

# ABBOTT JACOB

ROLLO AT  
WORK

Jacob Abbott

**Rollo at Work**

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# Jacob Abbott

## Rollo at Work

Notice to Parents.

Although this little work, and its fellow, “Rollo At Play,” are intended principally as a means of entertainment for their little readers, it is hoped by the writer that they may aid in accomplishing some of the following useful purposes:—

1. In cultivating *the thinking powers*; as frequent occasions occur, in which the incidents of the narrative, and the conversations arising from them, are intended to awaken and engage the reasoning and reflective faculties of the little readers.

2. In promoting the progress of children *in reading* and in knowledge of language; for the diction of the stories is intended to be often in advance of the natural language of the reader, and yet so used as to be explained by the connection.

3. In cultivating the *amiable and gentle qualities of the heart*. The scenes are laid in quiet and virtuous life, and the character and conduct described are generally—with the exception of some of the ordinary exhibitions of childish folly—character and conduct to be imitated; for it is generally better, in dealing with children, to allure them to what is right by agreeable pictures of it, than to attempt to drive them to it by repulsive delineations of what is wrong.





Rollo Digging Holes in the Ground.

## Labor Lost

### Elky

When Rollo was between five and six years old, he was one day at work in his little garden, planting some beans. His father had given him a little square bed in a corner of the garden, which he had planted with corn two days before. He watched his corn impatiently for two days, and, as it did not come up, he thought he would plant it again with beans. He ought to have waited longer.

He was sitting on a little cricket, digging holes in the ground, when he heard a sudden noise. He started up, and saw a strange, monstrous head looking at him over the garden wall. He jumped up, and ran as fast as he could towards the house.

It happened that Jonas, the boy, was at that time at work in the yard, cutting wood, and he called out, "What is the matter, Rollo?"

Rollo had just looked round, and seeing that the head remained still where it was, he was a little ashamed of his fears; so at first he did not answer, but walked along towards Jonas.

"That's the colt," said Jonas; "should not you like to go and see him?"

Rollo looked round again, and true enough, it was a small horse's head that was over the wall. It looked smaller now than it did when he first saw it.

Now there was behind the garden a green field, with scattered trees upon it, and a thick wood at the farther side. Jonas took Rollo by the hand, and led him back into the garden, towards the colt. The colt took his head back over the fence as they approached, and walked away. He was now afraid of Rollo. Jonas and Rollo climbed up upon a stile which was built there against the fence, and saw the colt trotting away slowly down towards the wood, looking back at Rollo and Jonas, by bending his head every minute, first on one side, and then on the other.

"There comes father," said Rollo.

Jonas looked and saw Rollo's father coming out of the wood, leading a horse. The colt and the horse had been feeding together in the field, and Rollo's father had caught the horse, for he wanted to take a ride. Rollo's father had a little basket in his hand, and when he saw the colt coming towards him, he held it up and called him, "*Elky, Elky, Elky, Elky*," for the colt's name was Elkin, though they often called him Elky. Elkin walked slowly up to the basket, and put his nose in it. He found that there were some oats in it; and Rollo's father poured them out on the grass, and then stood by, patting Elky's head and neck while he ate them. Rollo thought his head looked beautifully; he wondered how he could have been afraid of it.

Rollo's father led the horse across the field, through a gate, into a green lane which led along the side of the garden towards the house; and Rollo said he would run round into the lane and meet him. So he jumped off of the stile, and ran up the garden, and Jonas followed him, and went back to his work.

Rollo ran round to meet his father, who was coming up the green lane, leading the horse with a rope round his neck.

"Father," said Rollo, "could you put me on?"

His father smiled, and lifted Rollo up carefully, and placed him on the horse's back. Then he walked slowly along.

"Father," said Rollo, "are you going away?"

"Yes," said he, "I am going to ride away in the wagon."

"Why did not you catch Elky, and let him draw you?"

"Elky? O, Elky is not old enough to work."

“Not old enough to work!” said Rollo, “Why, he is pretty big. He is almost as big as the horse. I should think he could draw you alone in the wagon.”

