

**ABBOTT
JACOB**

ROLLO'S
MUSEUM

Jacob Abbott
Rollo's Museum

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Содержание

THE CANAL	6
A FALSE ALARM	13
THE HEMLOCK-SEED	17
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	19

Jacob Abbott Rollo's Museum



Henry made a sudden plunge after him. [Page 119.](#)

THE CANAL

It happened one summer, when Rollo was between seven and eight years of age, that there was a vacation at the school which he was attending at that time. The vacation commenced in the latter part of August, and was to continue for four or five weeks. Rollo had studied pretty hard at school, and he complained that his eyes ached sometimes.

The day before the vacation commenced, his father became somewhat uneasy about his eyes; and so he took him to a physician, to see what should be done for them. The physician asked Rollo a good many questions, all of which Rollo endeavored to answer as correctly as he could.

At length, the physician told Rollo's father that all he needed was to let his eyes rest. "I think he had better not use them at all," said he, "for reading or writing, for several weeks; and not to be out much in the hot sun."

Rollo felt very much rejoiced at hearing this prescription, though still he looked very sober; for he felt somewhat awed and restrained by being in the doctor's office. There were a good many large books, in cases upon one side of the room; and strange, uncouth-looking pictures hanging up, which, so far as Rollo could see, did not look like any thing at all. Then there was an electric machine upon a stand in one corner, which he was afraid might in some way "shock" him; and some frightful-looking surgical instruments in a little case, which was open upon the table in the middle of the room.

In fact, Rollo was very glad to escape safely out of the doctor's office; and he was, if possible, still more rejoiced that he had so light and easy a prescription. He had thought that, perhaps, the doctor would put something on his eyes, and bandage them up, so that he could not see at all; or else give him some black and bitter medicines to take every night and morning.

Instead of that, he said to himself, as he came out at the door, "I have only got to keep from studying, and that will be capital. I can play all the time. True, I can't read any story books; but, then, I am willing to give the story books up, if I don't have to study."

Rollo had usually been obliged to read, or study, or write a little, even in vacations; for his mother said that boys could not be happy to play all the time. Rollo, however, thought that she was mistaken in this. It is true that she had sometimes allowed him to try the experiment for a day or two, and in such cases he had always, somehow or other, failed of having a pleasant time. But then he himself always attributed the failure to some particular difficulty or source of trouble, which happened to come up then, but which would not be likely to occur again.

In fact, in this opinion Rollo was partly correct. For it was true that each day, when he failed of enjoying himself, there was some peculiar reason for it, and exactly that reason would not be likely to exist another day. But then the difficulty with playing, or attempting to amuse one's self all the time, is, that it produces such a state of mind, that almost any thing becomes a source of uneasiness or dissatisfaction; and something or other is likely to occur, or there will be something or other wanting, which makes the time pass very heavily along.

It is so with men as well as boys. Men sometimes are so situated that they have nothing to do but to try to amuse themselves. But these men are generally a very unhappy class. The poorest laborer, who toils all day at the hardest labor, is happier than they.

So that the physician's prescription was, in reality, a far more disagreeable one than Rollo had imagined.

When Rollo reached home, he told his mother that he was not to have any thing more to do with books for a month.

"And you look as if you were glad of it," said she, with a smile.

"Yes, mother, I am," said Rollo, "rather glad."

"And what do you expect to do with yourself all that time?" said she.

"O, I don't know," said Rollo. "Perhaps I shall help Jonas, a part of the time, about his work."

“That will be a very good plan for a part of the time,” said his mother; “though he is doing pretty hard work just now.”

“What is he doing?”

“He is digging a little canal in the marsh, beyond the brook, to drain off the water.”

“O, I can dig,” said Rollo, “and I mean to go now and help him.”

This was about the middle of the forenoon; and Rollo, taking a piece of bread for a luncheon, and a little tin dipper, to get some water with, to drink, out of the brook, walked along towards the great gate which led to the lane behind his father's house. It was a pleasant, green lane, and there were rows of raspberry-bushes on each side of it, along by the fences. Some years before, there had been no raspberries near the house; but one autumn, when Jonas had a good deal of ploughing to do down the lane, he ploughed up the ground by the fences in this lane, making one furrow every time he went up and down to his other work. Then in the spring he ploughed it again, and by this time the turf had rotted, and so the land had become mellow. Then Jonas went away with the wagon, one afternoon, about two miles, to a place where the raspberries were very abundant, and dug up a large number of them, and set them out along this lane, on both sides of it; and so, in a year or two, there was a great abundance of raspberries very near the house.

