

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

BY AUNT BECKY.

Dear Boys and Girls:

I am sure the letters last week were enjoyed by all readers of the children's page. B. D., from Sudbury, writes a very nice letter for a little girl of seven. It was neatly written, and we hope to hear from her soon again. Henry S. and Billy Thomas (chums as they call themselves) must have rollicking times. Henry wants to know if poor venerable Aunt Becky ever made "gobolinks." Well, no, Henry, I have never done so, but I do believe I will renew my youth and join my little nieces and nephews in a "gobolink" contest. I think Minnie T. should ask her brother, who seems to be an adept at puzzles, to contribute some for the "Corner." We would all like to know if Johnnie B. got the fifty cents he expected. I hope Billy T.'s sore finger is better. I think he should explain how he managed to break a finger "playing football." Did I read his copy right? No one thought of writing about hallowe'en fun. Surely the good old customs have not been forgotten. Long, long ago when I was a little girl, hallowe'en was a red letter day. Good-bye, dear little friends. Write as often as you like, you are always welcome in the corner.

Your friend,

AUNT BECKY.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I thought I would try and write you a little letter. I am a little girl of nine. I do not go to school but I study my catechism at home. I have two sisters and a brother older and one brother younger than me. My sister Rose is writing to me also. Good-bye.

LIZZIE.

Granby.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I was pleased at seeing my little letter in the paper this week. I will try and write every week. I am learning my catechism at home in hopes to make my first Communion in the spring. We live about four miles from the Church. In winter some times it is very cold to drive so far. This is all for this week. Good-bye.

ROSE.

Granby.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I am just eight years old and cannot write very good, but I would like to see my letter in your paper, so won't you put it in. I have a big dog. Rover is his name. He loves to swim in the river. We throw out sticks and he goes after them and when he comes in we all run away, because he likes to jump up on us and it is not very nice when he is soaking wet.

ISABEL.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I live in the country and cannot go to school regularly. I feed the chickens, turkeys and ducks, and gather the eggs. We had visitors nearly all summer. My aunts and cousins were with us and we had great times boating and picnicking in the woods. They are building a school-house about a mile from here, so then papa will drive me to school every day.

Your friend,

MIRIAM.

Dear Aunt Becky:

I have three white mice. My auntie gave them to me for my birthday. They have lots of fun scampering over the house and cuddle around my neck. I have six dolls and I make all their clothes. My big sister cuts them out and I sew them. I have two brothers and a sister older than myself and a baby sister. I am ten years old and go to school regularly. Papa thinks I am doing very well for a little girl.

Your little friend,

KITTIE.

Dear Aunt Becky:

Can you find room for a letter from a little girl who lives down by the sea? I wanted to write and tell you how much I enjoy reading the children's page. Seeing other little boys and girls' letters made me want to write too. I hope to see this next week.

Your friend,

MOLLY.

Isaac's Harbor, N.S.

Dear Aunt Becky:

This is from far away Winnipeg. I wonder how you would like to live out this way. We have very cold winters but have lots of fun sliding down home-made toboggan slides and making snowballs and having snow-ball fights. I am longing for it, although sometimes I have to stay indoors for days at a time. In summer I have no very special good time, as we live outside the city and it is very quiet. I had a trip last year with my uncle to New York. I rode in the elevated cars and thought it was just lovely. We stayed down at Manhattan for a few

No wonder folks found it hard to believe that he was just a tramp kitten, or that they paid no heed to the wistful look in his round eyes or to the piteous little cries that came from his funny red mouth. Sad indeed would have been his fate only for the mother-heart in the loft tenant. She had three babies of her own, great rollicking fellows with big heads and ugly yellow jackets, but she loved them dearly, and every day went forth to forage for them. Just as the waif cuddled down under the maple she devoted mother came by softly, a fat juicy mouse held carefully between her sharp teeth. No doubt she was thinking what a jolly scramble her darlings would have for this delicious morsel. Perhaps that was why she scurried along more quickly as she heard a pleading "Meow, me-ow" from the orphan under the tree, and four little white socks twinkled through the grass and came out on the path in front of her.

Would she give it to him? She stopped for a moment, shook her mouse temptingly, bent her head till it almost touched the path, and then, with a gentle little purr, dropped her babies' dinner to the motherless bairn.—Cecelia Martin, in Donahoe's.