“Perhaps he is strong enough for that; but Elky has never learned to work yet.”

“Never learned!” said Rollo, in great surprise. “Do horses have to *learn* to work? Why, they have nothing to do but to pull.”

“Why, suppose,” said his father, “that he should dart off at once as soon as he is harnessed, and pull with all his strength, and furiously.”

“O, he must not do so: he must pull gently and slowly.”

“Well, suppose he pulls gently a minute, and then stops and looks round, and then I tell him to go on, and he pulls a minute again, and then stops and looks round.”

“O no,” said Rollo, laughing, “he must not do so; he must keep pulling steadily all the time.”

“Yes, so you see he has something more to do than merely to pull; he must pull right, and he must be taught to do this. Besides, he must learn to obey all my various commands. Why, a horse needs to be taught to work as much as a boy.”

“Why, father, I can work; and I have never been taught.”

“O no,” said his father, smiling, “you cannot work.”

“I can plant beans,” said Rollo.

Just then, Rollo, who was all this time riding on the horse, looked down from his high seat into a little bush by the side of the road, and saw there a little bunch that looked like a birdsnest; and he said, “O, father, please to take me down; I want to look at that birdsnest.”

His father knew that he would not hurt the birdsnest; so he took him off of the horse, and put him on the ground. Then he walked on with the horse, and Rollo turned back to see the nest. He climbed up upon a log that lay by the side of the bush, and then gently opened the branches and looked in. Four little, unfledged birds lifted up their heads, and opened their mouths wide. They heard the noise which Rollo made, and thought it was their mother come to feed them.

“Ah, you little dickeys,” said Rollo; “hungry, are you? *I* have not got any thing for you to eat.”

Rollo looked at them a little while, and then slowly got down and walked along up the lane, saying to himself, “*They* are not big enough to work, at any rate, but *I* am, I know, and I do not believe but that *Elky* is.”



## Preparations

When Rollo got back into the yard, he found his father just getting into the wagon to go away. Jonas stood by the horse, having just finished harnessing him.

“Father,” said Rollo, “I can work. You thought I could not work, but I can. I am going to work to-day while you are gone.”

“Are you?” said his father. “Very well; I should be glad to have you.”

“What should you like to have me do?” asked Rollo.

“O, you may pick up chips, or pile that short wood in the shed. But stand back from the wheel, for I am going to start now.”

So Rollo stood back, and his father drew up the reins which Jonas had just put into his hands, and guided the horse slowly and carefully out of the yard. Rollo ran along behind the wagon as far as the gate, to see his father go off, and stood there a few minutes, watching him as he rode along, until he disappeared at a turn in the road. He then came back to the yard, and sat down on a log by the side of Jonas, who was busily at work mending the wheelbarrow.

Rollo sat singing to himself for some time, and then he said,

“Jonas, father thinks I am not big enough to work; don't you think I am?”

“I don't know,” said Jonas, hesitating. “You do not seem to be very industrious just now.”

“O, I am resting now,” said Rollo; “I am going to work pretty soon.”

“What are you resting from?” said Jonas.

“O, I am resting because I am tired.”

“What are you tired of?” said Jonas. “What have you been doing?”

Rollo had no answer at hand, for he had not been doing any thing at all. The truth was, it was pleasanter for him to sit on the log and sing, and see Jonas mend the wheelbarrow, than to go to work himself; and he mistook that feeling for being tired. Boys often do so when they are set to work.

Rollo, finding that he had no excuse for sitting there any longer, presently got up, and sauntered along towards the house, saying that he was going to work, picking up chips.

Now there was, in a certain corner of the yard, a considerable space covered with chips, which were the ones that Rollo had to pick up. He knew that his father wished to have them put into a kind of a bin in the shed, called the *chip-bin*. So he went into the house for a basket.

He found his mother busy; and she said she could not go and get a basket for him; but she told him the chip-basket was probably in its place in the shed, and he might go and get that.

“But,” said Rollo, “that is too large. I cannot lift that great basket full of chips.”

“You need not fill it full then,” said his mother. “Put in just as many as you can easily carry.”