Rollo stopped to eat some raspberries as he walked along. He thought they would do exceedingly well with his bread, to give a little variety to his luncheon. After he had eaten as many as he wanted, he thought he would gather his dipper full for Jonas, as he was busy at work, and could not have time to gather any for himself.

He got his dipper full very quick, for the raspberries were thick and large. He thought it was an excellent plan for Jonas to plant the raspberry-bushes there; but then he thought it was a great deal of trouble to bring them all from so great a distance.

“I wonder,” said he to himself, as he sat upon a log, thinking of the subject, “why it would not have been just as well to plant raspberries themselves, instead of setting out the bushes. The raspberries must be the seeds. I mean to take some of these big ones, and try. I dare say they'll grow.”

But then he reflected that the spring was planting time, and he knew very well that raspberries would not keep till spring; and so he determined to ask Jonas about it. He accordingly rose up from the log, and walked along, carrying his dipper, very carefully, in his hand.

At length, he reached the brook. There was a rude bridge over it made of two logs, placed side by side, and short boards nailed across them for a foot-way. It was only wide enough for persons to walk across. The cattle and teams always went across through the water, at a shallow place, just below the bridge.

Rollo lay down upon the bridge, and looked into the water. There were some skippers and some whirlabouts upon the water. The skippers were long-legged insects, shaped somewhat like a cricket; and they stood tiptoe upon the surface of the water. Rollo wondered how they could keep up. Their feet did not sink into the water at all, and every now and then they would give a sort of leap, and away they would shoot over the surface, as if it had been ice. Rollo reached his hand down and tried to catch one, to examine his feet; but he could not succeed. They were too nimble for him. He thought that, if he could only catch one, and have an opportunity to examine his feet, he could see how it was that he could stand so upon the water. Rollo was considering whether it was possible or not, that Jonas might make something, like the skippers' feet, for *him*, to put upon his feet, so that *he* might walk on the water, when suddenly he heard a bubbling sound in the brook, near the shore. He looked there, and saw some bubbles of air coming up out of the bottom, and rising to the top of the water. He thought this was very singular. It was not strange that the air should come up through the water to the top, for air is much lighter than water; the wonder was, how the air could ever get down there.

From wondering at this extraordinary phenomenon, Rollo began to wonder at another quite different question; that is, where all the water in the brook could come from. He looked at a little cascade just above the bridge, where the water rushed through a narrow place between two rocks,

and watched it a few minutes, wondering that it should continue running so all the time, forever; and surprised also that he had never wondered at it before.

He looked into the clear, transparent current, which poured steadily down between the rocks, and said to himself,

“Strange! There it runs and runs, all the time—all day, and all night; all summer, and all winter; all this year, and all last year, and every year. Where can all the water come from?”

Then he thought that he should like to follow the brook up, and find where it came from; but he concluded that it must be a great way to go, through bushes, and rocks, and marshes; and he saw at once that the expedition was out of the question for him.

Just then he heard another gurgling in the water near him, and, looking down, he saw more bubbles coming up to the surface, very near where they had come up before. Rollo thought he would get a stick, and see if he could not poke up the mud, and find out what there was down there, to make such a bubbling. He thought that perhaps it might be some sort of animal blowing.

He went off of the bridge, therefore, and began to look about for a stick. He had just found one, when all at once he heard a noise in the bushes. He looked up suddenly, not knowing what was coming, but in a moment saw Jonas walking along towards him.

“Ah, Jonas,” said Rollo, “are you going home?”

“Yes,” said Jonas, “unless you will go for me.”

“Well,” said Rollo, “what do you want me to get?”

“I want some fire, to burn up some brush. You can bring out the lantern.”

“Very well,” said Rollo, “I will go; only I wish you would tell me where these bubbles come from out of the bottom of the brook.”

“What bubbles?” said Jonas.

So Rollo took his stick, and pushed the end of it down into the mud, and that made more bubbles come up.

“They are bubbles of air,” said Jonas.

“But how comes the air down there,” said Rollo, “under the water?”

“I don’t know,” said Jonas; “and besides I must not stay and talk here; I must go back to my work. I will talk to you about it when you come back.” So Jonas returned to his work, and Rollo went to the house again after the lantern.

