

## GO IT ALONE.

BY JOHN G. SAXE.

There's a game much in fashion, I think it's called euchre,  
Though I've never played it for pleasure or lucre,  
In which, when the cards are in certain conditions,  
The players appear to have changed their positions,  
And one of them cries in a confident tone—  
"I think I might venture to go it alone."

While watching the game, 'tis a whim of the bard's,  
A moral to draw from the skirmish in cards,  
And to fancy he finds in the trivial strife,  
Some excellent hints for the battle of life,  
Where, whether the strife be a ribbon or throne,  
The winner is he who can "go it alone."

When great Galileo proclaimed that the world,  
In a regular orbit was carelessly whirled,  
And got—not a convert for all of his pains,  
But only derision, and prison, and chains,  
"It moves for all that," was his answering tone,  
For he knew, like the earth, he could "go it alone."

When Kepler, with intellect piercing afar,  
Discovered the law of each planet and star;  
And doctors who ought to have lauded his name,  
Derided his learning and blackened his fame;  
"I can wait," he replied, "till the truth you shall own,"  
For he felt in his heart he could "go it alone."

Alas for the player who idly depends  
In the struggle for life upon kindred and friends  
Whatever the value of blessings like these,  
They can never atone for inglorious ease,  
Nor comfort the coward, who ends with a groan,  
That his crutches have left him to "go it alone."

There is something, no doubt, in the hand you may hold,  
Health, family, culture, wit, beauty and gold;  
And the fortunate owner may fairly regard,  
As each, in its way, a most excellent card—  
Yet the game may be lost, with all these for your own,  
Unless you've the courage to "go it alone."

In battle or business, whatever the game,  
In law or in love, it is ever the same;  
In the struggle for power, or scramble for pelf,  
Let this be your motto: "Rely on yourself!"  
For whether the prize be a ribbon or throne,  
The victor is he who can "go it alone."

## THE BLESSING.

"How beautiful is the rain!  
After the dust and heat,  
On the broad and fiery street.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
In the country on every side,  
Where far and wide,  
Like a leopard's tawny and spotted hide,  
Stretches the plain,  
To the dry grass and dryer grain,  
How welcome is the rain!"

## POOR JAMES WYMPER.

When he was a child they called him "Poor little James." He wasn't little, and he wasn't poor, so far as worldly goods went; nor did those who called him "poor" use the word in kindness toward the motherless, neglected boy. He had red eyelids. No power could brush his hair smooth or keep the knees of his trousers clean. He had a wonderful facility for cutting his fingers and wrapping them up in unpleasant looking rags. He always had a cold in his head. At the age of twelve he could barely read two syllables. His only use in the world appeared to be to serve as an awful example to naughty boys, who would play with knives and disliked soap and water; and for this purpose he was used pretty freely. They sent him to a big school, where he did nothing but get bullied; and when his father died and left him very poor in a new sense of the word, the distant relative who took him in charge out of charity, could find no better employment for him than to sweep out the office and run of errands. By this time he had ceased to be "poor little James," and became POOR JAMES WYMPER.

He could do nothing good of himself, and by some curious perversity set himself to undo the good others had done. He had a craze for taking things to pieces by no means equalled by his capacity to put them together again. He complained that they did not give him time, and declared that this granted, the condition of the victims of his handiwork would be improved. Be this as it might be, every piece of mechanism that fell in his way, from his cousin's sewing-machine to the great hydraulic press at his protector's works, was made to suffer.

He had a fatal facility for always being in the way. He seemed to be all elbows. He could not move ten steps to save his

life without treading upon some one's toes or upsetting something. When you spoke to him he was always in a fog. "The boy is half an idiot," quoth the worthy cotton-spinner, whose bread he ate.

At the age of eighteen he had made only two friends in the world, a blacksmith and a cat—an evil-minded black Tom, who swore at every one else, and bit them savagely when they attempted to put him through the tricks which poor James Wympier had taught him. Amateur hammering at the forge did not improve untidy Jim's appearance, and his cat—not being in a show—did not increase his income. He ran errands for his cousin like a boy when he had attained a man's estate, until one day, when he ran one for himself, and did not come back again.

Fears were entertained that he had come to a bad end. The police were put in motion and rewards offered; but his friend the blacksmith, upon being pressed, said that he had gone to "Mereker"—cat and all.

I do not think that his relations were broken hearted. I fancy that good Mr. Bryce, the cotton-spinner, was rather glad to be rid of his wife's cousin, the errand boy. His wife, who was not unkind to the forlorn lad in a way of her own—a very cold way it was—sighed several times apropos of nothing, and murmured, "Poor James Wympier!"

