# HAL'S DREAM BY CLARA MORRIS

HE WAS a slender, serious, dark-eyed boy and my close friend. I called him Hal, instinctively feeling what a misfit was the name Harry—by which his family called him. I was very proud of being his chum, not only because he was a boy, but because he was two or three years my elder, and so, of course, was two or three years the wiser. He was no girl-boy, for he raced and played ball, and marbles, ran away and went in swimming and took his thrashing for it just as other boys did, but he was gentler than they; he was imaginative and thoughtful. We were the only children living in that direct neighborhood, which was a very retired one, so that our companionship seemed the natural outcome of the situation. We were both "booky" to an unusual degree and we were both Sunday school enthusiasts. In this neighborhood the city had been altering the grade of one of the streets and so had left on one side a high bank of clay. The moment my eye fell upon that bank I cried:

"Oh, Hal, if only there was a hole in it!"

"A hole; what good would that be?"

"Why," I sputtered excitedly, "if the hole was big enough, we could crawl into it, couldn't we—and—and it could be caves and grottos—and we could be fairies or play Robinson Crusoe or be hermits or robbers."

"Hermits would do, Clarie—we could play hermits and read our Sunday school books there, and eat dates—that is if they have any at the grocery. Let's go see now; I've got a nickel."

"But," I argued, "there's got to be a hole."

"So there will be, by and by, but come now."

Oh, that hole—never would it have been larger than the inside of a big pail but for the aid of a good-natured Irish laborer, who generally sat at the foot of our "cliff," as we called it, when eating his noonday meal. In a few minutes, with mighty arms and immense shovel, with throbbing hearts, we saw our cave growing until oh, joy! we knew we could crawl into it. Then, suddenly the work stopped.

"Oh, please, sir, won't you make it go a little deeper in?" pleaded Hal.

"No, I'll not, sure even now I'm afraid the thing will be cavin' in on yer!"

That fear did not trouble us a particle. As hermits, we retired as far in as the cave would permit, but, unfortuntely, our legs were very palpably still in the world. As we sat side by side, high up in the face of the bank, we had a clear, far view of the blue of the lake, where it gently, gently melted against the blue of the sky, and with our own little Bibles open on our laps, we used to look silently a long time, and then one day I heard Hal say, low to himself, "almost like that, but not quite." And once he pretended he had not spoken, and once he did not even hear my question of what he meant, and so I came to know that his big brown eyes did not always see me when they were turned on me. My brother hermit had a secret—a secret kept from me, and I had told him every secret I had, and every secret everybody else had, that I know anything about. Tears came into my eyes—then I was angry.

"That's right," I cried, "don't tell it! Don't trust Clarie—little tattler and tale bearer!" I leaned my forehead against the side of the cave—I burst into sobs. "You can keep your secret—and keep your old cave, too—and—and—"

He raised my head and laid it back against his shoulder. Then he took up the corner of my apron, and began to rub my falling tears all over my grieving little face.

"But Clarie, dear, there is no secret—there's something, yes, and I wanted to tell you about it, too—but honestly I didn't dare—I was afraid you'd laugh at me, and—and (in a lower, tenser tone) I don't believe I could bear to hear it laughed at."

I sat up and looked at him, and very seriously he returned my look. "Mother knows," he said slowly, "and I'm going to tell you in all the world, and no one else; for I'm not afraid of your laughing, now."

He drew up his leg and clasped his arms about it, and looked out, straight before him. His eyes were wide and bright. He was distinctly pale; his delicate nostrils quivered faintly—there was a moment's pause. Looking back at that moment I tell Hal's dream as he told it—the incidents in the exact order, and frequently his exact words.