LITTLE LAUGHS.

The following story is told of how the office boy got the better of former Secretary Root: Said Mr. Root, "Who carried off my paper-basket?"

"It was Mr. Reilly," said the boy. "Who is Mr. Reilly?" asked Mr. Root.

"The janitor, sir." An hour later Mr. Root asked, "Jimmie, who opened the window?" "Mr. Lantz, sir."

"And who is Mr. Lantz?" "The window-cleaner, sir." Mr. Root wheeled about and looked at the boy. "See here, James," he said, "we call men by their first names here. We don't 'mister' them in this office. Do you understand?" "Yes, sir."

In ten minutes the door opened, and a small, shrill voice said, "There is a man here as wants to see you, Elihu."

A piano-tuner employed by a city firm was sent to a certain suburb to tune a piano. He found the instrument in good condition and not in the least need of attention.

A few days later the firm received a letter from the owner of the piano, a lady of musical intention, stating that the piano had not been properly tuned. It was no better than before.

After receiving a reprimand from his employer, the hapless tuner made another trip to the suburbs and again tested every note, only to find, as before, no fault with the instrument. This time he told the lady so.

"Yes," she said, "it does seem all right, doesn't it, when you play on it, but as soon as I begin to sing it gets all out of tune again."

SYNONYMOUS.

"Mon Dieu, zees languazhe," said the earnest Parisian, who was visiting the Fair. "It makes me cent mille troubles. Mon ami, Brown tells me Monsieur Smit' has one level head. I inquire of ze dictionaire what it is that level means. Ze dictionaire say level is flat. Next day I see Monsieur Smit' an' I compliment heem. 'Ah, Monsieur Smit', vous avez ze grand flat head.' Monsieur Smit' is not compliment. He knock me down."

STORIES OF CARDINAL WISEMAN.

Gentleness, benevolence, hospitality were among his (Cardinal Wiseman's) notable characteristics. None could tell a story better than he. One day when the Cardinal had had some choice plants on the table, someone ventured to ask their names. "I'm afraid I can't tell you," said the Cardinal. "I am sometimes as much puzzled by botanical nomenclature as the old lady who said she could not be bothered to remember all the long Latin names; the only two she had ever been able to retain were Aurora Borealis and delirium tremens."

He used to relate with amusement and satisfaction how, on his last visit to Ireland, he had been characteristically welcomed by a ragged native. As soon as he set foot on Irish ground this warm-hearted fellow pushed his way through the crowd, and, falling on his knees before him, seized his hand, at the same time exclaiming: "Now thin, by holy St. Patrick! Heaven bless your Imminisity!"

MY OLD KENTUCKY HOME.

A writer in a recent issue of the Bardstown (Ky.) Record gives some highly fanciful details of the writing of "My Old Kentucky Home." The author of the song was Stephen Collins Foster. He was born of Irish Catholic parents in Allegheny, Pa., and early in life developed a marked talent for poetry and music. In that day, however, a living could not be made by following these arts, so Foster became a printer. As such he spent several years in Kentucky and the South, and came to love that land of song and many singers.

While at Bardstown he was a frequent visitor at the home of Judge John Rowan, who owned a large farm about two miles out from Bardstown. The Rowan home is a large, rambling, two-story structure, with verandas around it, after the Southern style, and a number of shade trees in front. Even to-day the place is a beautiful one, set back a couple of hundred yards from the stone pike. The song was written while Foster and his sister were on a week's visit to the homestead, and this is how the Record says it was first produced, although the first draft of it was undoubtedly written during the previous days of the visit.

One beautiful morning, while the slaves were at work in the corn field, and the sun was shining with a mighty splendor on the waving grass—first giving it the color of a light red, then changing it to a golden hue—there were seated upon a bench in front of the Rowan homestead two young people—a brother and a sister. High up in the top of a tree was a mocking bird warbling its sweetest notes. Over in the hidden recess of a small brush the thrush's mellow song could be heard. A number of small negro children were playing not far away. When Foster had finished the first verse of the song, his sister took it from his hand, and sang in a sweet, mellow voice:

"The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home; 'Tis summer, the darkies are gay; The corn-top's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom, While the birds make music all the day."

