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How The Home Was Built

Maud Lindsay

Once there was a very dear family—Father, Mother, big Brother Tom, little Sister Polly, and the baby, who had a very long name, Gustavus Adolphus—and every one of the family wanted a home more than anything else in the world.

They lived in a house, of course, but that was rented; and they wanted a home of their very own, with a sunny room for Mother and Father and Baby, with a wee room close by for the little sister; a big, airy room for Brother Tom; a cosy room for the cooking and eating; and, best of all, a room that Grandmother might call her own when she came to see them.

A box which Tom had made always stood on Mother's mantel, and they called it the "Home Bank," because every penny that could be spared was dropped in there for the building of the home.

This box had been full once, and was emptied to buy a little piece of ground where the home could be built when the box was full again.

The box filled very slowly, though; and Gustavus Adolphus was nearly three years old when one day the father came in with a beaming face and called the family to him.

Mother left her baking, and Tom came in from his work; and after Polly had brought the baby, the father asked them very solemnly: "Now, what do we all want more than anything else in the world?"

"A home!" said Mother and Brother Tom.

"A home!" said little Sister Polly.

"Home!" said the baby, Gustavus Adolphus, because his mother had said it.

"Well," said the father, "I think we shall have our home if each one of us will help. I must go away to the great forest, where the trees grow so tall and fine. All Winter long I must chop the trees down, and in the Spring I shall be paid in lumber, which will help in the building of the home. While I am away, Mother will have to fill my place and her own too, for she will have to go to market, buy the coal, keep the pantry full, and pay the bills, as well as cook and wash and sew, take care of the children, and keep a brave heart till I come back again."

The mother was willing to do all this and more, too, for the dear home; and

Brother Tom asked eagerly: "What can I do?—what can I do?" for he wanted to begin work right then, without waiting a moment.

"I have found you a place in the carpenter's shop where I work," answered the father. "And you will work for him, and all the while be learning to saw and hammer and plane, so that you will be ready in the Spring to help build the home."

Now, this pleased Tom so much that he threw his cap in the air and hurrahed, which made the baby laugh; but little Polly did not laugh, because she was afraid that she was too small to help. But after a while the father said: "I shall be away in the great forest cutting down the trees; Mother will be washing and sewing and baking; Tom will be at work in the carpenter's shop; and who will take care of the baby?"

"I will, I will!" cried Polly, running to kiss the baby. "And the baby can be good and sweet!"

So it was all arranged that they would have their dear little home, which would belong to every one, because each one would help; and the father made haste to prepare for the Winter. He stored away the firewood and put up the stoves; and when the wood-choppers went to the great forest, he was ready to go with them.

Out in the forest the trees were waiting. Nobody knew how many years they had waited there, growing every year stronger and more beautiful for the work they had to do. Every one of them had grown from a baby tree to a giant; and when the choppers came, there stood the giant trees, so bare and still in the wintry weather that the sound of the axes rang from one end of the woods to the other. From sunrise to sunset the men worked steadily; and although it was lonely in the woods when the snow lay white on the ground and the cold wind blew, the father kept his heart cheery. At night, when the men sat about the fire in their great log-house, he would tell them about the mother and children who were working with him for a home.

Nobody's ax was sharper than his or felled so many trees, and nobody was gladder when Spring-time came and the logs were hauled down to the river.

The river had been waiting too, through all the Winter, under its shield of ice, but now that Spring had come, and the snows were melting, and all the little mountain streams were tumbling down to help, the river grew very broad and strong, and dashed along, snatching the logs when the men pushed them in and carrying them on with a rush and a roar.

The men followed close along the bank of the river, to watch the logs and keep them moving; but at last there came a time when the logs would not move, but

lay in a jam from shore to shore while the water foamed about them.

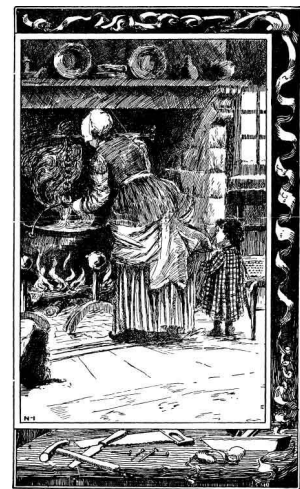
"Who will go out to break the jam?" said the men. They knew that only a brave man and a nimble man could go, for there was danger that the logs might crush him and the river sweep him away.

They looked at each other. But the father was not afraid, and he was surefooted and nimble; so he sprang out in a moment, with his ax, and began to cut away at the logs.

"Some of these logs may help to build a home," he said; and he found the very log that was holding the others tight, and as soon as that was loosened, the logs began to move.

"Jump! Jump!" cried the men, as they ran for their lives; and, just as the logs dashed on, with a rumble and a jumble and a jar that sent some of the logs flying up in the air, the father reached the bank safely.

The hard work was over now. After the logs had rested in the log "boom," they went on their way to the saw mills, where they were sawed into lumber to build houses; and then the father hurried home.



When he came there, he found that the mother had baked and washed and sewed and taken care of the children, as only such a precious mother could have done. Brother Tom had worked so well in the carpenter's shop, that he knew how to hammer and plane and saw, and had grown as tall and as stout as a young pine tree. Sister Polly had taken such care of the baby, that he looked as sweet and clean and happy as a rose in a garden; and the baby had been so good, that he was a joy to the whole family.

"I must get this dear family into their home," said the father; and he and Brother Tom went to work with a will. And the home was built, with a sunny room for Father and Mother and Baby, a wee little room close by for good Sister Polly, a big airy room for big Brother Tom, a cosy room for the cooking and eating, and best of all, a room for the dear grandmother, who came then to live with them all the time.



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