

The Project Gutenberg EBook of St. Nicholas Magazine for Boys and Girls,  
Vol. 5, May, 1878, No. 7., by Various

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with  
almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or  
re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included  
with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.net](http://www.gutenberg.net)

Title: St. Nicholas Magazine for Boys and Girls, Vol. 5, May, 1878, No. 7.  
Scribner's Illustrated

Author: Various

Editor: Mary Mapes Dodge

Release Date: July 1, 2005 [EBook #16173]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

\*\*\* START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ST. NICHOLAS MAGAZINE \*\*\*

Produced by Juliet Sutherland, Lynn Bornath and the Online  
Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

[Illustration: MANDY AND BUB BY THE NETS. [See page 450.]]

ST. NICHOLAS.

VOL. V.  
MAY, 1878.  
No. 7.

[Copyright, 1878, by Scribner & Co.]

HOW MANDY WENT ROWING WITH THE "CAP'N."

BY MARY HALLOCK FOOTE.

It was the month of May--the season of fresh shad and apple-blossoms on the Hudson River. "Bub" and "Mandy" Lewis knew more about the shad than they did about the apple-blossoms, for their father was a fisherman, and they lived in a little house built on a steep bank between the road above and the river below. Sometimes, on cool, damp spring evenings, the scent of the orchards came down to them from the hills above, but the smell of shad was much stronger and nearer.

Just in front of the house was an old wharf, where fishing-boats were moored, and nets spread for drying or mending. One morning, Bub and Mandy were sitting on the log which guards the edge of the wharf, watching their father and brother Jeff getting ready to spread the nets for next night's "haul." Jeff was busy with the buoy lines and sinkers, while the father bailed out the boat with an old tin pan. The children were rather subdued--Bub wondering how long it would be before he could "handle a boat" like Jeff and go out with his father? Mandy was expecting every moment to hear her mother's voice calling from the house. It was Monday morning, and Mandy knew her mother would soon be starting for the Hillard's, where she "helped" on Mondays and Saturdays.

These were the longest days of the week to Mandy, for then she had baby to tend all by herself and he was "such a bother!"

Yes, there it was: "Mandy!--Mandy!--Mandy Lewis! don't you hear?" Mandy kept her eyes gloomily fixed on the curve of her father's back, as it bent and rose in the boat below, in time with the scra-a-a-pe, swish, of the bailer.

"What's the use makin' b'l'leve you don't hear?" said Bub. "You know you've got to go!"

"I just wish mother'd make you tend baby once, and see how you'd like it!"--and Mandy rose with an impatient jerk of her bonnet-strings and slowly climbed the steep path to the house. Her mother, standing in the door-way with baby on one arm, shaded her eyes from the sun as she watched the cloudy face under the pink bonnet. It was always cloudy on Mondays and Saturdays.

"Seems as if you didn't love your little brother, Mandy--such work as you make of tendin' him! Just look how glad he is to see you," as baby leaned forward and began pulling at the pink bonnet. "He's just had his bread and milk, and if you set right there in the door, where he can watch the chickens, I shouldn't wonder if he'd be real good for ever so long. Father and Jeff wont be home to dinner, but there's plenty of bread and butter and cold beans in the closet for you and Bub. You can set the beans in the oven to warm, if you like--only be sure you put 'em on an old plate; and you can divide what's left of the ginger-bread between you."

"Oh, mother! can't we eat it now?" said Bub, who had watched his father and Jeff off in the boat, and, now returning to the house, didn't quite know what to do next.

"Why, it aint an hour sence breakfast! But you can do as you like; only, if Mandy eats hers, baby'll want it, sure. Better wait till he's asleep."

"All right; Mandy can wait," said Bub, cheerfully, as his mother set the plate of cake on the table before leaving the house.

"Oh, Bub, I'm awful hungry, too!" said Mandy. "You cut the cake in halves,--mind you cut fair,--and hold my piece for me where baby can't see it. Sit right here behind me."

So Mandy on the door-step, and Bub on the floor, with his back against the door, which he gently tilted as he munched his cake, were very silent and comfortable for a minute or two.

The hens crawled and cackled, with cozy, gossipy noises, in the sun before the door; the baby blinked and cooed contentedly.

"Ready for another bite?" said Bub, holding out Mandy's cake close to her left ear.

"In a min-ute," said Mandy, with her mouth full. "Bub Lewis, aint you ashamed of yourself? You've been eatin' off my piece! I saw you just now!"

