

**VARIOUS**

A CHRISTMAS  
HAMPER

**Various**  
**A Christmas Hamper**

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*A Christmas Hamper / A Volume of Pictures and Stories for Little Folks:*

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# Various

## A Christmas Hamper / A Volume of Pictures and Stories for Little Folks

### A Very Naughty Little Person

I 'M told I'm very naughty  
I almost 'spect I am;  
But, somehow, when I shut the door  
It's nearly sure to slam.

Can you tell why my shoe-strings break  
And tie themselves in knots,  
And how it is my copy-books  
Are always full of blots?

It seems as if too many blots  
Lived in one pot of ink;  
But when they're wet and shiny,  
They're pretty, don't you think?

Why does my hair get tangled?

What makes me talk all day?  
And why don't toys and books just try  
To put themselves away?

I think that p'r'aps I *might* be good  
A little, by-and-by;  
It's very hard, but sometimes  
I *almost* 'spect I'll try.

But now they say I'm naughty,  
And p'r'aps it's nearly true;  
There are so many naughty things  
For little folks to do.

# Poor Uncle Tom

He seemed a funny old gentleman, the children thought, but still rather nice, especially when he brought those sweets out of his pocket and let them dip into the bag and take what they liked. They had seen him walking through the wood, and then when they left off playing, he had come to sit down beside them, and asked them their names.

“Mine’s Hugh, like father,” said the eldest; “and this is Lily, and this is Tom.”

The old gentleman looked a little quickly at Tom.

“Who is he named after?” he said.

The children’s faces grew grave.

“He is named after poor Uncle Tom,” said Lily in a low voice, “who went to sea and was drowned.”

There was silence for a minute. Then the old gentleman spoke again, —

“So poor Uncle Tom was drowned, was he?”

“Yes,” said Hugh. “His ship was lost, and everybody was drowned, ’cept two or three that got in the boat, and Uncle Tom wasn’t among them. Father waited and waited, but it wasn’t any good. So then he put up a monument in the church just where we can see it from our pew.”

“And we always sings about the saints of God on his burfday,” said Lily, “and father cries a little.”

“No, he don’t!” said Hugh indignantly. “Father’s a man, and men don’t cry!”

“But he does,” said Lily. “I saw a weeny little tear on his cheek this morning, for to-day is Uncle Tom’s burfday, and his voice goes all shaky like, ’cause he was so fond of poor Uncle Tom, and says he was so good.”

The old gentleman sat silent, staring hard at the ground.

“Is it long since Uncle Tom went away?” he said at last.

“It is ten years,” replied Hugh. “It was the year I was born.”

“Ten years – so it is,” murmured the old gentleman – “only ten years, and it has seemed like a hundred.”

The children looked at one another surprised.

“Did you ever know Uncle Tom?” asked Hugh curiously.

“Yes, I knew him well. I was on his ship.”

“But you aren’t drowned!” cried Lily.

The old gentleman smiled.

“No,” he said, “I wasn’t drowned; I got off safe. Uncle Tom used to talk to me, though, about his old home, and one day he said that he had carved his name on a tree in the park, and I was to go and see it if I ever got home.”

“Oh, I’ll show you,” said little Tom. “It is on a beech tree close by here. I’ll show you. There it is.”

He pointed to a tree on which some initials and a date were cut deep into the bark.

“It has kept very fresh,” said the old gentleman. “I thought it would have been grown over by now.”

“Father always comes and tidies it up on uncle’s birthday,” said the boy. “See, he is coming now! I’ll go and tell him you are here. – Father!” he shouted, running off – “father, here’s a gentleman who knew Uncle Tom!”

But when father came near and saw the old gentleman, he stared at him for a moment as if he had seen a ghost, and then he gave a great cry.

“Tom, Tom, it is you yourself!”

And it *was* Uncle Tom, who had not been drowned after all, but when the ship was wrecked had managed to get ashore to an island, and there had lived on the fish he caught, and birds’ eggs, and cocoa-nuts, watching for a sail, like Robinson Crusoe. At last the sail came after ten long years. And when he reached England he did not write, but came down to his old home to see who was there, for of course he had heard no tidings all the time.

Nobody recognized him at the village, for the tropical sun had burned his skin brown, and the long waiting and the sorrow and the hardships had turned his hair white. Only his brother knew him by his eyes, for they two had loved each other very much.

“But what will father do with your tombstone?” said Lily gravely, as she sat on her uncle’s knee that night. “It is such a pretty one, with a beautiful angel on it!”

# A Snow Man

Oh, the beautiful snow!  
We're all in a glow —  
Nell, Dolly, and Willie, and Dan;  
For the primest of fun,  
When all's said and done,  
Is just making a big snow man.

Two stones for his eyes  
Look quite owlshly wise,  
A hard pinch of snow for his nose;  
Then a mouth that's as big  
As the snout of a pig,  
And he'll want an old pipe, I suppose.

Then the snow man is done,  
And to-morrow what fun  
To make piles of snow cannon all day,  
And to pelt him with balls  
Till he totters and falls,  
And a thaw comes and melts him away.

# Not Such Fun as it Seemed

“ISN’T it fun, Dolly?” asked Eric, as he and his little sister ran along the sea front as fast as their sturdy legs could carry them.

Eric was the jolliest little boy imaginable, but, unfortunately, a little bit too fond of mischief, and Dolly was generally only too eager to join in her brother’s pranks.

Just now they were running away from nurse, who was down on the sands with baby. They waited until her head was turned away, then off they ran.

“We’ll go out to the rocks and play at being shipwrecked sailors,” Eric went on. “I’ve got some biscuits in my pocket, and I’ll dole them out, piece by piece, and pretend we shan’t have any more food unless a boat takes us off.”

Poor Eric! his play very soon became earnest, for he and Dolly waded out to a big rock in a very lonely part of the coast, and so interested were they in their game that they never noticed the tide coming in until it had surrounded them, and there was no getting back.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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