

**THE YOUNG CUMBRIAN,
AND OTHER STORIES OF
SCHOOLBOYS**

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The Young Cumbrian, and Other Stories of Schoolboys by George E. Sargent

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GEORGE E. SARGENT

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THE DONKEYS WERE CAUGHT AND MOUNTED.

[See page 12.]



THE YOUNG CUMBRIAN,

And other Stories of Schoolboys.

BY

GEORGE E. SARGENT,

AUTHOR OF

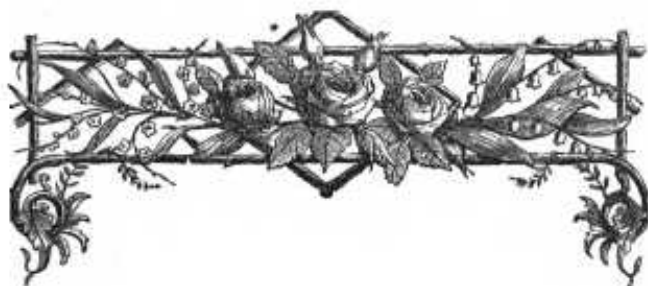
*"The Story of a Pocket Bible," "The City Arab," "Boys will be Boys,"
"Stories of Old England," etc.*



THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY,

56, PATERNOSTER ROW; 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD;
AND 164, PICCADILLY.

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I.

THE YOUNG CUMBRIAN;

OR,

HOW TO FORGIVE.

OF all schoolboys whom we ever knew, poor little Tom Smith was as unlikely as any to become the hero of a story. His name, his look, his manners, all might seem to forbid the thought. Ah! but there are many brave, noble, kind, and generous hearts under the plainest forms and commonest names; and Tom Smith, *our* Tom Smith, was one of them.

He was about eight years old when he made his first appearance at school, and his countenance, at first sight, was far from interesting. He was thin, pale, and stooping, so as to look almost deformed; and all his movements were awkward. When he spoke, he excited the laughter of his schoolfellows—that is to say, of many of them; some had better manners than to laugh outright, though *they* were amused. His birthplace was in one of the northern counties, and he brought with him to school the peculiar dialect of home. Those who laughed did not remember that, had the case been reversed, and had they been sent to Northumberland, or

Cumberland, or Durham, their southern speech would there have sounded oddly and strangely.

Then, poor little Tom—for by that somewhat vulgar diminutive was he always called—was a perfect ignoramus. He had never been to school, and could scarcely spell out a sentence composed of words of two syllables; in the use of pen or pencil he was as inexperienced and inexpert as an infant. Worse than this, it was soon found that, at that time, he had no great love for learning. He seemed dull of comprehension, and hated tasks as strongly as he could hate anything. The confinement of school was, at first, dreadful to him. He was restless as a wild bird newly caught and caged, and fretted sorely over the necessary constraint he had to endure. Ah! few school books were ever more blotted and blurred with bitter tears than poor little Tom Smith's.

And in play hours it was much the same. The ample playground seemed to be too straitened for our young Cumbrian; for, still like the unhappy caged wild bird, which beats its breast madly against the imprisoning wires, so did the poor boy, day after day, walk round and round, close to the high palings and hedges which shut him in, wishing with all his heart—who can doubt it?—that he had wings like the dove, that he might fly away and be at rest.

Weeks passed away from the time of his first introduction to school life, and still the little Cumbrian was solitary and sad. No one seemed to care for him, except the master, who took kindly notice of him, and strove by gentle encouragements to reconcile him to his new life. But the poor boy shrank from notice, and preferred communion with his own lonely and melancholy thoughts.

Tom was an orphan. His father had died about three years before that in which we first knew him; his mother scarcely more than as many months. No wonder he was sad. Before his father's death, the child had been healthy and joyous; but afterwards, he had drooped and pined like a tender plant deprived of its nutriment. None could tell what ailed him; but all foretold that he would not live long on earth; that his mother would be left alone, for she had no other child. And the mother, believing and fearing this, had petted the weak boy, and permitted him to roam at will over the beautiful hills of his native county, untrammelled by tasks and books, and had waited on him with such love as only dwells in a mother's breast.

The young Cumbrian loved nature; and nature was the book which he had studied under his mother's eye. He had studied it well too. He knew much about the birds of the air, their "wood notes wild," their names, their natures, and their nests; of the summer insects too, and the flowers of the field, and the hill side, and the valley. His mother had been his teacher, as together they daily roamed in search of health and strength—while she had health and strength to roam—over the wild but beautiful country around their pretty cottage. Happily for the little orphan and for herself, she could teach other things than these. She was a Christian; and she knew that, beautiful as is nature, and much as it tells of God's power and goodness to create and preserve, and to bless with daily mercies, it is the Gospel alone which tells of His power to save—to save sinners. From her lips, therefore, had the boy heard the Gospel, the good news of a Saviour; and God had blessed her teaching and her prayers. Afterwards,