When he came back to the brook, he found that he could not make any more bubbles come up; but instead of that, his attention was attracted by some curiously colored pebbles near the shore. He put his hand down into the water, and took up two or three of them. He thought they were beautiful. Then he took his dipper, which had, all this time, been lying forgotten by the side of a log, on the shore, and walked along—the dipper full of raspberries in one hand, the lantern in the other, and his bright and beautiful pebbles in his pocket.

Rollo followed the path along the banks of the brook under the trees, until at length he came out to the open ground where Jonas was at work. There was a broad meadow, or rather marsh, which extended back to some distance from the brook, and beyond it the land rose to a hill. Just at the foot of this high land, at the side of the marsh farthest from the brook, was a pool of water, which had been standing there all summer, and was half full of green slime. Jonas had been at work, cutting a canal, or drain, from the bank of the brook back to this pool, in order to let the water off. The last time that Rollo had seen the marsh, it had been very wet, so wet that it was impossible for him to walk over it; it was then full of green moss, and sedgy grass, and black mire, with tufts of flags, brakes, and cranberry-bushes, here and there all over it. If any person stepped upon it, he would immediately sink in, except in some places, where the surface was firm enough to bear one up, and there the ground quivered and fluctuated under the tread, for some distance around, showing that it was all soft below.

When Rollo came out in view of the marsh, he saw Jonas at work away off in the middle of it, not very far from the pool. So he called out to him in a very loud voice,

“Jo—nas!—hal—lo!”*

Jonas, who had been stooping down at his work, rose up at hearing this call, and replied to Rollo. Rollo asked him how he should get across to him.

“O, walk right along,” said Jonas; “the ground is pretty dry now. Go up a little farther, and you will find my canal, and then you can follow it directly along.”

So Rollo walked on a little farther, and found the canal where it opened into the brook. He then began slowly and cautiously to walk along the side of the canal, into the marsh; and he was surprised to find how firm and dry the land was. He thought it was owing to Jonas’s canal.

“Jonas,” said he, as he came up to where Jonas was at work, “this is an excellent canal; it has made the land almost dry already.”

“O, no,” said Jonas, “my canal has not done any good yet.”

“What makes the bog so dry, then?” said Rollo.

“O, it has been drying all summer, and draining off into the brook.”

“Draining off into the brook?” repeated Rollo.

“Yes,” said Jonas.

“But there is not any drain,” said Rollo; “at least there has not been, until you began to make your canal.”

“But the water soaks off slowly through the ground, and oozes out under the banks of the brook.”

“Does it?” said Rollo.

“Yes,” said Jonas; “and the only use of my canal is to make it run off faster.”

“Ah! now I know,” said Rollo, half talking to himself.

“Know what?” asked Jonas.

“Why, where all the water of the brook comes from; at least, where some of it comes from.”

“How?” said Jonas. “I don’t know what you mean.”

“Why, I could not think where all the water came from, to keep the brook running so fast all the time. But now I know that some of it has been coming all the time from this bog. Does it all come from bogs?”



“Yes, from bogs, and hills, and springs, and from the soakings of all the land it comes through, from where it first begins.”

“Where does it first begin?” said Rollo.

“O, it begins in some bog or other, perhaps; just a little dribbling stream oozing out from among roots and mire, and it continually grows as it runs.”

“Is that the way?” said Rollo.

“Yes,” said Jonas, “that is the way.”

During all this time Rollo had been standing with his lantern and his dipper in his hands, while Jonas had continued his digging. Rollo now put the lantern down, and handed the dipper to Jonas, telling him that he had brought him some raspberries.

Jonas seemed quite pleased with his raspberries. While he was eating them, Rollo asked him if a raspberry was a seed.

“No,” said Jonas. “The whole raspberry is not, the seeds are *in* the raspberry. They are very small. When you eat a raspberry, you can feel the little seeds, by biting them with your teeth.”

Rollo determined to pick some seeds out, and see how they looked; but Jonas told him that the way to get them out was to wash them out in water.

“Take some of these raspberries,” said he, “in the dipper to the brook, and pour in some water over them. Then take a stick and jam the raspberries all up, and stir them about, and then pour off the water, but keep the seeds in. Next, pour in some more water, and wash the seeds over again, and so on, until the seeds are all separated from the pulp, and left clean.”