Rollo still objected, saying that he wanted her very much to go and get a smaller one. He could not work without a smaller one.

“Very well,” said she, “I would rather that you should not work then. The interruption to me to get up now, and go to look for a smaller basket, will be greater than all the good you will do in picking up chips.”

Rollo then told her that his father wanted him to work, and he related to her all the conversation they had had. She then thought that she had better do all in her power to give Rollo a fair experiment; so she left her work, went down, got him a basket which he said was just big enough, and left him at the door, going out to his work in the yard.

## A Bad Beginning

Rollo sat down on the chips, and began picking them up, all around him, and throwing them into his basket. He soon filled it up, and then lugged it in, emptied it into the chip-bin, and then returned, and began to fill it again.

He had not got his basket more than half full the second time, before he came upon some very large chips, which were so square and flat, that he thought they would be good to build houses with. He thought he would just try them a little, and began to stand them up in such a manner as to make the four walls of a house. He found, however, an unexpected difficulty; for although the chips were large and square, yet the edges were so sharp that they would not stand up very well.

Some time was spent in trying experiments with them in various ways; but he could not succeed very well; so he began again industriously to put them into his basket.

When he got the basket nearly full, the second time, he thought he was tired, and that it would be a good plan to take a little time for rest; and he would go and see Jonas a little while.

Now his various interruptions and delays, his conversation with his mother, the delay in getting the basket, and his house-building, had occupied considerable time; so that, when he went back to Jonas, it was full half an hour from the time when he left him; and he found that Jonas had finished mending the wheelbarrow, and had put it in its place, and was just going away himself into the field.

“Well, Rollo,” said he, “how do you get along with your work?”

“O, very well,” said Rollo; “I have been picking up chips all the time since I went away from you.”

Rollo did not mean to tell a falsehood. But he was not aware how much of his time he had idled away.

“And how many have you got in?” said Jonas.

“Guess,” said Rollo.

“Six baskets full,” said Jonas.

“No,” said Rollo.

“Eight.”

“No; not so many.”

“How many, then?” said Jonas, who began to be tired of guessing.

“Two; that is, I have got one in, and the other is almost full.”

“Only two?” said Jonas. “Then you cannot have worked very steadily. Come here and I will show you how to work.”

## What Rollo Might Do

So Jonas walked along to the chips, and asked Rollo to fill up that basket, and carry it, and then come back, and he would tell him.

So Rollo filled up the basket, carried it to the bin, and came back very soon. Jonas told him then to fill it up again as full as it was before.

“There,” said Jonas, when it was done, “now it is as full as the other was, and I should think you have been less than two minutes in doing it. We will call it two minutes. Two minutes for each basket full would make thirty baskets full in an hour. Now, I don't think there are more than thirty baskets full in all; so that, if you work steadily, but without hurrying any, you would get them all in in an hour.”

“In an hour?” said Rollo. “Could I get them all in in an hour?”

“Yes,” said Jonas, “I have no doubt you can. But you must not hurry and get tired out. Work moderately, but *steadily*;—that is the way.”

So Jonas went to the field, leaving Rollo to go on with his thirty baskets. Rollo thought it would be a fine thing to get the chips all in before his father should come home, and he went to work very busily filling his basket the third time.

“I can do it quicker,” said he to himself. “I can fill the basket a great deal faster than that. I will get it all done in half an hour.”

So he began to throw in the chips as fast as possible, taking up very large ones too, and tossing them in in any way. Now it happened that he did fill it this time very quick; for the basket being small, and the chips that he now selected very large, they did not pack well, but lay up in every direction, so as apparently to fill up the basket quite full, when, in fact, there were great empty spaces in it; and when he took it up to carry it, it felt very light, because it was in great part empty.

He ran along with it, forgetting Jonas's advice not to hurry, and thinking that the reason why it seemed so light was because he was so strong. When he got to the coal-bin, the chips would not come out easily. They were so large that they had got wedged between the sides of the basket, and he had hard work to get them out.

This fretted him, and cooled his ardor somewhat; he walked back rather slowly, and began again to fill his basket.

