

FICTION

Jacob Abbott

Georgie

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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FICTION



THE BRIDGE

THE

ROLLO STORY BOOKS

BY

JACOB ABBOTT.

GEORGIE.

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GEORGIE.

THE LITTLE LANDING.

A short distance from where Rollo lives, there is a small, but very pleasant house, just under the hill, where you go down to the stone bridge leading over the brook. There is a noble large apple tree on one side of the house, which bears a beautiful, sweet, and mellow kind of apple, called golden pippins. A great many other trees and flowers are around the house, and in the little garden on the side of it towards the brook. There is a small white gate that leads to the house, from the road; and there is a pleasant path leading right out from the front door, through the garden, down to the water. This is the house that Georgie lives in.

One evening, just before sunset, Rollo was coming along over the stone bridge, towards home. He stopped a moment to look over the railing, down into the water. Presently he heard a very sweet-toned voice calling out to him,

"Rol-lo."

Rollo looked along in the direction in which the sound came. It was from the bank of the stream, a little way from the road, at the place where the path from Georgie's house came down to the water. The brook was broad, and the water pretty smooth and still here; and it was a place where Rollo had often been to sail boats with Georgie. There was a little smooth, sandy place on the shore, at the foot of the path, and they used to call it Georgie's landing; and there was a seat close by, under the bushes.

Rollo thought it was Georgie's voice that called him, and in a minute, he saw him sitting on his little seat, with his

crutches by his side. Georgie was a sick boy. He could not walk, but had to sit almost all day, at home, in a large easy chair, which his father had bought for him. In the winter, his chair was established in a particular corner, by the side of the fire, and he had a little case of shelves and drawers, painted green, by the side of him. In these shelves and drawers he had his books and playthings,—his pen and ink,—his paint-box, brushes and pencils,—his knife, and a little saw,—and a great many things which he used to make for his amusement. Then, in the summer, his chair, and his shelves and drawers, were moved to the end window, which looked out upon the garden and brook. Sometimes, when he was better than usual, he could move about a little upon crutches; and, at such times, when it was pleasant, he used to go out into the garden, and down, through it, to his landing, at the brook.

Georgie had been sick a great many years, and when Rollo and Jonas first knew him, he used to be very sad and unhappy. It was because the poor little fellow had nothing to do. His father had to work pretty hard to get food and clothing for his family; he loved little Georgie very much, but he could not buy him many things. Sometimes people who visited him, used to give him playthings, and they would amuse him a little while, but he soon grew tired of them, and had them put away. It is very hard for any body to be happy who has not any thing to do.

It was Jonas that taught Georgie what to do. He lent him his knife, and brought him some smooth, soft, pine wood, and taught him to make wind-mills and little boxes. Georgie liked this very much, and used to sit by his window in the summer mornings, and make playthings, hours at a time. After he had made several things, Jonas told the boys that lived about there, that they had better buy them of him, when they had a few cents to spend for toys; and they did. In fact, they liked the little windmills, and wagons, and small framed houses that Georgie made, better than sugar-plums and candy. Besides, they liked to go and see Georgie; for, whenever they went to buy any thing of him, he looked so contented and happy, sitting in his easy chair, with his small and slender feet drawn up under him, and his work on the table by his side.

Then he was a very beautiful boy too. His face was delicate and pale, but there was such a kind and gentle expression in his mild blue eye, and so much sweetness in the tone of his voice, that they loved very much to go and see him. In fact, all the boys were very fond of Georgie.

GEORGIE'S MONEY.

Georgie, at length, earned, in this way, quite a little sum of money. It was nearly all in cents; but then there was one fourpence which a lady gave him for a four-wheeled wagon that he made. He kept this money in a corner of his drawer, and, at last, there was quite a handful of it.

One summer evening, when Georgie's father came home from his work, he hung up his hat, and came and sat down in Georgie's corner, by the side of his little boy. Georgie looked up to him with a smile.

"Well, father," said he, "are you tired to-night?"

