MISS MINERVA and WILLIAM GREEN HILL

By FRANCES BOYD CALHOUN

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CHAPTER XXV.—Continued.

"Did you all hear what Miss Larrimore, who teaches the little children at school, said about us?" asked Lina importantly.

"Naw," they chorused, "what was it?"

"She told the superintendent," was the reply of Lina, pleased with herself and with that big word, "that she would have to have more money next year, for she heard that Lina Hamilton, Frances Black, William Hill and Jimmy Garner were all coming to school, and she said we were the most notorious bad children in town."

"She is the spitefullest woman they is," Jimmy's black eyes snapped; "she 'bout the meddlesomest teacher in town."

"Who told you 'bout it, Lina?" questioned the other little girl.

"The superintendent told his wife and you know how some ladies are—they just can't keep a secret. Now it is just like burying it to tell anybody anything if you never tell anybody but Billy's daddy, Mr. Hamilton, said grandfather, and grandfather said it was a shame the poor children in town couldn't have a good time once in their lives, and he guess he'd give a dollar himself to the first one who would do something that would make Miss Minerva Hill have to stay at home a little."

"Gee!" said Jimmy, his black eyes snapping with admiration at the daring of such a project, "I'd give a dollar myself to see that."

"Let's do something to her!" said Lina, who was a little coward herself and had to be egged on to all her mischief by the boys.

"Let's put some red ink in her inkstand so it will look like she has cut her finger badly when she dips her pen in it to mark the children's lessons," said Frances, who was a little girl who had read a great many books and was full of ideas.

"No, let's wait until she has company and then we can think of something she's afraid we'll do before company comes and we can do it before company goes," said Jimmy, who was a boy who was full of practical jokes.

"We can't think of anything she's afraid we'll do because we haven't been doing anything we shouldn't do for a long time," said Lina, who was a little girl who was very truthful.

"Let's put a dead rat in her desk and make her think it died of spite because we have behaved so well that we haven't given it any chance to live," said Frances, who was a little girl who had read a great many books and was very fanciful.

"Let's do something to her hair while we are in her room at dinner time and she will think it is the girls she has whipped most lately who have come back to pay her for her meanness," said Jimmy, who was a boy who was very practical.

"Let's—" but what they were to do to their beloved teacher to make her think that her pupils of the past term were returning to her in spirit to torment her because she had been so mean to them in the flesh, they had not time to decide, for the bell was ringing and they had to take their places in the school room.

"Looks like he'd 'a' wore his breeches out," said Billy.

"I don't want to be a lady," declared Frances; "they can't ever ride straddle nor climb a tree, and they got to squinch up their waists and toes. I wish I could kiss my elbow right now and turn to a boy."

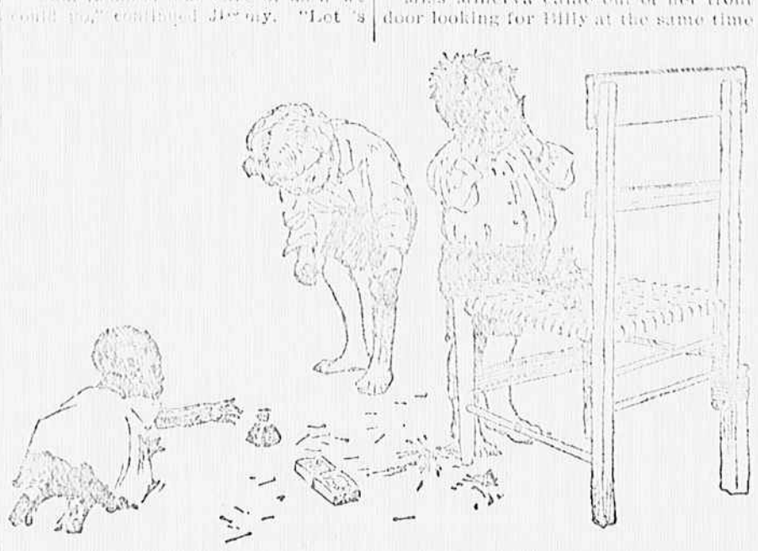
CHAPTER XXVI.

Unconditional Surrender.

"They 's going to be a big nigger 'scursion to Memphis at 'leven o'clock," said Jimmy as he met the other little boy at the dividing fence; "Sam Lamb 's going and 'most all the niggers they is. Sarah Jane 'lowed she 's going, but she ain't got nobody to 'tend to Bennie Dick. Wouldn't you like to go, Billy?"