## A New Plan

Before he had got many chips in it, however, he happened to think that the wheelbarrow would be a better thing to get them in with. They would not stick in that as they did in the basket. “Men always use a wheelbarrow,” he said to himself, “and why should not I?”

So he turned the chips out of his basket, thus losing so much labor, and went after the wheelbarrow. He spent some time in looking to see how Jonas had mended it, and then he attempted to wheel it along to the chips. He found it quite heavy; but he contrived to get it along, and after losing considerable time in various delays, he at last had it fairly on the ground, and began to fill it.

He found that the chips would go into the wheelbarrow beautifully, and he was quite pleased with his own ingenuity in thinking of it. He thought he would take a noble load, and so he filled it almost full, but it took a long time to do it, for the wheelbarrow was so large that he got tired, and stopped several times to rest.

When, at length, it was full, he took hold of the handles, and lifted away upon it. He found it very heavy. He made another desperate effort, and succeeded in raising it from the ground a little; but unluckily, as wheelbarrows are very apt to do when the load is too heavy for the workman, it tipped down to one side, and, though Rollo exerted all his strength to save it, it was in vain.



Too Heavy.

Over went the wheelbarrow, and about half of the chips were poured out upon the ground again. "O dear me!" said Rollo; "I wish this wheelbarrow was not so heavy."

He sat down on the side of the wheelbarrow for a time in despair. He had a great mind to give up work for that day. He thought he had done enough; he was tired. But, then, when he reflected that he had only got in three small baskets of chips, and that his father would see that it was really true, as he had supposed, that Rollo could not work, he felt a little ashamed to stop.

So he tipped the wheelbarrow back, which he could easily do now that the load was half out, and thought he would wheel those along, and take the rest next time.

By great exertions he contrived to stagger along a little way with this load, until presently the wheel settled into a little low place in the path, and he could not move it any farther. This worried and troubled him again. He tried to draw the wheelbarrow back, as he had often seen Jonas do in similar cases, but in vain. It would not move back or forwards. Then he went round to the wheel, and pulled upon that; but it would not do. The wheel held its place immovably.

Rollo sat down on the grass a minute or two, wishing that he had not touched the wheelbarrow. It was unwise for him to have left his basket, his regular and proper mode of carrying the chips, to try experiments with the wheelbarrow, which he was not at all accustomed to. And now the proper course for him to have taken, would have been to leave the wheelbarrow where it was, go and get the basket, take out the chips from the wheelbarrow, and carry them, a basket full at a time, to the bin, then take the wheelbarrow to its place, and go on with his work in the way he began.

But Rollo, like all other boys who have not learned to work, was more inclined to get somebody to help him do what was beyond his own strength, than to go quietly on alone in doing what he himself was able to do. So he left the wheelbarrow, and went into the house to try to find somebody to help him.

He came first into the kitchen, where Mary was at work getting dinner, and he asked her to come out and help him get his wheelbarrow out of a hole. Mary said she could not come then, but, if he would wait a few minutes, she would. Rollo could not wait, but went off in pursuit of his mother.

"Mother," said he, as he opened the door into her chamber, "could not you come out and help me get my wheelbarrow along?"

"What wheelbarrow?" said his mother.

"Why, the great wheelbarrow. I am wheeling chips in it, and I cannot get it along."

"I thought you were picking up chips in the basket I got for you."

"Yes, mother, I did a little while; but I thought I could get them along faster with the wheelbarrow."

"And, instead of that, it seems you cannot get them along at all."

"Why, mother, it is only one little place. It is in a little hole. If I could only get it out of that little hole, it would go very well."

"But it seems to me you are not a very profitable workman, Rollo, after all. You wanted me very much to go and get you a small basket, because the common basket was too large and heavy; so I left my work, and went and got it for you. But you soon lay it aside, and go, of your own accord, and get something heavier than the common chip-basket, a great deal. And now I must leave my work and go down and wheel it along for you."

"Only this once, mother. If you can get it out of this hole for me, I will be careful not to let it get in again."

