Fanny Fern

The Play-day Book: New Stories for Little Folks

Fanny Fern

The Play-day Book: New Stories for Little Folks

Published by Good Press, 2022

goodpress@okpublishing.info

EAN 4064066424060

Table of Contents

PREFACE.
A RAINY DAY, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.
THE BOY WHO WANTED TO SEE THE WORLD.
THE JOURNEY.
CHAPTER I.
CHAPTER II.
CHAPTER III.
THE MORNING-GLORY.
A PEEP OUT OF MY WINDOW.
THE CIRCUS.
WHAT EVERY LITTLE CHILD MAY SEE.
A STORY FOR BOYS.
KATY’S FIRST GRIEF.
OUR NEW DOG DASH.
FUN AND FOLLY; A STORY FOR THOUGHTLESS BOYS.
HISTORY OF A FAMILY OF CATS.
THE POOR-RICH CHILD.
THE HOD-CARRIER.
THE TOM-BOY.
THE LITTLE MUSICIAN.
LIONS.
THE CRIPPLE.
THE TRUANT.
BESSIE AND HER MOTHER.
RED-HEADED ANDY.
LITTLE NAPKIN.

THE SPOILED BOY.
PUSS AND I.
LUCY’S FAULT.
UNTIDY MARY.
A LUCKY IRISH BOY.
THE CHILD PRINCE AND THE CHILD PEASANT.
THE WILD ROSE.
JENNY AND THE BUTCHER.
THE TWO BABES.
THE LITTLE SISTERS.
OURS; OR, A LOOK BACKWARD.
CHILDREN’S TROUBLES.
THE VACANT LOT.
“FOOLISH NED.”
GREENWOOD.
BED-TIME.
SOLILOQUY OF OVERGROWN FIFTEEN.
A TEMPERANCE STORY.
ALL ABOUT HORACE.
A WALK I TOOK.
SUSY FOSTER.
“FEED MY LAMBS.”
TWO LIVE PICTURES.
A RIDDLE; OR, MAMMA’S CHRISTMAS PRESENT.
THANKSGIVING.

PREFACE.

Table of Contents

Since "Little Ferns" was published, I have had many letters, and messages, from little children all over the country, asking me "to write them soon another little book of stories." Here is one that I have prepared for you and them: I hope you will like it; for some of you, it will be too young a book; for some of you, too old; those for whom it is too young, will perhaps read it to little brothers and sisters; those for whom it is too old now, can look at the pictures and learn to read, little by little, by spelling out the words in the stories. I call it "The Play-Day Book;" because I made it to read when you are out of school, and want to be amused. If, while you are looking only for amusement, you should happen to find instruction, so much the better.

Fanny Fern.

A RAINY DAY, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

Table of Contents

“Oh, dear, I knew it would rain to-day, just because I didn’t want to have it; every thing is so dark, and cold, and gloomy; drip—drip—drip—oh, dear! had I made the world, mother, I never would have made a drop of rain.”

“What would the cattle have had to drink, then?”

“I am sure I don’t know; I don’t see why they need drink. I could drink milk, you know, mother.”

“But if it didn’t rain the grass would all dry up, and then the cows would give no milk.”

“Well, I don’t know any thing about that. I know I don’t like rain, any how; do you like a rainy day, mother?”

“Yes, very much: it gives me such a nice chance to work; I have nobody to interrupt me. I can do a great deal on a rainy day.”

“But I have no work, mother.”

“Ah, that is just the trouble: time lies heavy on idle hands; suppose you wind these skeins of silk into nice little balls for my work-basket?”

“So I will; won’t you talk to me while I am doing it? tell me something about yourself, when you was a little girl—little like me; tell me the very first thing you can ever remember when you was a tiny little girl.”

“Bless me, that was so long ago that you will have to give me time to think. Can you keep your chattering tongue still five minutes, while I do it?”

Susy nodded her head, and fixed her eye very resolutely on a nail in the wall.

A long pause.

“Hum—hum,” muttered Susy pointing to her lips, as her mamma moved in her chair.

“Yes, you can speak now.”

