

THE HOME
SUNSHINE
SERIES

BOOKS FOR BOYS

A decorative illustration in red ink featuring several stylized flowers of various shapes and sizes, some with long stems and small buds, arranged in a horizontal line across the top of the cover.

ARTHUR'S
ADVENTURE

A decorative illustration in green ink featuring a large, detailed flower with many petals and long, thin leaves, positioned on the left side of the cover. To its right, there are smaller, stylized flowers and leaves arranged in a horizontal line.

BY ROBINA F. HARDY

A circular logo with a decorative border of small dots. Inside the circle, the letters 'N' and 'S' are intertwined in a stylized, calligraphic font. Below the letters, there is a small horizontal line.

NS

OSB
SA
HARDY, R. F.
ARTHUR'S
[1888]



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ARTHUR'S ADVENTURE.



PETER AT THE BOAT-HOUSE.

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ARTHUR'S ADVENTURE.

I.—ONLY ONE FAULT.

ARTHUR HARLEY, though a nice boy and a general favourite, had one particular fault. His father and mother said it was his only fault; but as that was the opinion of very partial parents, it may not have been the impression of friends and relations in general. Now, I will tell you what Arthur's fault was. It showed itself chiefly in a great desire to perform all the feats of strength or skill which he witnessed in older people. For instance, if there was a question raised as to riding some tricky horse, Arthur was sure to prick up his ears and say that *he* could do it; or if anybody

spoke of getting a rowing-boat, and wondered who would help best with the oars, Arthur was certain to offer his services, though he might never have tried even to hold an oar previously!

Some people called this ambition, others dubbed it self-conceit; but whichever it was, *that* was Arthur's particular fault. And now I will tell you more about him, so that you may understand better the adventure which this story tells of, and which was fortunately the means of helping Arthur to overcome his fault.

Mr. Harley, Arthur's father, was a well-to-do manufacturer in one of the large towns of England. He lived in a great big, rather gaunt-looking house near his factory; and though it was comfortably furnished, it was a little dull-looking, especially on damp days, when the heavy atmosphere made the smoke from the tall factory chim-

neys hang like a thick drapery all around it. Perhaps it was this that made Arthur enjoy so very much the occasional visits to the country which his father and mother treated him to. He was especially fond of going to Aunt Prudence's snug little country cottage, where there was so much to see and hear that, to a town-bred boy like himself, was perfectly new and enchanting. There were always "Nancy," the pretty brindled cow; and "Roger," the old pony; besides "Smudge," a little black spaniel; and "Tibby," the gray cat. But quite lately Aunt Prudence had taken home to Mossgreen two little orphans, cousins of Arthur's, whose names were Bobby and Kitty Campbell. They came from what is called the Highlands of Scotland—a very long way from Mossgreen. Arthur felt quite sorry for them next time he went to Aunt Prudence's, for their little black

dresses and white sorrowful faces told how very lonely and forlorn they had been left. But Aunt Prudence was a very kind and careful aunt, so they could not have fallen into better hands; and soon Bobby and Kitty began to take heart again, and play about merrily like other children. Bobby was only six, and Kitty a year younger, so Arthur could not look upon them as companions in the usual sense of the word. Still Mossgreen certainly began to seem more lively than ever now that these two little things were trotting up and down, making their childish laughter and music heard in all directions. The worst of it was that they were both very delicate children—at least Aunt Prudence said so. They would catch cold from the least bit of open window, or damp grass, or anything of that sort, and were not like strong, hardy, little Highlanders at all.

But in spite of this, Arthur managed to have a good deal of fun with them on his visits to Mossgreen. Bobby would play at being a soldier, while Arthur was of course his general, giving him orders; telling him when to load his gun, when to march, halt, right wheel, left wheel, make ready, present, fire, and all the rest of it. Even Kitty was occasionally pressed into the service, though Arthur did not feel at all sure about girls being allowed into the army. He *had* read about Amazons in his school-books, but could not remember much about them, and was quite sure they were not British soldiers at all events. So Kitty contented herself with watching the proceedings in general, seated on a footstool with her big doll hugged in her arms. Smudge would have done better for a soldier, Arthur thought, if he would only stand upon his hind-legs, as he often did to beg;

