THE RIVER.

Wish I could get back to-day
To the meadowy fields of May
Where we went the shadowy way
To the river;
Where a little world of joys
Blossomed round the barefoot boys
As they went with jocund noise
To the river.

Splash! splash!
The wavelets dash,
And the splintered sunbeams flash
Where the maples
Used to quiver
On the cool road
To the river!

Wish I could get back to-day
Where the mosses trailed in gray
And the lilies felt the spray
Of the river;
Where, above its banks of green,
Well I loved to loll and lean
In the shadow and the sheen
Of the river.

Splash! splash!
The wavelets dash,
And the splintered sunbeams flash
Where the oak leaves
Used to quiver
On the cool banks
Of the river.

Wish I could get back to-day!
But the gold has left the gray;
Long the winters, brief the May,
And the river
With its gloom and with its gleams,
Where life's dying sunset streams,
Ripples through an old man's dreams
Faintly ever.

—Frank L. Stanton, in Atlanta Constitution.

MALIND.

BY HELEN W. PIERSON.



MALIND, don't you want ter see what I got in this bundle?"

"I should admire to," said Malind, pushing back the purple slat sunbonnet which shut her in from all side views, and made the landscape look as if she were gazing at it through a telescope.

The girl who had hailed her darted behind a clump of bushes.

"Come 'round here," she said. "Ma would give me fits if she knew I'd opened it! It's a frock she's bin makin' fer Lita Marsh, stuck up thing! Ma says she looks as if she 'spected the earth would git up an prance when she steps on it. Guess she'll hev a s'prise party when she sees me tricked out in a frock jest like hern! The patron come from Paris!"

Phronie Meeker's English was not as correct as her clothes. Her mother was the dressmaker of Canaan, and Phronie's costumes were the envy and admiration of the other girls. Malind especially admired the flapping leghorn hat with its soft white feathers drooping over Phronie's mop of yellow hair. That pink and white face with eyes about as expressive as blue beads, seemed the highest type of beauty to her.

Malind was sallow and thin, with dark, eager, questioning eyes. Her shabby gown of faded purple like her sunbonnet, sagged loosely down from her sharp shoulderblades as if hung on pegs. The skirt touched the top of her coarse shoes, and the sleeves nearly hid her little brown hands.

Phronie sat down on a stump and began to open the bundle putting the pins in her mouth till it looked like a "rosebud set in little rueful thorns."

"I don't dast shake it out," she said, "but you kin see what it's like. Ain't it just splendiferous?"

Malind looked at the dainty gown of white china silk with a foam of lace ruffles sprinkled with pearls. Her eyes kindled.

"Oh, oh," she cried, "I don't believe queens have anything more beautiful! Ain't them pale pink bows just like flowers?"

"They're a sight prettier," said Phronie, who was very artificial in her tastes, "an' just think I'm goin' to hev one like it, only not silk—silk muslin! I'm goin' to wear it to the Sunday-school picnic. What you goin' to wear?"

Malind flushed a little. "Oh, I don't know," she faltered.

"You do like me, an' git a new frock," said Phronie. "I jest up an' told ma I wouldn't go a step without one. Say, do you know what Inde Bingham says you look like in your old blue flannin'? A pen wiper? Ha! ha! You know one of them things with a head and flannin' skirts?"

Phronie seemed to find the idea so amusing that she giggled for a minute, while Malind felt the blood rush hotly through her veins.

"Well, I got to hurry," said Phronie, shaking out her skirts. "I'm goin' to buy the ribbon for my frock, soon as I take this home to that nifty thing. Want to come with me and see me buy it?"

"No, I don't," said Malind, turning away without another word. She, too, carried a bundle, whose contents she was not anxious to disclose.

The June afternoon seemed suddenly to have grown hot and close. Even the river seemed sunning away in a warm haze and the white dust of the road stifled her. The yellow belted bees droned lazily over the flowers as if glad their day's work was over. Even the butterflies swayed lazily on the clover and told one another it had been a trying day.