"You are the one to be tired, Georgie," said he, "sitting here alone all day."

"Hold up your hand, father," said Georgie, reaching out his own at the same time, which was shut up, and appeared to have something in it.

"Why, what have you got for me?" said his father.

"Hold fast all I give you," replied he; and he dropped the money all into his father's hand, and shut up his father's fingers over it.

"What is all this?" said his father.

"It is my money," said he, "for you. It is 'most all cents, but then there is *one* fourpence."

"I am sure, I am much obliged to you, Georgie, for this."

"O no," said Georgie, "it's only a *little* of what you have to spend for me."

Georgie's father took the money, and put it in his pocket, and the next day he went to Jonas, and told him about it, and asked Jonas to spend it in buying such things as he thought would be useful to Georgie; either playthings, or tools, or materials to work with.

Jonas said he should be very glad to do it, for he thought he could buy him some things that would help him very

much in his work. Jonas carried the money into the city the next time he went, and bought him a small hone to sharpen his knife, a fine-toothed saw, and a bottle of black varnish, with a little brush, to put it on with. He brought these things home, and gave them to Georgie's father; and he carried them into the house, and put them in a drawer.

That evening, when Georgie was at supper, his father slyly put the things that Jonas had bought on his table, so that when he went back, after supper, he found them there. He was very much surprised and pleased. He examined them all very particularly, and was especially glad to have the black varnish, for now he could varnish his work, and make it look much more handsome. The little boxes that he made, after this, of a bright black outside, and lined neatly with paper within, were thought by the boys to be elegant.

He could now earn money faster, and, as his father insisted on having all his earnings expended for articles for Georgie's own use, and Jonas used to help him about expending it, he got, at last, quite a variety of implements and articles. He had some wire, and a little pair of pliers for bending it in all shapes, and a hammer and little nails. He had also a paint-box and brushes, and paper of various colors, for lining boxes, and making portfolios and pocket-books; and he had varnishes, red, green, blue, and black. All these he kept in his drawers and shelves, and made a great many ingenious things with them.

So Georgie was a great friend of both Rollo and Jonas, and they often used to come and see him, and play with him; and that was the reason that Rollo knew his voice so well, when he called to him from the landing, when Rollo was standing on the bridge, as described in the beginning of this story.

TWO GOOD FRIENDS.

Rollo ran along to the end of the bridge, clambered down to the water's edge, went along the shore among the trees and shrubbery, until he came to the seat where Georgie was sitting. Georgie asked him to sit down, and stay with him; but Rollo said he must go directly home; and so Georgie took his crutches, and they began to walk slowly together up the garden walk.

"Where have you been, Rollo?" said Georgie.

"I have been to see my cousin James, to ask him to go to the city with us to-morrow."

"Are you going to the city?"

"Yes; uncle George gave James and I a half a dollar apiece, the other day; and mother is going to carry us into the city to-morrow to buy something with it."

"Is Jonas going with you?"

"Yes," said Rollo. "He is going to drive. We are going in our carryall."

"I wish you would take some money for me, then, and get Jonas to buy me something with it."

"Well, I will," said Rollo. "What shall he buy for you?"

"O, he may buy any thing he chooses."

"Yes, but if you do not tell him what to buy, he may buy something you have got already."

"O, Jonas knows every thing I have got as well as I do."

Just then they came up near the house, and Georgie asked Rollo to look up at the golden pippin tree, and see how full it was.

"That is my branch," said he.

He pointed to a large branch which came out on one side, and which hung down loaded with fruit. It would have broken down, perhaps, if there had not been a crotched pole put under it, to prop it up.

"But all the apples on your branch are not golden pippins," said Rollo. "There are some on it that are red. What beautiful red apples!"

"Yes," said Georgie. "Father grafted that for me, to make it bear rosy-boys. I call the red ones my rosy-boys."

"Grafted?" said Rollo; "how did he graft it?"