"Aint, either! You can see great things with the back of your head! Here's your piece 'n' here's mine. Yours is ever so much bigger!"

"Well, you've been gobbling yours's fast's you could, and I only had two little bites off mine."

"\_Little\_ bites! I sh'd think so! Don't know what you call big ones, then! So chuck full you couldn't speak half a minute ago. Here, hold your own cake, and let baby grab it!"

"Well, I'd rather give it \_all\_ to him, than have you eat it up on the sly!"

Bub walked down toward the water without deigning a reply, but thought of several things on his way which would have been more withering than silence.

Mandy did not enjoy the rest of her cake very much,--eating it furtively, so baby should not want it, and dropping crumbs on his little white head, which he kept twisting around, to see what she was doing. She began to think that perhaps she had been rather hasty in accusing Bub; but surely that was the right-hand piece, instead of the left, he was biting from? Well, anyway, it didn't much matter now the cake was all eaten. The old rooster had wandered round the corner of the house, where he was presently heard calling to his favorite hen. She ran, and all the others followed. Baby grew restless, and made little impatient noises, and the sun was getting very hot and bright on the door-step. What \_was\_ Bub doing down there among the nets on the drying-ground? He had been very still, with his head bent down and his hands moving about for ever so long.

Mandy felt that, after their late unpleasantness, it would be more dignified to take no notice of Bub for a while; but curiosity, and baby's restlessness, finally prevailed over pride, and rolling up her troublesome little burden in an old red shawl, she trotted with him

down to the river.

"Bub," she said, after standing by him some time in silence, watching him driving a row of small sticks into the ground, "\_was\_ it my piece you was bitin' off?"

"I told you 't wasn't. If you don't b'l'ever me, what's the use o' my sayin' so again?"

"Well, I'm sorry, Bub. I just caught a sight of you as I turned my head, an' I thought--"

"Oh, well, never mind what you thought; we've heard enough 'bout that cake! Shove your foot one side a little? I want to drive another spile there. Them's the hitchin' spiles on the inside."

"What you buildin'?" asked Mandy.

"Can't you see for yourself? What's built on spiles, I'd like to know! Meetinghouses, may be you think. This is Lewis's dock; all the day boats and barges stop here!"

"Where's the water?" asked Mandy.

"Oh, you wait till high tide, 'bout four o'clock this afternoon, 'n' you'll see water enough!"

Just then, a boy in a blue blouse, with a basket of fish over his shoulder, came whistling along.

"Perry! Perry Kent! Where you goin'?" Bub called.

"Down to little cove, to clean fish."

"Oh, can't I go along and help? I can scale a herrin' first-rate; father said so."

"Aint herrin'; they're shad; got to be cleaned very partic'lar, too. But come along, if you want to."

"Bub," said Mandy, in an eager whisper, "oh, Bub, wait for me! Baby's fast asleep. I'll lay him right down here, in his shawl; the nets'll keep the sun off, 'n' he'll be real cozy 'n' nice till we get back."

"Why don't you take him up to the house?" said Perry, looking with some interest at Mandy's bundle. "'Taint a very good place for him here. You'll find us at the cove, all right."

"He'll wake up sure, if I try to carry him up the hill. See how nice he lays; and I'll hang the end of the shawl over this net-pole. I can see it plain enough from the cove. If he wakes up, he'll be tumblin' round and pull it off, so I'll know when to come back for him."

"Well, it takes a girl for contrivance," Perry said; and it was something in his manner rather than the words which made Mandy, as she followed the two boys, vaguely feel she was disapproved of.

The cove was a half-circle of pebble beach, washed by the ripples of a slowly rising tide, with a wall of gray slate rock at the back. Hemlock-trees leaned from the steep wooded cliff above, the shadows of their boughs moving with the wind across the sunny face of the rock.

It was very warm and still and bright. Mandy climbed to a perch high up in the twisted roots of an old hemlock, who, having ventured too far over the edge of the cliff, was clinging there, desperately driving his tough toes into the crevices of the rock, and wildly waving his boughs upward and backward as if imploring help from his comrades, safe in the dark wood above.

The river spread broad and bright below her. Mandy listened, in happy silence, to all the mysterious rustlings and twitterings and cracklings in the wood above, and the sounds, far and near, from the river below. Now and then she looked to see if the shawl still fluttered from the net-pole. She was glad she came, and it seemed but a very little while before the fish were all cleaned, and the boys, sitting on a rock, skipping pebbles, and watching for Perry Kent's father, who was coming in his boat to take the fish up to the hotel.

