

MISS MINERVA and WILLIAM GREEN HILL

By FRANCES BOYD CALHOUN

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His aunt sat down on the bed by his side. She was not versed in the ways of childhood, and could not know that the little boy wanted to pillow his head on Aunt Cindy's soft and ample bosom, that he was homesick for his black friends, the only companions he had ever known.

"I'll tell you a Bible story," she temporized. "You must not be a baby. You are not afraid, are you, William? God is always with you."

"I don't want no God," he sullenly made reply; "I wants somebody with sho' nough skin an' bones, an'—an' I wants to hear 'bout Uncle Plikerk Peter."

"I will tell you a Bible story," again suggested his aunt. "I will tell you about—"

"I don't want to hear no Bible story, neither," he objected. "I wants to hear Uncle Jimmy-Jawed Jup'ter play his 'corjan an' sing."

"Rabbit up the gum tree, Coon is in the holler. Wake, snake; Juney-Bug stole a half a dollar."

"I'll sing you a hymn," said Miss Minerva patiently.

"I don't want to hear you sing no hymn," said Billy impolitely. "I wants to see Sanctified Sophy about."

As his aunt could think of no substitute with which to tempt him in lieu of Sanctified Sophy's shouting, she remained silent.

"An' I wants Wilkes Booth Lincoln to dance a clog," persisted her nephew.

Miss Minerva remained silent. She felt unable to cope with the situation till she had adjusted her thoughts and made her plans.

Presently Billy, looking at her shrewdly, said:

"Gimme my rabbit foot, Aunt Minerva, an' I'll go right off to sleep."

When she again looked in on him he was fast asleep, a rosy flush on his babyish, tear-stained cheek, his red lips half parted, his curly head pillowed on his arm, and close against his soft, young throat there nestled the left hind foot of a rabbit.

Miss Minerva's bed time was half after nine o'clock, summer or winter. She had hardly varied a second in the years that had elapsed since the runaway marriage of her only relative,

the young sister whose child had now come to live with her. But on the night of Billy's arrival the stern, narrow woman sat for hours in her rocking chair, her mind busy with thoughts of that pretty young sister, dead since the boy's birth.

And now the wild, reckless, dissipated brother-in-law was dead, too, and the child had been sent to her; to the aunt who did not want him, who did not care for children, who had never forgiven her sister her unfortunate marriage. "If he had only been a girl," she sighed. What she believed to be a happy thought entered her brain.

"I shall rear him," she promised herself, "just as if he were a little girl; then he will be both a pleasure and a comfort to me, and a companion for my loneliness."

Miss Minerva was strictly methodical; she worked ever by the clock, so many hours for this, so many for that. William, she now resolved, for the first time becoming really interested in him, should grow up to be a model young man, a splendid and wonderful piece of mechanism, a fine, practical, machine-like individual, moral, upright, religious. She was glad that he was young; she would begin his training on the morrow. She would teach him to sew, to sweep, to churn, to cook, and when he was older he should be educated for the ministry.

"Yes," said Miss Minerva; "I shall be very strict with him just at first, and punish him for the slightest disobedience or misdemeanor, and he will soon learn that my authority is not to be questioned."

And the little boy who had never had a restraining hand laid upon him in his short life? He slept sweetly and innocently in the next room, dreaming of the care-free existence on the plantation and of his idle, happy, negro companions.

CHAPTER III.

The Willing Worker. "Get up, William," said Miss Minerva, "and come with me to the bathroom; I have fixed your bath."

The child's sleepy eyes popped wide open at this astounding command.

"Ain't this here Wednesday?" he asked sharply.

"Yes; today is Wednesday. Hurry up or the water will get cold."

"Well, me an' Wilkes Booth Lincoln jest washed las' Sat'day. We ain't got to wash no mo' till nex' Sat'day," he argued.

"Oh, yes," said his relative; "you must bathe every day."