“Is that the way they get raspberry seeds?” said Rollo.

“Yes,” said Jonas, “I believe so. I never tried it myself; but I have heard them say that that is the way they do with raspberries, and strawberries, and all such fruits.”

Rollo immediately went and washed out some seeds as Jonas had directed, and when he came back he spread them out upon a piece of birch bark to dry. While they were there, Jonas let him kindle the pile of brush wood, which he had been intending to burn. It had been lying all summer, and had got very dry. In the mean time, Jonas continued digging his canal, and was gradually approaching the pool of water. When he had got pretty near the pool, he stopped digging the canal, and went to the pool itself. He rolled a pretty large log into the edge of it, for him to stand upon; and with his hoe he dug a trench, beginning as far in the pool as he could reach with his hoe, while standing upon his log, and working gradually out towards where he had left digging the canal. The bottom of the pool was very soft and slimy; but he contrived to get a pretty deep and wide trench out quite to the margin, and a little beyond.

“Now,” said he to Rollo, “I am going to dig the canal up to the end of this trench, and then the water will all run very freely.”

There was now a narrow neck of land between the end of the canal and the beginning of the trench; and as Jonas went on digging the canal along, this neck grew narrower and narrower. Rollo began to be impatient to see the water run. He wanted Jonas to let him hoe a little passage, so as to let it begin to run a little.

“No,” said Jonas.

“Why not?” said Rollo.

“There are two good reasons,” he replied. “The first is, it will spoil my work, and the second is, it will spoil your play.”

“What do you mean by that?” said Rollo.

“Why, if I let the water run a little now, it will flood me here, where I am digging, and make all muddy; and I cannot finish my canal so easily; so it will spoil my work. Then, besides, we want to see the water run in a torrent; but if I let you dig a little trench along across the neck, so as to let

it off by degrees, you will not take half as much pleasure in seeing it run, as you will to wait until it is all ready. So it will spoil your play.”

Rollo did not reply to this, and Jonas went on digging.

“Well,” said Rollo, after a short pause, “I wish, Jonas, you would tell me how the bubbles of air get down into the mud, at the bottom of the brook.”

“I don’t know,” said Jonas.

“It seems to me it is very extraordinary,” said Rollo.

“It is somewhat extraordinary. I have thought of another extraordinary phenomenon somewhat like it.”

“What is that?” said Rollo.

“The rain,” replied Jonas.

“The rain?” said Rollo; “how?”

“Why, the rain,” replied Jonas, “is water coming down out of the air; and the bubbles are air coming up out of the water.”

“Then it is exactly the opposite of it,” said Rollo.

“Yes,” said Jonas.

“But you said it was *like* it.”

“Well, and so it is,” Jonas replied.

“Like it, and yet exactly opposite to it! Jonas, that is impossible.”

“Why, yes,” said Jonas, “the air gets down into the water, and you wonder how it can, when it is so much lighter than water. So water gets up into the air, and I wonder how it can, when it is so much heavier. So that the difficulty is just about the same.”

“No,” said Rollo, “it is just about opposite.”

“Very well,” said Jonas. Jonas never would dispute. Whenever any body said any thing that he did not think was correct, he would sometimes try to explain it; but then, if they persisted, he would generally say “Very well,” and that would prevent all dispute. This is an excellent way to prevent disputes, or to end them when they are begun.

While Jonas was digging slowly along through the neck of land, Rollo was rambling about among the bushes, and at length Jonas heard a sudden scream from him. Jonas looked up, and saw Rollo scrambling away from a little thicket, and then presently stopping to look back, apparently frightened.

“What now, Rollo?” said Jonas.

“Here is a great hornets’ nest,” said Rollo.

Jonas laid down his spade, and went to where Rollo was. Rollo pointed to a little bush, where Jonas saw, hanging to a bough, not far from the ground, a small hornets’ nest, about as big as a common snow-ball, and as round. Jonas walked slowly up towards it, watching it very attentively, as he advanced.

“O Jonas! Jonas!” exclaimed Rollo, “you’d better be careful. Jonas! Jonas! you’ll get stung.”

Jonas paid no attention to what Rollo was saying, but still kept moving slowly on towards the bush. When he got pretty near, he took his knife out of his pocket, and advancing one step more, he took hold of the end of the branch with one hand, and cut it off close to the tree, with the other. Rollo, in the mean time, had run backwards several steps to avoid the danger; still, however, keeping his eyes fixed upon Jonas.

