

THE RED CLOUD CHIEF.

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NEBRASKA

MATCHES.

A girl in the London streets.
A match girl, tall and slender,
A girl that often meets,
A girl of homely aspect;
This is the girl I see,
When I walk on the street;
Perhaps, if you'll listen to me,
You'll think you see her yourself.

This is her picture, here:
Brown eyes, liquid and large,
With the look of a laughing deer,
Least the "Bobby" should take her in charge.

A poor little frame, half fed,
A frock with the pattern all ways,
An old shawl over her shoulders,
Twas her mother's in happier days.

Happiness never was hers:
Born to squalor and want,
Her place in this universe
Was to live with the grim and gaunt,
To be trampled on by the feet of the great,
To be trampled on by the feet of the great,
To be trampled on by the feet of the great,
To be trampled on by the feet of the great,

She had a brother—a child
Of five years old or so;
She was sister and mother, and spoiled
As mothers will, she loved him so.
She had a little brother,
Or carried him, if he died,
And in all the crowded world,
None pitied and none admired.

One night, one bitter cold night,
They sat on a step to rest;
The frost was on the ground,
They, in their weakness, confessed,
They had wrapped the shawl round the child,
Though her throat to the storm was bare,
When the "Bobby" came up she snarled—
A smile that the angel shared!

That's the box? They're just as they were
When they fell from her coat;
And I mean to keep them there,
Till—but you couldn't understand,
What I mean to do with them?
They're just as they were,
I could not understand,
They'd light me the rest of the way.
—T. Hartman, in *London Argosy*.

A HEROIC LIFE.

The Story of a "Disagreeable and Fussy Old Maid."

"Oh dear! I do wish Annie would stay at home," said Miss Wilton one day, as the door closed behind that lady.

"Bessie!" said her mother, reprovingly.

"I do!" persisted the girl. "She is so fussy and so disagreeable, I don't like her a bit."

Mr. Wilton laid aside his paper and sighed as he said:

"Bessie, I must tell you a story, a true one."

"Do, papa," interrupted Bessie, as she brought a low stool and sat down at his feet.

"It was many years ago, Bessie, a cold, wet day in early spring. A party came forth from the church door and stood reverently beside the open grave of their pastor. Dust was committed to dust, and the mourners returned to their homes looking sad by the side of his grave. That died a few years before, and the funeral was over, the last sweet, sad rites had been performed, the prison-like lid had been fastened tightly, shutting from gaze forever the cold, placid face, and the white hair of the deaconate room. No, not alone the side were three trembling children and a dependent now upon her for support and all of the household, and some relatives who wanted to plan the money future for her."

"The farm will sell partly middle well; oughter get eight hundred dollars for it, but that ain't much else," said Uncle Silas Graspall, laid his hand upon the old desk in the corner. A long, ancient article of furniture, worn and scratched and defaced, but sacred in the eyes of the mourning girl. Sell for much! Nellie's lip quivered. Perhaps it was not worth much in the eyes of the world, but to her it was priceless. All the diamonds of Africa could not buy her father's desk. Even so she looked at it, through her blinding tears, she seemed to see her father's form sitting before it, as he was wont to do.

"Ahem!" began Uncle Silas again, "Hev you thought what you'd do yet, Nellie? I s'pose he didn't leave you any money, did he? None to speak of?"

"I think not much," faltered the girl.

"And I guess not. He never was great for makin' money." Nellie's eyes flashed, and she shut her lips tightly together to keep back the answer as she felt must come. "He was a master good man, though, John was, Wal, now, you haint made no plans, I s'pose. I kin give you a home, such as it is."

"So can I," interrupted Aunt Selina. "Nellie is welcome to stay with me as often as she pleases to work well."

"I think she had better come with me," Uncle Silas went on. "What do you say, Nellie?"

"But, but—the children—it will be too much, you ought not to—faltered Nellie.

"Oh, as ter them," said the man, hesitatingly. "Will, there, can earn his board a-most anywhere, and tother two can go to the 'sch'um."

"Never!" said Nellie, fiercely.

"But you can't expect one person to take 'em all," said Aunt Selina. "If you go to Silas' I'll take Will myself. I s'pose he could do the chores. Most twelv, ain't he?"

"Yes," answered Nellie, as she laid her hand protectively over his, and answered his imploring look with a sad little smile.

"And I'll take Charlie. He's big enough to pick up chips and do little chores," said Aunt Selina, who lived alone.