Malind saw nothing as she plodded along. Wrath burned like a fire in her heart. Phronie's mocking words sounded in her ears. A vision of her at the picnic in that lovely white frock floated before her, while she saw herself in the ill-fitting blue flannel, made from one of her mother's gowns. She never remembered having had a new frock.

"Wonder how it would feel to hev one," she thought, a weak little hope stirring in her heart.

She stopped at last before a rickety little gate tied with a bit of old rope. She opened it and stepped into a narrow path bordered with ragged box. The thorny branch of a straggling rose bush caught at her skirt as she passed. The house was a small, unpainted, box-like structure, but the sun and storm had tinted it with their own soft colors, and a climbing rose redeemed it from ugliness.

A thin, sallow woman was shaking a cloth at the door. She looked worn and haggard. Her mouth was drawn down at the corners and there was a settled gloom in her dark eyes. She wore a scanty gown of blue gingham.

"You've bin a loiterin' again," she said in a complaining tone, "an' Dode, he hesn't come back nuther. He's a dretful stirrin' boy. Like's not he's bin a swimmin' agin. Last Sat'dy he hedn't a dry stitch on him. 'Pears as ef betwixt you two I hev my sheer of trouble. It's like bein' ground 'twixt the upper an' nether mill-stuns. Lemme see the work!"

Malind opened the bundle and laid out on the table six dozen pairs of coarse woolen socks, the seams of which were to be sewed together.

"It's a good way to the fact'ry, an' awful hot," she said, taking off her sunbonnet.

"Got the money all right?"

Malind took a few coins from her pocket.

"Say, ma," she said eagerly, "can't I sew 'em 'most as good as you kin now?"

"E'enamost as good," her mother answered, "ef you wasn't such a flibbertygibbet that can't set still."

"I will set still. I'll do half of 'em. I'll work every minute I kin—if—if—" she stammered.

"Ef what? Git it out!" cried her mother impatiently.

"If you'll git me a new frock fer the Sunday-school picnic," Malind blurted out, every nerve in her body tingling with excitement.

"Fer the lan' sake, Malind," cried her mother shrilly. "I do admire to hear you talkin' about new frocks when we can't hardly git enough to eat—leastways 'pears as ef Dode never would git filled up."

"I mean sunthin' cheap," faltered Malind. "I wouldn't care what—ef 'twas fresh—an' made fer me—an' kinder fitted."

"I wisht I could manage it," said Mrs. Blinn with a sigh. "I'd like ter rig you up good as the best—but it's no use talkin' 'bout it. That there picnic comes in about a week. How under the canopy could you do all that work in such a short space o' time? I wuz calcalatin' on gittin' you a new suit fer Christmas. There, now, jest whirl in an' set the table. I hear Dode a whistlin'. Thank goodness we've got plenty of cold mush an' milk."

But Malind was not in a thanksgiving mood just then. The cold mush choked her. Her heart was hot with rebellion against fate, though she could not have called it by that name. Why had some girls everything, while she had nothing? Dode's appetite annoyed her. How he did swallow everything! The mound of white mush melted away like snow before the sun!

Dode was two years younger, a rosy cheeked, sturdy boy, who ruled the house. Malind often thought it must be fine to be a boy. He did not have to learn to sew and help with the grey woolen socks.

"You look after Dode and take keer of the lamp," said her mother when she sent them to bed. "Child over Peapack way burnt to death with one of them kerosene lamps bustin'. The great genies never thought of wrappin' her in a blanket. Some folks is so ignorant they don't know that woolen things smothers fire."

Many a pair of bright eyes grew brighter the morning of the picnic when they saw the luminous blue sky and the dew dappled meadows glittering in the sunshine. The birds were singing as if they, too, had a picnic, and the wind in the white pines sang joy songs of its own. Malind saw the children trooping by in their holiday garments. The little girls fluttered about like gay plumaged birds. She held up the great skirt of her old blue flannel with a strange choking in her throat. It was just as wide as when her mother had worn it, but the frayed edges had been cut off and a clumsy hem shortened it. The basque was still too large for her. Her thin figure was lost in it.

