A PAGE FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS

CURRENT TOPICS

On May 1, Baron Sakatani and a number of Japanese financiers arrived in Victoria by the big Japanese ship Kaga Maru. These gentlemen are on a tour of the world. They will visit Chicago and New York and most of the great cities in Europe and return by the Trans-Siberian railroad. They say they are traveling for pleasure but Japanese newspapers state that they are on the way to visit the great bankers of the world in order to borrow money to pay off the debt of Japan. Even in time of peace Japan has been spending for many years large sums of money to build railroads, steamships and other public works. Her schools, too, have cost her a great deal of money. The debts incurred for peaceful undertakings, however, could have been paid but for the two great wars in which Japan has engaged, the first with China, the other with Russia. In both of these she came off conqueror, but they have left a load of debt which will be a burden on the country, not only during the lives of this generation but of their children and children's children.

Korea, as many of you know, is a peninsula nearly opposite Japan. The Japanese nation claims a protectorate over it. The Koreans would like to keep their country for themselves but are not strong enough to drive the Japanese away. The country is in a very disturbed state. Disorderly bands of men rob the farmers and merchants. It is said too, that the Japanese soldiers stationed in the country oppress the people. The government of Korea and Prince Ito, the Japanese general, have resolved to put an end to lawlessness. It was said some time ago that the Japanese intended to settle in Korea. It looks as if the little brown men have learned to act by

"The good old rule, the simple plan
That they shall take who have the power
And they shall keep who can."

We cannot blame them for even Christian nations do not always do to their neighbors as they would have them do to them.

King Manuel won the applause not only of the Cortes or Parliament, but of the people, by his modest manly speech and earnest manner at its opening. "I hope to work with you in order to bring about the happiness and greatness of our country. To these I henceforth dedicate my life and activities," said the boy king to the members of the Cortes. The lad has shown himself brave and honest. It will be a happy thing for the country, if, as he grows older, he becomes wiser and better.

The countries around the Gulf of Mexico are in a sad way. In Venezuela they have the plague. The president of Guatemala is finding that his neighbors do not believe he was right in killing scores of men and women even if his life was threatened and Honduras and Nicaragua are determined to punish him. In Mexico a train has been robbed of $63,000 which the Wells-Fargo express had sent from one city to another in a safe. The messengers of this company risk their lives when they carry money from place to place over the lonely mountain passes, but it is not so often that the thieves are able to rob a train. It is thought in this case that some of the servants of the company are the robbers.

A later despatch states that Colombia has a dispute with Panama on the north and Venezuela on the east about her boundaries. Poor Venezuela is in no condition just now to enforce any claim, however just. The plague has spread through the port of La Guaira till it had to be quarantined. On account of this the whole country will suffer terribly. There are not many seaports in Venezuela and it is feared Porto Cabello to the west may also be closed.

There is one bright side to this gloomy picture. The doctor who first declared the disease to be the plague and who was punished for doing so, has chosen to stay among the people and is doing what can be done to stamp it out. He is assisted by the United States Consul, Thos. R. Moffatt.

There is a dispute between the shipbuilders of Great Britain and their men and already the masters have shut down some of their works. Unless an agreement is arrived at a quarter of a million of men will be thrown out of employment. It is a terrible thing that so many men should be idle. Lock-outs and strikes will, surely some day be impossible in civilized countries.

It is a hundred years since the first Roman Catholic Bishop was appointed in New York. The event has been celebrated with much pomp and ceremony, for the Catholic church in that great city numbers many thousands of people. On Saturday, May 2, a procession of sixty thousand men marching through the streets brought the celebration to a close. The sight was a grand one, never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

What a wonderful thing a great steamship is! On the Empress of Britain, 1,580 people have crossed the ocean to come to Canada. What wanderers men have become. It would be interesting to know how many people are on the ocean in any one week.

A plot to murder Lord Kitchener and other British officials was lately discovered in Calcutta. There is great discontent in India and it is feared there will be an attempt to overthrow the British government. The tribes on the northwestern border who were invading India have been defeated and trouble in that quarter is over for the present.

A splendid squadron is to bring the Prince of Wales to Quebec to celebrate the founding of the city by Champlain. The prince will sail on the Indomitable, one of the finest battleships in the world. Besides these there will be seven men of war. The boys of Eastern Canada are to be envied the fine sights they will see during this celebration.

Every boy and girl in the city knows that we need more and better water. Last midsummer and well on to autumn there was not water enough in some parts of the city to use in the houses, much less to water lawns and gardens. This year there are many more people in Victoria than there ever were. No time should be lost in settling where more water is to be got. Mr. Ashcroft is an engineer who has been paid by the government to examine into the question and to try to find out the truth. In his long report, he says he believes the water from Goldstream would supply a city more than four times as large as Victoria. There are many people here who do not think the Goldstream water should ever have been sold to a private company. That may be quite true. But if it is cheaper for Victoria to buy this water than to get it anywhere else, if there is plenty of it and if it is good, the sooner we get it the better.