"But who would take Annie, that pale, fragile, five-year-old girl, that surveys them all with such great, wild eyes, as she clung closer to Nellie? Each one glanced instinctively towards a rebellious little girl who sat apart from all the others, clothed in the deepest mourning. Mrs. Churchill was their father's only sister, as her name she was a wealthy widow and had recently buried her only child. Having known the deepest sorrow, she could not be so pitifully pitiful. Surely from her hundreds she would spare a little to lighten their burden. Unconsciously Nellie herself thought of this, and she looked in her grateful love as she now arose and bowed.

"I'll take the little Annie," she said, answering the inquiring look of all, and she looked coldly at the one who had been so kind to her. "I've anything to do with it."

"The trembling child and a resolute old maid in her eyes."

"It's all settled then," said Uncle Silas, briskly. "The farm and furniture be sold; I'll see ter it, and the money kin be put inter the bank and paid atween us when they get older."

"You can give it to the three," said Mrs. Churchill, as she attempted to draw the child to her, "Annie will need nothing."

"Very generous in you," stammered Aunt Selina. "Well, well, Nellie, what do you say?"

"The color flooded the poor girl's face as she felt all eyes fixed upon her. A strange, choking sensation prevented her, for the time, from answering a word. Then she saw, also, the trusting, inquiring eyes of the children, dimmed by tears, as they waited for her answer. That gave her resolution and strength, and she said, unhesitatingly, "I can only say that I thank you all, but I decline your offers. My father's last words were: 'Nellie, take care of the little ones,' and we can not be parted."

"You are taking care of them when you give them up to good homes," said Mrs. Churchill.

"Why, gal, you're crazy as a coot! What kin a gal like you do to support a family? Tell me that if you kin. A slender, primly thing like you, too, asked Uncle Silas, in surprise.

"I hardly know myself, yet," Uncle Silas, answered Nellie, slowly, "but I am certain I can do it. We have the farm, and the garden, and the cow. Oh, we shall get along famously."

"Just as you please," the aged relatives answered in one voice, "but when you fail don't expect us to help you."

"I never shall, answered Nellie, with much spirit, and then they all went their homeward way, much relieved that the disagreeable old maid was over.

"Nellie would a saved me from a gal this summer," reflected Uncle Silas, "but then, her board and clothes would a cost considerable. I don't s'pose she had a great pile."

"Will could a done the chores," thought Aunt Selina, "but her especially growin' boys, do eat as full."

"Charlie'd a bin some company," thought Aunt Sabrina, "but he'd a bin a sight of bother."

"Churchill, dear, of the cold, daintily, I'm going to the school, of the costly toys and useless frocks at home—and signed. Not one tender thought for the fatherless children in the desolate house she had left her own brother's children, to whom the she would not miss would seem a fortune."

"Well, Willie, do you think we can take charge of the family?" asked Nellie, bravely, as the door closed behind their relatives.

"I guess so," he answered, "I can work."

"So can I," said Charlie, quickly.

"And I can wash dishes," said Annie.

"Bless my children! It will be strange if we do not succeed. It will be a long time before we have money, we have to go to work, and with trembling hands she opened the old desk and took out the well-worn pocket book. Alas, it was not very full, only a hundred and ten dollars.

"That is better than nothing," said Nellie, and the bills are all paid. Here are every one of them receipts. We have provision enough in the house to last us three months at least, and the shed is full of wood. Oh, yes, we shall do bravely. We will let the farm. Tom Rawlins wants to take it. I heard him asking father about it not two weeks ago. The orchard and garden we must attend to ourselves, then there are the hens, the turkeys and the cow."

"I'm guessing we can show 'em," cried Will, "and if we can't, we can get along a year or two, and then we'll be easier. I'll s'pose be a man, then I'll take care of us all."

"So can I," said Charlie, stoutly.

"Bless my little ones!" laughed Nellie. "I would be queer indeed if I could not find a way to help. Willie, I want you to go over and see Tom Rawlins to-morrow. It is I, he we were making our plans and preparing to follow them. Father would not like to have us spend the hours in useless sorrow."

