

The Family Circle

A BOY'S MORNING RESOLVE

Everything happy and everything gay—
These are the things I will talk of to-day.
Everything sorrowful, dreadful, and wrong—
These are the things I will keep from my tongue.

Everything gentle and everything kind—
These are the things I will hold in my mind.
Everything hateful and everything low—
These are the things I'm resolved not to know.

Everything helpful and everything fine—
These are the things for these small hands of mine.
Everything lazy and everything mean—
These I will leave, and, in God's sight, be clean.

JOHNNY'S TOMMY

Johnny and his Tommy had a whole big beautiful orchard to themselves to play in. In spring it looked at if it had been covered with pink and white snow, the blossoms were so thick on the trees; and in late summer and the fall there were ripe apples lying in the grass under the green trees. Johnny liked summer best and so did Johnny's Tommy.

Johnny was a very little boy, and his Tommy was a very small calf. This little calf was as white as snow and had the dearest dark eyes and the most silky ears one ever saw! Tommy belonged wholly to Johnny, and every day the little boy went three times to the orchard with milk in a pail for his pet. Sometimes greedy Tommy upset his bucket and spilt the milk and then Johnny would have to travel back for more.

Just outside the beautiful orchard lay the railroad track, and sometimes the up-freight train had to wait right in front of the orchard until the man in the tower by the track signalled for it to come on. This was great fun for Johnny, for Johnny's father had fixed up a pulley-post by the hedge with a wheel that Johnny could turn and which would wind up a long rope hanging from the top of the post; and to the end of this rope was fastened a small basket. Johnny would fill the basket with big red apples and wind it slowly to the top of the hedge. Then, quick as a wink, the fireman's big black hand would seize and empty the basket, and all the train men would call out, 'Thank you, Johnny!'

Johnny dearly loved to work the little pulley, and if the train had to wait very long for the signal the basket was raised more than once and every man on the train was sure to have several apples in his pockets to take home to his children.

One morning when Johnny went out to the orchard the little white calf was nowhere in sight. The inquisitive little creature had squeezed through the hedge and when at last Johnny spied him he was standing exactly in the middle of the track.

'Come, Tommy! Come, Tommy!' called Johnny in a fright for it was not long until train time. 'Oh,' said he to himself, running up and down behind the hedge, 'if mamma only hadn't told me never to go on the track I could get out and drive him off—but I promised her I'd never go outside the orchard!'

There was no use in running to the house for help, because his mother had gone down to the village and there was no one at home but grandma, and she was lame; so Johnny could only coax and call to Tommy, and hold out a tempting apple through the hedge. But Tommy had all the apples he wanted, and he paid no attention. 'You'll be killed, Tommy!' screamed Johnny suddenly, for he heard the freight train coming.

The engineer had told Johnny that he would always whistle once if the train must stop; but if the track was clear and the signal was out, he would blow twice as he came on.

Clear and sharp came the two blasts that said 'No stop!'

Johnny laid down in the grass and sobbed to think of his dear white Tommy being crushed by the big engine. But Tommy, outside, planted his feet firmly on a tie and, like the 'goose' a young calf often is, stood and faced the monster.

Suddenly the engineer saw Johnny's Tommy and brought the train to a standstill. A grimy brakeman leaped off, seized the stubborn fellow, rushed down the bank, and, in spite of his kicking, thrust him through the very hole where he had crawled out to the track an hour before.

'Don't cry, Johnny!' he called cheerfully. 'Tommy is all right. You watch this hole till someone comes, for another train'll be along pretty soon. Can't wait!' And in a minute the train was rushing along again.

When he had wiped away his tears, Johnny buckled on Tommy's strap and led him to the house for he didn't dare leave him in the orchard until the hedge was mended. He led Tommy up to his mother and told her the story.

'That was a very kind engineer,' said Johnny's mother after she had heard it. 'Guess he remembered the apples!'

Then they both laughed at the big black finger-marks on Tommy's white coat; but that foolish fat little animal just kicked up his heels, broke loose and scampered to the pail by the gate to see if dinner had been served!

SPINNING TOPS

Spinning a top has been a favorite amusement of small boys—yes, and of some fairly big boys, too—for a good many hundred years. Suidas mentions tops among the toys of Grecian lads away back in remote times, and Roman boys spun them in the days of Virgil.

As for the name, top (says the *Ave Maria*), it is probably just one form of the old word, toy. The notion that a top is so called 'because it is sharpened to a tip or top on which it is spun,' or 'from whirling around on its top or point,' is quite incorrect. Any boy knows that a top doesn't spin on its tip, which is the bottom. One of the big dictionaries defines the top as 'a children's toy of conical, ovoid (egg-shaped), or circular shape, whether solid or hollow, sometimes of wood with a point of metal, sometimes entirely of metal, made to whirl on its point by the rapid unwinding of a string wound about it, or by lashing with a whip, or by utilising the power of a spring.'

Now, this definition is not complete. It says nothing of the old-time top, or peg-top, which one's big brother, or one's self, used to make by taking a wooden spool from which the thread had all been unwound, and whittling half of it into a miniature cone, then putting a round stick through the hole, sharpening the lower end to a point and leaving the upper end projecting from the top of the spool. The spinning used to be done by taking this upper end of the stick, or axis, between the thumb and either the index or the second finger, and whirling it vigorously. Whenever the top began to wobble, one used to talk of 'watching the old cat die,'—a process of which, by the way, the unsatisfactory big dictionary referred to above makes no mention at all. We haven't any doubt that this was the particular variety of the toy which Blessed Thomas More meant when he wrote:

'A toppe can I set, and dryve it in his kynde.'

A LABOUCHERE STORY

A Labouchere anecdote which has not been done to death is given in the new volume of recollections by Sir Henry Lucy, to whom it was told by Labby himself. It concerned the younger son of a peer, who thought that a berth in the diplomatic service was as desirable a place as any for one who took life rather easily. He knew nothing of the special subjects upon which the preliminary examination was based, but