"Me an' Wilkes Booth Lincoln ain't never wash on a Wednesday sence we's born," he protested indignantly.

Billy's idea of a bath was taken from the severe weekly scrubbing which Aunt Cindy gave him with a hard washrag, and he felt that he'd rather die at once than have to bathe every day.

He followed his aunt delectfully to the bathroom at the end of the long neck porch of the old-fashioned, one-story house; but once in the big white tub he was delighted.

In fact, he stayed in it so long Miss Minerva had to knock on the door and tell him to hurry up and get ready for breakfast.

"Say," he yelled out to her, "I likes this here; it's mos' as fine as Johnny's Wash Hole, where me an' Wilkes Booth Lincoln goes in swimmin' ever sence we's born."

When he came into the dining-room he was a sight to gladden even a pious old maid's heart. The water had curled his hair into riotous yellow ringlets, his bright eyes gleamed, his beautiful, expressive little face shone happily, and every movement of his agile, lithe figure was grace itself.

"I sho' is hungry," he remarked, as he took his seat at the breakfast table.

Miss Minerva realized that now was the time to begin her small nephew's training; if she was ever to teach him to speak correctly she must begin at once.

"William," she said sternly, "you must not talk so much like a negro. Instead of saying 'I sho' is hungry,' you should say, 'I am very hungry.'"

Listen to me and try to speak more correctly."

"Don't! don't!" she screamed as he helped himself to the meat and gravy, leaving a little brown river on her fresh white tablecloth. "Wait until I ask a blessing; then I will help you to what you want."

Billy enjoyed his breakfast very much. "These muffins sho' is—" he began; catching his aunt's eye he corrected himself: "These muffins am very good."

"These muffins are very good," said Miss Minerva patiently.

"Did you ever eat any bobocued rabbit?" he asked. "Me an' Wilkes Booth Lincoln been eatin' chit'lins, an' sweet 'taters, an' 'possum, an' squirrel, an' hoe-cake, an' Brunswick stew ever sence we's born," was his proud announcement.

"Use your napkin," commanded she, "and don't fill your mouth so full."

The little boy flooded his plate with sirup.

"These here 'lasses sho' is—" he began, but instantly remembering that he must be more particular in his speech, he stammered out:

"These here sho' is—am—are a nice messer'lasses. I ain't never eat a nice good bait. They sho' is—I aimed to say—these 'lasses sho' are a bird; they's 'nother sight tastier'n sorghum, an' Aunt Cindy 'lows that sorghum is the very penury of a nigger."

She did not again correct him.

"I must be very patient," she thought, "and go very slowly. I must not expect too much of him at first." After breakfast Miss Minerva, who would not keep a servant, preferring to do her own work, tied a big apron around the little boy's neck, and told him to churn while she washed the dishes. This arrangement did not suit Billy.

"Boys don't churn," he said sullenly; "me an' Wilkes Booth Lincoln don't never have to churn sence we's born; 'omans has to churn an' I ain't a-going to. Major Minerva—he ain't never churn," he began belligerently, but his relative turned an uncompromising and rather perturbed back upon him. Realizing that he was beaten, he submitted to his fate, clutched the dasher angrily, and began his weary work.

He was glad his little black friend did not witness his disgrace.

As he thought of Wilkes Booth Lincoln the big tears came into his eyes and rolled down his cheeks; he leaned way over the churn and the great glistening tears splashed right into the hole made for the dasher, and rolled into the milk.

Billy grew interested at once and laughed aloud; he puckered up his face and tried to weep again, for he wanted more tears to fall into the churn; but the tears refused to come and he couldn't squeeze another one out of his eyes.

"Aunt Minerva," he said mischievously, "I done ruist yo' buttermilk."

"What have you done?" she inquired.

"It's done ruist," he replied, "you'll hafter th'ow it away; 'tain't fitten for nothin'." I done cried 'bout a bucketful in it."