"The young folks roll on the little cabin floor, All merry, all happy, all bright; By-'n-by hard times comes a-knock-in' at the door— Then, my old Kentucky home, good night."

On her finishing the first verse the mocking bird descended to a lower branch. The feathery songster drew his head to one side, and appeared to be completely enraptured at the wonderful voice of the young singer. When the last sweet note died away upon the air, her fond brother sang in a deep bass voice:

"Weep no more, my lady; oh, weep no more to-day; We'll sing one song for the old Kentucky home, For our old Kentucky home far away."

"A few more days for to tote the weary load, No matter, 'twill never be light, A few more days till we totter on the road— Then, my old Kentucky home, good-night."

The negroes had laid down their hoes and rakes; the little tots had placed themselves behind the large sheltering trees, while the old black women were peeping around the corner of the house. The faithful old house-dog never took his eyes off the young singers; everything was still; not even the stirring of the leaves seemed to break the wonderful silence. Again the brother and sister took hold of the remaining notes, and sang in sweet accents:

"They hunt no more for the possum and the coon On the meadow, the hill and the shore, They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon, On the bench by the old cabin door, The day goes by like a shadow o'er the heart, With sorrow where all was delight; The time has come when the darkies have to part— Then, my old Kentucky home, good night, The head must bow and the back will have to bend Wherever the darky may go; A few more days and trouble all will end, In the fields where the sugar-canes grow."

As the song finished tears flowed down the old people's cheeks; the

children crept from their hiding place behind the trees, their faces wreathed in smiles; the mocking-bird and the thrush sought their homes in the thicket, while the old dog still lay basking in the sun.

Foster died in Allegheny and is buried in St. Francis cemetery there. His grave is overgrown with briars. His songs have gone round the English-speaking world and there is a splendid bronze statue of him in Highland Park, Pittsburg, but no one has thought enough of him to care for his last resting place, more's the pity.

THE STAGE IRISHMAN.

Vigorous Protest from the Old Land Against the Creature.

There is no Irish wrong that demands more prompt redress than that embodiment of slanderous national insult known as the "stage" Irishman, writes "Juverna" in the London Universe. The hideous creature was originally called into existence by England, for the purpose of defaming a people whom she envied and hated, and as the years sped the poisonous charm worked with results which Irishmen—true Irishmen—only too well know. Bitter indeed is the thought which reminds us that amongst the greatest caricaturists of their own country and race are to be found natives themselves, who, dulled by ignorance or something worse, batten upon a putrid superstition which they insist upon preserving for the reason that it brings a sordid living. In America our people have taken up the matter very seriously, determining to scotch this stage reptile at all hazards, and ere long the conventional "stage" Irishman will be found as scarce in Old Columbia as is patriotic sentiment in a British regiment of the line. The Ancient Order of Hibernians, that powerful organization of Irishmen in exile, is dealing with the intolerable grievance in an unmistakable way, having passed a resolution ordaining that no member of the order shall attend any theatre in which the ridiculous caricature embodied in the "stage" Irishman is allowed to figure in the programme. A most praiseworthy effort this to stamp the creature out of existence. We trust that this spirited protest may find prompt imitation here at home, as many of our social "noodles" who aspire to social distinction as comic vocalists made "native" ideals—raised specially in the atmosphere of low-class English music halls—their choice delineation when "performing" in drawing room or on local amateur stage. There is no more loathsome character to be met in any social circle than this "fella" who, being an Irishman born, considers it his bounden duty to formally apologize to mankind for the "unfortunate" by libelling his race and country on every available opportunity. This Irish ranting is quite too common, and should be made a rara avis by systematized hunting whenever he appears in evidence. Prompt, resolute, and constant action is what is wanted in dealing with him. Let him be socially squelched and his efforts mocked universally. Such course must inevitably accomplish wonders. It is needed.

PRaise FOR A POET.

The late Richard Henry Stoddard received many little books of poems from would-be poets who hoped to be given a word of praise.

Once while Stoddard was acting as literary editor of a certain publication, there was sent to him a book of poems published at the author's expense, the edition of which was limited to one hundred copies.

One hardly can imagine the shock the author must have received when he opened Stoddard's review of the book and read the following: "The best thing that we can say of this volume of poems is that the edition is limited to one hundred copies."