but then Smudge steadily refused to do so, and Tibby was of course useless in military tactics. She sat purring on the rug, washing her face occasionally, sublimely indifferent to the warlike preparations going on around her. But all this was only on wet days, when, of course, Aunt Prudence would not allow Bobby and Kitty to venture out. On fine sunshiny days there were other amusements, in which Arthur found even his small cousins some assistance. In the little thicket, near the avenue gate, he would pretend to be a sort of Robin Hood, living in a tent or under a tree, and rushing out at intervals on any unfortunate travellers to rob them. These travellers were generally Peter, his aunt's man-servant, going past with his wheelbarrow; or Marjory, the cook, looking around for eggs laid by any straying hens. On these occasions Bobby and Kitty were the followers of the bold

outlaw ; and Kitty prepared his dinner in the tent, while Bobby carried his arrows for him, both of which occupations they were very proud of.

All these games suited Arthur very well, as they gave him the first place in every respect ; and though he sometimes wished there had been a bigger boy to help him, it is very doubtful whether he would have enjoyed his holidays quite as much as he did with only the faithful following of Bobby and Kitty.

“ Now, children,” said Aunt Prudence one morning soon after breakfast, “ I’m going from home to-day, and shall not get home till you are all in your beds.—Arthur, you are quite a big boy, so I am going to trust your little cousins to your care. Marjory is very busy washing to-day, and Mary, the nursemaid, must help. Will you take Bobby and Kitty out for a

walk ; and don't let them get into any mischief ? ”

“ Oh yes, aunt ; I'll be awfully careful,” said Arthur quite gladly.

“ And will you play at some *quiet* games with them, Arthur, like a good boy,” continued his aunt, “ so as not to over-heat or over-excite them, you know ? For Bobby has never quite got over that last feverish attack of his, and Kitty is so apt to take a chill after running about too much. I really don't like the idea of leaving you all for so long, but a business letter of some importance has just reached me this morning, and I must see Mr. Prickett, my agent, about it. You know he lives in Stratford, and that is full twenty miles away. It will take me all day to get there and back, and to catch all those horrid trains and 'buses that one has to think about in travelling. I don't like the prospect in the very least, my dear, I

do assure you; but it is some comfort, Arthur, to think that you are a good, sensible boy, who can be trusted to look after things as much as a little boy like you can be expected to do."

Arthur quite liked being talked to in this confidential way by his aunt. It pleased his sense of self-importance, and made him feel quite like a grown-up person. His aunt was greatly excited about this journey to town, as he could easily see, and so she chattered away to him about it a good deal more than she would have otherwise done. So Arthur asked her questions about the trains, and the journey, and so forth, which led to his being allowed to look up the railway guide-book for her, and to jot down the various hours she was to remember on a slip of paper; which employments exactly suited him. Indeed, his advice and assistance now seemed so valu-

able that Aunt Prudence would fain have taken him with her on that important business errand, only she could not think of leaving Bobby and Kitty without so wise and trustworthy a companion.

“Well, don’t you be anxious about the little ones, auntie,” said Arthur in a cheerful, reassuring tone; “I’ll look after them well, I promise you. And it’s such a fine dry day, you know, they can’t possibly catch cold. Where shall I take them to?”

“Well,” said Aunt Prudence, “I think you had better play about in the garden and avenue all forenoon, as usual. Peter will be at hand and give the little ones a ride in the barrow, or a swing, if they like. Then you shall have dinner; and I was thinking, if you liked, you might take baskets and go over to the woods on the other side of the road to gather blackberries. They are quite a safe place to wander

about in; and Smudge will go with you as a protector, too."

The three children clapped their hands, for this seemed a very enchanting prospect indeed; and Kitty ran off at once to ask Marjory for three nice baskets to fill with blackberries.

"Baskets!" said Marjory. "You'll get that, Miss Kitty; but I doubt you'll all eat more blackberries than you'll bring home for me to make jam with."

II.—LEFT TO THEMSELVES.

