

## LITTLE CHILDREN OF THE HILLS

THE TRANSFORMATION OF ALBERT.

## IV

[BY MATHA PIERCE.]

For The Courier

Hearing a familiar about one morning early in May, Mrs. Lee stepped out on the back porch. There was indeed the same shabby pony, but the boy who rode him! At sight of him she threw up her hands. "Who is this?" she cried. "Do I know this boy?"

Alfred grinned from ear to ear. His face newly polished with laundry soap, shone like mahogany.

"I'm a diff'r'nt lookin' boy when I'm clean, ain't I?" he cried gleefully. "Thought I'd s'prise you. You're so great on bein' clean. Dad went to town last week, with the pelts and I made him buy me some soap. Got a whole quarter's worth. White Rooshan! Is that good soap? You think?"

"Yes," assented Mrs. Lee. "It is very good soap."

"Look at these clothes!" continued Alfred. "Look at this shirt! I've got another at the camp. I've got two; and a pair of over-alls, too! Feel o' that shirt. Ain't that a good shirt f'r seven-ty-five cents?"

Mrs. Lee took a pinch of shirt-sleeve between a critical thumb and finger.

"It is good warm flannel," she asserted.

"How do you like my hat? And my boots?" Alfred pursued, taking off the hat and surveying it with admiration and holding up the brass-toed, red-topped boots for inspection.

"Fine! fine!" cried Mrs. Lee. "You are quite dressed up. But why put on your hat? Are you not coming in to have some breakfast? I am just baking some flannel cakes for Johnny, and the coffee is hot." She laughed. Alfred wondered why.

Alfred had arranged his hat to his satisfaction. It was a round shiny one. He had drawn it down until both his ears, turned gracefully down, and stood straight out from his head.

"Come in and have some cakes," urged Mrs. Lee, to her own surprise.

Alfred seldom required urging. Mrs. Lee wondered that a new flannel shirt, a new pair of over-alls thrust into the red-topped boots, and even the wonderful shiny hat, should work such a transformation in manner.

"I guess not," Alfred said shyly.

"But why not?" queried the good woman.

"I want to git down to Orr's before Jamie starts to school," said Alfred in a burst of confidence. "He's allus been pointin' his finger at me and callin' me dirty pig."

"He's a naughty boy," said Mrs. Lee, indignantly, "to say such things to a poor, helpless child."

Alfred grinned. "I guess this morning," he affirmed, "I'll be the cleanest of the two." As he galloped away he looked back over his shoulder to shout regret. "I'm awful sorry Johnny ain't up. I know he'd like to see these clothes."

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JAMIE.

In the afternoon Mrs. Lee and Johnny went in the two wheeled cart to spend the afternoon and take tea with Mrs. McIntyre, who lived four miles down the creek. The McIntyres were a lonely couple, of middle age, recently married after long years of waiting for the wealth Robert hoped to accumulate, ranching. All his wealth consisted in a little log house, and a little herd of cattle roaming the free range. But there was no happier nor more cheerful and contented woman up and down the valley than Janet McIntyre two years out from Scotland. Her fresh, roddy face, from which the gray hair was brushed

back so uncompromisingly, was to the children of the Little Bear valley one of the most beautiful ever seen, though so utterly lacking regularity of feature and the softness of youth.

She and Mrs. Lee sewed together contentedly in the little west windowed sitting room. The golden afternoon sunshine streamed in and made a bright spot on the carpet. In the middle of this spot the big gray cat purred contentedly. All was peace and contentment but seven-year-old Johnny was frankly bored. He had looked at the pressed heather, and the gold clock under the glass case. All he cared to look at were things which must be handled so carefully. He had failed in an amiable attempt to play with the cat. The cat was a respected cat with privilege, and would not submit to have his tail pulled, or his fur brushed backward. Johnny flattened his nose against the window and discovered Jamie Orr coming in the lane. All his lassitude vanished. He made one leap for his hat and another for the door-way. Mrs. Lee rose and looked out. She saw Jamie Orr throw his bridle rein over the gate post, and approach the house.