"Well," said his mother at length, "I will go. Though the common way with wagoners, when they get their loads into difficulty, is to throw a part off until they lighten it sufficiently, and then go on. I will go this time; but if you get into difficulty again, you must get out yourself."

So Rollo and his mother went down together, and she took hold of the wheelbarrow, and soon got it out. She advised Rollo not to use the wheelbarrow, but to return to his basket, but yet wished him to do just as he thought best himself.

When she had returned to the house, Rollo went on with his load, slowly and with great difficulty. He succeeded, however, in working it along until he came to the edge of the platform which was before the shed door, where he was to carry in his chips. Here, of course, he was at a complete stand, as he could not get the wheel up such a high step; so he sat down on the edge of the platform, not knowing what to do next.

He could not go to his mother, for she had told him that she could not help him again; so, on the whole, he concluded that he would not pick up chips any more; he would pile the wood. He recollected that his father had told him that he might either pick up chips or pile wood; and the last, he thought, would be much easier.

“I shall not have any thing to carry or to wheel at all,” said he to himself, “and so I shall not have any of these difficulties.”

So he left his wheelbarrow where it was, at the edge of the platform, intending to ask Jonas to get it up for him when he should come home. He went into the shed, and began to pile up the wood.

It was some very short, small wood, prepared for a stove in his mother's chamber, and he knew where his father wanted to have it piled—back against the side of the shed, near where the wood was lying Jonas had thrown it down there in a heap as he had sawed and split it.



## Hirrup! Hirrup!

He began to lay the wood regularly upon the ground where his pile was to be, and for a few minutes went on very prosperously. But presently he heard a great trampling in the street, and ran out to see what it was, and found that it was a large herd of cattle driving by—oxen and cows, and large and small calves. They filled the whole road as they walked slowly along, and Rollo climbed up upon the fence, by the side of the gate, to look at them. He was much amused to see so large a herd, and he watched all their motions. Some stopped to eat by the road side; some tried to run off down the lane, but were driven back by boys with long whips, who ran after them. Others would stand still in the middle of the road and bellow, and here and there two or three would be seen pushing one another with their horns, or running up upon a bank by the road side.

Presently Rollo heard a commotion among the cattle at a little distance, and, looking that way, saw that Jonas was in among them, with a stick, driving the about, and calling out, Hirrup! Hirrup! At first he could not think what he was doing; but presently he saw that their own cow had got in among the others, and Jonas was trying to get her out.

Some of the men who were driving the herd helped him, and they succeeded, at length, in getting her away by herself, by the side of the road. The rest of the cattle moved slowly on, and when they were fairly by, Jonas called out to Rollo to open the gate and then run away.

Rollo did, accordingly, open the gate and run up the yard, and presently he saw the cow coming in, with Jonas after her.

“Jonas,” said Rollo, “how came our cow in among all those?”

“She got out of the pasture somehow,” said Jonas, in reply, “and I must go and drive her back. How do you get along with your chips?”

“O, not very well. I want you to help me get the wheelbarrow up on the platform.”

“The wheelbarrow!” said Jonas. “Are you doing it with the wheelbarrow?”

“No. I am not picking up chips now at all. I am piling wood. I *did* have the wheelbarrow.”

In the mean time, the cow walked along through the yard and out of the gate into the field, and Jonas said he must go on immediately after her, to drive her back into the pasture, and put up the fence, and so he could not stop to help Rollo about the chips; but he would just look in and see if he was piling the wood right.

He accordingly just stepped a moment to the shed door, and looked at Rollo's work. “That will do very well,” said he; “only you must put the biggest ends of the sticks outwards, or it will all tumble down.”

So saying, he turned away, and walked off fast after the cow.

## An Overturn

Rollo stood looking at him for some time, wishing that he was going too. But he knew that he must not go without his mother's leave, and that, if he should go in to ask her, Jonas would have gone so far that he should not be able to overtake him. So he went back to his wood-pile.

He piled a little more, and as he piled he wondered what Jonas meant by telling him to put the largest ends outwards. He took up a stick which had a knot on one end, which made that end much the largest, and laid it on both ways, first with the knot back against the side of the shed, and then with the knot in front, towards himself. He did not see but that the stick lay as steadily in one position as in the other.