Perry's father was always called Cap'n Kent. He kept a kind of floating restaurant. One end of his boat was boarded over into a closet, with shelves filled with a supply of fresh fruit and berries in the season, cider, cakes, pies, root-beer, lemons, crackers, etc. His customers were chiefly the "hands" on board sloops becalmed opposite the landing, or passing barges and canal-boats, slowly trailed in the wake of a panting propeller, or escorted by dingy little "tugs," struggling along like lively black beetles.

The "Cap'n" was a very tall man, and his arms were so long that, as he rowed, he sat quite upright, only stretching his arms back and forth, scarcely bending his body at all. This gave great dignity to his appearance in a boat. His feet were very long too, and when he walked he lifted the whole foot at once, and put it down flat. Of course he could not walk very fast; but so important a person as the "Cap'n" could never be in a hurry.

As he held his boat against a rock while Perry lifted in the basket of fish, he saw the wistful faces of the children standing on the beach. Now, the "Cap'n" considered himself a very good-natured man, and good-natured men are always fond of children. So he called out in a loud voice:

"Whose little folks are you?"

"Bub and Mandy Lewis," Mandy answered quickly.

Bub nudged her with his elbow.

"He spoke to me, Mandy!"

"Want to take a little row up to the hotel? Let's see--your folks live by the old fishin' dock, don't they? Wal, I can leave ye there comin' back. You can tell your Pa that Cap'n Kent took ye out rowin'."

"I'd like to go, if you please," said Bub, who was ready with an answer

this time; "but Mandy, she's got to tend to the baby."

"The baby! What baby?" said the "Cap'n," while Mandy whispered, crossly, "Bub, I think you're real mean!"

"Oh, sir, baby's fast asleep up on the dryin'-ground, where the nets are! I could go as far as that, if you'd let me get out there,--if it wouldn't be too much trouble, sir."

"Course it would!" said Bub, emphatically.

But the "Cap'n," who was not so good-natured that he liked to have small boys answer for him, gravely considered the matter while he settled his oars in the rowlocks.

"Wal, it's some trouble, perhaps; but I don't mind puttin' myself out once in a while for a nice little gal. Step lively now, young man! Come along, sissy!"

Mandy sat radiant in the little bow-seat, as the boat pushed off. A great Albany "tow" was passing,--a whole fleet of barges and canal-boats lashed together,--with calves and sheep bellowing and bleating, cables creaking, clothes flapping on the lines; a big steamboat, with a freight-barge under each wing, plowing the water on ahead, and sending the waves chasing each other in shore.

The little boat danced gayly on the "rollers." A fresh wind blew toward them, and brought with it a shout of "Boat ahoy! Hello, Cap'n! Got any good stuff aboard?"

"Got some good \_cider\_," the "Cap'n" called in reply, with strong emphasis on the last word.

"Come alongside, then!"

The "Cap'n" condescended to lean a little on his oars in pursuit of a bargain, and sent the little boat spinning over the water toward one of the barges in the rear part of the "tow."

Some men in a row were lounging over the rail; one of them threw a rope, which hissed and splashed close to the boat. Perry caught it, and they were soon under the lee of the floating village.

While the store was unlocked, and its wares handed out, Mandy noticed, on the deck above, a woman washing a little boy three or four years old. He stood in an old wooden pail, with a rope tied to the handle,--his little white body, all naked and slippery, shining in the sun. One could hardly help noticing him, he screamed so lustily as the water was dashed over his head and shoulders.

Mandy saw how his face showed red and flushed with crying, under the dripping yellow locks.

She thought uneasily of the baby, lying all alone on the old dock; wondered if the sun had got round so as to shine in his face, and how long the "Cap'n" would stand there, talking with those men. She was happy again when the boat dropped behind and the "Cap'n" turned toward

the shore.

"Perry," he said, "just look at my watch--there in my weskit-pocket on the starn-seat. What time's it got to be?"

"Twenty minutes to one," said Perry.

"What time'd I say we'd have them shad up there? One o'clock? Wal, one o'clock it'll be, then. Only we can't leave this little gal ashore till we come back."

"Oh, please----" Mandy began, in great dismay as she saw they were passing the fishing-dock. "The baby! He's there all alone, and--oh, Bub, the shawl's gone! I must go ashore, Cap'n Kent--please!"