Aunt Prudence left by the ten o'clock stage-coach, which just passed the gates of Mossgreen. That would take her to the nearest railway-station, where she would have to wait some time before proceeding on her journey to town, so that altogether it was quite a serious undertaking for the

old lady, accustomed to a very quiet and uneventful country life. It was to be a busy day also with old Marjory. She had long been wishing to have a thorough overhaul of the Mossgreen linen-press, which contained a great store of beautiful old table-cloths and serviettes, the fine damask of which had been spun in ancient days by ladies belonging to the family. These articles were unrivalled still for quality and design; but, as Marjory declared, their colour was more like that of a gull's foot than anything else, from lying so long unused. Aunt Prudence had given leave for a special bleaching of these precious relics, and the opportunity was too good to be lost. It was a bright, pleasant day, and old Marjory was very busy getting her big tubs well filled, with Mary's active assistance; and they were both very glad that Arthur Harley was there to look after the children.

Marjory, however, had bestirred herself on the children's behalf so far as to make a very nice pudding for their dinner, besides the dish of mince and potatoes which Aunt Prudence had appointed; and having done this, she dismissed them from her mind. Peter was very kind in general to the little creatures, and he did give them some turns of the wheelbarrow, and also made up a charming "see-saw" for them in the back-yard; but, as it rather unfortunately happened, he wanted to go to a flower-show some miles off that day, and so he set off as soon as his work was done.

The long forenoon passed pleasantly enough away. The children played at various quiet games in the shrubbery and about the back-yard—houses, shops, and so forth. Then they grew more restless, and invaded the distant bleaching-green, where Marjory and Mary were too busy to be

much troubled with them. Indeed, Marjory's temper threatened to break up once or twice, when Arthur tried to jump over a long strip of fine damask, just narrowly missing leaving his footprints on the margin. At last they were fairly chased off, and ran away back laughing to the safer ground near Peter's tool-house and sheds, where they could have see-saws and other amusements at will.

Then dinner came on, and a very merry little dinner-party that was. They pretended to be lords and ladies, with very fine manners; and Arthur made a grand speech, with so much nonsense in it that Bobby nearly choked himself with laughing; after which Mary decreed that they must stop and go out to play again, for she wanted very much to go back and help old Marjory with her great work.

“But we are not going to play any

longer, Mary," said Arthur. "You know, we are going to be *very* usefully employed: we are going out to the woods with our baskets."

"Oh yes," cried Bobby; "we are going to catch blackberries!"

At the idea of *catching* blackberries all the three children laughed again, and Mary joined them; after which she hurried them off, saying she had really no more time to stand laughing there. And so, soon after dinner, Arthur ordered his little troop to get ready for the grand blackberrying expedition. They were quite as eager as himself, and in a few minutes Kitty's cape and sun-bonnet were on, and Bobby's basket was slung over his shoulder in a most tourist-like manner. Off the three started, Arthur, of course, leading the way. The woods were quite close at hand, and there were a good many blackberry bushes on

which the berries hung temptingly enough, though already a great many had been gathered by the school-children all about the place. For a long time the three young explorers enjoyed themselves very much, hunting out the best bushes, and filling their mouths if not their baskets. Presently they came to a barer part of the wood, and had more difficulty in finding supplies.

“Shouldn’t we go back to the other bushes, Arthur?” asked Bobby.

“No,” said Arthur decisively. “I think it will be far better to go on as far as that other wood, where I am sure the bushes will be much thicker, and then the school-children are not so likely to have been there before us.—You aren’t tired yet, Kitty, are you?”

“N—no—not very,” said Kitty hesitatingly. Her little legs *were* rather begin-

ning to fail her, but she liked to do whatever the boys did, and would obey Arthur in particular to the very utmost of her power.

“Come on then,” said Arthur, feeling quite like the pioneer of some African exploration party. “I’ll carry your basket for you, if you like. Why, what a lot you have got, to be sure! Marjory will be quite surprised. She’ll have to make a big pot of jam out of them.”

Thus encouraged, Kitty marched bravely forward, and soon they had all crossed the wide field separating the two woods; and scrambling over a low wall, found themselves in quite a new region.