"O," said Georgie, "I do not know exactly. He cut off a little branch from a rosy-boy tree, and stuck it on somehow, and it grew, and bears rosy-boys still."

Rollo thought this was very curious; Georgie told him he would give him an apple, and that he might have his choice--a pippin or a rosy-boy.

Rollo hesitated, and looked at them, first at one, and then at another; but he could not decide. The rosy-boys had the brightest and most beautiful color, but then the pippins looked so rich and mellow, that he could not choose very easily; and so Georgie laughed, and told him he would settle the difficulty by giving him one of each.

"So come here," said he, "Rollo, and let me lean on you, while I knock them down."

So Rollo came and stood near him, while Georgie leaned on him, and with his crutch gave a gentle tap to one of each of his kinds of apples, and they fell down upon the soft grass, safe and sound.



They then went into the house, and Georgie gave Rollo his money, wrapped up in a small piece of paper; and then Rollo, bidding him good by, went out of the little white gate, and walked along home.

The next morning, soon after breakfast, Jonas drove the carryall up to the front door, and Rollo and his mother walked out to it. Rollo's mother took the back seat, and Rollo and Jonas sat in front, and they drove along.

They called at the house where James lived, and found him waiting for them on the front steps, with his half dollar in his hand.

He ran into the house to tell his mother that the carryall had come, and to bid her good morning, and then he came out to the gate.

"James," said Rollo, "you may sit on the front seat with Jonas, if you want to."

James said he should like to very much; and so Rollo stepped over behind, and sat with his mother. This was kind and polite; for boys all like the front seat when they are riding, and Rollo therefore did right to offer it to his cousin.

A LECTURE ON PLAYTHINGS.

After a short time, they came to a smooth and pleasant road, with trees and farmhouses on each side; and as the horse was trotting along quietly, Rollo asked his mother if she could not tell them a story.

"I cannot tell you a story very well, this morning, but I can give you a lecture on playthings, if you wish."

"Very well, mother, we should like that," said the boys.

They did not know very well what a lecture was, but they thought that any thing which their mother would propose would be interesting.

"Do you know what a lecture is?" said she.

"Not exactly," said Rollo.

"Why, I should explain to you about playthings,—the various kinds, their use, the way to keep them, and to derive the most pleasure from them, &c. Giving you this information will not be as *interesting* to you as to hear a story; but it will be more *useful*, if you attend carefully, and endeavor to remember what I say."

The boys thought they should like the lecture, and promised to attend. Rollo said he would remember it all; and so his mother began.

"The value of a plaything does not consist in itself, but in the pleasure it awakens in your mind. Do you understand that?"

"Not very well," said Rollo.

"If you should give a round stick to a baby on the floor, and let him strike the floor with it, he would be pleased. You would see by his looks that it gave him great pleasure. Now, where would this pleasure be,—in the stick, or in the floor, or in the baby?"

"Why, in the baby," said Rollo, laughing.

"Yes; and would it be in his body, or in his mind?"

"In his face," said James.

"In his eyes," said Rollo.

"You would see the *signs of it* in his face and in his eyes, but the feeling of pleasure would be in his mind. Now, I suppose you understand what I said, that the value of the plaything consists in the pleasure it can awaken in the mind."

"Yes, mother," said Rollo.

"There is your jumping man," said she; "is that a good plaything?"

"Yes," said Rollo, "my *kicker*. But I don't care much about it. I don't know where it is now."

"What was it?" said James. "I never saw it."

"It was a pasteboard man," said his mother; "and there was a string behind, fixed so that, by pulling it, you could make his arms and legs fly about."

"Yes," said Rollo, "I called him my *kicker*."

"You liked it very much, when you first had it."

"Yes," said Rollo, "but I don't think it is very pretty now."

"That shows what I said was true. When you first had it, it was new, and the sight of it gave you pleasure; but the pleasure consisted in the novelty and drollery of it, and after a little while, when you became familiar with it, it ceased to give you pleasure, and then you did not value it. I found it the other day lying on the ground in the yard, and took it up and put it away carefully in a drawer."