"You remember how very, very hot it was three Sundays ago, Clarie? Well, after Sunday school was out I went into church with mother. The heat was dreadful and my head was so heavy and achy. Mother offered me a fan, but I wouldn't have it, for it never makes you any cooler to sit and pound yourself with a fan; but all I could think of was the big old elm tree where we play oasis, and you sell me water for my caravan from the desert. I could just hear the leaves moving and I knew what a big, cool shade they were making and—and—they all had their heads down in prayer. No one noticed my leaving—and even if father did, he never scolded me on Sunday—and it was only three blocks to the elm; so I moved very quietly, no one looked up, and next moment I was blinking my eyes out in the sunshine and wondering if ever the sun had blazed like that before? I walked for a while, but I found no elm, but instead there stood an old white wall, with a great wide open gate in it. I passed through it and only then I noticed that everything was strange to me. I wasn't frightened, but I was puzzled, and oh, the heat! In the sky not one tiniest, thinnest little skin of a white cloud limned the deep, deep blue. On still days our lake almost reaches that blue, but not quite—not quite.

"I was tired and very thirsty and though I passed melon gardens and saw grapes hanging over a wall, I dared not touch them. I looked and looked, but I could see no familiar elm and the chain of distant hills made me feel small and lonely. Then suddenly I heard a burst of laughter and the patter of running feet, and, turning, I saw coming from a garden gate a troop of children, the two taller ones carrying large jars. They were not only bare of foot, but leg as well; yes, and of arm; half naked, in fact. They were a black-haired, black-eyed, red-lipped, sweetly-laughing crew; and, though they were greatly excited over some matter of their own, they called me gayly to go with them to the well, where the water was cold and the grass velvet soft to burning feet. And there I slaked my thirst and found deep shade, though no elm tree cast it. There were trees, but many were strange to me. Some bore fair fruit. I knew the oak and guessed the palm, and on our way to the well I had seen in full rosy bloom a very thicket of wild oleander.

"We had found a girl already at the well, and ere she went, she took from her basket a handful of loose grain, pursed up her lips, swelled out her round, brown throat and in imitation gave the cooing of the doves—then cast the grain abroad. I had not dreamed there was a pigeon near, but instantly from on high, through sunshine and through shade, came the down slanting gleam of their darting silvery wings. Yet no one noticed the pretty greedy things, with their rosy feet, their jeweled eyes, and dainty affectations of eager search and extremest hunger—so exciting was the conversation at the well. One boy declared his father was going to take him down to the very sea next Sabbath, that they might hear the Man for themselves—since no two people seemed to talk alike of Him; and then all broke out and chattered at one time. Not far off ran—white in dust—the public way and many people journeyed by it, and many turned aside as much to get the hot white dazzle from their eyes as for rest for foot and cooling draught for parched throat. But always there was that excitement in the air, and each man added to it—the high, the low; the rich, the poor; gently or angrily, delicately or coarsely, they spoke. But always of one person; one subject held all minds. An old man fat, and red and hot-looking, with great jewels burning on his fingers and strange headgear, who left his servants and the animal he rode out in the blazing heat, while he sat in comfort by the densely shaded well, declared the Man a monstrous fraud. Oh, yes, he had heard the tale of sight restored—and the sick healed, too—yes, yes, he knew that hundreds vouched for the truth of these wild tales—but mark: He—should be seized and cast into prison straight, for healing on the Sabbath. The Sabbath, mind—breaking the law—failing to keep holy the Sabbath day. Let Him and his rabble come but within his city's gates and straight into prison the lawbreaker would go! And as he bestrode his weary, unrefreshed beast, and went his way, men frowned, and jeering little boys made contemptuous signs at his broad back, while talk, all broken and confused, burst forth again.