“Have you thought of it, mother?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that’s nice; let me get another card to wind that skein on, when I have done this; I hope it is a long story, I hope it is funny, I hope there ain’t any ‘moral’ in it. Katy Smith’s mother always puts a moral in; I don’t like morals, do you, mother?”

Susy’s mother laughed, and said that she didn’t like them when she was her age.

“There now—there—I’m ready, now begin; but don’t say ‘Once on a time,’ I hate ‘Once on a time;’ I always know it is going to be a hateful story when it begins ‘Once on a time.’”

“Any thing more, Susy?”

“Yes, mother: don’t end it, ‘They lived ever after in peace, and died happily.’ I hate that, too.”

“Well, upon my word. I did not know I had such a critic for a listener. I am afraid you will have to give me a longer time to think, so that I can fix up my story a little.”

“No, mother, that’s just what I don’t want. I like it best unfixed.”

“Well, the first thing I remember was one bitter cold Thanksgiving morning, in November. My mother had told me the night before that the next day was Thanksgiving, and

that we were all invited to spend it ten miles out of town, at the house of a minister in the country."

"Horrid!" said Susy; "I know you had an awful time. I am glad I wasn't born, then. Well—what else?"

"We were all to get up and breakfast the next morning by candle-light, so as to take a very early start, that we might have a longer stay at Mr. Dunlap's. My mother told me all about it the night before, as she tucked me up in my little bed, after which I saw her go to the closet and take down a pretty bright scarlet woolen frock and a snow-white apron to wear with it, with a nice little plaited ruffle round the neck; then she laid a pair of such snow-white woolen stockings side of them, and a pair of bright red morocco shoes."

"How nice—were you pretty, mother?"

"Of course my mother thought so; I think I looked very much as you do now."

Susy jumped up, and looked in the glass.

"Then you had light-blue eyes, a straight nose, a round face, and yellow curly hair? Did you, mother, certain, true?"

"Yes."

"Well, mother."

"Well, then, my mother went down stairs."

"Didn't she kiss you, first?"

"Oh, yes, she always did that."

"And heard you say your prayers?"

"Yes."

"Our Father, and, Now I lay me?"

"Yes."

"How queer for you to say my prayers when you were a little girl. I am glad you said my prayers. Well, mother."

“Then I lay a long while thinking about the visit.”

“In the dark?”

“Yes.”

“Any body with you?”

“No.”

“Wern’t you afraid?”

“Not a bit.”

“You funny little mother—well.”

“And by-and-by I went to sleep, and slept soundly till morning. Long before daylight my mother lifted me out of bed, washed and dressed me by a nice warm fire, and then took me down in her arms to breakfast. I had never eaten breakfast by candle-light before. I liked the bright lights, and the smell of the hot coffee and hot cakes, and my mother’s bright, cheerful face. It did not take us long to eat breakfast, but before we had done the carriage drove up to the door. Then my mother wrapped some hot bricks upon the hearth in some pieces of carpet.”

“What for?”

“To keep our feet warm in the carriage, while we were riding, and then she pulled another pair of warm stockings over my red shoes and stockings, and put on my wadded cloak, and tucking my curls behind my ears, tied a blue silk hood, trimmed with swan’s down under my chin, and putting on her own cloak and bonnet, led me to the door.

“I had never seen the stars before; they glittered up in the clear blue sky, oh, so bright, so beautiful! The keen frost-air nipped my little cheeks, but when they lifted me into the carriage, I was sorry not to see the pretty stars any longer; they wrapped up every thing but the tip end of my

nose, in shawls and tippets, and though I could not see the bright stars any more, I kept thinking about them; I wondered what kept them from falling down on the ground, and where they staid in the daytime, and how long it would take me to count them all, and, if one ever *did* fall down on the ground, if it would be stealing for me to keep it for 'my ownty doan-ty.'

"I was not used to getting up so early, so the motion of the carriage soon rocked me to sleep, and when I awoke it was broad daylight, and the carriage had stopped at the minister's door. Oh, how the snow was piled up! way to the tops of the fences, and all the trees were bending under its weight; every little bush was wreathed with it; the tops of the barns, and sheds, and houses, were covered with it; and great long icicles, like big sticks of rock candy, were hanging from the eaves. I liked it most as well as the pretty stars; I was glad I had seen them and the soft white snow.