"But if the value is all gone, what good does it do to save it?" said Rollo.

"The value to *you* is gone, because you have become familiar with it, and so it has lost its power to awaken feelings of pleasure in you. But it has still power to give pleasure to other children, who have not seen it, and I kept it for them."

"I should like to see it, very much," said James. "I never saw such a one."

"I will show it to you some time. Now, this is one kind of plaything,—those which please by their *novelty* only. It is not generally best to buy such playthings, for you very soon get familiar with them, and then they cease to give you pleasure, and are almost worthless."

"Only we ought to keep them, if we have them, to show to other boys," said Rollo.

"Yes," said his mother. "You ought never to throw them away, or leave them on the floor, or on the ground."

"O, the little fool," said Rollo suddenly.

His mother and James looked up, wondering what Rollo meant. He was looking out at the side of the carryall, at something about the wheel.

"What is it," said his mother.

"Why, here is a large fly trying to light on the wheel, and every time his legs touch it, it knocks them away. See! See!"

"Yes, but you must not attend to him now. You must listen to my lecture. You promised to give your attention to me."

So James and Rollo turned away from the window, and began to listen again.

"I have told you now," said she, "of one kind of playthings--those that give pleasure from their *novelty* only. There is another kind--those that give you pleasure by their *use*;--such as a doll, for example."

"How, mother? Is a doll of any *use*?"

"Yes, in one sense; that is, the girl who has it, *uses* it continually. Perhaps she admired the *looks* of it, the first day it was given to her; but then, after that, she can *use* it in so many ways, that it continues to afford her pleasure for a long time. She can dress and undress it, put it to bed, make it sit up for company, and do a great many other things with it. When she gets tired of playing with it one day, she puts it away, and the next day she thinks of something new to do with it, which she never thought of before. Now, which should you think the pleasure you should obtain from a ball, would arise from, its *novelty*, or its *use*?"

"Its *use*," said the boys.

"Yes," said the mother. "The first sight of a ball would not give you any very special pleasure. Its value would consist in the pleasure you would take in playing with it.

"Now, it is generally best to buy such playthings as you can use a great many times, and in a great many ways; such as a top, a ball, a knife, a wheelbarrow. But things that please you only by their *novelty*, will soon lose all their power to give you pleasure, and be good for nothing to you. Such, for instance, as jumping men, and witches, and funny little images. Children are very often deceived in buying their playthings; for those things which please by their novelty only, usually please them very much for a few minutes, while they are in the shop, and see them for the first time; while those things which would last a long time, do not give them much pleasure at first.

"There is another kind of playthings I want to tell you about a little, and then my lecture will be done. I mean playthings which give *you* pleasure, but give *other persons* pain. A drum and a whistle, for example, are disagreeable to other persons; and children, therefore, ought not to choose them, unless they have a place to go to, to play with them, which will be out of hearing. I have known boys to buy masks to frighten other children with, and bows and arrows, which sometimes are the means of putting out children's eyes. So you must consider, when you are choosing playthings, first, whether the pleasure they will give you will be from the *novelty* or the *use*; and, secondly, whether, in giving *you* pleasure, they will give *any other persons* pain.

"This is the end of the lecture. Now you may rest a little, and look about, and then I will tell you a short story."

THE YOUNG DRIVERS.

They came, about this time, to the foot of a long hill, and Jonas said he believed that he would get out and walk up, and he said James might drive the horse. So he put the reins into James's hands, and jumped out. Rollo climbed over the seat, and sat by his side. Presently James saw a large stone in the road, and he asked Rollo to see how well he could drive round it; for as the horse was going, he would have carried one wheel directly over it. So he pulled one of the reins, and turned the horse away; but he contrived to turn him out just far enough to make the *other* wheel go over the stone. Rollo laughed, and asked him to let him try the next time; and James gave him the reins; but there was no other stone till they got up to the top of the hill.