"How do Mis Lee," he said in a gentle little voice, out of all proportion to his bulk. (He was rather a fat boy.) "Will you tell Mis McIntyre, mamma said I could come to play awhile?"

Mrs. Lee nodded brightly, and the two boys went away together to construct miniature ditches, watering imaginary acres of Alfalfa, and to quarrel vociferously over their water rights, after the pattern of their fathers.

At half past five they came in. The two women were in the kitchen. Mrs. Lee sat at the window, still sewing. Mrs. McIntyre moved briskly about, preparing the evening meal "for company."

Jamie sat down on the kitchen step. His reddish hair, wet with perspiration lay in little streaks on his forehead. His gentle blue eyes had an expression of melancholy which gradually spread itself over his fat freckled face.

He sighed heavily. "Well, Mis McIntyre," he said, "I guess I'd better be going if I'm going to get home in time for supper."

"Aw. Are you sayin' so Jamie dear?" said Mrs. McIntyre, absently. "Did ye have a good time playin'?"

"Yessum," said Jamie. "Any way," he pursued, "I don't s'pose I'll get home in time for supper. It'll all be et up, before I get there. Maybe mamma'll save me some though," mournfully.

"She will that," said Mrs. Lee. "Trust a mother to look out for her boys."

Jamie cast a scornful glance at Mrs. Lee.

"I don't s'pose mamma'll have anything very good for supper," he pursued. "I didn't hear her say anything about it."

Mrs. McIntyre turned as if an idea had just struck her.

"Jamie, lad," she said. "D'ye s'pose your mother would be carin' noo, if ye stayed and took a bit o' tea wi' me?"

Sunshine beamed from Jamie's face. "She said I could," he said bashfully, "if you asked me."

"Well, then you'll just stay," said Mrs. McIntyre kindly.

Jamie rose with a sigh of intense relief. "I guess I better go and put that horse in the barn," he said. Looking back as he went down the steps he added cheerfully:

"I s'pose, eevin' they's company you're goin' to have hot biscuits and black b'rry jam. I know you most always do."

"Did you ever?" said Mrs. Lee, laughing, as Mrs. McIntyre answered gayly: "Yes, Jamie, I will that."

## CLUBS.

Edited by Miss Helen G. Harwood.

## CALENDAR OF NEBRASKA CLUBS

February	
2 & 9. Fin de Siecle c., Am. history.....	Seward
4. W's. c., Prominent women of Cen'y. Norfolk	
4. Matinee Musicale "Hours of a day".....	Lincoln
4. W's. c., Am. history.....	Omaha
5. W's. c., Schools.....	Wakefield
5. Sorosis, Physical culture.....	Lincoln
5. Century c., Egyptian history.....	Lincoln
6. New Book Review c., Miscellaneous.....	Lincoln
7. Lotos c., Victorian Reign.....	Lincoln
8. Self Culture c., Am. Fiction.....	St. Paul
8. W's. c., Social reforms.....	Minden
9. Round Table, Sociology.....	Crete
9. History & Art c., Ger. & contemporary	
Scientists.....	Seward
11. W's. c., Philanthropy.....	York
11. 30th Cen. c., Miscellaneous.....	Pawnee City
12. W's. c., Fr. history.....	Columbus

The Woman's club met Monday afternoon, January 28th, at the University chapel. The program was in charge of the music department. Mr. Willard Kimball explained the construction of the pipe organ and also gave a short recital. Persons not members of the club were admitted for the nominal fee of twenty five cents.

At the Century club on Tuesday afternoon, January 22nd, Mrs. George E. Haskell read a paper on the "Conquests of Egypt by the Hyksos or Shepherd Kings," and Mrs. McCroery on "Egyptian Monuments, Temples and Tombs." The meeting occurred at the home of Mrs. Hindman.

German Opera was the topic of the last meeting of the music department, January 18th. Mesdames Hall, Warner, Fisher, Easterday, Fleming and Miss Young lectured upon the subject.