"Oh, Malind, hurry up," cried Dode from below. "You are the pokinest girl. The wagon's awaitin' for us."

Malind hurriedly tried on her dish-shaped black straw hat, adorned with one old feather and a crushed rose, and she almost forgot her discontent in the joy of a long ride through green woods.

"Everybody is just as hateful as they can be," said Phronie, as they dismounted at the picnic grounds, "a-settin' on my skirts just for spite, and rumplin' it like anythin'."

Malind joined in all the games, while Phronie kept apart and tried to smooth out her wrinkled skirts. In the "hymns of lofty cheer" Malind's voice rang out above the rest. "Say, sis," whispered Dode, his eyes dancing with mischief, "I found this bully firecracker in the street this morning. It's a giant. Wouldn't it make fun if I set it off?—an' I got a match, too."

"Throw it over there an' give Phronie a scare," suggested Malind. "Stuck-up thing!"

Phronie was still standing apart from the rest smoothing her ruffled plumage. She did not notice Dode's approach, but suddenly there was an explosion and a terrified scream. Phronie Meeker's light skirts were in a blaze; the wind fanned the fire. For a second everyone seemed paralyzed as Phronie ran about shrieking with terror. Malind gazed at her with dilated eyes. Her heart stood still. "Woolen things smother fire." The words rang in her ears as if someone had spoken. Her heart began to beat again hard and fast. Her face grew hot with blushes. How could she do it before that crowd? But she must. Phronie might burn to death, and it would be her fault. Her hands trembled so she could hardly unfasten the great unwieldy skirt. She could scarcely see Phronie any more, for she seemed shrouded in flame. But she dashed forward the blaze and threw the woolen skirt over it. Together the children fell to the ground. How Malind wrestled with the fire she never knew. Others came to her help, but not before her own face and hands were badly burned. She hardly felt the pain. She only thought of Phronie's danger and her own guilt. She remembered Dode, when she was tenderly borne to a carriage and laid upon the cushion. He had disappeared.

"If I could find the boy who threw that cracker I'd thrash him myself," said Mr. Lumley, as he lifted Phronie into the same carriage with Malind.

"He ought to be sent to prison," said Phronie, angrily. "I wish I could jest light him with a match till he sizzled." A terrible fear tugged at Malind's heart. She must shield Dode if possible. It was a sort of relief to feel that in shielding him she was saving herself.

Malind's burns were tedious, but she found herself a heroine. Flowers and fruit, books and toys, were sent to her. Dode kept his secret well, and feasted on good things. But somehow the dainties had lost their flavor for Malind. The knowledge of her guilt rankled in her bosom like a poisoned arrow. Wher her Sunday-school teacher sat by her side and praised her for not hesitating through any false shame from taking off her woolen skirt she felt miserable. If people would only forget it and leave her in her peace. But even when alone she found no peace. The knowledge that she was acting a lie tormented her. Even when she was once more able to sit up the world did not look the same to her.

Malind sat listlessly by the window in the long June twilight looking out. The latch of the gate clicked and she saw Mrs. Meeker and Phronie. They were followed by Miss Lumley, her Sunday-school teacher, and the girls of her class.

"Well, I declare, it's regular depilation," said Mrs. Blinn, pleased and fussy, "pears as if sunthin's got to happen to ye in Canaan 'fore folks takes proper notice of other folks. Well I feel full as good as any of 'em—full as good. Malind, you ain't lookin' a bit chick."

The little girl had grown pale and her heart beat painfully.

Mrs. Meeker bustled in. She held a large package in her hand.

"We heard you were settin' up an' well enongh for company," she said, "so we thought we'd give you a surprise party."

Malind stood up and tried to speak, but the glands in her throat grew dry and her tongue was rigid.