Then James said that Rollo might ride on the front seat now, and when Jonas got in, he climbed back to the back seat, and took his place by the side of Rollo's mother.

"Come, mother," then said Rollo, "we are rested enough now: please to begin the story."

"Very well, if you are all ready."

So she began as follows:--

THE STORY OF SHALLOW, SELFISH, AND WISE.

Once there were three boys going into town to buy some playthings: their names were Shallow, Selfish, and Wise. Each had half a dollar. Shallow carried his in his hand, tossing it up in the air, and catching it, as he went along. Selfish kept teasing his mother to give him some more money: half a dollar, he said, was not enough. Wise walked along quietly, with his cash safe in his pocket.

Presently Shallow missed catching his half dollar, and--chink--it went, on the sidewalk, and it rolled along down into a crack under a building. Then he began to cry. Selfish stood by, holding his own money tight in his hands, and said he did not pity Shallow at all; it was good enough for him; he had no business to be tossing it up. Wise came up, and tried to get the money out with a stick, but he could not. He told Shallow not to cry; said he was sorry he had lost his money, and that he would give him half of his, as soon as they could get it changed at the shop.

So they walked along to the toy-shop.

Their mother said that each one might choose his own plaything; so they began to look around on the counter and shelves.

After a while, Shallow began to laugh very loud and heartily at something he found. It was an image of a grinning monkey. It looked very droll indeed. Shallow asked Wise to come and see. Wise laughed at it too, but said he should not want to buy it, as he thought he should soon get tired of laughing at any thing, if it was ever so droll.

Shallow was sure that he should never get tired of laughing at so very droll a thing as the grinning monkey; and he decided to buy it, if Wise would give him half of his money; and so Wise did.

Selfish found a rattle, a large, noisy rattle, and went to springing it until they were all tired of hearing the noise.

"I think I shall buy this," said he. "I can make believe that there is a fire, and can run about springing my rattle, and crying, 'Fire! Fire!' or I can play that a thief is breaking into a store, and can rattle my rattle at him, and call out, 'Stop thief!'"

"But that will disturb all the people in the house," said Wise.

"What care I for that?" said Selfish.

Selfish found that the price of his rattle was not so much as the half dollar; so he laid out the rest of it in cake, and sat down on a box, and began to eat it.

Wise passed by all the images and gaudy toys, only good to look at a few times, and chose a soft ball, and finding that that did not take all of his half of the money, he purchased a little morocco box with an inkstand, some wafers, and one or two short pens in it. Shallow told him that was not a plaything; it was only fit for a school; and as to his ball, he did not think much of that.

Wise said he thought they could all play with the ball a great many times, and he thought, too, that he should like his little inkstand rainy days and winter evenings.

So the boys walked along home. Shallow stopped every moment to laugh at his monkey, and Selfish to spring his rattle; and they looked with contempt on Wise's ball, which he carried quietly in one hand, and his box done up in brown paper in the other.

When they got home, Shallow ran in to show his monkey. The people smiled a little, but did not take much notice of it; and, in fact, it did not look half so funny, even to himself, as it did in the shop. In a short time, it did not make him laugh at all, and then he was vexed and angry with it. He said he meant to go and throw the ugly old baboon away; he was tired of seeing that same old grin on his face all the time. So he went and threw it over the wall.

Selfish ate his cake up, on his way home. He would not give his brothers any, for he said they had had their money as well as he. When he got home, he went about the house, up and down, through parlor and chamber, kitchen and shed,

springing his rattle, and calling out, "Stop thief! Stop thief!" or "Fire! Fire!" Every body got tired, and asked him to be still; but he did not mind, until, at last, his father took his rattle away from him, and put it up on a high shelf.

Then Selfish and Shallow went out and found Wise playing beautifully with his ball in the yard; and he invited them to play with him. They would toss it up against the wall, and learn to catch it when it came down; and then they made some bat-sticks, and knocked it back and forth to one another, about the yard. The more they played with the ball, the more they liked it, and as Wise was always very careful not to play near any holes, and to put it away safe when he, had done with it, he kept it a long time, and gave them pleasure a great many times all summer long.