"Why did you cry?" asked Miss Minerva calmly. "Don't you like to work?"

"Yes'm, I jes' loves to work; I wish I had time to work all the time. But it makes my belly ache to churn—I got a awful pain right now."

"Churn on!" she commanded unsympathetically.

He grabbed the dasher and churned vigorously for one minute.

"I reckon the butter's done come," he announced, resting from his labors.

"It hasn't begun to come yet," replied the exasperated woman. "Don't waste so much time, William."

The child churned in silence for the space of two minutes, and suggested: "It's time to put hot water in it; Aunt Cindy always puts hot water in it. Lemme git some fer you."

"I never put hot water in my milk," said she, "it makes the butter puffy."

Work more and talk less, William.

Again there was a brief silence, broken only by the sound of the dasher thumping against the bottom of the churn, and the rattle of the dishes.

"I sho' is tired," he presently remarked, heaving a deep sigh. "My arms is 'bout give out, Aunt Minerva."

Ole Aunt Blue-Gum Tempy's Peruny Pearlina see a man churn with his toes; lemme git a chair an' see if I can't churn with my toes."

"Indeed you shall not," responded his annoyed relative positively.

"Sanctified Sophy knowed a colored 'oman what had a little dog went 'roun' an' 'roun' an' churn fer her," remarked Billy after a short pause. "If you had a billy boat or a little nanny I could hitch him to the churn fer you ev'ry day."

"William," commanded his aunt, "don't say another word until you have finished your work."

"Can I sing?" he asked.

She nodded permission as she went through the open door into the dining-room.

Returning a few minutes later she found him sitting astride the churn, using the dasher so vigorously that buttermilk was splashing in every direction, and singing in a clear, sweet voice:

"He'll feed you when you's naked, The orphan's tear he'll dry, He'll clothe you when you's hongry An' take you when you die."

Miss Minerva jerked him off with no gentle hand.

"What I done now?" asked the boy innocently. "Tain't no harm as I can see jes' to straddle a churn."

"Go out in the front yard," commanded his aunt, "and sit in the swing till I call you. I'll finish the work without your assistance. And, William," she called after him, "there is a very bad little boy who lives next door; I want you to have as little to do with him as possible."

To be continued.

FROM OUR EXCHANGES MIAMI

James Chilcott of DeWitt had both legs broken Wednesday when he fell off his wagon in front of the wheels and was run over. He was hauling ice from the river to his icehouse in DeWitt. The team ran away and Mr. Chilcott was thrown off the wagon. The bone of one leg was badly crushed. His injuries are serious.

J. E. Matheny came in from Columbia Saturday morning, where he attended the state corn show, laden with numerous ribbons as evidence that he had again won recognition in the contest for honors among Missouri corn growers. The exhibits in the state show are grouped into five sections, Saline county belonging to the central section. In this section Miami township easily led all competitors in the various classes. J. E. Matheny won 1st for best ten ears white corn grown in central section, men's class.—John F. Webb has accepted a position as engineer on a Mississippi river steamboat for the 1912 season. He will leave as soon as navigation opens on the Mississippi which is usually between the middle of March and the first of April. John Ferril will be fireman on the boat.

—Mrs. H. M. Bates of this city has a curiosity in her home in a lemon tree she grows as a house plant. The tree has reached good proportions and has come into bearing. It has borne a number of fine specimens of lemons this year. We had the pleasure of seeing and handling one which Mrs. Bates presented to her mother, Mrs. Margaret Mertens. This lemon weighs about a pound and measures even inches around its shortest circumference.—News.

Parson's Poem a Gem

From Rev. H. Stubenvoll, Allison, Ia., in praise of Dr. King's New Life Pills.

"They're such a health necessity, In every home these pills should be.

If other kinds you've tried in vain,

USE DR. KING'S

And be well again. Only 25c at P. H. Franklin's.

