

THE
PLUM-PUDDING.



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SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY, 56, PATERNOSTER ROW,
AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS.

THE PLUM-PUDDING.



"I ONCE saw," said my uncle Robert, speaking to my brother and myself, who had called upon him at his cottage—"I once saw," said he, "a plum-pudding, the making of which had in one way or other employed more than a thousand men." "A thousand men!" said I; "why, it must have been as large as a church!" "A thousand men!" said my brother; "why I would walk twenty miles to see such a pudding!"

"Well," replied my uncle, "if that be the

case, you shall see just such a pudding next Friday, if you will come and dine with me. Friday will be my birthday, and exactly at one o'clock we will sit down to cut up the wonderful plum-pudding." "But where is the pudding to be made, uncle?" said I. "And how can you get a pot big enough to boil it in?" cried my brother. "You cannot have it in this house, for it would never come through the door-way." "Never mind about that," replied uncle Robert. "If you will do your part in helping to eat it, I will take all the care upon myself of seeing that it is made properly. 'f we should find the house too small, we will have the pudding in the big field at the back of the orchard."

"What a pudding it will be!" said my brother Harry, snapping his fingers; "but how shall we be able to cut it up?"

"O," replied my uncle, "never fear. If it be necessary, I will borrow my neighbour Brown's long ladder to get to the top of it; and I should think that a wagon and horses would be more than sufficient to remove the slices as I cut them."

"A long ladder, and a wagon and horses!" said Harry, lifting up his eyebrows with surprise; "why, all the neighbourhood will be in an uproar: we shall have a thousand persons to see it. However, as the pudding will be so very large, we shall perhaps be able to

spare most of them a taste ; but I should like of all things to see it made."

Uncle Robert would by no means agree to this proposal ; so we left him, promising to be at his house exactly at half-past twelve on the next Friday.

For the next few days we thought more of the plum-pudding than we did of our books. My brother absolutely dreamed of it ; and I verily believe that no three days of our whole lives ever appeared to us so long as those we passed through before my uncle's birthday arrived. We were up betimes, and scrubbed our faces with cold water till they were red as cherries. Never, sure, were two happier hearts than those that beat in our bosoms, when at eleven o'clock we set off for Cranberry cottage, where we arrived full half an hour before the time fixed upon.

Harry and I had observed a ladder leaning against the end of Brown's house, and we concluded at once that it was placed there to be in readiness. A wagon also we saw that stood under the wheelwright's shed, which we doubted not would in a little time be moving towards the cottage. Now, we had seen a ladder standing against Brown's house, and a wagon under the wheelwright's shed, twenty times before then, but our heads were so full of the plum-pudding, that we had no idea the ladder or the wagon could be wanted for any

other purpose than the important one of rendering assistance in disposing of the wonderful pudding.

Harry and I, who had fancied that the cottage would be in strange confusion in consequence of the great preparations necessary to be made, were not a little surprised to find every thing as quiet and in as much order as usual.

We were very anxious to have a peep at the kitchen; but uncle Robert was on the look out, and took care we should have no opportunity. Exactly as the clock struck one, Mr. Raikes, uncle Robert's old friend, entered the cottage, and at the same moment Peggy Saunders, uncle Robert's housekeeper, brought in a dish with a cover over it, and set it on the table. "My old friend," said Mr. Raikes, speaking to my uncle, "I need not ask you what is under that cover. Twenty birthdays have I been mercifully spared to sit down to dinner with you, and a plum-pudding has always smoked at the top of the table." "True, true," replied my uncle; "I am fond of observing old customs, and so long as we are fellow-pilgrims in this uncertain world, I trust that as my birthday comes round I shall have my old dish on the table, and my old and honoured friend seated near me."

Uncle Robert then asked a blessing, and the cover was removed from the plum-pudding. I do not know that a better pudding

was ever set upon a table, but it was a sad fall-off from what we expected to see.

"But this is not the pudding you promised us, uncle," cried Harry, as soon as the cover was taken from the dish. "The very same," said uncle Robert. "Why, did you not say you would borrow neighbour Brown's ladder to get to the top of it?" "I said I would do so if it was necessary, Harry," replied my uncle Robert; "but you see I can contrive to get to the top of it without the ladder." "And did you not say," cried I, "that you would get a wagon and horses to remove the slices?" "O, no!" replied he; "what I said was, that I thought a wagon and horses would be more than sufficient for the purpose; and I think so still." "But you do not mean to say, uncle," continued Harry, "that a thousand persons have been employed in making that pudding?" "Yes I do," was uncle's reply; "and after dinner I will try to convince you that what I say is true."