Alas! there were no blackberry bushes visible here, in spite of Arthur’s confident prediction — only tall fir-trees, with long bare stems and thick dark tops, that seemed

to keep out the sunlight altogether. Bobby and Kitty felt a little frightened, indeed, at the gloom, and both clung to Arthur for protection. Arthur, of course, felt the full delight of his position, and put on an air of great experience and wisdom, though somewhat puzzled secretly to know what had better be done. It was soft and easy walking, however, for Kitty's little feet over the fine powdery dust of fir-cones and withered foliage. And before very long they emerged from that dark thicket on to the edge of a lake. Very pretty it looked in the glittering light of the afternoon sun, with fairy-like islands dotting its surface, where tall reeds and grasses made nests for the numerous families of swan and wild-fowl that haunted the lake.

“Oh, I remember seeing this lake once before,” said Arthur, looking rather troubled.

“Aunt Prudence told me it was on some rich man’s property—I forget his name, but he was away from home, in India or somewhere like that, and so she did not like us to go into his grounds without permission. I think that is why I have never been here again. I had almost forgotten there was such a place.”

“Will aunt be angry if we stay?” asked Kitty, who was of a prudent and thoughtful nature. “Hadn’t we better run back again?”

“Oh, nonsense!” cried Arthur. “I want to see it ever so much. And now that we *are* here, what harm can there be? And if Mr. What’s-his-name’s in India, I’m sure he’ll never know. Of course, if I had remembered, I wouldn’t have come into his woods; but now we’re here, do let’s have a rest and some fun. Look what a jolly little boat there is, too, over at the other

side!—Bobby, you and I can run round and see what like it is.”

Bobby was nothing loath. He followed his leader eagerly; while Kitty sat down to look at her blackberries again, and to rest her little tired limbs. The boat was only a little way off, so she did not feel frightened.

The two boys soon reached the tiny boat, which lay moored to a little wooden jetty, close to a very small, low-roofed boat-house. They jumped eagerly into it and ran from end to end, feeling quite proud of being “afloat.”

“Oh see, Bobby, it is called the *Fairy!*” cried Arthur, looking over the edge and surveying the bright blue and red paint, with the name *Fairy* in white letters at the stern. “What fun it would be to have a sail! If I could get the oars I shouldn’t be long of taking you over to that nice island.”

“O Arthur,” exclaimed the little boy, as admiringly as if a vision of Fairyland itself had suddenly opened up before his eyes, “you couldn’t really, *could you?*”

This was all Arthur’s ambitious nature required. To be thought so wonderful a being, even by little Bobby, was something pleasant, and Kitty’s surprise would, of course, be still greater.

“Oh, if I had only oars!” he repeated. “I know all about rowing, and that sort of thing. It’s as easy as ‘A-B-*Buff*.’”

“And won’t Mr. What’s-his-name be angry?” asked Bobby in an awe-struck voice; for he supposed that was the real name of the rich man who owned the wood, the lake, the boat, and these treasures.

Arthur laughed heartily at his little cousin’s mistake.

“Well, I don’t know his right name,” he said, “but that is a very good one; we’ll

just call him that. And I'm sure he wouldn't be angry even if he knew. I'm not going to hurt his boat. What's it made for, I'd like to know, but to sail about in?"

III.—THE SWANS' ISLAND.

While Kitty sat quietly resting herself by the lake-side, she was startled by the sound of a gun going off just in the woods at her back. It was a very alarming sound to her. Immediately she set off running towards the boys as fast as she could, arriving trembling and out of breath. Just as she came up to them she tripped over some long wooden object lying on the shore. Arthur first picked up his little charge and dried her tears, then he turned to see what this thing was.

“Hurrah!” he cried, “this is the very

thing we were in search of. That old boat-house is locked where they keep their oars and things; but here is one oar about as good as could be. I believe I could make the boat go with this one, even if I don't find another."

It was, indeed, an old oar with the handle broken, but long enough even now for Arthur's utmost desires. Kitty forgot her fears and troubles entirely in the enchanting amusement of sitting rocking up and down in the *Fairy*; and as no other shots came from the wood, they concluded it had been the gamekeeper passing, and that he had gone further off now.