The art department of the Woman's club met Monday, January 21st, in the club rooms. Mrs. Hodgman read a paper on the Pre-Raphaelites.

Mrs. Hibner read a paper on "Shakers" at the meeting of the literary department of the Woman's club Thursday afternoon, January 24th.

The Lotos club met last Thursday with Mrs. Henry E. Lewis. A program of miscellaneous topics and a discussion of plans for the remaining eight meetings of the year, filled the afternoon.

The committee on reincorporation of the G. F. W. C., is, Mesdames Cornelia C. Fairbanks, Indianapolis; Lucia E. Blount, Washington, D. C.; M. E. Trautman, New York City; John T. McNeal, Denver, chairman; Mary L. Lockwood, The Columbia, Washington, D. C.

The Arche club passed the following resolutions, regarding the admission of colored clubs or delegates:

Whereas the colored women's clubs are not asking for admission to the state federation; and, whereas we consider this question of vital importance to the unity of the north and south in our General Federation, we are opposed to our state federation taking any action in the matter.

The second biennial of musical clubs will be held in Cleveland on April 30th, and May 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 1901. Also the music federation of which Mrs. Edwin F. Uhl of Grand Rapids is president, and which has grown remarkably since the first St. Louis biennial, will soon hold its convention.

At the first board meeting since the last election of officers of the Connecticut state federation the report of the committee, appointed some two weeks ago to study the matter of equal rights in the guardianship of children, was

heard. An effort will be made to prepare a bill and obtain its passage in the next legislature. According to the existing law a father can do with the child according to his pleasure or convenience, even to giving it away, no matter what the mother's feelings or wishes may be.

The Forum club of San Diego, Cal., has accomplished great things since its organization in 1895. The object of the club is to promote culture, literary and social intercourse. Perhaps the most enjoyable feature of the Forum is its club house, the apartments of which consist of a lecture hall, reception room, tea room and dressing room. The lecture room is used entirely for club meetings. The reception room possesses a small library, magazines, daily papers and writing material. The tea room finished in Delft blue is always open and is found to be a most welcome place. The club has two regular meetings, the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. The first and third Wednesdays have been devoted to informal receptions, but during the last year current topics have been introduced to take the place of these. In December the club celebrated its fifth, "wooden, anniversary."

The Plastic club of Philadelphia has begun to exert much influence in the east. The exhibition this year will consist of miniatures, a loan collection of paintings, silhouettes and colonial garments. Among the members are Miss Cecilia Beaux, Miss Alice Barber Stephens and Miss Blanche Delaye.

The calendar of the Cozy club of Tecumseh, bound in violet, has chosen for its subjects during the year, "Study of the French people" and "Topics of the day." The officers are: Mrs. Harris, Pres.; Mrs. Sullivan, vice P.; Miss Ella McCrosky, sec.; Mrs. Bouton, treas.; and Mrs. True, librarian. Under the topic of "Study of the French people" several papers are devoted to French history, another subject of interest "Characteristics of the French people" and "Home life in France" which is the source, of course, of national characteristics. Two afternoons are given to French art; French women, history, literature and institutions are also studied.

The subject "Topics of the day" explains itself, for most of the problems that are of interest today, especially to women, are chosen. It is always encouraging to find a Nebraska day among club programs. It signifies state patriotism and state patriotism will sooner or later evolve something for the benefit of a locality which is necessarily state improvement. The toasts offered for this day are "The clubs," "Early days in Tecumseh," "The garden spot of Nebraska," "Nebraska's backbone," and "Things that foster our state pride." The program for January 1st was a reception.

The Fairbury Woman's club was well attended last week and nearly every member was prepared with a practical recipe of some kind. Miss Gellatly sang Asthore accompanied by Trotter by Mrs. Perry on the piano. "Hints to young housewives" was ably handled by Mrs. Sarbach, and we could but wish that all young housekeepers and all who con-

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