

JANE AND JERRY.

I

Jane and Jerry.

One night in the winter of 1869, at Jackson Center, Indiana, a little village close swept by the breezes of Lake Michigan, a social affair of heart-throbbing importance was in progress. It was "Spelling School" night at the village school house. The pretty country girls had smartened up their Sunday frocks and maybe added a new ribbon to their satisfying costumes. The stalwart boys had greased their boots and, perchance, as was the fashion of that day, smoothed their locks by application of sweet scented oil. The school room buzzed with happiness for each girl and boy had earned this good time by good days works; moreover, none in all

THE STORY OF

that neighborhood was far out circumstanced by another.

On this especial night, a newcomer, Young Simpson, a sailor lad, just in from a season on the Lakes, was running gauntlet of opinion. And jolly well he ran, for he was readiest of all that company with quip and jest. Good humored and as breezy as the Lakes whereon he had spent years of wholesome life.

"He's not like the others," said Jane Cape.

Now Jane was a round, rosy, slip of a girl who first saw daylight in Cumberlandshire, England. She was the merriest, sauciest, daringest one of all that jolly company. She was a bit imperious too, despite her small person and her appealing, big, blue eyes. So when Jane whispered to the big boy who was choosing up sides: "Choose Jerry Simpson

JERRY SIMPSON.

next to me," she had her way.

"Why did they choose me," said Jerry, "I can't spell."

"Never mind," said happy Jane, "I can spell for both of us."

Jerry went down the first round. Vain-glorious Jane sat down the second, and would have been mightily chagrined save that she was so happy snuggled up to Jerry while he told her, on this, their second time of meeting, that he had "thought about her," and, might he see her home.

The spelling match was long drawn out. The two sides stood up bravely. The "giver out" turned on his list of catch words. Many a boy and girl triumphed over the long, hard words only to be tripped on some simple one, until one by one the spellers sat them down even as in the years since come and gone so many of that company have dropped off to

THE STORY OF

sleep the good, long sleep.

Before the champion speller of that night stood on the floor alone, all flushed with pride and glad with hearty handshakes, it had come to young Simpson to know that he wanted more than all things else in life to have the blue eyed Jane to be his own for all the time to come.

In other, stranger years to come, this sailor lad so broad of smile, so kind of heart, so brave and quaint of speech, shall stand in many a country schoolhouse, champion for human rights and none shall spell him down until his great story, bravely, quaintly told, sets truth a-marching on.