far superior to Juneau, on the coast, where we are now. There is no wind at Rampart, and forty to fifty below zero is really not at all uncomfortable. At that place of course we could not get all the comforts we have on the coast, and for two months each fall, while the river is freezing, and two months in the spring, while the stream is breaking up, we had to do without mail. But the miners are well educated, refined people, and the society is very agreeable. The prices in the interior are extremely high. A dozen eggs, when we could get eggs at all, cost \$1.50; five pounds of sugar, \$1, and butter was seventy-five cents a pound. The only difference between living at Juneau and in this country is the climate, and I believe I prefer that of Juneau."

Mrs. Mullen brought with her a collection of gold nuggets, also a large collection of Alaskan Indian work, which far surpasses any basket or headwork of the Indians of this country.—Omaha Bee.

Couldn't Stand Hustling.

In Harper's Wu Ting-Fang, in his article on "Chinese and Western Civilization," tells of an American who, having lived for a time in China, was unable afterward to endure life in his own country:

"I had an American friend in China, who died only a short time ago," says Mr. Wu. "The story of his life is rather interesting. He went to China when he was a young man. He learned the language of the country, and became an accomplished Chinese scholar. He adapted himself to the ways and habits of those among whom he had cast his lot, and thus became to all intents and purposes Chinese in his mode of life. After spending the greater part of his life in China he made up his mind that he would pass the remainder of his days in the land of his birth, among the scenes of his childhood. Accordingly he left China, with no intention of returning. But he reckoned without his host. No sooner had he found himself in New York than the noise and bustle of the metropolis of the New World drove him to distraction. He did not know which way to turn to find rest and quiet, and he took the earliest opportunity to go back to China. Thus it is possible that a man born and bred in strenuous America may prefer the quiet surroundings of China."

Diamonds Explode.

It has long been known that diamonds, especially the class known as "rose diamonds," are likely to explode if subjected to only what would seem a very ordinary degree of heat, such as strong rays from the sun, etc. It is now believed that the explosions are the result of the rapid expansion of certain volatile liquids enclosed in cavities near the centre of these precious stones. A great many diamonds, even though cut, mounted and worn as gems of perfection, are still in an unfinished condition—that is, the liquid drop from which the stone is being formed has not as yet deposited all of its "pure crystals of carbon." These movable drops may occasionally be seen with the naked eye.

When this is the case a strong microscope will give the drop the appearance of a bubble in the fluid of a carpenter's level. It is also highly probable that beside the liquid mentioned these cavities may contain certain gases under great tension. This being the case, one may readily comprehend how a very small amount of heat would cause the liquid and gas to expand to such a degree that the diamond would give way with all the characteristics of a miniature explosion.—Boston Herald.

Hand Kissing Again.

The Parisians are seeking to make the kissing of the hand the most elegant way of greeting or taking leave of a lady, says the Ladies' Pictorial. It is certainly more graceful and more impressive than handshaking. A man, if he is clever, may convey a great deal in the way he lingers over a hand, even when holding it in the ultra-fashionable manner, but he can silently say a great deal more by the way he respectfully salutes it.

Nowadays it calls for no grace of hearing to shake hands successfully. One sees men doing it daily with barely a glance at the lady who gives them this privilege. But no one can kiss hands in such a coldly perfunctory fashion and therefore I think that women in London society would welcome a revival of the practice for the sake of the elegance it would lend the modern youth.

Wasp's Method of Attack.

Belt, in his "Naturalist in Nicaragua," draws attention to the methods of attack used by different species of wasps. One, accustomed to animals and not to man, takes care to crawl down the outstanding hairs to the skin before inserting its sting; while others, which live in the midst of human dwellings, fly straight at a man's face. The first species, true to inherited instinct, when it attacks unfamiliar human beings attaches itself to their hair or their beads. But there must have been a time when the second species discovered that the face was the vulnerable part, and the discovery was the outcome of the action of brain.

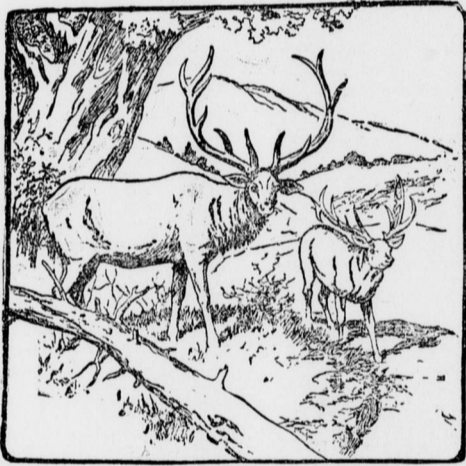
Musical Fish.

Many fish can produce musical sounds. The red gurnard has earned the name of seacock from the crowing noise which it makes, while another species is called the piper. Others, notably two species of opidium, have sound-producing apparatus, consisting of small movable bones, which can be made to produce a sharp rattle. The curious "drumming" made by the Mediterranean fish known as the maigre can be heard from a depth of thirty fathoms.

Free Quinine For Employees.

A law has been passed in Italy requiring employers of labor to supply their employes with quinine free when suffering from malaria.

The Missing Hunter Puzzle.



Find the hunter and his dog.

off a slanting piece at one end (Fig. 12), then cut a notch in top (Fig. 13). Gently tap the bark all over with one end of a penknife in order to loosen it from the wood. After carefully removing the bark without breaking it cut the wood according to the dotted lines in Fig. 14, which will give Fig. 15. The wood is now ready to slip back into the bark, but before doing this place a pea in the hollow part (Fig. 14); then slide the bark back in place (Fig. 16). Now blow the twig and sound the alarm.—The Delicater.

A CROP FAILURE.



The Farmer—"What! No potatoes grown in it yet? Guess I've been buncoed."—New York American.

QUEER AQUARIUM FISH.

The visitors to the Aquarium have had an opportunity to see specimens of several kinds of fish which have not

boys were playing together," he said. "One of them, named 'Jim,' had an unusually large mouth. The other said to him: 'Gosh, Jim. Ain't you got a big mouth! It's good your ears are fastened to tight. If they weren't your mouth would go clear 'round, and the top of your head would be an island.'"

THE GAME OF BUTTONS.

Buttons are in extensive use in the sports of German children, with whom they form a sort of coinage, each sort having a stipulated exchangeable value. Traces of similar usage exist in the United States. A common New York game consists in throwing buttons. A line is drawn and a hole made about twelve feet off. The players toss their buttons, and whoever comes nearest the hole has the first shot. He endeavors to drive the buttons of the rest into the hole, striking them with the extended thumb by a movement of the whole hand, which is kept flat and stiff. When he misses the next takes his turn, and so on. Whoever drives the adversary's button into the hole wins it.

Another game for two players is called "spans." The buttons are cast against the wall, and if a player's button falls within a span of the adversary's he may aim at it and win it by striking, as before.—Washington Star.

BIOGRAPHY FOR JUVENILES.

Pliny the elder was for a space procurator in Spain. He spent much of his time afterward studying at Rome; being near the Bay of Naples during an eruption of Vesuvius he landed to witness the phenomenon, but was suffocated by the fumes. His "Natural History" is a repository of the studies of the ancients in that department, being a record, more or less faithful, from extensive reading, of the observation of others rather than his own.