Samson and Delilah

By Harriet G. Canfield

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Aunt Dee put her pretty head out of the window, and listened—all unconscious that she doing, she turned another page in her love story. They had lived in this neighborhood only two days, but Dorothy had evidently found a playmate. Her cheerful little voice came floating up: "Oh, yeth," she was saying, "I'm glad you live in the next houth!"

Aunt Dee looked down at her small niece. She was standing close to the hedge that divided their lawn from the old-fashioned yard adjoining it. Standing just as close to the hedge, on the other side, was a fair-haired child, whose long, golden curls were tied back on each side with a blue ribbon.

Only the head of each was visible to the other, but Aunt Dee gazed wonderingly at the little figure on the other side of the hedge. "Was it a boy, or a girl? A long-sleeved gingham apron—blue and white—hung stiffly down to the tops of shoes, thick-soled and heavy, like those worn by men in embry. There were pockets in the apron, and the small hands were thrust into them man fashion. There was a look of final martyrdom in the blue eyes.

"I wuth afraid I'd have to live near a boy," Dorothy lisped, laughing contentedly.

The golden-haired child flushed painfully and writhed with embarrassment; then he leaned forward and said something too low for Aunt Dee to hear. Dorothy sprang back in amazement. "Oh! Oh!" she cried. "What a whopper! You ain't a boy at all—you've got curlith, an' ribbonth an'—

"I'll come round and show you my shoes," he said, determined to convince her of his masculinity. A minute later he was standing on the lawn, exhibiting his pedal extremities to the little girl.

"Far I never thaw a boy wear apronth like that," she said argumentatively. "What for do you wear em?"

The question was not answered, for the new acquaintance said, "I've got to go in, now. Aunt Mercy's calling me."

"Do You Know How Samson—The Bible Sayeth—Lost His Long Hair?"

He seemed glad of the chance to leave his fair acquaintance, but that he escape was a bit temporary, Aunt Dee discovered at breakfast. Dorothy, as usual, made a confidant of her.

"Oh, dear!" she sighed, sitting down on the floor to take off her shoes. "There ith a great deal of trouble in thith world."

Aunt Dee suppressed a smile. "What is troubling you now, dear?" she asked sympathetically.

"Nothing ith troubling me—it ith poor Thamthon!"

"Samson!" is that the little boy next door?"

"Yeth. You ithee he had a mamma only a teeny bit of a while, then she died, an' hith Aunty Merthy took him. She ith only a great aith, an' she don't prove of boyth; she wanth them all to be little girlth. She wanted him named Thamthon 'cauth he had long hair, like the Thamthon in the Bible. Hith papa ith away tho much, an' he hath to wear apronth an' ribbonth." She gazed pensively at the little stocking in her hand.

"It is too bad!" Aunt Dee said indignantly. "Poor little fellow!"

"Yeth, but the curlith are the hardeth to bear! Hith papa wanted them cut off, but hith Aunt Merthy wanted him to wait 'til he came home again. He wath to come home to-day, but they got a letter that maybe he wouldn't come 'til July, an' Thamthon'th heart ith breaking! He hath to do patchwork, and hith Aunt Merthy readth the Bible to him."

"Doesn't he like that?" Aunt Dee said.

"Yeth, everything but the angelth; he ithn't fat'rthed in angelth!"

"Why, isn't he interested in the angels, Dorothy?"

"Oh, they all have long hair! He ith thorry for them, but he don't never want to be onth."

"What is Samson's last name?" Aunt Dee asks.

"Whiting—so is Whiting, it ithn't out of the Bible, like Thamthon. What ith the matter, Aunt Dee? You jumped!"

"Nothing dear; I knew some one of that name several years ago." Now you must say your prayers, and let me put out the light. Mamma is coming up to kiss you good night."

Alone in her room Aunt Dee recalled the past, and the past inseparably connected with David Whiting. "Some one of that name" had loved her eight long years ago. She had loved him, and foolishly (?) refused him for another woman's sake. Had Grace Thornby been happy with the man she loved? Happy as Deborah Wright might have been?

"He never called me Deborah," she said to herself, "it was always 'Dee'—Dorothy's name for me now. Poor Grace! I never dreamed that she was dead. They moved away before Samson came. I know the poor little man is David's boy; the likeness is perfect. My heart goes out to that pathetic little figure in blue gingham! I could pray with Dorothy, 'O Lord, pleath have Thamthon'th hair cut!'"

The next day was Saturday. Samson came over early in the morning, and the children played happily for over an hour. Then there was such a commotion in the yard, that Aunt Dee went to the door to see what was the matter.

Samson—with Dorothy behind him—was the center of a group of boys. His cheeks were flushed and his eyes shining. "I won't stand it!" he cried. "I ain't a girl!"

