

AUNT MAJOR'S TOY BOOKS.

PRICE SIXPENCE EACH.

**THE
CHERRY
ORCHARD.**



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July 27th
1867.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD.



MA-RI-AN-NE was a lit-tle girl a-bout eight years old: she was re-mark-a-bly good tem-per-ed, kind, and o-be-di-ent, and could bear to be dis-ap-point-ed, or con-tra-dict-ed, or blam-ed, with-out be-com-ing sul-len, or an-gry, or pee-v-ish. She had a cou-sin a year young-er than her-self, who was na-med Ow-en, a cross ill-tem-per-ed boy, who was al-ways cry-ing or pout-ing a-bout some tri-fle or o-ther, or quar-rel-ling with his com-pa-ni-ons, and try-ing to force them to yield to his hu-mours.

One fine sum-mer's e-ven-ing, the cou-sins with their lit-tle friends set out to go to school, which was a-bout a mile from their home. Ma-ri-an-ne and most of the o-ther chil-dren li-ked to go by the lane, be-cause they could ga-ther the pret-ty flow-ers which grew on the banks and in the hed-ges, but Ow-en pre-fer-red the high-road, be-cause he could see the carts, and the car-ria-ges, and the horse-men that oc-ca-si-on-al-ly pass-ed, and this time he in-sist-ed that they should go by the road. "But we have been by the road for se-ve-ral days to please you," said Ma-ri-an-ne, "and now we want to go by the lane to ga-ther some flow-ers for our Dame." "I don't care for that," said Ow-en; "you *must* go my way, Ma-ri-an-ne." "Oh! you should not say *must*," said Ma-ri-an-ne, in a gen-tle tone.



“No, in-deed,” cried one of her com-pa-ni-ons, “nor yet look so cross; that’s not the way to make us do what he wants; be-sides, he ne-ver does any-thing we want.” Ow-en now grew quite an-gry. Then Ma-ri-an-ne said to the o-thers, “Let us do what he asks this once; we can go by the road, and come back by the lane in the cool of the e-ven-ing.” To please Ma-ri-an-ne they all a-greed to this. Still Ow-en was not sa-tis-fi-ed, but walk-ed on kick-ing up the dust with his feet, say-ing, “I’m sure it’s much plea-san-ter here than in the lane, is it not, Ma-ri-an-ne?” Ma-ri-an-ne could not say what she did not think, so Ow-en went on kick-ing up the dust more and more. “Do not make such a dust, dear Ow-en,” said she at last; “see how you have co-ver-ed my shoes and clean stock-ings.” “Then say it is plea-sant-er here than in the lane.” “I can-not say that, be-cause I do not think so, Ow-en.” “Then I’ll make you think so, and say so, too,” said this per-verse lit-tle boy. “You are not ta-king the right way to do that,” said Ma-ri-an-ne; “I can-not think this dust plea-sant.”

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Ow-en still per-sist-ing, his com-pa-ni-ons went o-ver to the o-ther side of the road, but which-e-ver way they went, he fol-low-ed them. At length com-ing to a turn-pike gate, on one side of which was a turn-stile, they all pass-ed through whilst Ow-en was emp-ty-ing his shoes of dust. On look-ing up, he saw that they were all hold-ing the turn-stile to pre-vent his com-ing through. "Let me through! let me through!" he cri-ed; "I must and will come through."

"No! no! Mas-ter Ow-en," said they, "not un-til you pro-mise to make no more dust." Owen strug-gled with all his might, but he soon found out that ten were strong-er than one, and be-gan to cry and roar; but no one ex-cept the turn-pike man was with-in hear-ing, and he on-ly laugh-ed at him. Af-ter ma-n-y fruit-less ef-forts, Ow-en at last left the stile and turn-ed home-wards. "Where are you go-ing?" said Ma-ri-an-ne; "you will be late at school if you go by the lane now." "I know that, and I shall tell our Dame you would not let me through the turn-stile." "And we shall tell her the rea-son why," said the others.



He had gone some distance when he saw Ma-ri-an-ne run-ning af-ter him. "Oh! come back, dear Ow-en," she said, "there is an old wo-man be-yond the turn-pike, who has such beau-ti-ful ripe red cher-ries to sell." She spoke so good-hu-mour-ed-ly that Ow-en could not be sul-len any long-er. "Ripe red cher-ries!" he cri-ed; "let us make haste then." As he ap-proach-ed the turn-pike, the o-ther chil-dren ran back, and a-gain held it a-gainst him. "Pro-mise that you wont kick up the dust," they cri-ed. "Well! well! I do pro-mise," said Ow-en, af-ter some lit-tle he-si-ta-tion. So they let him through, for Ow-en, though an ill-hu-mour-ed boy, al-ways kept his word. The cher-ries were tied in bunch-es to a long stick, and all the chil-dren held out their half-pence for a bunch. "There are e-le-ven of you," said the old wo-man, "and there are just e-le-ven bunch-es on this stick," and she put the stick in-to Ma-ri-an-ne's hand. Ma-ri-an-ne be-gan to un-tie and dis-tri-bute the bunch-es to the ea-ger lit-tle crowd which press-ed a-round her. Ow-en re-ceive-d his bunch first; but he was dis-sa-tis-fi-ed with it, for two of the cher-ries were not quite as good as the rest, and he in-sist-ed on hav-ing an-o-ther bunch. Ma-ri-an-ne of-fer-ed to give him two of her best in ex-change, but the o-ther chil-dren would not suf-fer her to be so im-po-sed upon. This so ir-ri-ta-ted Ow-en, that he snatch-ed the stick from them, threw it on the ground in a fu-ry, and tram-pled all the cher-ries un-der his feet.