HOUSTONIA

John L. Jones, who for eight days has been on trial for the murder of A. M. Mackey on Nov. 20, 1911, was pronounced guilty of first degree murder and the death penalty recommended by the jury at 9.30 this morning. This case went to the jury at 5 p. m. yesterday. Judge H. B. Shain will formally pronounce sentence later.

Will Goins loaded his live stock, implements and household goods into a car and shipped them to Smithton Wednesday where he has purchased an 80 acre farm.—Houstonian.

NELSON

Rev. and Mrs. Clinton Cox of Marshall visited J. P. Marshall and the first of the week.—Mr. and Mrs. P. E. English who have been living here for the past year have moved to Olean, Mo., their former home, Saturday. They will leave Olean in a short time for Arkansas where Mr. English has purchased an interest in a bank. While here they have made many friends who were sorry to see them leave. Frank Buford has rented the H. A. Smith farm which was formerly occupied by Mr. and Mrs. English, and has moved on it.—Monday night about dark Victor Bruno, son of R. Bruno, co. went out to the well to get some water and fell into the well. The family heard him scream at once and began to search for him. It was some time before they could locate him. When found, he had climbed almost to the top of the well. He went down head first to the bottom of the well of 10 feet of water and when he had come to the surface caught hold of the rope which was tied at the top and climbed upon that.—L. M. Verts has received a large consignment of fresh groceries which he is putting in the room south of Haynie's drug store, part of which is occupied by the bank.—Record.

Kills More than Wild Beast

The number of people killed yearly by wild beasts don't approach the number killed by disease germs. No life is safe from their attacks. They're in air, water, dust and even food. But grand protection is afforded by Electric Bitters, which destroy and expel these deadly disease germs from the system. That's why chills, fever and ague, malarial and many blood diseases yield promptly to this wonderful blood purifier. Try them, and enjoy the glorious health and new strength they'll give you. Money back, if not satisfied. Only 50c at P. H. Franklin's.

ARROW ROCK

The editor is still sick and not able to be out yet. He said he was improving last week regardless of the medicine and thought then he would be able to be at the office by the first of this week any way, but he said the Dr. changed the medicine on him and he had not been able to get out yet but hopes to be in a few more days.—Statesman.

Escaped With His Life

"Twenty-one years ago I faced an awful death," writes H. B. Martin, Port Harrelson, S. C. "Doctors said I had consumption and the dreadful cough I had looked like it sure enough. I tried everything I could hear of, for my cough, and was under the treatment of the best doctor in Georgetown, S. C. for a year, but could get no relief. A friend advised me to try Dr. King's New Discovery. I did so, and was completely cured. I feel that I owe my life to this great throat and lung cure." Its positive ly guaranteed for coughs, colds, and all bronchial affections. 50c and \$1.00. Trial bottle free at P. H. Franklin's.

SLATER

W. E. Collins, one of the truckmen at the roundhouse was seriously hurt Sunday night by falling in a pit, his ankle being broken.—B. F. Craig, a well-known brakeman on the Alton, was fatally injured at Higginsville last Tuesday afternoon while doing some switching on the local. It is reported that he slipped and fell in front of a moving car which passed over one of his legs near the hip, causing death in a few hours. The deceased came to Slater about four years ago from Eastern Kansas and entered the services of the C. & A. About four months ago he moved his family to Kansas City, where he has since lived. Mr. Craig was about 30 years of age and is survived by his wife and four children. His remains were taken to Kansas City Wednesday and will probably be buried there.—Miss Margaret Taylor, of Blackburn is the guest of her sister, Mrs. Frank Entekin, this week. We are informed that her father, who recently sold his farm near Blackburn, expects to move his family to a ranch in Idaho next Spring.—The colored school house caught fire from a defective flue Tuesday and was damaged to the extent of about \$25. The fire originated between the ceiling and the roof where the English sparrows had found their way and constructed nests of straw and grass. But for the timely arrival of the crew the building would have been destroyed.—Rustler.