"You can't go 'thout you 's a nigger," was the reply; "Sam Lamb say they ain't no white folks 'lowed on this train 'ceptin' the engineer an' conductor."

"Sam Lamb 'd take care of us if we could go," continued Jimmy. "Let 's slip off and go down to the depot and see the niggers get on. There 'll be 'bout a million."



They Darkened Their Faces, Heads, Hands and Feet.

Billy's eyes sparkled with appreciation.

"I sho' wish I could," he said; "but Aunt Minerva 'd make me stay in bed a whole week if I went near the railroad."

"My mama 'd gimme 'bout a million licks, too, if I projeckted with a nigger 'scursion; she 'bout the spankingest woman they is. My papa put some burnt cork on his face in the Knights er Pythi's minstrels and I know where we can get some to make us black; you go get Miss Minerva's ink bottle, too, that 'll help some, and get some matches, and I 'll go get the cork and we can go to Sarah Jane's house and make usselfs black."

"I ain't never promise not to black up and go down to the depot," said Billy waveringly. "I promise not to never be no mo' Injun—I—"

"Well, run then," Jimmy interrupted impatiently. "We 'll just slip down to the railroad and take a look at the niggers. You don't hafto get on the train just 'cause you down to the depot."

So Miss Minerva's nephew, after tiptoeing into the house for her ink bottle and filling his pockets with contraband matches, met his chum at the cabin. There, under the critical survey of Bennie Dick from his customary place on the floor, they darkened their faces, heads, hands, feet and legs; then, pulling their caps over their eyes, these energetic little boys stole out of the back gate and fairly flew down an alley to the station. No one noticed them in that hot, perspiring crowd. A lively band was playing and the mob of good-humored, happy negroes, dressed in their Sunday best, laughing and joking, pushing and elbowing, made their way to the excursion train standing on the track.

The two excited children got directly behind a broad, pompous negro and slipped on the car just after him. Fortunately they found a seat in the rear of the coach and there they sat unobserved, still and quiet, except for an occasional delighted giggle, till the bell clanged and the train started off.

"We'll see Sam Lamb toreckly," whispered Jimmy, "and he'll take care of us."

The train was made up of seven coaches, which had been taking on negroes at every station up the road as far as Paducah, and it happened that the two little boys did not know a soul in their car.

But when they were nearing Woodstock, a little station not far from Memphis, Sam Lamb, making a tour of the cars, came into their coach and was promptly hailed by the children. When he recognized them, he burst into such a roar of laughter that it caused all the other passengers to turn around and look in their direction.

"What y' all gwine to do nex' I jes' wonder," he exclaimed. "Yo' ekals ain't made dis side o' 'ternity. Lordee, Lordee," he gazed at them admiringly, "you sho' is genoowine corn-fed, sterlin' silver, all-wool-an'-a-yard-wide, pure-leaf, Green-River Lellapaloozas. Does yo' folks know 'bout yer? Lordee! What I axin' sech a fool question for? 'Course dey don't. Come on, I gwine to take y' all off 'm dese cars right here at dis Woodstock, an' we kin ketch de 'commodation back home."

"But Sam," protested Billy, "We don't want to go back home. We wants to go to Memphis."

"Hit don't matter what y' all wants," was the negro's reply, "y' all gotta git right off. Dis-here 'scursion train don't leave Memphis twell twelve o'clock tonight an' yuh see how slow she am runnin', and ev'y no 'count nigger on her 'll be full o' red eye. An' yo' folks is plumb 'stracted 'bout yer dis minute, I 'low. Come on. She am gittin' ready to stop."

He grabbed the blackened hand of each, pushing Jimmy and pulling Billy, and towed the reluctant little boys through the coach.

"Yuh sho' is sp'iled my fun," he growled as he hustled them across the platform to the waiting-room. "Dis-here 's de fus' 'scursion I been on widout Sukey a-taggin' long in five year an' I aimed fo' to roll 'em high; an' now, 'cause o' ketchin' up wid y' all, I gotta go right back home. Now y' all set jes' as straight as yer kin set on dis here bench," he admonished, "whilst I send a telegraph to Marse Jeems Garner. An' don' yuh try to 'lope out on de flatform neider. Set whar I kin keep my eye skinned on yuh, yuh little slipp'ry-ellum eels. Den I gwine to come back an' wash yer, so y' all look like 'spectable white folks."