And then his inkstand box was a great treasure. He would get it out in the long winter evenings, and lend Selfish and Shallow, each, one of his pens; and they would all sit at the table, and make pictures, and write little letters, and seal them with small bits of the wafers. In fact, Wise kept his inkstand box safe till he grew up to be a man.

That is the end of the story.

THE TOY-SHOP.

"I wish I could get an inkstand box," said Rollo, when the story was finished.

"I think he was very foolish to throw away his grinning monkey," said James "I wish I could see a grinning monkey."

They continued talking about this story some time, and at length they drew nigh to the city. They drove to a stable, where Jonas had the horse put up, and then they all walked on in search of a toy-shop.

They passed along through one or two streets, walking very slowly, so that the boys might look at the pictures and curious things in the shop windows. At length they came to a toy-shop, and all went in.

They saw at once a great number and variety of playthings exhibited to view. All around the floor were arranged horses on wheels, little carts, wagons, and baskets. The counter had a great variety of images and figures,--birds that would peep, and dogs that would bark, and drummers that would drum--all by just turning a little handle. Then the shelves and the window were filled with all sorts of boxes, and whips, and puzzles, and tea-sets, and dolls, dressed and not dressed. There were bows and arrows, and darts, and jumping ropes, and glass dogs, and little rocking-horses, and a thousand other things.

When the boys first came in, there was a little girl standing by the counter with a small slate in her hand. She looked like a poor girl, though she was neat and tidy in her dress. She was talking with the shopman about the slate.

"Don't you think," said she, "you could let me have it for ten cents?"

"No," said he, "I could not afford it for less than fifteen. It cost me more than ten."

The little girl laid the slate down, and looked disappointed and sad. Rollo's mother came up to her, took up the slate, and said,

"I should think you had better give him fifteen cents. It is a very good slate. It is worth as much as that, certainly."

"Yes, madam, so I tell her," said the shopman.

"But I have not got but ten cents," said the little girl.

"Have not you?" said Rollo's mother. She stood still thinking a moment, and then she asked the little girl what her name was.

She said it was Maria.

She asked her what she wanted the slate for; and Maria said it was to do sums on, at school. She wanted to study arithmetic, and could not do so without a slate.

Jonas then came forward, and said that he should like to give her five cents of Georgie's money, and that, with the ten she had, would be enough. He said that Georgie had given him authority to do what he thought best with his money, and he knew, if Georgie was here, he would wish to help the little girl.

Rollo and James were both sorry they had not thought of it themselves; and, as soon as Jonas mentioned it, they wanted to give some of their money to the girl; but Jonas said he knew that Georgie would prefer to do it. At last,

however, it was agreed that Rollo and James should furnish one cent each, and Georgie the rest. This was all agreed upon after a low conversation by themselves in a corner of the store; and then Jonas came forward, and told the shopman that they were going to pay the additional five cents, and that he might let the girl have the slate. So Jonas paid the money, and it was agreed that Rollo and James should pay him back their share, when they got their money changed. The boys were very much pleased to see the little girl go away so happy with her slate in her hand. It was neatly done up in paper, with two pencils which the shopman gave her, done up inside.

After Maria was gone, the boys looked around the shop, but could not find any thing which exactly pleased them; or at least they could not find any thing which pleased them so much more than any thing else, that they could decide in favor of it. So they concluded to walk along, and look at another shop.

They succeeded at last in finding some playthings that they liked, and Jonas bought a variety of useful things for Georgie. On their way home, the carryall stopped at the house where Lucy lived, and Rollo's mother left him and James there, to show Lucy their playthings.

One of the things they bought was a little boat with two sails, and they went down behind the house to sail it. The other playthings and books they carried down too, and had a fine time playing with them, with Lucy and another little girl who was visiting her that afternoon.