"Then the minister, and his wife and boys came out, and we went in with them to a bright fire, and the coachman put up his horses in the barn, and went into the kitchen into the big chimney-corner, to thaw his cold fingers. They gave me some warm milk, and my mother some hot coffee, and then the grown people talked and talked great big words, and I ran about the room to see what I could see."

"What did you see?"

"First, there was a Maltese cat, with five little bits of kittens, all curled up in a bunch under their mother, eating their breakfast; by-and-by the old cat went out in the kitchen to eat hers, and then I took one of the kittys in my white apron, and played baby with it. It purred and opened

its brown eyes, and its little short tail kept wagging. I could not help thinking the little country kitty was glad to see some city company. Then I got tired of the kitty, and went up to the corner of the room to look at some shells, and the minister’s boy told me to put them up to my ear, and they would make a sound like the sea, where they came from; I asked him if they were alive? and he laughed at me; and then my face grew as red as my frock, so that I had to hide it in my white apron.

“Then, after a while, the bells rang for church, for the minister was going to preach a Thanksgiving sermon; and my mother said that she was going with him and his wife to hear it; but that she would be back soon, and that I might stay, while she was gone, in the warm parlor, with the kitty and the shells; and that the minister’s boy would stay with me if I didn’t like to stay alone. Then I crept up into my mother’s lap, and whispered that I did not like the minister’s boy because he had laughed at me, and that I wanted his mother to take him away with her to church, and leave me all alone with the kittys and the shells; then the minister’s boy laughed again when they told him, and said ‘I was a queer one;’ but I didn’t care for that, when I saw him tie on his cap and pull on his mittens to go off. So they opened the door of the sitting-room into the kitchen, that Betty might see I did not catch my apron on fire, and then they went to church.”

“Didn’t they leave you any thing to eat?”

“Oh, yes, I forgot that; I had a plate of ‘Thanksgiving cookies,’ as they called them, and as soon as the door was

shut, I took the plate in my lap and never stopped till I had eaten them all up."

"Wasn't you a little pig, mother?"

"Not so very piggish, after all, because I was so astonished with my candle-light breakfast, before starting from home, that I forgot to eat any thing. So, you see, I was very glad of the cookies."

"I am glad the minister's boy did not stay, mother; I dare say he would have eaten them all up. Didn't you get tired before church was out, mother?"

"No; I looked out of the window a long while, at the pretty white snow; and by-and-by I saw a cunning little bird pecking at the window; it was all white but its head, and that was black. I wanted to open the window and let it in; I thought it must be cold, but I was afraid the minister's wife would not like it if the snow should fly in from the window-sill on her nice carpet; just then Betty the cook came in, and she told me that it was a little snow-bird, and that she thought it had become quite chilled, for the frost lay thick on the windows; Betty said she would open the window, and in it flew on the carpet; then I tip-toed softly up and caught him; he fluttered a little, but I think he liked my warm hand. Betty told me to put him in my bosom, and so I did; and then he got warm as toast, and the first thing I knew; out he flew, and perched on top of a rose geranium in the window; then I gave him some cookie crumbs, and he ate them, and then he began pecking at the window, and Betty said she thought he wanted to get out to his little mates outside. I did not want him to go, I liked him better than the kittys or the shells, but when Betty said that perhaps the cat would

catch and eat him, I said, ‘Let him go;’ so she opened the window, and away he flew.

“Then I did not know what to do; I wished the minister would not preach such a long sermon, and keep my mother away. I wondered what we were going to have for dinner, for I began to smell something very nice in the kitchen, and I wished more than ever that sermon was over. I went and peeped through the crack of the door into the kitchen, to find out what smelt so good, and I saw, oh, such a big fire-place, you might almost have played blind-man’s buff in it, only I supposed that ministers would not let their children play blind-man’s buff; and front of the fire-place was a great tin-kitchen, and in the tin-kitchen was a monstrous turkey, and front of the turkey kneeled Betty, putting something on it out of a tin box.

“I said, ‘Betty, what is that tin thing?’