THE LITTLE RUSSIAN'S PARENTAGE.

A Russian immigrant of tender age was being registered in a downtown Philadelphia school. The teacher questioned:

"What is your name?" "Katinka," replied the child. "And your father's name?" "I never hat one," came the quick response. "Then tell me your mother's name," said the teacher kindly. "I never hat no mudder neither," answered the little child seriously. "I was born off my gran-mudder,"—Lippincott's.

PELICAN PINCY.

(By Anne Cobb, in S. S. Times.)

Ned was out in the pineapple-acres trying to find some ripe fruit for supper. It was a very interesting place to explore, especially for a Northern boy on his first visit to Florida. The "pines," as Uncle Will called them, were all sorts and sizes,—little plants just set out, and full grown ones—several feet high, with stiff, sharp-pointed leaves protecting the fruit tucked away in their midst. Most of them had only little crimson bunches yet, but off in one corner Ned found two ripe ones, and was just going to carry them off when he saw a huge feathered thing lying all huddled up in one of the alleys between the rows of pineapples.

"Uncle, oh, Uncle!" he called; "please come here a minute?" Uncle came and looked.

"Why, it's a pelican," he said. And then, as he stooped and examined it, "Wounded, too, poor thing!" he said, pityingly.

"Perhaps we could cure it if we took it home," suggested Ned.

"I'm afraid not," said uncle, doubtfully. "Still, it wouldn't do any harm to try. We'll let Moses bring it along in the cart; it's too heavy to carry."

When they got home they found Mr. Pelican wasn't hurt so badly after all, and Auntie May's nursing agreed with him so well that in a week he was walking around. Ned thought he was the queerest mixture of pretty and ugly he had ever seen. His feathers were beautiful, especially the rich reddish ones on the neck. But such clumsy, sprawling feet, with the toes joined together in a sort of web! And, queerest of all, a tough, skinny pouch underneath his long, flat bill. Ned wondered what it was for, till "Piney" (as he called him, from the place where he was found) began to fish for his dinner. He perched out on the end of the long dock, and watched till a fish came along. Then down he plunged, grabbed the fish, stored it away in his pouch, and so on till he had enough. Whenever he got hungry, all he had to do was to take a fish or two out of his convenient lunch-basket.

Ned was afraid that Piney would go away when he got well. Perhaps he was a wee bit grateful, and perhaps he thought Uncle Will's dock had as nice fish near it as any other place on the lake; anyway he stayed, and soon got so tame that he would waddle round the grounds after Ned just like a dog. The one member of the family who disapproved of Piney was old Cook Lily.

"Seems lak he jes' know when ah got mah po'ch swop' up," she said. "Den he 'low he'll trail dose feet along an' spile it. Ole Mars' Debbil in dat bird; you-all better watch out." So whenever she heard a certain shuffle on the porch, Lily would peek round the corner, and if no one was with Piney, he was likely to be "shooed" off the porch in a hurry.

One afternoon every one had gone sailing, and, queerly enough, Piney had not appeared. Lily was rocking away, singing "De year ob Jubilee" in the best of spirits, when she heard a step outside. Up she jumped, and round the porch she ran, slashing frantically with the broom, and crying, "G'way, now, yo' penickety old—"

And that's as far as Lily got, for her broom hit—not Piney, but the young minister from down the lake. Over the edge of the porch he went—just like Piney—and actually rolled in the sand! Poor Lily. All she could say at first was, "Mas' Preachah, O Mas' Preachah!"

But the sand was soft, and "Mas' Preachah" wasn't hurt; so he sat on the edge of the piazza and listened, with great bursts of laughter, to Lily's explanations. As he went away, smoothing his crushed hat, whom should he meet but Piney, Waddling up the trail with Ned!

"So this is your pelican, is it, Ned?" he asked, with a twinkle in his eye. "Better teach him to wear hats if you don't want his head cracked."

After her mistake Lily did a little extra scrubbing, but put the entire blame of the happening on Piney. "Huh-uh," she would say, shaking her head wisely. "What ah tell you 'bout dat biggetty bird?"

Mrs. Newlywed—Have you any nice slumps this morning? Butcher—Slumps? What are they? Mrs. Newlywed—Indeed, I don't know; but my husband is always talking about a slump in the market, and I thought I would like to try some.