

**TALES FOR A COSY
NOOK: WHAT CAME OF
A BIT OF SOAP; NO. II**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649416875

Tales for a Cosy Nook: What Came of a Bit of Soap; No. II by Forbes E. Winslow

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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FORBES E. WINSLOW

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Tales for a Cozy Hook.

No. II.

**WHAT CAME OF A BIT OF
SOAP.**

BY

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RECTOR OF S. PAUL'S, & LEONARDS-ON-SEA.

London:

W. SKEFFINGTON & SON, 163, PICCADILLY.

1880.

1489. f. 497.





WHAT CAME OF A BIT OF SOAP.

“WHAT came of a bit of soap? Why, lather, of course.”

There you go, my dear young reader, running right away from me at the very beginning of the book. What go-ahead people you young folks are to be sure, you always want to jump to conclusions; you are ever in such a desperate hurry to end, that you never give yourselves time to begin.

Now, if you please, you must for once allow the old man his own way, and kindly let me go my own pace. I remember, as a boy, going to bathe at Brighton, and seeing a sentence written up in a bathing machine (by the way, it is very wrong to write in bathing machines), which struck me very much; the sentence was this, and I commend it to your notice,

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"Patience is a virtue." Some one had evidently been kept waiting for his machine, and this was his reflection thereon. "You'd better bide a wee," as the song that Mamma sings tells you, and then you will find out in the last page of this book, "*what came of a bit of soap.*"

And now, like Princess Schehera-zade in the 'Arabian Nights,' by way of introducing the story I have to tell, I will begin by relating another.

Many years ago, when I was a little boy (never mind how many years ago, Miss Impudence, I do not care to count them), I was, however, then a very little boy, with the broadest of white collars, the shortest of jackets, and the chubbiest of rosy faces, altogether, as my fond mother was given to say, "a beautiful boy": I was at a school kept by two dear old maiden ladies, nice old souls; I am sure they meant well, but they had at times a peculiar way of showing their kindness, as you will see.

Every Saturday night, by way of making our Sundays more enjoyable, we little boys,

having been marshalled up into a large bedroom on the second floor, were arranged in a silent, trembling, awe-stricken row; then a large jar of treacle—I see it now, and I shudder at the recollection—was brought down from the top of a high wardrobe. A big gravy spoon, much like the enormous spoon the clown feeds the babies with at the pantomime, was brought out, into this was placed an innocent-looking white powder, which so far belied its looks, that at the very sight of it, our cheeks grew white, our little bosoms heaved, our knees went knocking together as if we were practising a postman's knock, and the whole row of little boys immediately assumed an exceedingly limp and boneless appearance, like marionettes when the strings that hold their limbs become suddenly loose. Over this powder a stream of thick treacle was carefully poured, and with a stick the whole delicious compound was worked up into a solid mass, and then, one by one, every shaking, writhing boy had to step forward to take his physic. Woe betide the luckless mortal who shirked

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his dose; it was a standing rule that the spoon was to issue forth from each mouth as bright and glistening as if the powder and the treacle had never been there. To add insult to injury, and by way of rendering our Sunday exercises more full of tranquil happiness and comfort, we were then ushered down to the lower regions, where, amidst other toilette luxuries, such as flesh-brushes which would rasp the skin off an ancient rhinoceros, hard towels (oh! how hard they were), scalding hot water, I have got into hot water a good many times since then, but never into the like of that, we had our heads washed with soft soap of the most unmitigated description. The pleasing result of those days of early discipline is this, that whenever I meet with an old schoolfellow who has survived those memorable days, I find these three well-defined marks by which I can recognize him as a fellow-sufferer and co-martyr with myself: first, a ravenous appetite that nothing can satiate; secondly, a mouth extending from ear to ear; and thirdly, a shiny bald head as

innocent of any appearance of hair as a cannon ball fresh from Woolwich Arsenal.

Now, dear children, for by this time the solitary reader who commenced this book, I hope has been reinforced by a number of brothers and sisters who are peering eagerly over her shoulder, place yourselves in a row, and I will deal with you as I was dealt with when a little boy. The story I am going to tell is the treacle ; the moral, or application, or lesson to be learned from the story, is the innocent-looking white powder ; I will not be so rude as to say that either the author or the publisher is the spoon, so we will call the book as a whole, the gravy-spoon. "And the soft-soap?" Well, you may find out what that is for yourselves, by-and-by : it never does to explain everything.

And now, having cleared the way, off we go, but mind you don't run ahead of me. There must be no peeping at the last page, for you will find out all too soon, as it is, "*what came of a bit of soap.*"

Of course you have heard of Eastmoreland,