"One aroused astonishment by repeating the names of those most recently baptized; another expressed his timid doubts because, you see, the Man had not appeared in pomp and princely state, as should the One the prophets had foretold, while, with her sturdy boy riding in state astride her hip, a handsome woman told again and yet again, with every foolish detail of hour, of place, of garments worn, of height and depth and quality of the jars; how she, a guest at that fair marriage feast, had seen—herself had seen—the wondrous miracle of water turned to wine! The loiterers had mostly gone their ways—all save some women, with their water jars and their children; and now, in looking across the open country toward some houses, low, flat-roofed and white, one saw the quivering of the air above the heated earth; and 'twas then, just then, that I felt that—that lightness, that brightness, that reasonless desire to laugh, to sing, from my very heart. My heart—why, what ailed my heart? I pressed my hands hard upon my side to hold down its high beating, and at that moment such a strange thing happened. I had only known our summer birds to sing in the early morning or late evening's coolness, remaining silent through the heat, yet here, all suddenly, birds before unseen burst forth in rapturous song. They came from everywhere, from distant eaves, from sheltering boughs, from tangled thicket or from grassy hollow. They flung into the air, as might a fountain fling its spray, a shower of living music, twittering, piping, trilling, warbling, each softly ruffling throat at fullest strain, each little eye half closed in ecstasy. They gave in praise all they had to give, then sank down in silent adoration. For, moving toward us from the great highway there came a group of men. One of them, at least, walked clumsily, for he was followed by a great cloud of dust, and one shambled as he came, as might a weary, yoke-worn ox. Grave men they were, some even stern and fierce of eye, with roughened hair and beards untrimmed and hands all swart and scarred and stained with roughest labor, while all the tones of burnished copper glowed in the hair and beard of another, and the red spark that gleamed in his quick, small eye, was but partly veiled by his drooping lids.

"So far I noted; then—ah, then! the group had paused, and from the center there came forth, as from a prickly, protecting outer shell, the white, sweet-kerneled nut might come; there came forth a Man, strong and sweet, beautiful and grave. The golden brown waves of his hair were darker than the silky beard, whose light growth but softened the lines of His divinely perfect face. His garments fell in stately folds about Him, and their whiteness, without blemish from the wayside or from road, seemed dazzling in contrast to the blueness of His great, flowing mantle. Yes, there came forth a Man to marvel at—but as he moved toward the stone seat of the well, He slowly raised His eyes. The quivering of the hot air stilled, the teeming earth held its warm breath in awe. My soul rushed to the very parting of my lips, for this was the Joy of the World—here was the Son of God!

"I could not think at first; could only feel—the joy! joy! joy! And then I noted others, and knew my thought was—would, oh, would He let me follow Him? If I could do some serivce for Him—something hard; but I was so little yet! He was seated by the well and the group stood apart from Him, and spoke low among themselves; and I almost unconsciously began to approach the Man, for, oh, I longed, yearned to touch Him—once! just once! To see once more the tender fire of those death conquering eyes! And lo! the other children were crowding toward Him, too—their eyes big and bright, their half breathless lips apart. I saw, and hastened—I was almost to Him, when a little toddling, speechless thing, of dimples and soft laughter, passed me in a baby rush! Two little arms beating the air to aid her stumbling feet! She wavered—caught His hand, and He laid the wee thing in His bosom!

"At that we all swarmed forward, eagerly; but two of the group stepped out quickly, and frowningly waved us off—the stern one speaking cruel words to us—but they were never finished. He raised the white wonder of His hand and silenced them. He turned the tender fire of His luminous eyes on us and He spoke. I heard His voice—I—I felt my eyes straining, my heart bursting—that joy was killing me! But still was joy—for clear and sweet, the whole world listening heard the blessed words: 'Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.' He held His gracious arm out to us—I rushed forward—I was almost at His sacred feet—a hand held me back. I struggled madly against that restraining grasp, and then a voice said in my ear, 'Harry, Harry, dear! Remember where you are.'"

"Clarie," he whispered, "Mother says it was—just a dream?"

I slipped my arm about his neck—reverently I kissed his cheek, and answered:

"Hal, dear Hal, it was a vision—a blessed vison!" and he was comforted.

## *Disaster Takes 32,069 Lives in 1905*

(Continued from Fourth Page.)