"Never mind, sissy; baby's all right. Bless my soul! who'd want to carry off a baby? There aint no wild beasts roamin' round, and most of us's got babies enough o' our own to hum, without borryin of the neighbors. You'll find him there all safe enough when we get back. Them shad, ye see, was promised at one o'clock up to the hotel. Cap'n Kent, ye know, he never breaks his word."

"But you said----?" Mandy began, in a distressed voice, when Bub interrupted her.

"You'd better keep quiet, Mandy. You would come, 'n' now I hope you'll get enough of it!"

That was a very long twenty minutes to Mandy, while they drew slowly nearer and nearer to the steamboat-landing, and the little white and brown houses of the fishermen, scattered along shore, one by one were left behind.

"Now, Perry," the "Cap'n" said, as he unshipped his oars, while the children clambered out of the boat, "just look at that ere watch again. See if the Cap'n aint as good as his word. Five minutes to one, eh? Didn't I tell ye? Hello, sissy! Where's that gal goin' to now? What's your hurry? I'll take ye back in half an hour."

But Mandy was off, running like a young fox along the edge of the wharf.

"Cap'n," said Bub, "we're much obliged to you, sir, and I guess I'll go on too. Mandy's awful scared about the baby, and--"

"Lord, what a fuss 'bout a baby!" the "Cap'n" broke in with his loud voice, "Babies aint so easy got rid of. Wal, may be you'll go rowin' with the Cap'n again, some day. Tell yer Ma I've got some first-class lemons, if she wants to make pies for Sunday. Can't get no such lemons at the store."

But the "Cap'n's" last words were wasted, for Bub was already speeding off after Mandy.

When he reached the fishing-dock, there she sat, a dismal little heap, on the ground between the net-poles. She had lost her bonnet; she had fallen down and rubbed dust in her hair. Now she sat rocking herself to

and fro, and sobbing.

"Oh, Bub! The baby!" was all she could say.

"Look here, Mandy! Stop cryin' a minute, will you?" said Bub. "It's after one o'clock; may be mother had only half a day at Hillard's, and come home 'n' found the baby down here; she could see the shawl from the house."

Mandy jumped up, "Let's go see. Quick!" she cried. But the string of one shoe was broken, and the shoe slipped at every step. She stooped to fasten it. "Don't wait, Bub. Go on, please!" Then she felt so tired and breathless with running and crying, that she dropped down on the ground again to wait for Bub's return.

She heard his feet running down the hill, and wondered if they brought good news.

No; the house was empty. No baby or mother there!

"I must go to Hillard's," said Bub. "You'd better stay, Mandy; you look 'most beat out."

His voice was very gentle, and Mandy could not bear it.

"Oh, Bub! don't be good to me. I'm a horrid wicked girl! What will mother say? How can I tell her?" Then she broke into sobs again.

It was dreadful, sitting there alone, after Bub's footsteps died away in the distance, thinking and wondering hopelessly about the baby. Mandy remembered how his little head, heavy with sleep, had drooped lower and lower, and tired her arms. How gladly would she feel that ache if she could only hold the warm little body in her arms again!

How still it was! She could hear the children at McNeal's, down the road, laughing and calling after their father as he went away to his work. There was fresh trouble in the thought of her father coming home at night. Would it not be better that she should go away and hide herself, where no reproachful eyes could reach her? Would they miss her, and feel sorry for poor little Mandy? Would her mother go about looking pale and quiet, thinking of her gently?

Hark! What noise was that under the drooping curtain of nets? Now she does not hear it; but presently it comes again--a soft, happy little baby voice, cooing and talking to itself.

With joyful haste, Mandy lifted the heavy festoon of nets, and crawled under. There, in the warm, sunny gloom, lying all rosy and tumbled, with his clothes around his neck, and the old red shawl hopelessly tangled round the bare and active legs, lay baby, cramming his fists in his mouth or tossing them about, while he talked stories to the gleams of sunlight that flickered down through the meshes of the nets.

How he had managed to roll so far, Mandy did not stop to wonder about. She scooped him up into her arms, the bare legs kicking and struggling, and crawled with him into the open air.

There she sat, hugging him close, with her cheek resting on his head, when the tired, anxious mother, hurrying on ahead of Bub, came running down the hill.

Many times after that, the baby was a "bother" to Mandy, but she was never heard to call him so.