THE WHISTLER.

I know a lad of kindsome mood,
His age is three count twenty;
I wonder may he be very good,
Or yet naughty?
But let the day be cold or hot,
The city or from or grass;
If fair or foul the weather be,
He whistles as he pass.

He starts the city morning fine
To daylight and to work;
But when night is the city's time,
He's sure to miss his mark.
Of all the lads beneath the sun
I believe today,
It's hard to find one that will use
Who whistles at his play.

Then whistle on, my merry chap,
Be cheerful, hearty little;
For who can tell what cloud coming
Your time may turn cold?
Each merry note I now can hear
The place is will be yet;
But no sigh was yet so like for
Who whistles at his play.

Some say the world is growing cold,
Yet I hold against that to be;
Some think the sun has lost its glow,
The world is aging too;
But yet as I look out the window,
And warm and young I'm stay
As long as there's one left to pass,
To whistle at their play.

—M. A. Mitchell in Boston Boys.

LITTLE JIM.

"I must take the child in, Sally," said Miss Bell, looking down upon a small creature that crouched upon the rug before the blazing fire of her little parlor grate—a boy nine years old, half naked, bellos, barefoot and not to the skin, for the rain was pouring phenomenally without and the suburban cottage seemed about to float away upon a sea of mud and water. I think I must let the child stay, and see what I can do for him."

"You're your own mistress, Miss Bell," said Sally, "but it's my humble duty to demonstrate again it. You're a single lady, Miss Bell, and I'm a wid'ler. We allot no men follows about and we ain't yet the child to take in strangers of that class, seem to me."

"Such a lady, Sally!" said Miss Bell.

"It was one just as small as he is, and a pet to boot, that took my black silk dress—one Mr. Winkler Cooker gimme when she went and married a second time," said Sally. "It was as good as new and I ripped the cargo of it and trimmed it with red velvet, and I was my far it, it was scrumptious! And a little gal came begging, and I up and asked Mr. Cooker for to lave her, and the dish, and him we sent for for a servant she off with the dress and my bo'bonds and two hankerchiefs, and I dunno what all. I ain't never been charytable some, nor I ain't never had a black silk gowned some mother, nor I don't expect to. If I let that boy stay till he was dried and give him a dinner, it's all I'd do, mim."

"I know," said Miss Bell, "it's what any one would say, Sally; but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a new black silk dress—pattern and lining and buttons and any trimming you like, and you can choose it for yourself at Mr. Potter's store—if you'll just take that child and bathe him and fix him up in some of the boys' clothes since Martha sent me for the church poor. Yes, and Miss Mustie shall make a for you, Sally, and I'll pay her, if you'll only—well, not—sly."

"Not interfere, Miss Bell?" said Sally.

"Well, I won't. I always have said that Miss Bell was the liberalest lady ever I lived willingness ever so much obleeged, mum." With that Sally seized upon the urchin, who had been found lying before the door fare downward in the mud, and bore him to the bathroom, while Miss Bell sat down her fee and thought over a plan that had formed itself in her brain some time before.

She was sixty, she was a spinster, she had a nine little nieces of her own, and her married brothers and sisters had chosen to scatter themselves over the world, leaving life to herself for the most part of the time. They could provide for their children. Why should she, who, standing on the threshold of old age, take to herself an adopted son? The big black eyes that had looked up at her had touched her heart. Once, long before, such eyes in a far alien head had done that, for she had a true story, this elderly woman who had once been a pretty girl, and the tale the child had told had touched it also.

"Tailor fat at one—mammy dead. No home—nothing to eat."

Very evidently nothing to wear, from another point of view than Miss Mc Finney's.

"It seems as if Providence had sent him to me," said Miss Bell, "and I think I shall adopt him."

When the boy came down, clean and bright in the well patched gray suit in which Sally had stripped him, Miss Bell thought him very pretty. It did not occur to her, as it did to Sally, that he was rather easy for a child that had been starving for three days, and that his appetite was no more ravenous than that of any healthy boy of his age. In fact, Miss Bell was delighted, and after dinner, when she had had a talk with him and set watching him as he pored over a great picture book—in one hand a bun, in the other a bit of cake, as she proved it to herself, "quite like a mother." Yes, after she had had the child about her for a week or so, and made sure that she was not mistaken, Miss Bell received that she would legally adopt him and make her will in his favor. He should go to school. She would see that he was properly bought up, and her friends might say what they pleased. She should have a son in her old age, and would have some pleasant a good deal besides.

Even Sally began to look upon little Jim with the distance before three days were past, and when she had made bought her black silk with all that was needful, and had it fitted by Miss Bell's own dressmaker, she softened to the uncomfortable cause of this favor, and made him special puddings, and even allowed him to pop corn on her kitchen range on Saturday evening after touching big him how to do it.

"A child does liven up a house, mim," she said on Sunday evening, "and we second quite a family in the church pew, somehow similar."