Jonas brought the nest out of the thicket.

“Jonas!” said Rollo, in a tone of strong remonstrance, “you are crazy.”

“There are no hornets in it,” said Jonas, quietly.

He brought out the nest, and held it so that he and Rollo could see it.

“The hornets have made it of brown paper,” said he.

“Brown paper,” said Rollo. “Where do they get the brown paper?”

“O, they make the brown paper too.”

“Ho!” said Rollo; “hornets can’t make paper.”

“Think not?” said Jonas. Jonas was always careful not to contradict, even when he supposed that Rollo was mistaken.

Rollo said he was *sure* that hornets could not make paper. Then Jonas took off a little shred from the hornets’ nest, and compared it with some brown paper which he had in his pocket; and he explained to Rollo that the hornets’ nest was made of little fibres adhering to each other, just as the fibres of the paper did.

“It is the same article,” he said, “and made of the same materials; only they manufacture it in a different way. So I don’t see why it is not proper to call it paper.”

“I don’t think it is paper,” said Rollo; “nothing is paper but what men make.”

“Very well,” said Jonas, “we won’t dispute about the name.”

So Jonas returned to his work, and Rollo said that he meant to carry the hornets’ nest home, and show it to Nathan. He accordingly laid it down by the side of his fire, near the dipper and the raspberry seeds.

In a short time, Jonas reduced the neck of ground, where he was digging, to a very narrow wall, and he called Rollo to come and see him let out the water. He took the shovel, and he told Rollo to take the hoe, so that, as soon as he should break down this wall, they could both be at work, digging out the passage way, so as to get it cleared as soon as possible.

He accordingly began, and soon made a breach, through which the water rushed with considerable force into the canal, and then wandered along rapidly towards the outlet into the brook. Rollo pulled away with his hoe, hauling out mud, moss, grass, and water, up upon the bank where he stood; and Jonas also kept at work clearing the passage with the spade. In a short time they had got a fine, free course for the water, and then they stood still, one on each side of the bank, watching the torrent as it poured through.

At length, the water in the pool began to subside gradually, and then it did not run so fast through the canal; and pretty soon after this, Jonas said he thought it was time for them to go home to dinner. So Rollo put up his raspberry seeds in a paper, and put them into his pocket, and carried his hornets’ nest in his hand. Jonas took the dipper and the lantern, and thus the boys walked along together.

A FALSE ALARM

As Rollo and Jonas walked along towards home, Rollo told Jonas that he thought he had been very successful in collecting curiosities that day.

“Why, what curiosities have you got besides your hornets’ nest?” asked Jonas.

“Why, there are my raspberry seeds,” said Rollo; “I think they are a curiosity; and besides that, I have got some very beautiful, bright pebbles in my pocket.”

“Let us see them,” said Jonas.

So Rollo put his hand into his pocket, and drew forth several pebbles; but they were by no means as beautiful as he had imagined. They looked rough and dull.

“They *were* very bright, when I got them,” said Rollo.

“That is because they were wet,” said Jonas. “Pebbles always look brightest and most beautiful when they are in their own proper place, in the brook; and that is the reason why I think it is generally best to leave them there.”

Rollo looked at his faded pebbles with an air of disappointment. He asked Jonas if there was no way of keeping them bright all the time.

“I think it probable that they might be oiled, and the oil would not dry.”

“Ho!” said Rollo, “I should not like to have them oiled.”

“Nor I,” said Jonas; “I should rather leave them in the brook.”

“But is not there any other way?”

“They might be varnished,” said Jonas. “That would bring out the colors; and the varnish would dry, so that you could handle them.”

“That would do,” said Rollo, “if I only had some varnish.”

“But the best way is to *polish* them,” said Jonas.

“How is that done?” asked Rollo.

“O, it is very hard to do,” replied Jonas. “They grind them on stones, and then they polish them on polishing wheels.”

“I wish I could do it,” said Rollo.

“It is not worth while to take so much pains with any of *your* curiosities,” said Jonas, “because you very soon get tired of them, and throw them away.”

“O, no,” said Rollo, “*I* never throw them away.”

“You leave them lying about the house and yard, then, and so other people throw them away.”

Rollo knew that this was true, and so he did not contradict Jonas.