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

CASTORIA For Infants and Children. The Kind You Have Always Bought Bears the Signature of Dr. J. C. Fletcher. In Use For Over Thirty Years CASTORIA. 900 DROPS. ALCOHOL 3 PER CENT. Aves... Preparation... NOT NARCOTIC. Fac Simile Signature of Dr. J. C. FLETCHER NEW YORK. 35 DROPS - 35 CENTS. Exact Copy of Wrapper.

GILLIAM

Quite a number of horses are lying in this community from eating wormy corn and felder Sam Hill lost four fine horses and B. P. Daniels lost his fine family horse.—Mrs. E. A. Davis sold her 80 acre farm located near Saline City, last week to Harry Johnson for the consideration of \$8000.—Globe.

Ends Winter Troubles

To many, winter is a season of trouble. The frost-bitten toes and fingers, chapped hands and lips, chilblains, cold-sores, red and rough skins, prove this. But such troubles fly before Bucklen's Arnica Salve. A trial convinces. Greatest healer of Burns, Boils, Piles, Cuts, Sores, Bruises, Eczema and Sprains. Only 25c at P. H. Franklin's.

George Sellmeyer, who resigned his position as cashier of the Bank of Glasgow the first of this year, and was succeeded by Al Wilhoit, went over to Slater last week to assist in opening a new bank starting there. Friday he suffered a severe hemorrhage of the lungs, and greatly weakened by the loss of blood, started to work again but had four or five more hemorrhages within the following 24 hours. He is still in Slater, under the care of a physician and a trained nurse, and while yet very weak, is improving slowly. George's many friends in Glasgow and vicinity will sincerely regret to learn of his illness and earnestly hope for his early recovery.—Glasgow Missourian.

Badly Frozen

J. A. Bailey whose home is at Elk River, Minn., was brought to this city late Tuesday afternoon by John Penrod of Love Station in a most pitiable condition, from the effect of exposure to both cold and fire.

Tuesday afternoon Bailey came to Mr. Penrod's home and asked for a few matches which John gave him. As there was something peculiar looking about the man, Mr. Penrod watched him set fire to a straw stack near by and then jump in the fire.

Mr. Penrod hastened to the assistance and pulled the man out, with his clothes badly burned and then he discovered that the poor fellow was half frozen. After warming him up, he brought him to this city, where Dr. Rafe Har- tin administered to him while at the hotel.

In the mean time Corbally's Fred M. Timulty, began telegraphing to the names of parties, found in letters on his person, and discovered that Bailey had been a bookkeeper for Stone, Webster & Co., the big Keokuk, Iowa dam contractors and it was thought his mind was affected from over work.—Louisiana Times.

Miss Ethel Davis attended the funeral of Mrs. Hattie Smock, at Troy, Mo., Saturday. Miss Davis and Mrs. Smock were close friends having been associated with the Wilson College at Chambersburg, Iowa. Mrs. Smock as supervisor and Miss Davis was in charge of the school of music.

Go To California Spend a winter in this tremendous and exquisite land, among the redwoods and the missions and orange groves. You can't live long enough to exhaust the interest of California. Everything is different, everything is finer than you have ever seen or known. Palatial hotels set between the surf and the hills—new foods for your jaded palate—fresh memories for your tired brain. Before winter overtakes you, follow summer into the west—take the direct route of low altitudes, the Rock Island—and take the Rock Island's de luxe train— The Golden State Limited The Train of Limitless Luxury Without Excess Fare Less than half a week on the cars and every hour filled with comfort. Big berths, splendid meals, a smooth road-bed, low altitude and sunshine from start to finish. The California and other excellent trains, every day from Chicago, St. Louis, Memphis, Kansas City, St. Joseph and Omaha, to Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Francisco. J. A. STEWART General Passenger Agent Topeka, Kan.