On Monday Jim was to go to school to the broad brick edifice which had stood hard by for years. There she spoke a fairer in the small household. A tiny tear nestled around Miss Bell's work basket. Sally "did up" several small collars with great care, and it was a proof that she had changed her mind in regard to the boy, that when Miss Bell said meditatively:

"Sally, I have to give James the small sleeve watch I had at school my sail. But perhaps I'd better keep it until he has made some improvement and call it a reward of merit."

The housekeeper replied, "Well, but as you think best, of course, mim. But if he wears a watch that call it will show he is somebody, and he'll be test jealous."

So Jim was the watch in the pocket of his new suit, and before he was upon his way was kissed and remarked as tenderly as though he really had a mother.

"It made him cry, mim," said Sally. "I saw the tears in his eyes, and I'll own up that I was ashamed to him."

The two women watched him out of sight as he went down the street, but when school hours were past they waited in vain for his return. Night fell, and he was still among the missing.

The school to which he had been sent was kept by an old friend of Miss Bell. To her house, when it ordered straight without bringing the truant home, Miss Bell, full of anxiety, made her way, and to her inquiry received a most unpleasant answer.

"He never came, my dear. The watch and the new clothes have been too great a temptation. It never does to let children like this be near the poor. Evelina, I wanted to tell you that. But when you visit to do a thing, you will, I know you will."

Then Miss Bell went back to her home, which seemed more lonely than it had ever been before, and said to Sally Simpkins:

"Just please don't talk about it, Sally. All that can be said has been said by Doris Purcell."

Two days passed away. Still there was no news of Jim. Miss Bell expected none. All through her life the bad news used by her family was drawn for example of what came of trusting tales of woe and being benevolent to non-city objects, and this was her evening performance.

"No matter," she said to herself. "No matter; it is a lesson that will last my life. I deserved it."

The third day, however, a stop-gap policeman sauntered up the door-steps and pulled the bell.

"The old lady again, I suppose, Sally," Miss Bell said. "No doubt the authorities sent it not just inside the parlor door at exactly 3 o'clock in the morning. I don't know what other things they could make. They've done everything else with it."

But it was not the old lady had this was in question this time.

What the policeman said was this:

"Morning, ma'am. Do you know a little shap named Jim? He says you do. He says you've been good to him—gave him a watch and lots of clothes. He's got rid of them if you have. In fact, he says he lives here. No doubt he's all a liar."

"No, no!" said Miss Bell. "It is true. I—I took him in. I intended to adopt him. I—oh! perhaps I haven't been deceived in him, after all. Tell me quick."

"If you kindly step over to the station in ——street, you'll hear all about it," said the officer. "Of course, please."

It took Miss Bell only a few moments to get ready, and as quickly as the to the cab that Sally called could carry her she was at the police station, and in a few moments Jim, looking very small indeed among the large policemen, stood before her—Jim, more ragged than before, and shoeless again, but quite unabashed, his eyes blazing in his shaved right and hard, though his head was bandaged and his face bruised and very pale.

"There she is!" he cried. "There's the lady! She'll tell you how good she was to me. Nobody never was good before. I had clothes, small clothes; she gave 'em to me, and I had a watch; she gave it to me; and she kissed me, she did, and I love her. I do, like she was my mammy. Don't believe I've gone back on you, mim, don't believe it. I wouldn't."

A change swept over Miss Bell's face as he spoke. It grew soft and warm and kindly again.

"I know you wouldn't, child," said she. "No, indeed you wouldn't! I thought you had, but now I know better." And in her pink poplin and all her silly, Quakerlike belongings, she stooped and kissed poor ragged Jim very tenderly.

"Madam," said the grave elderly gentleman at the desk, "this boy tells a very curious story. You may tell it again, Jim."

"Yes, sir," said Jim. "When you took me in that day, lady, I was put there by Tom Collins. I lived along of him. It was true, what he told you, lady, but I lived along of Tom, and to pay me there so you would take me in, and I'd open the door and let them get in at night and take your money. They said you kept a great deal in the house."

"Well, I haven't any trust in books," said Miss Bell apologetically.

"I didn't want to do it," Jim went on, "but I thought I had to if Tom Collins said to do it. But when you was so good to me, and gave me clothes and a watch, and all, and said I was to be your little boy, why, I loved you. I wouldn't have done it for nothin, and I promised to God, that you told me and thought I'd be took care of. I never had a good word spoke to me before. Second like I'd go to heaven, and I meant to tell you some day, but I didn't want to yet, and I went off to school just so happy. Did before I got there I saw Tom talkin. He was watching the house. 'Other' says he, 'quite a swell. All the better. Tonight you must open the kitchen door. They go to bed early, of course. At 1 o'clock—you've got a watch to tell time by now—you let in the lot.' 'Yes,' says I, 'and then what?' 'Then we'll take the rest of the plate and the money