Miss Minerva came out of her front door looking for Billy at the same time that Mrs. Garner appeared on her porch in search of Jimmy.

"William! You William!" called one woman.

"Jimmee-ee! O Jimmee-ee-ee!" called the other.

"Have you seen my nephew?" asked the one.

"No. Have you seen anything of Jimmy?" was the reply of the other.

"They were talking together at the fence about an hour ago," said Billy's aunt. "Possibly they are down at the livery stable with Sam Lamb; I 'll phone and find out."

"And I 'll ring up Mrs. Black and Mrs. Hamilton. They may have gone to see Lina and Frances."

In a short time both women appeared on their porches again:

"They have not been to the stable this morning," said Miss Minerva uneasily, "and Sam went to Memphis on the excursion train."

"And they are not with Lina or Frances,"—Mrs. Garner's face wore an anxious look, "I declare I never saw two such children. Still, I don't think we need worry as it is nearly dinner time, and they never miss their meals, you know."

But the noon hour came and with it no hungry little boys. Then, indeed, did the relatives of the children grow uneasy. The two telephones were kept busy, and Mr. Garner, with several other men on horseback, scoured the village. Not a soul had seen either child.

He Was Received With Caresses and Flattering Consideration.

At three o'clock Miss Minerva, worn with anxiety and on the verge of a collapse, dropped into a chair on her veranda, her faithful Major by her side. He had come to offer help and sympathy as soon as he heard of her distress, and, finding her in such a softened, dependent and receptive mood, the Major had remained to try to cheer her up.

Mr. and Mrs. Garner were also on the porch, discussing what further steps they could take.

"It is all the fault of that William of yours," snapped one little boy's mother to the other little boy's aunt. "Jimmy is the best child in the world when he is by himself, but he is easily led into mischief."

Miss Minerva's face blazed with indignation.

"William's fault indeed!" she answered back. "There never was a sweeter child than William;" for the lonely woman knew the truth at last. At the thought that her little nephew might be hurt, a long forgotten tenderness stirred her bosom and she realized for the first time how the child had grown into her life.

The telegram came.

"They are all right," shouted Mr. Garner joyously, as he quickly opened and read the yellow missive, "they went on the excursion and Sam Lamb is bringing them home on the accommodation."

As the major, short, plump, rubicand, jolly, and Miss Minerva, tall, sallow, angular, solemn, were walking to the station to meet the train that was bringing home the runaways, the elderly lover knew himself to be at last master of the situation.

"The trouble with Billy—" he began, adjusting his steps to Miss Minerva's mincing walk.

"William," she corrected, faintly.

"The trouble with Billy," repeated her suitor firmly, "is this: You have tried to make a girl out of a healthy, high-spirited boy; you have n't given him the toys and playthings a boy should have; you have not even given the child common love and affection." He was letting himself go, for he knew that she needed the lecture, and, wonderful to tell, she was listening meekly. "You have steeled your heart," he went on, "against Billy and against me. You have about as much idea how to manage a boy as a—as a—" he hesitated for a suitable comparison; he wanted to say "goat," but gallantry forbade; "as any other old maid," he blurted out, realizing as he did so that a woman had rather be called a goat than an old maid any time.

"The color mounted to Miss Minerva's cheek.

"I don't have to be an old maid," she said sparkilly.

"Not and you are not going to be one any longer," he answered with decision. "I tell you what, Miss Minerva, we are going to make a fine, manly boy out of that nephew of yours."

"We?" she echoed faintly.

"Yes, we! I said we, didn't I?" replied the major ostentatiously. "The child shall have a pony to ride and everything else that a boy ought to have. He is full of natural animal spirits and has to find some outlet for them; that is the reason he is always in mischief. Now, I think I understand children." He drew himself up proudly. "We shall be married tomorrow," he announced, "that I may assume at once my part of the responsibility of Billy's rearing."

Miss Minerva looked at him in fluttering consternation.

"Oh, no, not tomorrow," she protested; "possibly next year some time."

"Tomorrow," reiterated the major, his white mustache bristling with determination. Having at last asserted himself, he was enjoying the situation immensely and was not going to give way one inch.

"We will be married tomorrow and—"

"Next month," she suggested timidly.

"Tomorrow, I tell you!"

"Next week," she answered.

"Tomorrow! Tomorrow! Tomorrow!" cried the major, happy as a schoolboy.