“Betty said, ‘It is a dredging-box, you little chatterbox;’ and then the red-faced coachman, who was toasting his toes in the chimney-corner, laughed, and said, ‘Come here, sis!’

“I did not go. I did not like to be laughed at, and I was not his sis; but still I kept smelling things through the door-crack, because I had nothing else to do, and because I liked the good smell. I saw Betty take out three pies to warm; one, she said, was mince, and I thought when I got a piece how I would pick out all the nice raisins and eat them; the other was pumpkin, and the other was an apple pie; then there was a large chicken pie, and a cold boiled ham, and some oysters; I knew my mother brought the ham and oysters from the city, because I heard her talking about it at

home; and then I wondered if folks who went to eat dinner with ministers had always to bring a part of their dinners. Then Betty came in to set the table for dinner; I was afraid she would not put on a plate for me, and that I should have to wait in the corner till the big folks had eaten up all the good things; but she did, and set up a little high chair with arms, that the minister's boy used to sit in when he was little. I told Betty I did not like the minister's boy's chair, and that I wouldn't sit in it; and then Betty said, 'Sho, sho—little girls must be seen and not heard.' I asked Betty what that meant, and then she and the red-faced coachman laughed again, and the coachman said, 'Sis, it is fun talking to you.' Then I heard a great noise in the entry, such a stamping of feet, and such a blowing of noses; sure enough meeting was done; I was so glad, for I knew the turkey was.

"Then the minister said, 'Come to me, little one.'"

"Oh, mother! I am so sorry; I suppose he wanted you to say your catechism, when you were so hungry; did you go?"

"I stood with my finger in my mouth, looking him in the face, and thinking about it. I liked his face; it was not cross, and there was a pleasant smile about his mouth, and a soft sweet look in his eyes; so I went slowly up to him. I was glad he did not call me 'sis,' like the coachman; I did not like to be called sis; I wanted people to be polite to me, just as they were to my mother."

"What did he say to you, mother? Did he make you say the catechism?"

"No; he pushed my curls back off my face, and kissed my forehead; then he asked me if I liked to hear little stories?"

"Did he? Why, what a nice minister!"

“I said, ‘Yes; do you know any? I know some.’

“Then the minister asked me what I knew.

“Then I said,

“‘Two wise men of Gotham went to sea in a bowl; if the bowl had been stronger, my tale would have been longer.’ Then the minister laughed and asked me if I believed that; then I said ‘Yes, it is printed in a real book, in my Mother Goose, at home;’ and then the minister told me to ‘say some more Mother Goose,’ and then I told him all about ‘Old Mother Hubbard, who went to the cupboard,’ and ‘Jack and Gill,’ and ‘Four-and-twenty black-birds,’ and ‘Little Bo-peep;’ and then the minister laughed and said, ‘Mother Goose forever!’ I did not know what that meant, and I did not dare to ask, because the ministers boy came into the room just then, and said, ‘What a nice baby you have got on your knee, father;’ and that made my face very red; and I asked the minister to let me get down, and then the minister’s boy came up to me and said, ‘Sis!’ and I said, pouting, ‘I ain’t sis, I am Susy;’ and then he laughed, and said again, ‘What a queer one!’ and began pulling the cat’s tail.”

“How ugly—I wish I’d been alive then, I would have pulled his hair for teasing my mother so. What happened next, mother?”

“Then Betty brought in the roast turkey, and the hot potatoes, and the oysters, and things; and then the minister himself lifted me up in my high chair, between him and my mother, and then he folded his hands and said a blessing.”

“Was it very long, mother?”

“No, only a few words, and then he carved the turkey, and gave me the wish-bone.”

“Why, mother, he was not a bit like a minister; was he? Well?”