"Jonas was mistaken," said he. "It is a great deal better to put the big ends back. Then they are out of sight; all the old knots are hid, and the pile looks handsomer in front."

So he went on, putting the sticks upon the pile with the biggest ends back against the shed. By this means the back side of the pile began soon to be the highest, and the wood slanted forward, so that, when it was up nearly as high as his head, it leaned forward so as to be quite unsteady. Rollo could not imagine what made his pile act so. He thought he would put on one stick more, and then leave it. But, as he was putting on this stick, he found that the whole pile was very unsteady. He put his hand upon it, and shook it a little, to see if it was going to fall, when he found it was coming down right upon him, and had just time to spring back before it fell.

He did not get clear, however; for, as he stepped suddenly back, he tumbled over the wood which was lying on the ground, and fell over backwards; and a large part of the pile came down upon him.

He screamed out with fright and pain, for he bruised himself a little in falling; though the wood which fell upon him was so small and light that it did not do much serious injury.

Rollo stopped crying pretty soon, and went into the house; and that evening, when his father came home, he went to him, and said,

"Father, you were right, after all; I *don't* know how to work any better than Elky."

## The Two Little Wheelbarrows

### Rides

Rollo often used to ride out with his father and mother. When he was quite a small boy, he did not know how to manage so as to get frequent rides. He used to keep talking, himself, a great deal, and interrupting his father and mother, when they wanted to talk; and if he was tired, he would complain, and ask them, again and again, when they should get home. Then he was often thirsty, and would tease his father and mother for water, in places where there was no water to be got, and then fret because he was obliged to wait a little while. In consequence of this, his father and mother did not take him very often. When they wanted a quiet, still, pleasant ride, they had to leave Rollo behind. A great many children act just as Rollo did, and thus deprive themselves of a great many very pleasant rides.

Rollo observed, however, that his uncle almost always took Lucy with him when he went to ride. And one day, when he was playing in the yard where Jonas was at work setting out trees, he saw his uncle riding by, with another person in the chaise, and Lucy sitting between them on a little low seat. Lucy smiled and nodded as she went by; and when she had gone, Rollo said,

“There goes Lucy, taking a ride. Uncle almost always takes her, when he goes any where. I wonder why father does not take me as often.”

“I know why,” said Jonas.

“What is the reason?” said Rollo.

“Because you are troublesome, and Lucy is not. If I was a boy like you, I should manage so as almost always to ride with my father.”

“Why, what should you do?” said Rollo.

“Why, in the first place, I should never find fault with my seat. I should sit exactly where they put me, without any complaint. Then I should not talk much, and I should *never* interrupt them when they were talking. If I saw any thing on the road that I wanted to ask about, I should wait until I had a good opportunity to do it without disturbing their conversation; and then, if I wanted any thing to eat or drink, I should not ask for it, unless I was in a place where they could easily get it for me. Thus I should not be any trouble to them, and so they would let me go almost always.”

Rollo was silent. He began to recollect how much trouble he had given his parents, when riding with them, without thinking of it at the time. He did not say any thing to Jonas about it, but he secretly resolved to try Jonas's experiment the very next time he went to ride.

He did so, and in a very short time his father and mother both perceived that there was, some how or other, a great change in his manners. He had ceased to be troublesome, and had become quite a pleasant travelling companion. And the effect was exactly as Jonas had foretold. His father and mother liked very much to have such a still, pleasant little boy sitting between them; and at last they began almost to think they could not have a pleasant ride themselves, unless Rollo was with them.

They used to put a little cricket in, upon the bottom of the chaise, for Rollo to sit upon; but this was not very convenient, and so one day Rollo's father said that, now Rollo had become so pleasant a boy to ride with them, he would have a little seat made on purpose for him. “In fact,” said he, “I will take the chaise down to the corporal's to-night, and see if he cannot do it for me.”

“And may I go with you?” said Rollo.

“Yes,” said his father, “you may.”

Rollo was always very much pleased when his father let him go to the corporal's.