NOVEMBER.

| | |
|---|---|
| 4—Mine explosion, Vivian, W. Va. | 7 |
| 4—Tornado over Mountain View, Oklahoma | 7 |
| 8—Railway collision, Hunlock's Creek, Pa. | 7 |
| 13—Mine cave-in, Johannesburg, South Africa | 58 |
| 14—Wreck of steamer Bavaria, Monongahela City, Pa. | 8 |
| 16—Tenement fire, New York City | 6 |
| 16—Powder explosion, Peoria, Ill. | 7 |
| 17—Floundering steamer Turbin, off Clark's Harbor, N. S. | 19 |
| 17—Collision of torpedo boat S 126 and Cruiser Undine | 33 |
| 19—Lodging house fire, Glasgow, Scotland | 20 |
| 19—Wreck of steamer Hilda off St. Malo, France | 123 |
| 25—Collision of steamers Ikuta and Fukura, near Matsure | 11 |
| 26—Railway collision and fire, near Baker's Bridge, Mass. | 17 |
| 26—Gale along northern coast of England | 17 |
| 27—Powder explosion, Emporia, Kan. | 9 |
| 27-29—Gale on the Great Lakes | 11 |
| | 404 |

DECEMBER.

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| 4—Wreck of steamer Ira H. Owen, Lake Superior | 19 |
| 4—Burning of a "Pull-boat," Middle river, Ala. | 9 |
| 5—Mine explosion, Diamondville, Utah | 18 |
| 6—Loss at sea of sailing vessel St. Donatien | 19 |
| 7—Railway collision, near Aranjuez, Spain | 11 |
| 8—Schooner Laguna, lost in the Gulf of Mexico | 12 |
| 8—Steamer Lunenburg, wrecked off Amherst Harbor, B. C. | 11 |
| 9—Railway wreck near Rock Springs, Wyo. | 10 |
| 9—Sinking of steamer Fram, Christiania Fjord, Norway | 11 |
| 11—Flathouse fire, New York city | 6 |
| 12—Residence fire, near Punxsutawney, Pa. | 6 |
| 12—Wreck at sea of schooner Florencia | 6 |
| 14—Powder explosion, near Boyles, Ala. | 5 |
| 14—Wind storm over Venice, Italy | 5 |
| 16—Mine explosion, Vancouver, British Columbia | 18 |
| 16—Nitroglycerin explosion, Marquette, Mich. | 5 |
| 17—Residence fire, Red Lake Falls, Minn. | 5 |
| 22—Mine ore-slip, Ironwood, Mich. | 8 |
| 23—Mine fire, Pachuca, Mexico | 30 |
| Total | 214 |

### *The Record by Months and Days.*

It needed nothing beyond the South Indian earthquakes to make April by far the most fatal of the months; even its follow in Calabria and the storms which devastated the Tonquin Delta, and the Philippine and Marshall groups, failing to raise September to within 3,000 of that April total. June and July, respectively third and fourth on the list, differed one from the other by only one life. The rest fall away from August's 605 to October's 207.

The Lahore-Mysore disaster again has made the 3d of the month the most fatal of dates; 14,576 all told, leading the 2d of the month by 3,203. The 29th was least disastrous, seeing but eleven killed during its eleven appearances. In the number of accidents rather than in lives lost the 1st has to show fifteen against the 15th's fourteen and the 3d's thirteen; the 29th and 31st witnessed only two mishappenings.

The "hoodoo" on the 13th was not marked. Just half of its appearances were free from deaths, 129 falling during the course of the other six. Also can almost anything be proved by the record of the Fridays. Thirty-nine accidents befell on this black weekday, putting the period to 1,277 lives—but then, twenty-two Fridays passed unmarked by any untoward chances. Of the holidays six were "bad" and four "good." The sinking of the Marpesia on New Year Day was followed by the sinking of the Natorigawa (94) on Lincoln's birthday; by an Iceland storm and a metropolitan asphyxiation tragedy on April Fools' Day (21); a Colorado mine cave-in on Decoration Day (5); an explosion as well as the usual mortality due to fire works on Independence Day (188), and, on Labor Day, the capsizing of a pleasure craft in Boulogne harbor (7)—326 lives in all on those half dozen days when the American world at least usually lays by its cares and labors.

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