“Then I ate, and ate, and ate; and the minister gave me all the plums out of his pie, because he said that he could not find four-and-twenty black-birds to put in it; and after dinner he picked out my nuts for me; and when his boy called me ‘Sis,’ he said, ‘John, behave!’ After dinner, I asked the minister if he knew how to play cat’s-cradle; he said he used to know once; then he said to his wile, ‘Mother, can’t you give us a string, this little one and I are going to play cat’s-cradle.’ He was such a while learning that I told him I did not think ministers *could* play cat’s-cradle; but his wife said he was stupid on purpose, to see what I would do; he got the string into a thousand knots, and I got out of patience, and then I wouldn’t teach him any more; then he told me to see if I could spell cro-non-ho-ton-thol-o-gus, without getting my tongue in a kink. Then the minister’s boy said, ‘Try her on Po-po-cat-a-pet-el, father.’ Then the minister and I played ‘Hunt the Slipper,’ and ‘Puss in the Corner,’ and ‘Grand Mufti,’ and I was so sorry when a man drove up to the door, in a sleigh, and carried the minister off to see a poor sick woman.”

“Why, mother, I never heard of such a kind of a minister as he was. I thought ministers never laughed, and that they thought it was wicked to play; and that’s why I don’t like them, and am afraid of them. I wish our minister, Mr. Stokes, was like that minister you have been telling about; then I wouldn’t cross over the street when I see him coming. Do you think Mr. Stokes likes little children, mother? When he sees me he says, ‘How is your mother, Susy?’ but he never

looks at me when he says it, and goes away after it as fast as ever he can; but what else happened at your minister’s, mother?”

“Well, by that time, the sun began to go down, and the frost began to thicken on the windows; and though the large wood fire blazed cheerfully in the chimney, my mother said we had such a long, cold ride before us, that it was time we were starting. So I went out in the kitchen to tell the red-faced coachman to tackle up his horses, and there he lay asleep on the wooden settle.”

“What is a settle?”

“A rough kitchen-sofa, made of boards, with a very high back. I touched his arm, and he only said, as he turned over, ‘Whoa, there—whoa!’ ‘John,’ said I, ‘we want you to tackle up the horses; my mother wants to go home, John.’

“‘Get up, Dobbin, get up, Jack,’ said John, without opening his eyes.

“‘John,’ said I, right in his ear, for I was getting tired.

“‘Oh, that’s you sis, is it?’ said John, springing up, and knocking over the old settle with a tremendous noise. ‘Bless my soul, that’s you;’ and then he burst into a loud laugh, and I found out that he had not been asleep a bit, and only did so to plague me.

“Well, we warmed the bricks again; and wrapped them up with the old pieces of carpet, to put under our feet, and I drank some warm milk, and the minister’s wife put some cookies in my bag, and tied my soft blue silk hood round my face, and as she did it, she sighed such a long sigh, that I said,

“‘Does it tire you to tie my hood?’

"'No—no—no—no'—and then a great big tear came rolling down her cheek, and then she said, 'There is a little silken hood like yours in the drawer up-stairs, but I have no little rosy face to tie it round now;' and I stopped and thought a minute, for at first I did not understand; and then I said softly,

"'I'm sorry.'

"And then she wiped away her tears, and said, 'Don't cry dear; you looked like her, in that little hood; but God knows better than we do—I shall see her again some day.'

"Then she kissed me, and put me into the carriage, and John cracked his whip, and we were just starting, when the minister's boy came running out with my little bag, and said,

"'Here's your bag, sis; kiss me and you shall have it.'

"'I wouldn't kiss you, no—not for twenty bags,' said I; 'I love your mother, and I love your father; but I ain't "sis" and I don't love you, and I won't kiss you.'

"'Queer one—queer one,' said he, tossing my silk bag into the carriage, and making a great snow-ball with his hands to throw at John."

"Hateful thing."

"You must not say that, Susy."

"Why not?"

"Because that minister's boy is your father."

"Oh—oh—oh," screamed Susy, hopping up and down, "did I ever—did I ever—who would have thought it, that such a hatef—I mean that such a—boy should make such a dear papa, oh, mother; oh, I am so happy, it is so funny."

“Happy on a *rainy* day, Susy. I thought an hour ago that you were the most miserable little girl in the world, because you could not make the sun shine.”

“*You* are my sunshine, mother.”

“And papa, that hatef—”

“Now don’t, mother. I would never have said, so—never, if I had known—but how could *I* tell he was going to turn out my papa? any more than you could—when he used to call you sis.”

“Sure enough, Susy.”

THE BOY WHO WANTED TO SEE THE WORLD.