Arthur kept on trying his one oar with great delight. He had never been permitted to handle one at any time before, and, indeed, had only been twice in a boat of any kind all his life; but he did remember to have seen some friends of his father's

using the oars with strong and well-skilled arms, and with his usual self-confidence he felt sure he could do nearly, if not quite so well, as they did. Bobby and Kitty were all the time gazing intently at the beautiful islands lying out among the blue glittering waters of the lake, and fancying themselves settled blissfully among those lovely white swans and dear little diving birds that fluttered and shrieked away over yonder among the tall green reeds and the white water-lilies. Arthur had, of course, no time for these childish dreams. His mind was entirely occupied with the great science of rowing. He dipped his oar into the water now on this side of the boat, then on that, feeling all the time like some Columbus about to discover a new world, or Vasco da Gama in command of a crew bound for the Cape of Good Hope.

The afternoon sun was beginning to get

very low in the sky now; and though Arthur had no watch, he was well aware it would be time for going home before very long. If he was going to do anything very wonderful he must do it now.

“Well, I believe I *could* take you over to the island,” he said, “but it won’t be half so easy as with two oars. I’ll have a try at it anyway. Now, Kitty, you must sit awfully still, you know; and, Bob, you’ll steer. Oh! well, to be sure, the helm isn’t here. They take it out always. Well, you can sit in the stern there and point to the island. That’ll do for this time. You see I’ll have my back to it, of course, so I shan’t see how to go.”

“Hadn’t you better sit the other way then, Arthur?” said Bobby, whose nautical experiences were naturally very limited.

Arthur laughed. “You’re a little goose, Bobby. That would make us go backward,

don't you see? But never mind. I know all about it."

So the poor little things resigned themselves quite cheerfully to what was really a very dangerous expedition; and Arthur, having loosed the boat by untying a big rope which secured it to the jetty, pushed it boldly off, and began paddling away with his broken oar as best he might.

"What have you taken the rope with us for, Arthur?" asked Bobby.

"That is to fasten the boat with at the island," explained Arthur condescendingly, and feeling rather proud of his forethought and management.

"Oh!" cried Bobby, delighted with the idea of going to a *real* island—"oh, that will be splendid! Are we to stay there for a while, like Robinson Crusoe?"

"Oh, well, you know, we'll pretend that it's a long time; but of course we must go

home to-night, for Aunt Prudence would be angry if we didn't."

"I wish we could stay," sighed Bobby, and Kitty joined him. "Do let us stay, Arthur," she said.

"Well, but what should we eat?" remonstrated Arthur. "There may be no banana-trees or anything like what Robinson Crusoe found on *his* island."

"But I've got a *lot* of blackberries still," cried Kitty, pointing triumphantly to her little basket still hugged closely to her breast.

Arthur laughed and said that would do famously, but still he rather thought they must go home again that night.

Arthur had indeed hard enough work. He had to row away with all his might, keeping his one oar now on one side of the boat, then on the other. Of course this made the voyage of a very crooked, zig-zag

nature, and considerably retarded its progress; but the *Fairy*, being a very lightly-made little boat, was fortunately easy to propel, and the crew and cargo were also of very trifling weight, so away danced the *Fairy* over the bright, sparkling waters of the lake, and away went these three foolish little creatures, knowing nothing of the troubles and dangers before them.

It was wonderful enough that the *Fairy* did really arrive at the enchanting island after all, considering the difficulties of the voyage; but after half-an-hour's hard work Arthur Harley found to his great joy that the little boat was close upon the tall reeds and beautiful water-lilies which girdled the home of the swans. His heart beat high with excitement and triumph.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "Here we are, all safe on Robinson Crusoe's island. Wait a minute till I fasten the *Fairy* to a tree or

something, and then we'll go ashore and have some fun."

An old willow-tree bent over the lake, sweeping the waters with its long branches and glossy leaves. Arthur seized hold of one projecting branch, and was engaged in tying his rope firmly round it when he heard something go "flop" over the edge. He started and looked quickly round to see if Bobby or Kitty had gone amissing; but no, both were safe. What could it have been?

"O Arthur," cried Bobby in dismay, "look at the oar! It's ever so far away already. I saw it go over, but I never thought it would run away like that."

"*The oar! the oar!*" Arthur almost screamed in his desperation at seeing this one chance of return drifting away from his grasp. "You little fool!" he cried angrily to poor Bobby, why didn't you catch it?"

Bobby began to cry at this rough address, and Arthur felt that it was useless to blame the child.