## The Corporal's

But perhaps the reader will like to know who this corporal was that Rollo was so desirous of going to see. He was an old soldier, who had become disabled in the wars, so that he could not go out to do very hard work, but was very ingenious in making and mending things, and he had a little shop down by the mill, where he used to work.

Rollo often went there with Jonas, to carry a chair to be mended, or to get a lock or latch put in order; and sometimes to buy a basket, or a rake, or some simple thing that the corporal knew how to make. A corporal, you must know, is a kind of an officer in a company. This man had been such an officer; and so they always called him the corporal. I never knew what his other name was.

That evening Rollo and his father set off in the chaise to go to the corporal's. It was not very far. They rode along by some very pleasant farm-houses, and came at length to the house where Georgie lived. They then went down the hill; but, just before they came to the bridge, they turned off among the trees, into a secluded road, which led along the bank of the stream. After going on a short distance, they came out into a kind of opening among the trees, where a mill came into view, by the side of the stream; and opposite to it, across the road, under the trees, was the corporal's little shop.

The trees hung over the shop, and behind it there was a high rocky hill almost covered with forest trees. Between the shop and the mill they could see the road winding along a little way still farther up the stream, until it was lost in the woods.



### The Corporal's

As soon as Rollo came in sight of the shop, he saw a little wheelbarrow standing up by the side of the door. It was just large enough for him, and he called out for his father to look at it.

"It is a very pretty little wheelbarrow," said his father.

"I wish you would buy it for me. How much do you suppose the corporal asks for it?"

"We will talk with him about it," said his father.

So saying, they drove up to the side of the road near the mill, and fastened the horse at a post. Then Rollo clambered down out of the chaise, and he and his father walked into the shop.

They found the corporal busily at work mending a chair-bottom. Rollo stood by, much pleased to see him weave in the flags, while his father explained to the corporal that he wanted a small seat made in front, in his chaise.

"I do not know whether you can do it, or not," said he.

"What sort of a seat do you want?"

"I thought," said he, "that you might make a little seat, with two legs to it in front, and then fasten the back side of it to the front of the chaise-box."

"Yes," said the corporal, "that will do I think; but I must have a little blacksmith work to fasten the seat properly behind, so that you can slip it out when you are not using it. Let us go and see."

So the corporal rose to go out and see the chaise, and as they passed by the wheelbarrow at the door, as they went out, Rollo asked him what was the price of that little wheelbarrow.

“That is not for sale, my little man. That is engaged. But I can make you one, if your father likes. I ask three quarters of a dollar for them.”

Rollo looked at it very wishfully, and the corporal told him that he might try it if he chose. “Wheel it about,” said he, “while your father and I are looking at the chaise.”

So Rollo trundled the wheelbarrow up and down the road with great pleasure. It was light, and it moved easily. He wished he had such a one. It would not tip over, he said, like that great heavy one at home; he thought he could wheel it even if it was full of stones. He ran down with it to the shore of the stream, where there were plenty of stones lying, intending to load it up, and try it. But when he got there, he recollected that he had not had liberty to put any thing in it; and so he determined at once that he would not.

Just then his father called him. So he wheeled the wheelbarrow back to its place, and told the corporal that he liked it very much. He wanted his father to engage one for him then, but he did not ask him. He thought that, as he had already expressed a wish for one, it would be better not to say any thing about it again, but to wait and let his father do as he pleased.

As they were going home, his father said,

“That was a very pretty wheelbarrow, Rollo, I think myself.”

“Yes, it was beautiful, father. It was so light, and went so easy! I wish you would buy me one, father.”

“I would, my son, but I think a wheelbarrow will give you more pleasure at some future time, than it will now.”

“When do you mean?”

“When you have learned to work.”

“But I want the wheelbarrow to *play* with.”

“I know you do; but you would take a great deal more solid and permanent satisfaction in such a thing, if you were to use it for doing some useful work.”

“When shall I learn to work, father?” said Rollo.

“I have been thinking that it is full time now. You are about six years old, and they say that a boy of *seven* years old is able to earn his living.”

“Well, father, I wish you would teach me to work. What should you do first?”