Table of Contents

"Nothing but school, school—I am tired of it; I am tired of living at home; I am tired of every thing. My father is kind enough, so is my mother; but I want to be a man for myself. I am a very tall boy of my age; I am sure it is time I had off my round jacket. I want to see the world; I don't believe it is necessary for a fellow to swallow so many Greek and Latin dictionaries before he can do it. I have a great mind to 'clear out;' there is a quarter of a dollar up in my box, and I am a 'prime' walker; pooh—who cares? They should not tie a fellow up so, if they don't want him to run off. I can't stand it; I will go this very day; of course I sha'n't want any clothes but those I have on my back; they ought to last me a year; they are right out of the tailor's shop. He didn't know, when he made them, what a long journey they were going; who knows but one of these days, this very suit of clothes may be shown in a glass case, to crowds of people, as the very suit that the famous traveler, John Sims, wore when he was a boy. I like that! I never could see the use of keeping boys cooped up at home. Who wants to be a walking dictionary? I don't. I feel as if I could go round the world and back again in twenty minutes; no—not *back*; you don't catch me back in a hurry! I should like to see myself come sneaking home, after Bill Jones, and Sam Jackson, and Will Johnson, and all the fellows in the street, had heard I had run off. Of course

they’ll miss me awfully; I am ‘prime’ at ‘hop-scotch,’ and ‘bat-and-ball,’ and ‘hockey.’ I can stand on my head longer than any fellow among them; and when it comes to leaping over a post—ah, just ask my mother how many pairs of trousers I have stripped out doing it. I guess Jack Adams will miss me in the geography class; he always expects me to tell him his lesson; stupid dunce! I guess the school-master will miss me, too, for I was always the show-off-fellow, when company came into school; they can’t say I didn’t study my lessons well; but I am sick of it, crammed to death, and now I’m off. I wonder if I shall ever be sick when I am on my travels; that would be rather bad; mother is so kind when a fellow is sick: pshaw—I won’t be sick—who’s afraid? who’s a cry-baby? not I; I am John Sims, the great traveler that is to be—hurrah! I wonder who will have my old sled ‘Winded Arrow?’ I dare say sis will be going down hill on it; what a plague sisters are. Dora always has the biggest piece of pie; not that I care about it—I am too much of a man; but it is confoundedly provoking; if you try to have a little fun with girls; they holler out, ‘Oh, don’t, you hurt!’ and they bawl for just nothing at all, except to get their brothers a boxed ear. I can’t bear girls; I never could see any use in them. Now, if Dora had been a boy—ah, that would have been fun; he could have gone off with me on my travels; well—never mind about that, it is time I was going, if I mean to go to-day; father will be home to dinner soon, and then my plan will be all knocked in the head; I shall be sent out of an errand, or some such thing. I guess I will go out at the back door; it is ridiculous, but somehow or other I feel just as if every body knew what I was going to do; but once round the

corner—down —— street—and off on the railroad track, and they may all whistle for Johnny Sims, the famous traveler."

"Thump—thump—thump! I wonder who that is, knocking at my front door," said Betty Smith; "I hope it is not the minister! I can't leave these preserves for any body! thump—thump! What a hurry some folks are in, that they can't give a body a chance to wipe their sticky fingers on a roller; nobody comes here but the peddler and the tinman, unless it is the minister; who can it be?" and Betty opened the door, and hurled from between her teeth, her usual blunt, "What do you want?"

"A piece of bread, if you please; I've taken such a long walk, and I am very hungry."

"Where did you come from?" asked Betty, "and where are you going? and why didn't you put a piece of bread or something in your pocket before you started, hey?"

"I did not think I should be so hungry," said the boy.

"Well—where are you going now, any how?"

"I don't know."

"Don't know? that's a pretty story! how did you come by those good clothes? I'll bet a sixpence you stole 'em; they are genuine broadcloth—fine as our minister wears—and you begging for a piece of bread! I can't put that and that together. You don't get any bread from me, till you open your mouth a little wider, my young mister, and tell me what you are up to. I shouldn't wonder if you were sent here by some bad people, or something, to see if my man was to home; I can tell you now that he ain't, but there's a gun behind that kitchen door that's better than forty of him, and I know how to handle it, too. Do you hear that, now? I'll have