“Well, well, don’t cry,” he said. “Wait till I think what can be done. Maybe it will drift back again—” But Arthur paused here, feeling that this was a very “broken reed” to lean upon indeed. He made several ineffectual efforts to catch the floating oar by means of his boat-rope and by a crooked branch of a tree which he broke off, but all in vain. The precious oar danced lightly away over the waters, just as the *Fairy* had done in coming, and seemed to have no intention of returning to the Island of the Swans.

IV.—MAKING THE BEST OF IT.

Arthur Harley did not yield to despair all at once. He was a brave-hearted little

fellow, whatever his faults might be; and having brought his charges into a dilemma, he set about trying to do the best he could for them in the unfortunate circumstances.

“Come and let us see the island,” he said cheerfully, “and I’ll think what is best to do. Perhaps we can make signals to the people on shore, you know, and they’ll come and fetch us back. I’ll tie the boat again, in case it run away too, and then we’ll go and explore.”

Kitty was the first to land, being always a quick, light-footed creature. She raised a cry of terror, however, as soon as she had gone a few steps; for here was a huge white swan stalking towards her, very fierce-looking, and making a terrible hissing sound with his bill, which greatly alarmed her.

Arthur ran to the rescue, and by means of his crooked branch succeeded in turning

the foe, but not without some trouble. Kitty's nerves were a little shaken by this first experience of desert-island life.

Then Bobby, who had run eagerly forward, so as to be first in the middle of the island, gave vent to a still louder shriek of terror than his little sister; and when Arthur overtook him he was lying flat on his back, roaring with all his might and main, while a goat with great horns and long beard stood looking at him quietly enough from a little height just above. The goat was tethered, as Arthur perceived, so that he had only to pick up Bobby and set him on his feet again to relieve him from this great peril.

“We can easily keep out of old Billy's way,” Arthur said kindly. “Why, he only wants to be friends, poor old chap; and you know Robinson Crusoe found animals on his island, so it's all right.”

Thus encouraged, Bobby and Kitty were able to make a round of this new territory which they had discovered and taken possession of and thereafter all three enjoyed a little feast of blackberries from Kitty's basket, with the addition of some broken biscuits from the boys' pockets, which proved wonderfully acceptable now after so long a fast.

Arthur did not neglect his signalling all this time. He tied his own handkerchief and Bobby's up as high as he could upon the willow-trees, so that they might wave like red pennons on the breeze, and warn any passer-by on shore. Alas! it was a very lonely wood that skirted the little lake. Few if any went by that way, unless it might be a gamekeeper or a chance poacher, and the latter was not likely to trouble himself much about a signal of distress. At all events no one saw these

fluttering handkerchiefs that summer night. Arthur shouted, too, as loudly as he could possibly do. Every now and then he did so, till his voice almost failed him; but no answer came except an echo from the lonely shore and its dark green woods. His voice died away in the distance, and was lost in deep silence. Then Arthur's heart began to fail him a little; not for himself, certainly, but what was he to do with the two little helpless children whom he had so thoughtlessly led into danger? What, indeed?

To add to his troubles, darkness now began to descend over the landscape. There had been thick clouds gathering all around for some time, but those he had not noticed. It was only when a thick small rain began to patter on the branches overhead and drip through the leafy roofing on to their heads that the three little wanderers realized

what a change had taken place in the weather. And now Arthur at least felt seriously alarmed. He knew well enough how very delicate and fragile his little cousins were considered, especially by Aunt Prudence, and the immense care she was in the habit of bestowing upon them. Like most boys of his age, Arthur Harley was utterly indifferent to the laws of health in general, and the idea of "catching a cold" was one of the very last likely to occur to his mind. Still, when he thought of what *might* happen to Bobby and Kitty—how bronchitis, or croup, or fever, or any other of the ills Aunt Prudence daily discoursed of would most probably be their fate if they had to stay a whole night in cold and rain upon that island—then Arthur did feel miserable. He would gladly have given everything he was possessed of in the world, and suffered every penalty he could think

of if only these little cousins could be rescued. Alas! it might not be. The rain came faster; the night grew darker. All hope died out in Arthur's breast, and Bobby and Kitty abandoned themselves to helpless wailing and bitter sobs. It was indeed a melancholy plight.