Five years passed, and Mrs. Bryce was left a widow, by no means so well provided for as she expected to be. Moreover there was a lawsuit about the will, and a squabble in the winding-up of the partnership. She was glad to "get shut"—as her defunct lord would have said—of Manchester; and seeing an advertisement to the effect that a widow lady having a house too large for her, pleasant situated on the Thames near Maidenhead, was prepared to share it with just such a person as herself, transported herself thither, after a due exchange of references and such-like formalities, and found no reason to regret what she had done.

The other widow does not figure much in this story, and therefore it will be enough to say that she was a quiet lady-like woman, rather afraid of her partner in housekeeping, with a daughter, aged eighteen, who ruled the pair, and made the place very pleasant.

Bessy Jervoice was not pretty. Besides her eyes she had not a good feature in her face; but it was a good face—earnest and loving, with a sub-current of fun running under it (as the stream runs under the water-lilies), rippling out constantly. Her figure and her hair were simply perfection. Her little thoroughbred hands were ever busy, and the patter of her dainty feet was pleasant music in many a poor cottage.

Things went on very smoothly at the river-side villa until one rainy day, when, without a "with your leave," or "by your leave," or letter or telegram, or message, or any other sort of preparation, in marches poor James Wympier, dripping with rain and splashed with mud up to his hat.

"If you please, cousin Margaret, I've come back," he said, subsiding in his old low-spirited way into an amber satin drawing-room chair, which in two minutes he soaked through and through.

That was all. No excuse, no petition; a simple announcement that he had come back, conveyed in a manner which made it sufficiently clear that he intended to remain. "If you please, cousin Margaret, I've come back." Not another word did he say, and relapsed into thinking of something else, as usual.

Interrogated respecting his luggage, he replied that it was on the hall table, and there, sure enough, was found a sodden bundle containing a soiled flannel shirt, a pair of slippers, two pipes, a cloth cap without a peak, and a sailor's knife. In answer to further inquiries, he stated that his means were eight-pence, that he had been living in America, that he had walked from Liverpool, and that he wanted something to eat. When dried and fed and asked what he was going to do, he said, "Whatever you please;" and appearing to consider that all difficulty was thus disposed of, he went to sleep.

Poor Mrs. Bryce was at her wits' end. Ordinary hints were thrown away upon such a man. When she said she supposed he was going to London, he replied, Oh dear no; he had come from London. When she told him she was only a lodger in the house, he observed that it was a very nice house to lodge in. I have said that she was kind to him in her way when he was an errand boy, and somehow she could not be hard upon him now. There was something half

ludicrous, half melancholy, in his helplessness that disarmed them all. Bessy declared him to be the largest baby she had ever seen, persisted in speaking of him as *it*, and scandalized the matrons by inquiring gravely after tea, which of them was going to put *it* to bed.

"It's rather unkind for you to jest so, Bessy," said poor Mrs. Bryce, "when you see how distressed I am. What on earth am I to do?"

"I suppose it's too old for the Foundling?" mused Bessy.

"Bessy, be quiet!" said her mother.

"You dear old darling," said the pert one afterward, "don't you see that *we* cannot treat this thing seriously without making it doubly painful for dear Mrs. Bryce? It will come all right in the end."

"Yes, my dear, but when is the end to begin?"

It was to begin by special arrangement the next day, after breakfast; when the following conversation took place:

"Now, James," said his cousin, "we shall not be interrupted for some time, and you really must give me your serious attention."

"Yes, cousin Margaret."

"You see, James, you are a man now, and must act and be treated—do you understand?—treated like other people."

"That's just what I want to be?"

"Well, then, I must tell you frankly that I am much annoyed by your coming here as you did."

"It wasn't my fault that it rained, cousin Margaret. I wish it hadn't," he replied piteously.

"I'm not speaking of your coming in wet and spoiling the chairs, sir; I am much annoyed at your coming here at all."

The good widow thought that she would get on best by being angry, but it was no use.

"Where else was I to go?" he asked.

"How you found me out, I cannot think," sighed the victim. The observation was an unlucky one.

"Ah, ha!" he chuckled, "you thought I was a stupid, did you?"

And then followed a long, weary story of how, passing through Manchester, he had seen this person and spoken to that, and obtained the clue by which he had hunted his listener down. What made it more provoking was the credit he took for this cleverness. He warmed to his subject as he went on, and finished with the air of a man who had rendered an important service and expected to have it promptly recognized.

This threw his victim's cut-and-dried speeches off the line.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" she cried. "It doesn't matter how you found me out; you have done so. The question is, what am I to do with you, now you're here? What am I to do with you?"

"I don't know, cousin Margaret."

"You don't know! A pretty answer for a man of five or six and twenty. Now look here, James Wympier. I should like to do something for you for your poor mother's sake, but I cannot; and—and—you have no right to thrust yourself upon me like this, and—and—are you attending to me, James Wympier?"

