

## XII.

## An axe to grind.

When I *was* a little boy, I *remember* one cold winter morning, I *was accosted* by a *smiling* man with an axe on his shoulder. "My pretty boy," *said* he, "*has your father a grindstone?*" "Yes sir," *said* I. "You *are* a fine little fellow," *said* he, "*will you let me grind my axe on it?*"

*Pleased* with his compliment of "fine little fellow," I *answered*, "Oh, yes, sir; it *is* down in the shop. "And *will* you, my little man, "*said* he, *patting* me on the head, "*get* me a little hot water?" How *could* I *refuse*? I ran, and soon *brought* a kettle full. "How *old are* you and what *is* your name?" *continued* he without *waiting* for a reply. "I *am* sure you *are* one of the finest lads I *have* ever *seen*. *Will* you just *turn* a few minutes for me?"

*Tickled* with the flattery, I *went* to work, and bitterly *did* I *rue* the day. It was a new

axe, and I *toiled* and *tugged* till I *was* almost *tired* to death. I *found* this new axe "as hard to *wear*" as father *did* his new boots, which *made* him very cross for three days. The axe *grinding* *gave* me a lesson I *shall* never *forget*,—for the school bell *rang*, and I *could* not *get* away; my hands *were* *blistered*, and it was not half *ground*.

At length, however, the axe *was* *sharpened*, and the man *turned* to me with, "Now, you little rascal, you *have* *played* the truant; *cut* to school or you *will* *rue* it."

Alas! *thought* I, it *was* hard enough to *turn* a grindstone this cold day, but now to *be* *called* a little rascal *is* too much. It *sank* deep in my mind, and often *have* I *thought* of it since.

When I *see* a merchant over polite to his customers, *begging* them to *take* a little brandy, and *throwing* his goods on the counter, I *think* to myself, that man *has* an axe to *grind*.

When I *see* a man *flattering* the people, making great professions of attachment to liberty, who *is*, in private life, a tyrant, me *thinks*, *look* out, good people, that fellow *would* *set* you *turning* grindstones.

When I *see* a man, *placed* in office by party



spirit, without a single qualification to *render* him either respectable or useful, alas! me *thinks*, deluded people, you ARE *doomed*, for a season, to *turn* the grindstone for a booby.

### Sentences.

- Nº 1. I was accosted by a smiling man with an axe on his shoulder.
- „ 2. My pretty boy, has your father a grindstone?
- „ 3. Will you just turn a few minutes for me? I am sure you are one of the finest lads I have ever seen.
- „ 4. I found this new axe as "hard to wear" as father did his new boots.
- „ 5. Now, you little rascal, you have played the truant; cut to school or you will rue it.
- „ 6. It sank deep in my mind, and often have I thought of it since.
- „ 7. When I see a marchant over polite, I think to myself, that man has an axe to grind.
- „ 8. When I see a man flattering the people, methinks, look out, that fellow would set you turning his grindstone.

### Questions.

What means, "an axe to grind?" How was the boy accosted? Why did he answer so readily? What is flattery? Did the man gain his object? Was the boy well paid for his trouble? Was the lesson a good one? Did the boy profit by it? What is the moral of this lesson?

### XIII.

### The story of a leaf.

I *am* only a leaf. My home *is* one of the great trees which *grow* near the school-house.

All winter I *was wrapped* up in a tiny small blanket, *tucked* up in a little brown cradle, and *rocked* by the winds as they *blew*.

Do you not *believe* it, little reader. What I *say is* true.

Next fall *break* off a branch of a tree, and *see* whether you *can not find* a leafbud on it. It *will look* like a little brown knot.

*Break* it, and inside you *will see* some soft, white down; that *is* the blanket. The brown shell that you *break is* the cradle.



Well, as I WAS *telling* you, I WAS *rocked* all winter in my cradle on the branch. When the warm days *came*, and soft rains *fell*, then I *grew* very fast indeed. I soon *pushed* myself out of my cradle, *dropped* my blanket, and *showed* my pretty green dress to all who *came* by.

Oh how glad every one *was* to *see* me! And here I *am*, so happy, with my little brothers and sisters about me. Every morning the birds *come* and *sing* to us; the great sun *shines* upon us, and the winds *fan* us.

We *dance* with the winds, we *smile* back at the bright sun, and *make* a pleasant shade for the birds. Every day, happy, laughing school-children *pass* under our tree.

We are always glad to *see* you, boys and girls—glad to *see* your bright eyes, and *hear* you say, "How beautiful the leaves *are*!"

### Sentences.

- Nº 1. I am only a leaf.  
 „ 2. I was wrapped up in a tiny small blanket.  
 „ 3. Break off a branch of a tree and you can find a leaf bud on it.  
 „ 4. The brown shell that you break is the cradle.

- „ 5. I was rocked all winter in my cradle on the branch.  
 „ 6. I am so happy with my little brothers and sisters about me.  
 „ 7. We dance to the winds, we smile back at the bright sun and make a pleasant shade for the birds.  
 „ 8. We are glad to hear you say, "How beautiful the leaves are."

### Questions.

What is the subject of this lesson? Where did the little leaf spend the winter? Where are leaf buds to be found? How can you find the leaf's home? How did she grow out of it? Was she happy? What made her happy?

XIV.

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"ALFONSO REYES"

Indo. 1625 MONTERREY, MEXICO

### The lion.

The lion is often *called* the "King of beasts." His height *varies* from three to four feet, and he *is* from six to nine feet long. His coat *is* of a yellowish brown or tawny color, and

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