"Next Sunday night after church," pleaded Miss Minerva.

"No, not next Sunday or Monday or Tuesday. We will be married tomorrow," declared the dictatorial Confederate veteran.

Billy's aunt succumbed.

"Oh, Joseph," she said with almost a simper, "you are so masterful."

"How would you like me for an uncle?" Miss Minerva's affianced asked Billy a few minutes later.

"Fine an' dandy," was the answer, as the child wriggled himself out of his aunt's embrace. The enthusiastic reception accorded him, when he got off the train, was almost too much for the little boy. He gazed at the pair in embarrassment. He was for the moment disconcerted and overcome; in place of the expected scoldings and punishment, he was received with caresses and flattering consideration. He could not understand it at all.

The major put a hand on the little boy's shoulder and smiled a kindly smile into his big, gray, astonished eyes as the happy lover delightedly whispered, "Your aunt Minerva is going to marry me tomorrow, Billy."

"Pants an' all?" asked William Green Hill.

THE END

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By O. W. HELLBERG, Acting Director of the Sunday School Course of the Moody Bible Institute.)

LESSON FOR SEPTEMBER 5

ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.

LESSON TEXT—I Kings 18:20-39.

GOLDEN TEXT—Jehovah is far from the wicked; but he heareth the prayer of the righteous. Prov. 15:29 R. V.

Following the lesson of last week we have (ch. 18:1-16) the interesting account of Ahab's search for Elijah and of the prophet's meeting with Obadiah. Verses 5 and 6 suggest the severity of the drought in the land. Ahab's accusation, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel," is replied to by Elijah's challenge regarding a contest between himself, the representative of Jehovah, and the king's prophets representing Baal, (vv. 17-25). In accordance with the stipulations the prophets of Baal accepted the challenge and most miserably failed (vv. 26-29). The place of this dramatic contest was Mt. Carmel (see map) and the time probably B. C. 906.

I. Elijah's Preparation vv. 30-35.

On Carmel's crown now swarms a countless throng;
With one brave soul to stand for God
'Gainst millions in the wrong.
—George L. Taylor.

Elijah gave the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 priests of the groves (v. 19) every advantage possible that he might the more clearly unmask their error and make more signal their defeat. Their frenzied cries and self-injury continued fruitlessly until 3:00 p. m. Then Elijah announces the details which were to remove all possible doubt as to whose champion he was or who is to answer his petition. (a) He calls the people together (v. 30) drawing them nigh to God and challenging their undivided attention after the confusion produced by the priests and their consternation over their defeat. (b) He constructs the altar (vv. 30-31). Any true and lasting reformation must begin at the altars of God. Restore one in the heart, the home and church and there will return to all unity and strength. Note Elijah's insistence upon an undivided nation, as suggested by the "twelve stones." While any lasting reformation must begin in the individual heart, still if it is true and genuine it will work itself out in the nation. "Israel shall be thy name." The "prince that prevails with God," who had wrought for their fathers, who answered Jacob's prayer, is now about to answer Elijah. This altar was not constructed as a monument to departed one, nor for the ornamentation of the house of God. It was in God's first cathedral and for his glory alone. On this altar Elijah placed his sacrifice.

Again Israel is to prevail over its enemies, this time those within, not those from without. (c) He covered the altar (vv. 33,34) e. g., poured water upon it to remove all possible accusation of fraud or trickery. The trench "as great as would contain two measures of seed" (v. 32) is equivalent to six gallons. Three times water was taken from the spring, still flowing at this place, and poured upon the altar, twelve jars in all again symbolizing the twelve tribes.

II. Elijah's Prayer, vv. 36,37. The great prophet even could only secure through prayer his desired blessing though its purpose was "that this people may know that thou Lord art God." His prayer was: (a) Addressed to God; (b) Grounded upon experience, that of "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;" (c) It was for one purpose, the honor of that name; (d) It was to sanction his act in calling forth the drought upon Israel as a punishment for the sins of princes, priests and people; (e) It was founded upon the word of Jehovah, to corroborate and to affirm the works done "at thy word;" (f) It was for the conversion of the people, that their hearts might be turned back to Jehovah once more.

Elijah, the man of faith, staked his all upon the Word of God, he gave himself up wholly to the plans and purposes of God, and relied explicitly upon the covenant-keeping God.