"Yes, cousin Margaret," he replied with a jerk, coming suddenly out of his fog.

"What was I saying?"

"That you would like to do something for me for my poor mother's sake."

"That was only half what I said, sir. How dare you pick out my words like that! I went on to say that I couldn't do anything for you, and I can't, I've not the means. I'm very poor; I can hardly manage for myself. My husband left me very badly off."

"Did he leave me anything?"

"You! After your conduct—running away, and frightening us as you did? Is it likely?"

"I know it was wrong to run away, cousin Margaret, but you see I've come back again," he said with the utmost gravity.

This was conclusive. For the last half hour she had been trying to din into his head that he had no business to come back, and here he was taking credit for having returned, as an act which was to cancel all the offences of his youth! Perceiving that his reply had troubled her, he proceeded to promise upon his word of honor that he would never, never run away again. What was to be done with such a man? Talking was clearly useless. One of two courses only remained—to endure him, or call a policeman and turn him out neck and crop.

Mrs. Bryce did not call a policeman.

The conduct of poor James Wympier during the next two or three days was

what, in another man, would have roused the indignation of all concerned by its almost sublime audacity. The proceedings of Mr. Charles Matthews in "Cool as a Cucumber" are timid and retiring in comparison with those of Mrs. Jervoice's unwelcome guest. If the house and all it contained had belonged to him, and its inhabitants were dependents upon his bounty, he could not have behaved more freely; and all this with an air of innocence which utterly disarmed opposition.

"O, never mind me," was his refrain; "I don't want to trouble anybody. I'll do it all for myself. I'm all right. You let me alone and see."

His first great exploit was to precipitate himself upon a washing and wringing machine which he found out of order and disused, in a cellar; and whether he had improved in dexterity, or sufficient time was granted him for the realization of his ideas, need not be discussed here. The result was satisfactory. Not only did he put the thing into working order, but he worked it himself, to the intense delight of Bessy and the consternation of the cook.

Many other useful things he did. He made a windmill which pumped water up to the top of the house, and saved the sixpence a day which had been paid to a boy for his labor. He mended an old boat there was, and took Bessy out for rows on the river. He became the young lady's right hand man in her garden. Before a month was over not only had cousin Margaret become quite resigned to have him on her hands, but Mrs. Jervoice refused to accept any remuneration for his board and lodging, declaring that he was well worth his keep. It was something, you see, for these lone women to have a man about the house who could and would put his hand to this and that. He did not cut his fingers now.

Before this satisfactory condition of affairs had been arrived at, tailor and hosier had been set to work, and really poor James Wympier brightened up wonderfully in appearance under their hands. If his head had not been so big, and his elbows and knees so uncomfortably conspicuous, he would not have been a bad looking man. He was evidently a good-hearted one. He would do anything in his power, poor fellow, for any one; was in fact rather too active sometimes when he had been longer than usual in one of his fogs, on which occasions he would labor like an amiable bull in a china shop, and cause some consternation. Of course he made friends with the nearest blacksmith.

In the early days, when he had not ceased to be considerable a nuisance and an intruder, Bessy had stood his friend. One always takes an interest in those one befriends, and Bessy took a great interest in poor James Wympier—drawing him out, encouraging him, and defending him against practical jokes; but as time passed this young person's feelings toward him appeared to undergo a change. Instead of praising what he did, and encouraging him to further exertion, she found fault and snubbed him. She ceased to make fun of him as "it," and had a store of little bitter disparaging remarks—about his dependence, his want of self-respect, and so on—ready to shoot at him. "I think you are too severe on poor James Wympier," Mrs. Jervoice would say; "he is really very willing, and one must not expect too much of him, poor fellow. If another man had done what he did he would not have been damned with such faint praise, but he was only 'poor James Wympier,' and like the proverbial prophet, had little credit in his own country."

One morning was marked with an unusual event—poor James Wympier received a letter with American stamps upon it.

Among the visitors at Willow Bank, the Thames-side residence of Mrs. Jervoice, was a certain Mr. Augustus Bailey, a young gentleman of pleasing and varied accomplishments. He could sing you music hall songs nearly as well as the "great comiques," his masters. He could imitate most celebrated actors, and was a mighty punster. For the better exhibition of such talents a butt was indispensable and he found one ready made in poor James Wympier. It is needless to observe that poor James Wympier did not love Mr. Augustus Bailey; but it was curious that a usually amiable girl like Bessy Jervoice should encourage the latter in sallies which were often as ungenerous as they were insolent.

"I want you to put my sewing machine in good order, Mr. Wympier," said Bessy one day, "and mind it works smoothly, for I've got to make a dress in a hurry."