“It’s not of much use to collect curiosities,” said Jonas, “unless you have a museum.”

“A museum?” said Rollo.

“Yes, that is a cabinet to put them in, and keep them safe. Then, when you have done looking at them yourself, you put them away safely; and, after a time, you get a great many collected, and you take pleasure in looking them over from time to time, and showing them to other boys that come to see you.”

“Well,” said Rollo, “I should like to have a museum.”

“O, *you* could not keep one,” said Jonas.

“Why not?” said Rollo.

“You have not patience and perseverance enough. You would be very much pleased with it for a day or two; but then you would get interested in other plays, and let your museum all get into disorder.”

Rollo was silent. He knew that what Jonas said was true.

“I don’t know but that your cousin Lucy might keep a museum,” said Jonas; “she is more careful than you are.”

“And cousin James could help us find the curiosities,” said Rollo.

“So he could,” said Jonas. “I think it might be a very good plan.”

“But what shall we have for our cabinet to put them in?” said Rollo.

“Why, sometimes they have something like a book-case,” replied Jonas, “with shelves and glass doors. Then the curiosities are all put upon the shelves, and you can see them through the glass doors. But this can only be done with very valuable curiosities.”

“Why?” asked Rollo.

“Because such a case, with glass doors, costs a good deal of money; and it is not worth while to pay so much money only to keep common things, such as your pebble stones.”

“But we have got such a book-case, already made; it is in mother’s chamber,” said Rollo.

“Yes,” said Jonas; “but it is full of books. Sometimes they keep a museum in the drawers of a bureau; but that is not a very good plan.”

“Why not?” said Rollo.

“Because, when you open and shut the drawers, it joggles the curiosities about.”

“Does it?” said Rollo.

“Yes,” replied Jonas. “But there is one thing you can do—I did not think of it before. There is a good large box in the barn, and I can put some shelves into it, and make the cover into a door; and if you want to collect a museum, you can do it in that. You can keep it out in the play room, and so it will not trouble any body in the house.”

Jonas meant, by *the play room*, a pretty large room, in the barn, made originally for a sort of granary, but which the children were accustomed to use for a play room.

Rollo was very much pleased with this plan. He determined to collect a museum, and to put his hornets’ nest in it for the first thing. As soon as he got home, as he found that dinner was not quite ready, he and Jonas went out into the barn to look at the box. It was a large box, which had been made to pack up a bureau in, so that the bureau should not get injured in the wagon which it was brought home in. As it happened, the box was smooth inside and out, and the cover of it was made of two boards, which Jonas had taken off carefully, when he took the bureau out, and had then tacked them on again; thinking that he might perhaps want it some time or other,—box, covers, and all.

Now it happened, as it generally does to persons who take care of things, that the article which Jonas thus preserved, came into use exactly. The box, he said, would be just the thing. He showed Rollo how he could place it so that it would make a convenient sort of cabinet.

“I can put it upon its end,” said he, “and then I can put on the two cover boards with hinges,—one pair of hinges on each side; then the covers will make little doors, and it will open like a book case, only it will not be quite so elegant.”

“I think it will be very elegant indeed,” said Rollo; “and you can make it for us this afternoon.”

“No,” said Jonas; “not this afternoon.”

“Why not?” said Rollo.

“O, I must attend to my work in the meadow.”

“O, no,” said Rollo. “I mean to ask my father to let you make it this afternoon.”

“No; I’d rather you wouldn’t,” said Jonas.

“Why not?” asked Rollo. “I know he will let you.”

“Yes, I suppose he would let me, if you were to ask him; but that would spoil the museum.”

“Spoil it?” said Rollo.

“Yes,” said Jonas. “The way to spoil any pleasure is to neglect duty for the sake of it. Work first, and play afterwards. That’s the rule.”

“Well, but, Jonas, we want to begin our museum this afternoon.”

“Very well,” said Jonas; “you may begin collecting your curiosities, you know; and you can put them all in a safe place, and have them all ready to put in when I get the case made.”

Rollo did not quite like this plan; but he knew that Jonas was always firm when it was a question of right and wrong, and so he said no more; only, after a moment's pause, he asked Jonas when he *would* make the cabinet.

"The first rainy day," replied Jonas.

"Then I hope it will rain to-morrow," said Rollo; and he went out of the barn to see if it was not cloudy. But the sun shone bright, and the sky was clear and serene.