But even in the depths of his misery and remorse Arthur did not give up trying to do what he could to help and comfort. He sought out the thickest and most sheltered part of the little island, quite a cave, indeed, covered over with projecting roots of trees and lined with withered leaves; and there making a snug enough hole for the little ones to nestle in, he covered them over with his own jacket, and tried to speak words of cheer and hope to them, though his own heart misgave him sorely. Nor did Arthur forget to kneel and pray that the great heavenly Father would watch over his

wandering children that dark and dreary night.

“Somebody is sure to come for us very soon,” he said assuringly over and over again. “We must be ready, you know, to jump up whenever they come. But just now let us rest a bit and try to keep warm and dry.”

So saying, he cheered poor little Bobby and Kitty so well that in time they actually fell asleep; and Arthur watched beside them, thankful that they were not likely to cry themselves into fits now, as he had once feared. Every now and then he slipped out to see if there were any signs of help coming, but only to come back more wet and disconsolate than before.

Meanwhile things were in a pretty state at Mossgreen, you may be sure. Aunt Prudence had returned home, and was exceedingly angry at her whole household for

having allowed the children to wander; and it would be difficult to say whether Peter or Marjory or Mary was most out of their wits. The whole neighbourhood was gradually alarmed, and all through that wet night torches gleamed through the woods and voices rang across the fields; but the wind was high and the mist thick. Neither torch-light nor voices reached the Island of the Swans.

It was in the gray cold dawn next morning that Peter, stalking through the wood for the twentieth time, was attracted by the movements of Smudge, who persisted in "snuff, snuffing" at the shore close to the wooden jetty. He had been left hunting in the woods when the children went off in the boat; and though Arthur had whistled for him a long time, Smudge had not responded, probably feeling that Arthur was no master of his. His favourite leader

was Peter, who seldom went without Smudge anywhere except to church.

This time Peter was induced to follow his companion's lead, and arriving at the jetty, saw that the *Fairy* was gone. A new light dawned upon him. He gave the alarm at once. In a few minutes the boat-house was opened, another boat procured, and Peter, along with one of Lord Audely's men, set off to explore the island.

"There's the bairn's red handkerchief!" cried Peter with joy. Like Bobby and Kitty, he was from Scotland, and had not forgotten his native tongue. "Smudge, man, ye're a clever fellow! I'll give ye a beef bone this day if they're a' safe."

And safe they all were found in a few minutes more, snug among the willows and the swans, and with the old goat tethered beside them, and a happier meeting has seldom taken place than that one. With

what joy Arthur felt that, after all, the children were not doomed to die of hunger on that island through his folly and self-conceit! How fervently he asked Aunt Prudence not to blame *them*, for it was all his own fault—which, indeed, was true!

Aunt Prudence hardly knew what to say. She was still very angry at everybody in general; but then gladness and thankfulness kept her quiet, and it all ended very happily, except that Arthur himself was a week confined to bed by a feverish cold, the result of that night's exposure, excitement, and anxiety; which was certainly only to be expected.

“O mamma!” he said, while that dear mother watched by his sick-bed, “I’m so awfully glad it’s myself and not Bobby or Kitty who caught cold; for you know it was all my fault.”

“Yes, Arthur,” said his mother, “that is true; and I trust, my dear, you now see how a desire to be thought clever in everything *has* been your chief fault hitherto. Surely this sad lesson will help you now to conquer that too. Will you try, my son?”