Miss Lumley kissed her, and the girls greeted her affectionatily, yet she could not speak.

Mrs. Meeker began opening her parcel. "Seein' you spiled your frock savin' my girl," she said, "tain't more than right for me to give you another—an' I hope you'll like it!"

She took out a pretty pink gingham gown handsomely trimmed with embroidery.

"Miss Lumley said there must be a hat to match, so she bought this," Mrs. Meeker went on, holding up a dainty white straw, with a wreath of pale pink rosebuds around it.

Malind's heart throbbed fast. Never had she dreamed of owning such things. She gazed at them with longing and with pain.

"Speak up, child," cried her mother impatiently. "where's your manners?"

Malind felt herself trembling. They were all looking at her, but a haze seemed to float before her eyes, through which she saw them dimly.

"I, I can't take them," she gasped.

"She's out of her head," cried Mrs. Blinn with a groan.

"No, no, I know just what I'm doing. I don't deserve them! I don't deserve anything. I—I told the boy to throw that cracker at Phronie. It's all my fault that she was burned. I ought to be—punished."

"Well, I never," said Mrs. Meeker, tossing her head, "that wuz a regular impersition."

"I didn't think—her frock would take fire," said Malind, looking about beseechingly for a friendly face.

"You have done right to confess," said Miss Lumley, coming forward and taking the child's hand kindly, and you have atoned for it."

"To be sure," said Mrs. Meeker, veering to the popular side. "Some folks might be mean enough to take back their present, but I ain't that kind. You done what you could to make up for your mischief—so there it is, an' what I says I sticks to."

So the surprise party which had surprised every one there was a success after all.—Detroit Free Press.

An Armless Baby.

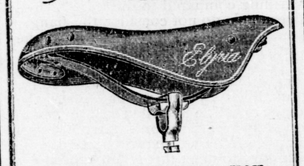
The wife of John Gunther, 242 South Dallas street, is the mother of a girl baby eight days old who is without arms, and apparently has no shoulder blades. The infant weighed five and one-half pounds at birth, and is in good health.—Baltimore American.

Animal Habits.

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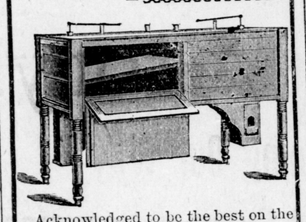
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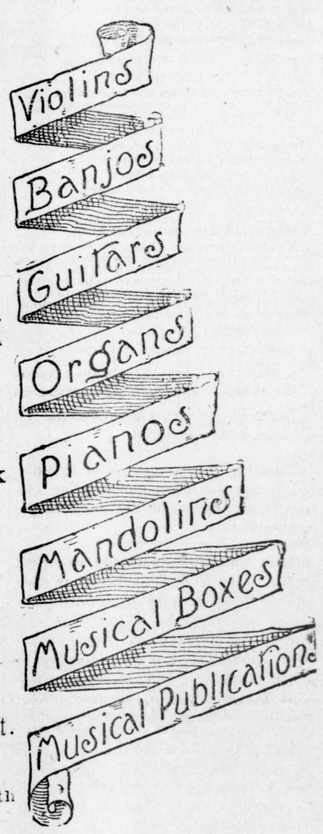
EAST BOUND.
(Read Down.)

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*Daily. †Daily ex. Sat. and Sun. ‡Sunday only. §Saturday only. ¶Daily ex. Sunday. Signal to take on or let off Baltimore Passengers Only. x Stops on Signal to let off Passengers for Regular Stops or Baltimore. m Stop on Signal to let off Passengers for Easton or Ocean City. k Stop on Signal to take on Passengers for Easton or Ocean City. b Stop on Signal to let off passengers for other k stops, regular stops or Baltimore.

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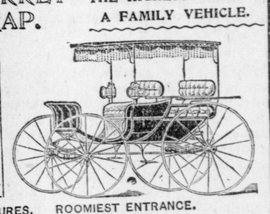


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