While Rollo was looking up at the sky, trying to find some appearance of rain, he heard a chaise coming, and looking out into the road, he saw that his cousin James was in it.

"Ah," said he to himself, "there comes cousin James! Now I will have a frolic with him, by means of my hornets' nest."

So Rollo ran into the garden, and slyly fixed his hornets' nest up in a lilac bush; and then ran out to the front of the house to find his cousin. But his cousin was nowhere to be found. The chaise was at the door, the horse being fastened to a post; but nobody was near it. So Rollo went into the house to see if he could find James.

They told him in the house that James had gone through the house into the yard, in pursuit of Rollo.

Rollo then ran out again, and at length found James, and after talking with him a minute, he said, "Come, James, let us go into the garden."

So they walked along towards the garden, Rollo telling James, by the way, about the canal which Jonas had made that day. At length, when they reached the lilac bush, Rollo looked up, and started in pretended fright, saying,

"O James! look there!"

"O!" exclaimed James; "it is a hornets' nest."

"So 'tis," said Rollo; "run! run!"

James and Rollo started off at these words, and away they ran down the alley, Rollo convulsed with laughter at the success of his stratagem. At length they stopped.

"Now, how shall we get back?" said James. For the lilac, upon which Rollo had put the hornets' nest, was close to the garden gate.

"I am not afraid to go," said Rollo.

So Rollo walked along boldly; James following slowly and with a timid air, remonstrating with Rollo for his temerity.

"Rollo!" said he, "Rollo! take care. You had better not go."

But what was his surprise and astonishment at seeing Rollo go deliberately up to the bush, and take down the twig that had the hornets' nest attached to it, and hold it out towards him!

"I put it up there," said Rollo. "There are no hornets in it."

Still, James was somewhat afraid. He knew of course, now, that there could be no hornets in it; but, still, the association of the idea of danger was so strong with the sight of a hornets' nest, that he could not feel quite easy. At length, however, he came up near to it, and examined it attentively.

"What made you frighten me so, Rollo?" said he.

"O, only for fun," said Rollo.

"But you deceived me," said James; "and I don't think that that was right. It is never right to deceive."

"O, I only did it for fun," said Rollo.

James insisted upon it that it was wrong, and Rollo that it was not wrong; and finally they concluded to leave it to Jonas. So they both went to him, and told him the story.

"Wasn't it wrong?" asked James.

"It wasn't—was it?" said Rollo.

"It was deception," added James.

"But it was only in fun," said Rollo.

“One or the other of you must be to blame,” said Jonas.

“How?” asked Rollo.

“Why, James seems displeased with you for frightening him so; and now, either you must have done wrong, and given him just cause for his displeasure, or else, if you did right, then his displeasure is unreasonable, and so it is ill humor.”

The boys did not answer.

“So that the question is, Did Rollo do wrong? or, Is James out of humor?”

“Why, I think deception is always wrong,” said James.

“Did you ever play blind-man’s-buff?” asked Jonas.

“Yes,” replied James.

“And did you ever go and squeak in a corner, and then creep away, to make the blind man think you were there, and so go groping after you?”

“Why, yes,” said James; “but that is not deception.”

“Why, don’t you try to make the blind man think you are in the corner, when, in fact, you have gone?”

“Yes,” said James.

“And is not that trying to deceive him?”

“Yes—” said James, hesitating, “but,—I think that that is a very different thing.”

“How is it different?” said Jonas.

It is probable that James would have found some difficulty in answering this question; but, in fact, he did not have the opportunity to try, for, just then, he heard some one calling him, and he and Rollo went into the house. They wanted him to go, and so he got into the chaise and rode away, promising to come and see Rollo in the afternoon, if he could get permission. Soon after this, Rollo sat down, with the rest of the family, to dinner. He determined to commence in earnest the work of collecting curiosities that afternoon.

THE HEMLOCK-SEED

James came to play with Rollo that afternoon, and Rollo explained to him his plan of collecting a museum of curiosities. James was very much interested in it indeed, and he said that he had some shells and some Guinea peas at home, which he would put into it.

Rollo went to show him the box out of which Jonas was going to make the cabinet the first rainy day. Then the boys went out again to see if there were yet any signs of a storm. But they looked in vain. There were no clouds to be seen, except here and there a few of those white, fleecy tufts floating in the heavens, which indicate fair weather rather than rain.