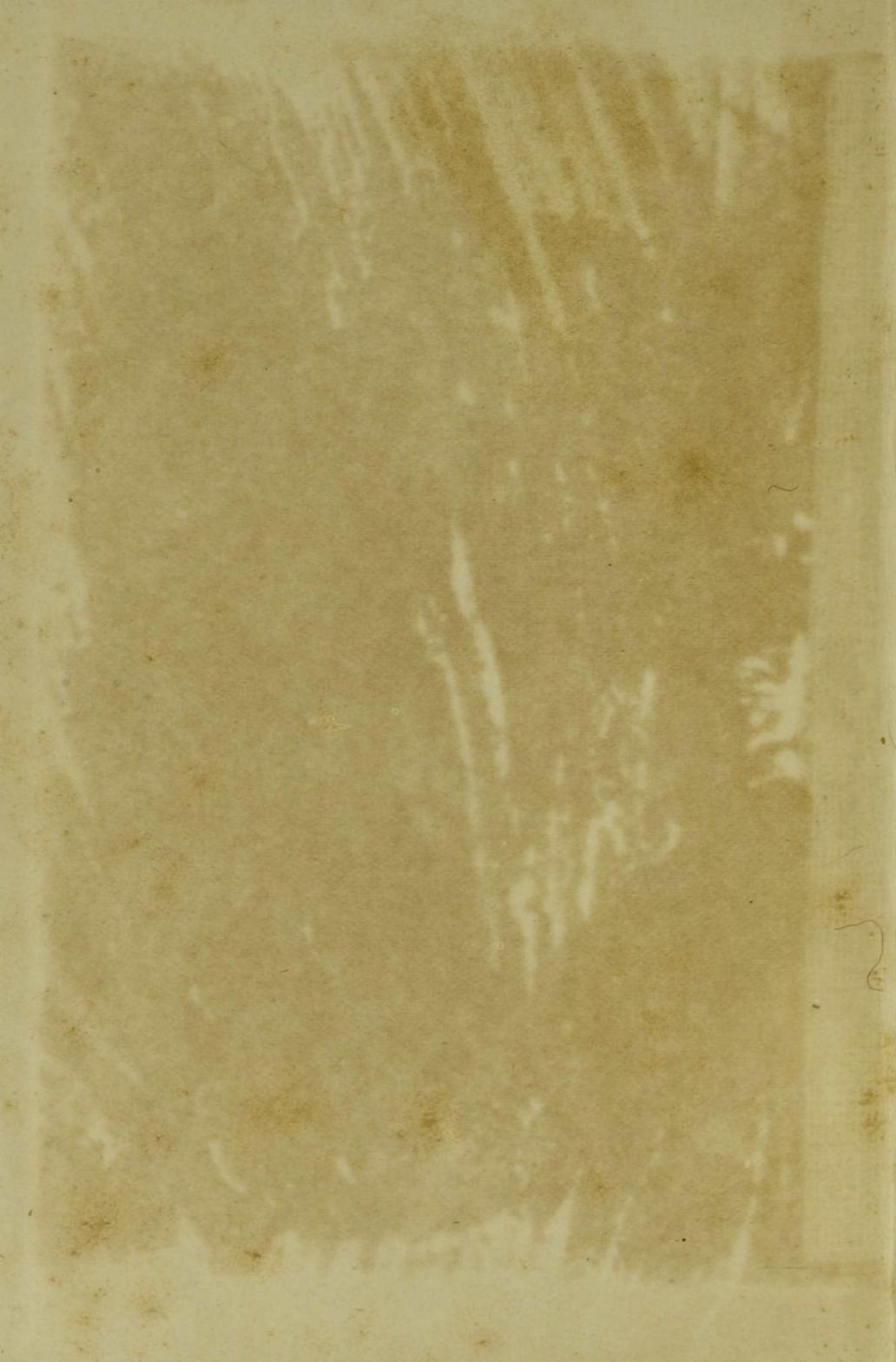
“Yes, mother, please God I will conquer it,” said Arthur reverently.

Years have passed since then. Arthur Harley has faithfully kept his resolution of trying to overcome that one foolish fault of his, and he is liked and trusted by everybody as much as he can wish to be. Bobby and Kitty have grown and prospered nicely, in spite of all Aunt Prudence’s fears and anxieties regarding them. Marjory has got her fine old spinning beautifully white now, and often when she displays it to visitors tells over the story of her washing-day.

However, it was some little time before

Arthur was quite well again; and in the meantime Lord Audely (the "Mr. What's-his-name" above mentioned) had returned from India, and hearing of the affair from his gamekeeper, called to ask for the little voyagers. Then he delighted them all by offering his own boatman to take the children safely over one day for a *picnic* on the Swans' Island if they liked. And so Arthur's mamma and Aunt Prudence went too; and they made nice sandwiches, and took tea-things with them and kindled a fire over there, and let the children have quite a happy day on the very scene of

ARTHUR'S ADVENTURE.



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