"He ith a boy!" Dorothy lisped valiantly. "Hith name ith Thamthon!"

Samson's tormentors hooted derisively. "Thamthon!" She says its name is 'Thamthon,' and it has curls!"

Before Aunt Dee could interfere, Samson's fist had come in close contact with the leader of the group. The boy—twice as large as his antagonist—was too astonished to avoid the blow. When he saw Aunt Dee coming he picked himself up from the grass, and ran swiftly down the street, his companions following like a flock of sheep.

Aunt Dee's eyes blazed with righteous indignation. "The cowards!" she cried. Samson's lips quivered, and he blinked hard, to keep the tears back—boys didn't cry! "I—I—hate curls!" he said.

Aunt Dee made a sudden resolution—she felt reckless. "Dorothy," she cried, "bring me the scissors!" Dorothy looked surprised, but she had been taught to obey her elders. While she was gone, Aunt Dee said quietly, "Do you know how Samson—the Bible Samson—lost his long hair?"

"Oh, yes," the little Samson answered promptly, "Dellilah cut it off. Aunt Mercy said Dellilah was a bad woman, but I liked her first rate."

Dorothy came up with the scissors in her hand. "Here they are, Aunt Dee," she said.

A look of wonder and delight came into Samson's blue eyes. "She called you 'Aunt D.!'" he cried. "does D. stand for Dellilah?"

"It does this morning," the scissors lady said determinedly, and she snipped the long curls off as though she enjoyed her work. "There! After it is shingled," she said, "and we get rid of this apron, you will be a really, truly, boy, dear." "Run into the house, Dorothy; I am going home with Samson."

She gathered the curls in one hand, and held out the other to the grateful little boy. Straight into the old house they walked, and Aunt Mercy held up her withered hands in horror, at the sight of her shorn lamb.

"How did this happen?" she gasped, and the scissors lady, like George Washington, "could not tell a lie," but made full confession.

Some one came into the room while she was introducing herself to Aunt Mercy—some one who stood behind her, and listened hungrily to the sweet voice, pleading for his motherless little boy.

"He has been so unhappy," she said, "and—forgive me—I've been wondering if you understand boys? They need—"

"They need a mother's love!" The voice came from behind her, full and deep, just as David Whiting's voice had sounded eight years before. She turned and looked at him, the warm color flooding her face.

"They need a mother's love," he said again. "Can my little lad have that, Dee?" He held out his arms entreatingly, and the scissors lady walked into them.

Rigidity of Matter.

To the average mind the conception of the atom, or electron, as a sort of whirlpool in the ether, renders it difficult to understand how matter can be rigid. Rigidity is explained as due to the enormous velocity of these etherial vortices. It has been shown that water moving with sufficient velocity through a tube cannot be broken into by a violent blow from a saber. "A layer of water a few centimeters thick," says M. le Bon, "animated by a sufficient velocity, which would be as impenetrable to shells as the steel plates of an ironclad."

City Ought to Be Clean.

To cleanse the streets of the city of London, nearly 80,000,000 gallons of water are annually required.

FACTS ABOUT THE GRAPE LEAF-HOPPER

Insect Pest Which Causes Much Damage in Vineyards—By H. J. Quayle, Assistant Entomologist, California Agricultural College.

The grape leafhopper was first named and described by Thomas Say in the year 1825. Specimens were taken that year from Missouri, and three or four years later it was reported as an important pest of the vine in the state of Massachusetts. Harris in 1841 wrote the first complete account of the insect, and fully appreciated the injury caused by it, and ever since that time it has occupied a very important place in the literature of grape insects in this country. Harris' account of the insect remained the standard for a long while, and no very thorough work was done on the life history of the insect until it was undertaken by Slingerland in 1891. In California it has been reported as a pest of the vine since 1875.

Beak, or Mouth-Parts of Grape Leaf-Hopper, Much Enlarged.

With the exception of the phylloxera, the vine hopper is undoubtedly the most destructive insect pest of the vine in sections where it has gained any foothold. Vineyardists in California are particularly concerned about it, for each year in some parts of the state it occurs in very great numbers, and in such sections it levies a heavy tax upon the vineyard interests. To give expression to this loss in money value, for example, in one vineyard of about 1,000 acres near Madera, the owner estimated that the damage done last year by hoppers would aggregate about $10,000.

The grape leaf-hopper belongs to the class of injurious insects that obtain their food by sucking the juices from the plant. Scale insects and plant lice are other well known pests belonging to this same general group, which obtain their food in much the same way that the mosquito sucks our blood. The sharp-pointed beak, or proboscis of the hopper is thrust into the tissues of the grape leaf, and the liquid parts extracted therefrom. The feeding is done mostly on the underside of the leaf, and those leaves around the base of the vine are the ones first attacked.