When his com-pa-ni-ons saw the ground stain-ed with the juice of their cher-ries, they were both sor-ry and an-gry. They had no more half-pence, and the old wo-man could not af-ford to give her cher-ries for no-thing. When they ar-ri-ved at the school-house they found the Dame read-ing a print-ed pa-per, and she told them that which-e-ver of them should say his les-son best, should have the plea-sure of read-ing a-loud the good news which this pa-per con-tain-ed. Ow-en, who was very quick in learn-ing, said his les-son the best, and he read the pa-per as fol-lows: "On Thurs-day e-ven-ing next, the Cher-ry Or-chard will be o-pen-ed; all who have tick-ets will be let in from six to eight o'clock. Price of Tick-ets six-pence." Now all the chil-dren wish-ed very much to go, but they had spent their last half-pence on the cher-ries which Ow-en had tram-pled in the dust. So they ask-ed their Dame what they could do to earn six-pence a-piece, and she told them they might per-haps earn it by plait-ing straw, as she had taught them. They all de-si-red to be set to work im-me-di-ate-ly. None of them, how-e-ver, were will-ing to work with Ow-en, as they were a-fraid he should quar-rel with them.



“Then I’ll work by my-self,” said Ow-en, “and I dare say I shall have fi-nish-ed be-fore any of you.”

Af-ter they had been at work all the rest of that e-ven-ing and the whole of the next day, Ow-en went to com-pare his work with theirs, and was as-ton-ish-ed to find how much more they had done than he had, and he ask-ed them how this could hap-pen, since he was a quick-er work-er than any of them. “It is be-cause we have all been help-ing one an-o-ther,” they re-plied; and in truth they had, for they had work-ed in com-mon, each one do-ing on-ly one thing, and that the thing which he could do best, and by this means they had got on ve-ry fast. He stood be-hind Ma-ri-an-ne in a me-lan-cho-ly pos-ture, won-der-ing to see how ra-pid-ly and mer-ri-ly they all work-ed. At last he said, “I’m sure I shall ne-ver earn six-pence by my-self be-fore Thurs-day; I am ve-ry sor-ry I was so ill-na-tur-ed a-bout the cher-ries; I will ne-ver be cross any more.”



“Do you hear that?” said Ma-ri-an-ne to her com-pa-ni-ons; “he is now sor-ry for what he has done.” “Oh yes, we hear,” an-swer-ed Cy-mon; “but how can we be sure that he will do as he says?” “Well, let’s try him,” said Ma-ri-an-ne; “let him come and work with us.” “No! no!” cri-ed ma-n-y voi-ces, “he will on-ly quar-rel with us.” So in spite of his cou-sin’s en-trea-ties, Ow-en was o-bli-ged to work on by him-self. At length Thurs-day came, and the old Dame mea-sur-ed and ex-am-in-ed the work, and gave to each of her lit-tle work-peo-ple the six-pence which he or she had earn-ed. Ow-en, how-e-ver, had not near-ly fi-nish-ed. “Poor Ow-en!” whis-per-ed Ma-ri-an-ne to her com-pa-ni-ons, “see how me-lan-cho-ly he looks sit-ting there a-lone; he will not be near-ly rea-dy; he can-not go with us.” “He should not have tram-pled on our cher-ries, and then we might have help-ed him,” said Cy-mon. “Ne-ver mind, let us help him for all that; he is sor-ry for it now. Come, let us help him, and then we shall all be hap-py a-gain.” “Be-fore we of-fer to help him, let us try whe-ther he is in-cli-ned to be good-na-tu-red now,” said Cy-mon.



Then, going to Ow-en, he said, "You will not have done in time to go with us, Ow-en." "No! in-deed," said Ow-en; "I may as well give it up. It is my own fault, I know." "Well, then, as you can-not go your-self, you will not want your pret-ty lit-tle bas-ket; will you lend it to us to hold our cher-ries?" "Oh, yes! with plea-sure," said Ow-en, jump-ing up to fetch it. "Now he is good-na-tu-red, I'm sure," said Ma-ri-an-ne. "Your plait-ing is not as good as ours," con-ti-nu-ed Cy-mon; "look how un-e-ven it is." "It is ra-ther un-e-ven," said Ow-en. Cy-mon be-gan to un-twist some of it, and Ow-en bore e-ven this trial of his pa-ti-ence with good tem-per. "Oh! you are pull-ing it all to pieces, Cy-mon," said Ma-ri-an-ne; "this is not fair." "Yes, it is," said Cy-mon, "for I have on-ly un-done an inch, and now I will do as ma-ny inch-es for Ow-en as he plea-ses, for I see that he is good-hu-mour-ed." Then they all set brisk-ly to work and help-ed Ow-en, and they got done in time, and Ow-en went with them to the Cher-ry Or-chard, where they spent the e-ven-ing ve-ry hap-pi-ly. And as Ow-en was sit-ting un-der a tree eat-ing the ripe cher-ries, he said to them:—"Thank you for help-ing me; I should not have been here now, if you had not been so kind to me; I hope I shall ne-ver be cross to any of you a-gain; if I e-ver feel in-cli-ned to be so, I will think of your good-na-ture to me, and of THE CHER-RY OR-CHARD."

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