

## A BEAR STORY.

There lived in the town of Rockingham, Vermont, in the last century, a family named Simons. Vermont, in the days of my story, was a wild, new country, to which people went as they now go to Minnesota, or to the territories beyond, building huts of logs, and cutting away the forests about them for acres; sowing, in the place of the tall trees, wheat and rye, and planting large fields of Indian corn.

What strange cries might have been heard by night in these forests! Something more than the katy-did and the whip-poor-will, the noise of the frogs and the hoot of the sullen owl. For panthers lived in the dark of the woods about these clearings; and sometimes the settler would be startled from sleep by the squeals of the distressed mother of a family of pigs, and then he knew that, without a doubt, a great clumsy black bear had scrambled over the side of the pen, (which was, by the way, built of logs, and thatched with hemlock bark), and possessed himself of her young ones.

But I was going to tell you about the family of Simonds. They had a nice field of corn at a little distance from the house, and night by night a bear had made havoc in it. She broke down the corn, she tore off the ears, she ate, she trampled under foot, she wasted most inconsiderately. They set the bear-trap in the field, but it was carefully avoided.

One morning two of the boys went out as usual to look at the trap. There it stood, with its huge jaws voraciously open, the cruel teeth holding nothing. They took the trap to move it to another spot.

'What is that so black in that tree, Elijah?' asked John suddenly.

John was eleven years old, while Elijah was thirteen or fourteen. The boys moved as fast as possible toward the tree, carrying the trap between them. There were two little cubs, only just large enough to climb, clinging among the branches.

'Brother,' said Elijah, in a most excited tone, 'I have a plan; one of us must go up and punch the cubs to make them cry, while the other shall hold the trap down here, and catch the old bear in it when she comes.'

'Yes,' said John.

'Well, have your choice, John.'

'I'd rather stay with the trap.'

Without further words, up went Elijah to tease the little bears and infuriate their mamma. Poor little bears! they were greatly alarmed at the sight of the rough clambering boy, intruding into their green drawing-room, and they trembled and cried out piteously for their mother. In a moment something black was seen on the top of a hillock, and on rushed the angry, savage beast, directly toward the nursery where she had left her darlings.

'What are you doing at the foot of my tree, you ugly? Now I'll eat you right up!' said she, by 'actions,' which 'speak louder than words.'

John was holding the large trap open before him, his back against the tree, the end of the trap resting on the ground, when the bear dashed at him furiously, with mouth wide open. Snap went the trap, and poor Mrs. Bruin was fast. Home went the boys, each of them carrying a cub.

'Father, brother Gardner, we've caught a bear!'

'Yes, I held the trap, and the old bear ran at me with her mouth wide open, and ran her head right in the trap, and there she was. See the cubs! The bear is in the trap now.'

'Impossible!' said Mr. Simonds.

'Impossible!' said brother Gardner.

But they went back with the boys, and there, sure enough,

was the mother-bear at the foot of the tree, muzzled with the heavy trap. She was shot, and her meat filled the pork barrel. Even at this distant day I cannot but feel sorry in my heart for that poor bear. But I dare say all the boys who read this story will feel altogether on the side of Elijah and John; and to you older ones, who will understand me, I cannot help saying that I wish a certain other black-bear that we know of—a savage, malicious beast, that has trampled, and devoured, and wasted in uncle Sam's corn-fields to his heart's content—was effectually trapped and gagged.

## 'RIGHT FROM HEAVEN.'

In a miserable cottage at the bottom of a hill, two children were hovering over a smouldering fire. A tempest raged without, a fearful tempest, against which man and beast were alike powerless.

A poor old miser, much poorer than these shivering children, though he had heaps of money at home, drew his ragged cloak about him, as he crouched down at the threshold of the miserable door. He dared not enter, for fear they would ask pay for shelter, and he could not move for the storm.

'I am hungry, Nettie.'

'So am I; I have hunted for a potato paring, and can't find any.'

'What an awful storm.'

'Yes; the old tree has blown down. I guess God took care that it did not fall on the house. See it would certainly have killed us.'

'If He could do that, couldn't he send us bread?'

'I guess so; let's pray 'Our Father,' and when we come to that part, stop till we get some bread.'

So they began, and the miser, crouching and shivering, listened. When they paused, expecting in their childish faith to see some miraculous manifestation, a human feeling stole into his heart; God sent some angel to soften it. He had bought a loaf at the village, thinking it would last him a great many days; but the silence of the two little children spoke louder to him than the voice of many waters. He opened the door softly, threw in the loaf, and listened to the wild eager cry of delight that came from the half-famished little ones.

'It dropped right from heaven, didn't it?' questioned the younger.

'Yes, I mean to love God for ever for giving us bread because we asked Him.'

'We'll ask Him every day, won't we? why, I never thought God was so good, did you?'

'Yes, I always thought so, but I never knew it before.'

'Let's ask Him to give father work to do all the time, so we never need be hungry again. He'll do it I am sure.'

The storm passed; the miser went home. A little flower had sprung up in his heart; it was no longer barren. In a few weeks he died, but not before he had given the cottage, which was his, to the poor labouring man. And the little children ever felt a sweet and solemn emotion when in their matutinal devotion they came to those beautiful words:—  
'Give us this day our daily bread.'

A GREAT EASTERN GHOST.—It appears that an impression got abroad that the Great Eastern steamship was haunted, the alleged ghost being no other than the impersonation of an unfortunate riveter, who was heard plying his avocation in one of the wells or compartments. Captain Paton states, that before the vessel left England he believed that one of the men employed in her construction was