

at last. "One day the donkey felt so mischievous, that he didn't know what to do ("Mischievous" muttered Laura), so he made up his mind to do something that Tyler hated, because he hated Tyler with all his might. So he rushed up and down, and kicked his legs in the air, and rolled over and over, just because he knew that Tyler always got so zaspated when he did that. And he made such a dreadful noise to start himself off, that Tyler who was pretending not to see his antics, left off digging and swore at him." (Great sensation.)

"It isn't wicked to say that someone else swore," declared Dora, pressing to Fred's side, as though to show herself with him against all the world if need be.

"He called him a jackass, and said he would break his neck, with a swear word before neck," went on Fred, disregarding them. "But the donkey ran away, and stood with his tail against the fence, pretending that he hadn't done anything, and didn't know what was the matter. So Tyler didn't hit him that time, because he couldn't get behind him, and went back mumbling to his digging; and the donkey smiled behind his back, and waved his tail in the air. He knew he would be punished and only have a little bunch of hay for his supper if he got into mischief; so he twisted the latch of the gate, so that it wouldn't shut properly, that he might get through into the field at night and steal something for himself. And when Tyler came back he blamed the boys, and wouldn't believe that they hadn't been swinging on the gate. But nobody told him that it was the donkey, or he would have nailed it up for spite, and he didn't guess, so that was all right. Then when Tyler had gone to his dinner, the donkey pulled up two beautiful young poplars that were just getting on nicely. That was beastly of him, because the trees hadn't hurt him; and he hurt the trees dreadfully, and all because Tyler was so fond of them. All their dear little leaves whispered to him and begged and implored him to stop; and the twigs tickled his ears, and even scratched him a little, but he hadn't got feeling enough to care. The earth clung to the trees as long as ever it could; but the donkey was vicious and furious, and he won in the end. And when he had thrown them down, the wind came and sobbed in the leaves and branches, and the sun shone down very pitifully, and the long blades of grass strained upwards and tried to cover their roots. But they drooped their leaves and died, for their hearts were broken; they knew that they could never lift their faces to the sun any more, or flutter their leaves in the breeze; and their poor roots were so cold and

thirsty; and they were so ashamed to have been sticking up in the air, when they should have been out of sight under the ground, like our feet in shoes and stockings. So their hearts were broken and they died."

"Oh, the poor, poor trees," said Dora. "Freddy dear, I wouldn't cry, if Tyler *killed* the donkey."

"No, it's enough to make you wish he *would*," said Fred, looking very fierce and taking himself quite seriously. "When Tyler saw the dead trees, he was so mad, and he whacked the donkey so much, that at last the donkey wished he hadn't done it. It was no good trying to make out that he didn't think it was such a dreadful thing to do, for he just looked at Tyler's face, and knew that he was fairly in for it. He dared not even bellow, and pretend Tyler was hurting him, as he often did when he wanted the nurses to bring him pieces of sugar, and say "poor fellow," and make a fuss of him; because Tyler looked so awfully fierce this time; not as he did sometimes when he caught him a sounding thwack and whooped as he did it. Then it was nearly all sound, and not much sting; now it was all sting, and no sound to speak of. Tyler was grinding his teeth like Blue Beard, and saying new swear-words, that the donkey had never heard before, and they sounded something *awful*. So the donkey thought it was best to keep quiet, and hold his ears down and look ashamed of himself; and he hoped that might pacify Tyler a little. And it did, till he looked at the poor dead trees, and then he started to feel angry all over again, till the donkey sobbed for fright, and would have put the trees back again if he could; but he couldn't, being only a donkey. Presently Tyler brought people to see what he had done, and they all looked shocked, and said, "What a pity," and "How dreadful of him," till he could have died of shame. And the nurse he liked best held the drooping leaves in her fingers, and looked so sorrowfully at him, that he sat down and cried real tears. And just as he was falling asleep of misery, Tyler took up the old branch of a tree and hit him with it. He shrieked for terror, because he thought it was the ghost of one of the trees he had killed, come to haunt him. And he only got a little bit of supper that night; but he hadn't the heart to go and steal for himself after all. And he had a bad dream, that he was sold and harnessed up, and had to drag loads, and be whacked harder than Tyler whacked him. And when he woke up the perspiration was pouring down his face, and his heart was beating very hard, and his conscience was saying: "You're been a very wicked un-

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