As soon as the table-cloth was removed, and some fruit was placed on the table, uncle Robert handed to me a slate and a slate-pencil, to put down the number of persons who had done any thing towards making the pudding. Harry would have it that nobody had any thing to do with it but Peggy Saunders: he was, however, very soon of a different opinion. Old Mr. Raikes appeared

heartily to enjoy our wonder as uncle Robert proceeded thus:—

“In making a plum-pudding flour is used, and to produce this flour many persons are employed. The ground has to be ploughed and harrowed, the seed to be sown, the corn to be reaped and ground, and all must have been done before Peggy Saunders could get enough at the baker’s to make a pudding. Now, a plough is formed partly of iron, and iron is procured from a great depth in the earth; perhaps a hundred men are employed in these mines before a single piece of iron is produced. Then there is the wood-work of the plough and harrow. The timber must have been felled, barked, lopped, and sawn into pieces for the wheelwright. The gearing of the horses which ploughed and harrowed the field, is partly formed of leather; this must have been tanned, curried, and worked up in a proper manner.”

As uncle Robert proceeded, I put down on my slate the numbers of the men which he thought had been employed, and I was astonished, and so was my brother Harry.

“Then,” continued uncle Robert, “we must consider that plums, sugar, currants, citron, lemon-peel, nutmegs, and allspice, are brought from different places abroad, where numbers of persons are constantly employed to prepare them. They are brought across

the wide sea in ships. These ships could not be made without the assistance of many men. nor navigated without many sailors. The hen's-nest must have been visited for eggs; the milkmaid must have been employed in supplying milk; the butcher must have killed the cow before he could sell the suet necessary for the pudding."

"Well!" cried I, holding up my slate, "I am sure you might give over now; see what a many columns of figures I have got!" "O no," replied uncle Robert, "you have got a great deal to do yet; for now the materials of the pudding are put together, it must be boiled; now the water came from the pump, to make which the pump-maker and many of his men have been busily occupied. The coals which made the fire were got from under ground by colliers, hundreds of whom very likely were employed in the mines whence they were obtained. There is, too, the basin in which the pudding was boiled: this was made at the potter's. And the cloth in which it was wrapped was woven in some manufactory." How long uncle Robert would have gone on I cannot tell, for I lost all patience; so I reckoned up the number on my slate of the workmen and labourers in wood and iron, mechanics, miners, shipwrights, foreigners, and sailors, and others who had directly or indirectly done something

towards producing the plum-pudding on the table, and found it to be more than double the number that my uncle had mentioned.

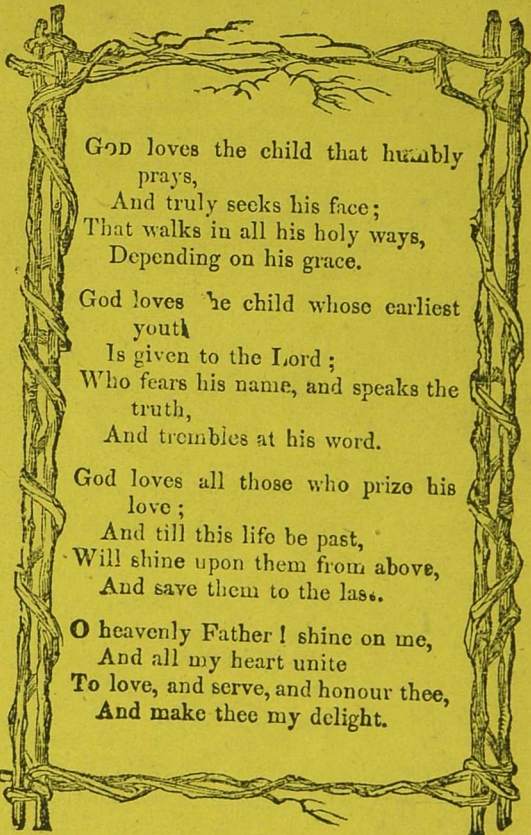
Harry and I stared with amazement, but we had not a word to say, for the thing was plain enough. Uncle Robert then had some serious conversation with his old friend, and I cannot help thinking that he said what he did on purpose to impress the youthful minds of my brother Harry and myself.

"If I had my life to begin again, Mr. Raikes," said he, "I would devote it early to Christ. 'Early piety,' says a christian writer, 'is the way to eminent piety,' and the longer I live the more I am persuaded of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of the value of that salvation wrought out for us by the Son of God, who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Mr. Raikes then mentioned about his own childhood, and how he had been led to pray while yet a child, and how he had found that Jesus, who died on the cross to save sinners, had been his Saviour and Friend.

Uncle Robert now lies beneath the green grass in the churchyard, but as his birthday comes round, it brings with it not only the remembrance of the wonderful plum-pudding, but also the remarks which he and his friend made about early piety.

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God loves the child that humbly
prays,
And truly seeks his face;
That walks in all his holy ways,
Depending on his grace.

God loves the child whose earliest
youth
Is given to the Lord ;
Who fears his name, and speaks the
truth,
And trembles at his word.

God loves all those who prize his
love ;
And till this life be past,
Will shine upon them from above,
And save them to the last.

O heavenly Father ! shine on me,
And all my heart unite
To love, and serve, and honour thee,
And make thee my delight.