III. God's Power, vv. 38-40. We are confident Elijah had never seen fire fall and that he must have realized the awful catastrophe involved if it did not fall. Yet he fearlessly makes his plea and the fire fell. It was not an accidental stroke of lightning. God, the creator, worked upon the laws of nature, his servant, and wrought confusion to his enemies. It would be a strange God and father who could not use his own laws and creation to produce a moral effect.

The abundance of proof was that not only the offering, but the water and the very stones of the altar were consumed. Risking all, all is won.

What we need everywhere is men who will follow in Elijah's steps in order that the fire of God may come upon us. There remained no longer any doubt, God is God, Baal is a sham.

So they "fell on their faces;" yet in spite of the victories of God men today refuse to render unto him like obedience and worship.

Compare in this connection the fire of God's holy spirit which came upon the apostles and believers at Pentecost and the resultant convicting power convincing the people of Jerusalem that the crucified Christ was the son of God.

WOMEN WHO ARE ALWAYS TIRED

May Find Help in This Letter.

Swan Creek, Mich.—"I cannot speak too highly of your medicine. When through neglect or overwork I get run down and my appetite is poor and I have that weak, languid, always tired feeling, I get a bottle of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and it builds me up, gives me strength, and restores me to perfect health again. It is truly a great blessing to women, and I cannot speak too highly of it. I take pleasure in recommending it to others."—Mrs. ANNIE CAMERON, R.F.D., No. 1, Swan Creek, Michigan.

Another Sufferer Relieved.

Hebron, Me.—"Before taking your remedies I was all run down, discouraged and had female weakness. I took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and used the Sanative Wash, and find today that I am an entirely new woman, ready and willing to do my housework now, where before taking your medicine it was a dread. I try to impress upon the minds of all ailing women I meet the benefits they can derive from your medicines."—Mrs. CHARLES ROWE, Kennebago, Maine.

If you want special advice write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., (confidential) Lynn, Mass. Your letter wil be opened, read and answered by a woman and held in strict confidence.

SOME HINTS FOR BUILDERS

Great Care Should Be Taken in Selection of the Most Substantial Roofing Material.

If you were without preparation or plan, rudely placed in a wilderness, your first thought would be of food supply and your next of shelter, for these are the two most vital necessities of mankind. It is therefore natural that the best thought, and study are put upon these two essentials.

More forward steps have been taken in the building industry in the past fifteen years, as regards comfort, service and architectural beauty than in the fifty years previous.

Only in recent years has the handling of cement in building work been understood properly, and progress is still constantly being made with it. Modern hotels and office buildings are being equipped with sheet metal mouldings and steel veenered doors. Nearly every important change in building construction is away from the fire hazard of wood.

One of the most significant developments of recent years is the crushed slate surfaced asphalt shingle which is, on new construction and old, rapidly supplanting the wooden article. There are many reasons for this. The slate surfaced shingles add beauty to any building—in fact, there is really no comparison from an architectural standpoint. Crushed slate of pleasing tints of red or green, is employed as a surfacing. The shingles are uniformly eight inches wide and are exposed four inches to the weather. No painting is necessary as the red or green crushed slate is natural and therefore cannot fade.

The purchaser, however, should guard himself against buying a slate surfaced shingle that is not guaranteed by a reliable and responsible manufacturer. There are so many kinds of roofing and shingles on the market today each claiming to be the best that it becomes necessary for the buyer to get some satisfactory assurance that the roofing or shingles are represented honestly.

Be Warned in Time

Do you have backache? Are you tired and worn out? Feel dizzy, nervous and depressed? Are the kidney secretions irregular? Highly colored; contain sediment? Likely your kidneys are at fault. Weak kidneys give warning of distress. Heed the warning; don't delay—Use a tested kidney remedy. None so well-recommended as Doan's Kidney Pills. None so universally successful.

A North Carolina Case

Mrs. W. C. Russell, 10 Parker St., Albemarle, N. C., says: "I had a constant, dull ache across the small of my back. My kidneys and bladder were weak and the kidney secretions made me miserable. Mornings I felt so tired and lame, I could hardly get out of bed. My hands and limbs swelled, my head ached and I was nervous and despondent. After doctors failed, Doan's Kidney Pills restored me to good health."

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FOSTER-MILBURN CO., BUFFALO, N. Y.

ADVICE TO THE AGED

Age brings infirmities, such as sluggish bowels, weak kidneys and torpid liver.

Tutt's Pills

have a specific effect on these organs, stimulating the bowels, gives natural action, and imparts vigor to the whole system.