"And so, putting aside her grief, she worked for the good of others. The dear father was not forgotten. Ah, no! Every evening, when the work of the day was over, the four children went with garlands of flowers to the churchyard with the bell, where in their silent sleep, rested the beloved father and mother. Every morning fresh wreaths were placed around the pictured faces above the old desk in the parlor. Their sorrow was none the less deep because they did not shut their eyes in their hearts, a thing to brood over in grief and self-reproach. Every hour they spoke cheerfully and lovingly of the lost ones as though they were still living. "Father would not like it so," was enough to change any cherished plan. "Mother always said she'd settle any dispute," Tom Rawlins took the farm on shares, and it was wonderful how much butter that one cow made under Nellie's skillful management and Will's watchful care, especially as they defied to raise it itself, a fine heifer, for future use.

"Guess you'll have got," cried Charlie, as he entered the kitchen one night after helping a neighbor all day.

"I want just such a nimble chore boy as you are," Mr. Wood had told him, and so he went, proud to earn the smallest cent to help along.

"No, I can't guess," answered Nellie, as she looked at the bag he will hold upon his shoulder. "It's something alive, for I see it move."

"Of course it is," shouted Charlie, unable to keep his secret another moment. "It's the liveliest kind of a pig, ain't it, Bessie?" and he cautiously opened the bag a bit, that they might see. "I brought him, and I'm going to buy some lambs, too, this fall. Mr. Wood wants me all summer, and they will pay me a dollar a week; isn't it nice?"

"I guess it was nice. Nellie's eyes beamed brightly as she answered, "Indeed it is, Charlie. Will and I can do there is to be done here, with Annie's help, and you can be at home with every night. Yes, it is very nice."

"I just wonderful how them children do manage," said Tom Rawlins to high praise. "I've bin in there time and again, when they was eatin', and they a man to have plenty. Nellie sells butter, nice butter, it's too, and she'll hunt the hens' eggs. I'll s'pose she'll have so many chickens as many as fifty turkeys."

"Yes, Charlie's bought a pig from old man Wood, and is goin' to work on it this summer, and Nell will get the nearest garden in town. I'll get all nature. I never see the old man look so trim afore."

"That's because they hev ter make 'emself count," returned his wife, "and he's a man who's got to depend on his own strength."

on, and he didn't hev time ter farm much."

"So, like bees, they worked through the long summer. Each one had something to do, and when berry time came they all picked what they could of the famous fruit for the nearest market. Once Mrs. Churchill drove by in her carriage, but she never entered the house, or spoke an encouraging word to the busy workers. Aunt Selina and Aunt Sabrina sent lots of advice, but that was all.

"Now, you don't tell me," said Uncle Silas, as he passed before the gate one day, to see if Nellie had changed her mind. Help was scarce, and wages high, and harvesting coming on. "Plenty ter eat yet, eh? Why, the apple crop is splendid in yer orchard. My trees is more'n half killed by the blamed caterpillars. How did you manage, now?"

"Will can tell you more about that than I can," answered Nellie, with secret pride.

"I haint their needs," said Will. "I ain't s'posed to be a visitor. What 'er doin' here? What's this? Garden-sass? That er a nice piece of beans?"

"Yes," answered Nellie. "Will and I have supported the family from this little piece of ground so far. Father left us a hundred and ten dollars, but we haven't touched a dollar of it yet. To be sure, we eat oatmeal porridge for breakfast, and mush and milk for supper every day of our lives, but we are all well and healthy yet, laughed Nellie. "Then you won't go?" persisted Uncle Silas.

"No," answered the girl, "I don't see how I can. Harvesting is coming on, and there are lots of apples to pick. And so the man jogged on. There was perplexity and confusion in his heart in stead of rejoicing, and he had no thought of offering any aid to his sister's children.

"At last the harvesting was over, and one evening, as they sat by the fire in the cozy kitchen, Nellie brought out the account book.

"Well, boys, we will see how we have on hand."

"Two hundred dollars," said Will.

"A hundred and seventy-five," said Charlie.

"Guess again, or I may as well tell you," said Nellie, gleefully. "Here is the account. You know we have paid our way by the sale of the butter and eggs, and garden sass as Uncle Silas calls it. We have apples and beans and turkeys and chickens for sale, and we have sold through the winter. There are three hundred bushels of potatoes in the cellar and quite a mow of oats to be threshed. Now listen, children, and see if I have it right:

Father left us	\$100
Interest on \$100	10
Forty turkeys	40
Forty bushels beans	40
Forty bushels potatoes	40
Forty bushels oats	40
Forty bushels corn	40
Forty bushels wheat	40
Forty bushels rye	40
Forty bushels barley	40
Forty bushels clover	40
Forty bushels alfalfa	40
Forty bushels timothy	40
Forty bushels orchard grass	40
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