The boys played together in the yard for some time. Among other things, they amused themselves by collecting some flowers, and pressing them in a book. Suddenly James said,

“O Rollo, let us go and get some blue-bells to press; they will be beautiful.”

“Where?” said Rollo.

“Among the rocks by the road, beyond the bridge,” said James. “There are plenty of them among those rocks.”

The place which James referred to, was a rocky precipice by the road side, about a quarter of a mile from the house; just at the entrance of a small village. Rollo approved of the proposal, and he went in and asked his mother’s permission to go.

She consented, and Rollo, when he came back through the kitchen, said to Dorothy, who was sitting at the window, sewing,

“Dorothy, we are going to get some blue-bells to press.”

“Ah!” said Dorothy. “Where are you going for them?”

“O, out by the bridge,” said Rollo, as he passed on to go out at the door.

“O Rollo!” said she, calling out to him suddenly, as if she recollected something; “stop a minute.”

So Rollo came back to hear what she had to say.

“You are going pretty near the village.”

“Yes,” said Rollo.

“And could you be so kind as to do an errand for me?”

“Yes,” said Rollo; “what is it?”

Then Dorothy went to her work-table, and began to open it, saying all the time,

“I want you to get some medicine for Sarah, for she is sick.”

Sarah was a friend of Dorothy’s, who lived at another house, not far from Rollo’s; and Rollo used sometimes to see her at his father’s, when she came over to see Dorothy. She was in very feeble health, and now wanted some medicines. Dorothy had been over at the house where she lived that day, and had found that the doctor had left her a prescription; but she had nobody to send for it, and she was not quite able to go herself. So Dorothy told her that if she would let her have the money, she would ask Rollo or Jonas to go.

So Sarah gave her a dollar bill, and in order to keep it safe, she put it in a little morocco wallet, and tied it up securely with a string. This wallet was what Dorothy was looking for, in her work-table. She took it out, and untied the string. She opened the wallet, and showed Rollo the money in one of the pockets, and a small piece of white paper, upon which was written the names of the medicines which the doctor wished Sarah to take. Such a writing is called a *prescription*.

Rollo looked at the prescription to see what sort of medicines it was that he was to get, but he could not read it. The words were short and strange, and had periods at the end of them,—which Rollo told Dorothy was wrong, as periods ought to be only at the end of a sentence. Then there were strange characters and marks at the ends of the lines; and Rollo, after examining it attentively, said

he could not read a word of it, and he did not believe that the apothecary could. However, he said he was willing to take it to him, and let him try.

He accordingly put the prescription back again carefully into the wallet, and Dorothy tied it up. Then he put it into his pocket, and went out to James. He found James waiting by the gate, and they both walked along together.

He and James had each a book to put their blue-bells in. They walked along, talking about their flowers, until at length they reached the bridge. Just beyond it was the rocky precipice, with shrubs and evergreens growing upon the shelves and in the crevices, and spaces between the rocks. It towered up pretty high above the road, and the declivity extended also down to the brook below the bridge, forming one side of the deep ravine across which the bridge was built. There was a very large, old hemlock-tree growing upon a small piece of level ground between the ravine and the higher part of the precipice. Under this hemlock-tree was a large, smooth, flat stone, where the boys used very often to come and sit, when they came to play among these rocks.



The boys rambled about among the rocks, sometimes down in the ravine and near the brook, and sometimes very high up among the rocks. They were both pretty good climbers, and there were no very dangerous places, for there were no high, perpendicular precipices. They found blue-bells in abundance, and several other flowers. They also found a variety of brakes, of different forms and colors. They determined to gather as many flowers as they could, and then go down to the hemlock-tree, and there look them over, and select those best to be pressed; and then put them carefully into their books there. Then they could carry them home safely; they would, in fact, be in press all the way.

After rambling and climbing about for half an hour, the boys went down to the flat rock, under the hemlock, with large bunches of plants and flowers in their hands. Here they sat another half hour, looking over their specimens, and putting them into their books. At length, Rollo picked up a singular-looking thing, which was lying down by the side of the stone under the tree. It was about as big as his thumb, and somewhat pointed at the ends. It was black, and rather glossy, and the surface was marked regularly with little ridges. James could not imagine what it was; but Rollo told him that he thought it must be a hemlock-seed. The truth was, that it was a great *chrysalis*

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