The first indication of their work is a mottled appearance of the leaf, due to the pale spots formed wherever the beak has been inserted and the green parts taken out. As the feeding continues these spots become more numerous, and this pale yellow color spreads over the entire surface, and finally the leaf turns brown and drops off. This injury has been observed as early as April or May, and thus the vine from the very beginning of the season is prevented from making its normal growth. As the hoppers increase in numbers the injury increases with the advancement of the season. In midsummer quite a large area about the crown of the vine will show all the leaves pale colored or completely dried up, and, in severe cases, the entire vine is thus affected. This drying up and dropping off of the leaves allows the sun to have free access to the fruit and may cause sunburn. We have seen the fruit thus exposed and badly sunburned as early as the middle of June. The falling off of the leaves prematurely also prevents the berry from maturing properly, since it is in the leaves of the plant that the sugar of the berry is manufactured. The grape thus loses much of its flavor and sweetness, and likewise the characteristic coloring, which is so desirable in certain table varieties, is not attained. The fruit, furthermore, is badly smutted by the exudations of the insects, and this serves as a harboring place for the collection of dust and dirt, and for the growth of fungi. The dropping of the leaves or any interference with their normal functions likewise has its effect on the growth of the wood of the vine. The canes fail to ripen normally for the next year's wood, and many of the buds fail to develop in the following spring. The vine may thus be more or less permanently stunted in growth, and even killed in severe cases of grape leaf-hopper injury.

The grape leaf-hopper (Typhlocyba comes Say) is a widely distributed native American insect occurring in the United States practically wherever the vine is grown. It is frequently notably injurious in the grape belts of New York and Ohio, as well as other less important grape sections in this country. In Europe this species is replaced by two other related species, Typhlocyba flavescens and Typhlocyba viticola. The former seems to be the more injurious of the two, and occurs throughout all of temperate Europe and northern Africa, while the latter is confined mostly to Italy and the neighboring islands.

Adult Grape Leaf Hopper Just Emerged.

The most satisfactory control method tried during the past two years was the use of the screen cage. This was found to capture about 85 to 95 per cent of the adult hoppers at a time in the spring before any eggs are deposited.

Spraying for the nymphs about June 1 or just before the spring brood becomes mature, will kill a satisfactory percentage of the nymphs or young, but will not kill many adults, or prevent eggs, which are present at this time, from hatching later. If the cage method has not been used, or satisfactorily operated, spraying for the nymphs will very materially aid in reducing the numbers of the spring generation.

Burning or other farm practices cannot be relied upon, but when such measures are generally practiced throughout a neighborhood, they may aid in reducing the numbers somewhat.

Experimental Vine Used in the Laboratory for Obtaining Data on the Life History of the Hopper. Cages Used for Confining the Insects Are Shown on the Leaves.

THE CARE OF FERNS

Most ferns, especially those offered in greenhouses, are shade-loving. Their native homes are in canyons, or under trees in moist places, where the air is quiet, and their fronds are not disturbed. Many of them are from tropical countries and quite a number have originated in greenhouses, either as sports or from spores, as their seeds are called. Adiantums, or maiden-hair ferns, are more difficult to manage in the house, because they will not long survive the dry air of rooms, owing to the extreme delicacy and small size of their pinnules, which are sometimes almost as delicate as gauze. They are sensitive to dryness of the air, though they will often do well in shaded places outside, in bath houses, or shady verandas, and only the few succeed with them in the house. Many other kinds are admirably suited for house culture, among the different varieties of Nephrolepis, of which the Boston fern is one, the Asplenium Belangeri, Woodwardia, a native California fern, and Dicksonia Antarctica.

Ferns should not be placed in halls or situations exposed to draughts. They require great care in watering. People often think they have watered their plants when the water has only gone over the surface and around the sides of the pots, the center of the ball being still quite dry. This is especially the case when the pots are filled with roots. It is necessary that the ball should be thoroughly soaked. There is no regular rule as to the time for watering. Plants in vigorous growth require more frequent watering. Evaporation, also, has much to do with it. On dry, warm days, when evaporation is great, water may be needed twice a day, while if the air is cool and moist, two or three days might intervene without water. A healthy, vigorous plant absorbs much water, while a delicate one can absorb but little. The soil should be examined always, and if dry, watered; if not, refrain from watering. A dry pot, if tapped, gives a hollow sound like a ripe watermelon, while one that is wet gives a dull, heavy sound, that indicates moisture.

When leaves shrivel and turn yellow, the soil has been too dry; if they turn yellow without shriveling, it indicates too much water has been given. In either case, the roots have been abused and lost their power of absorption.

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