“The first lesson would be to teach you to do some common, easy work, *steadily*.”

“Why, father, I can do that now, without being taught.”

“I think you are mistaken about that. A boy works steadily when he goes directly forward in his work, without stopping to rest, or to contrive new ways of doing it, or to see other people, or to talk. Now, do you think you could work steadily an hour, without stopping for any of these reasons?”

“Why—yes,” said Rollo.

“I will try you to-morrow,” said his father.



## The Old Nails

The next morning, after breakfast, Rollo's father told him he was ready for him to go to his work. He took a small basket in his hand, and led Rollo out into the barn, and told him to wait there a few minutes, and he would bring him something to do.

Rollo sat down on a little bundle of straw, wondering what his work was going to be.

Presently his father came back, bringing in his hands a box full of old nails, which he got out of an old store-room, in a corner of the barn. He brought it along, and set it down on the barn floor.

"Why, father," said Rollo, "what am I going to do with those old nails?"

"You are going to *sort* them. Here are a great many kinds, all together. I want them all picked over—those that are alike put by themselves. I will tell you exactly how to do it."

Rollo put his hand into the box, and began to pick up some of the nails, and look them over, while his father was speaking; but his father told him to put them down, and not begin until he had got all his directions.

"You must listen," said he, "and understand the directions now, for I cannot tell you twice."

He then took a little wisp of straw, and brushed away a clean place upon the barn floor, and then poured down the nails upon it.

"O, how many nails!" said Rollo.

His father then took up a handful of them, and showed Rollo that there were several different sizes; and he placed them down upon the floor in little heaps, each size by itself. Those that were crooked also he laid away in a separate pile.

"Now, Rollo," said he, "I want you to go to work sorting these nails, steadily and industriously, until they are all done. There are not more than three or four kinds of nails, and you can do them pretty fast if you work *steadily*, and do not get to playing with them. If you find any pieces of iron, or any thing else that you do not know what to do with, lay them aside, and go on with the nails. Do you understand it all?"

Rollo said he did, and so his father left him, and went into the house. Rollo sat down upon the clean barn floor, and began his task.

"I don't think this is any great thing," said he; "I can do this easily enough;" and he took up some of the nails, and began to arrange them as his father had directed.

But Rollo did not perceive what the real difficulty in his task was. It was, indeed, very easy to see what nails were large, and what were small, and what were of middle size, and to put them in their proper heaps. There was nothing very hard in that. The difficulty was, that, after having sorted a few, it would become tedious and tiresome work, doing it there all alone in the barn,—picking out old nails, with nobody to help him, and nobody to talk to, and nothing to see, but those little heaps of rusty iron on the floor.

This, I say, was the real trouble; and Rollo's father knew, when he set his little boy about it, that he would soon get very tired of it, and, not being accustomed to any thing but play, would not persevere.

And so it was. Rollo sorted out a few, and then he began to think that it was rather tiresome to be there all alone; and he thought it would be a good plan for him to go and ask his father to let him go and get his cousin James to come and help him.

He accordingly laid down the nails he had in his hand, and went into the house, and found his father writing at a table.

"What is the matter now?" said his father.

"Why, father," said Rollo, "I thought I should like to have James come and help me, if you are willing;—we can get them done so much quicker if there are two."

“But my great object is, not to get the nails sorted very quick, but to teach you patient industry. I know it is tiresome for you to be alone, but that is the very reason why I wish you to be alone. I want you to learn to persevere patiently in doing any thing, even if it is tiresome. What I want to teach you is, to *work*, not to *play*.”

Rollo felt disappointed, but he saw that his father was right, and he went slowly back to his task. He sorted out two or three handfuls more, but he found there was no pleasure in it, and he began to be very sorry his father had set him at it.

Having no heart for his work, he did not go on with alacrity, and of course made very slow progress. He ought to have gone rapidly forward, and not thought any thing about the pleasantness or unpleasantness of it, but only been anxious to finish the work, and please his father. Instead of that, he only lounged over it—looked at the heap of nails, and sighed to think how large it was. He could not sort all those, possibly, he said. He knew he could not. It would take him forever.

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