Before long we may have the tram cars running to Ross Bay and out to Sydney. There is no doubt this would be a good thing for the farmers in the Saanich peninsula as well as for Victoria. Electricity is the most wonderful of the powers of nature which man has yet been able to turn to his service. Imagine the world without the telegraph, the telephone and the electric car, to say nothing of the hundred other contrivances which we owe to the wizard Edison and to the great scientists from the time of Franklin, who have learned so much about what electricity can do and yet who have not been able to discover what it is.

The License Commissioners promise to see that the saloon and hotelkeepers do not break the laws which have been made to govern their business. There are among the saloon-keepers some who have always kept these laws and they say that they will now do their best to help to bring to justice the lawbreakers. Why have men or women ever been allowed to hold their licenses to sell liquor when it was known that they did not keep the promises they made when they got them?

When the boys now in the schools in Victoria grow to be men it is to be hoped they will do away with many of the saloons in the city. There surely is no need for more places to sell strong drink than there is for carrying on any other business in the city. If fewer people drank many of the saloon-keepers would have to go out of business. You can put your money to a much better use than to buy beer or whiskey with it. But the money wasted is the least part of the harm that this business does. Nothing is easier than to learn to drink but there is no habit harder to break. When once it holds a man in its grip, especially a young man, he must be strong indeed to be able to escape from it.

It is very much to be doubted if ever any man was the better for learning to drink in the tavern or the saloon and it is certain that thousands upon thousands have repented in shame and misery the day they first entered a public drinking place.

Some time ago the C. P. R. planned to clear land for settlement on this island. Mr. R. M. Palmer says that some of the land between Nanaimo and Alberni, especially that along French Creek and the Qualicum River is easily cleared and if laid out in ten acre farms would be very profitable. In these days farmers are learning that there is no need of having very large farms in order to make a living. A small piece of land wisely and carefully cultivated is often much more profitable than hundreds of acres which cannot be properly attended to. It needs, however, more experience and more wisdom to cultivate the small than the large farm. In the agricultural colleges and many of the country schools, young people are learning what soils are best suited to certain plants, how to care for domestic animals and many other things necessary for farmers to know. In these days many highly educated men are working on farms all over Canada. No life is more independent or better for the man who must work for his living than that of a farmer.

One of the candidates for the presidency of the United States, Governor Johnson of Minnesota, would like to see the flag of the United States flying from the Gulf of Mexico, to the Arctic Ocean. We, in Canada, are very well contented to have the United States for neighbors but we think our own government much better than theirs. While we know that there are many things in which Canada can improve, it is not to the great republic, rich and prosperous as she is that we look for a pattern. The United States has as much as she can do now to look after her own affairs and Canada is quite big enough to become another nation, if the time should ever come when she is not satisfied to be part of the greatest empire the world has yet seen.

There are a great many children in Victoria who will be sorry to hear that Archbishop Orth is too ill to come back again. Until a new Archbishop is appointed, Father Brabant will fill the place.

The summer has come and with the summer all sorts of out-door amusements. The more time boys and girls can spend in the open air the better. But it is a busy time too. Every one is preparing for the close of school. The hard work will make them enjoy the holidays better and there is nowhere in the world where children have as good a time as in Victoria at midsummer. Whether they go out camping or not the fields and beaches as well as the park are free for all. The city is spending much money on Beacon Hill Park and all children, little or big, should see that they are very careful not to disfigure trees or plants. The park is a delightful playground. Sea and sky and mountains all make it more beautiful than pen can describe or brush can paint.

The nest which the children of Miss Saunder's school at Quamichan found is that of the Tule wren. This tiny bird is not common on Vancouver island. How so small a creature built as large a nest is wonderful. It is a brown bird but little bigger than a humming bird with a rather long bill. Perhaps some of the bright-eyed Quamichan children may yet see the little pair at work. They build in marshy places, such as the spot in which the nest was found.

SHORT STORIES

Marjorie's Automobile Ride

Marjorie in all the eight years of her life had never ridden in an automobile, and she wanted to, oh, so much. She lived in the country and she had seen lots of automobiles go down the long straight road that passed her house, but she had never ridden in one.

One afternoon two men rode up to Marjorie's house in a big red automobile and left it purring in the roadway while they went in to see her father. Marjorie stood swinging on the gate for a little while, looking at it with admiring eyes. Then she went out into the road and walked all around it, thinking how nice it would be if the men would take her for a ride. Then growing bolder, she climbed into the forward seat and sat down with the big steering wheel in front of her.

The shining brass levers attracted her attention, and she wanted to know what would happen if she moved one of them, so she tried and tugged and pulled with all her might on the nearest one and managed to move it 'way back. Nothing happened, and she was rather glad that nothing had happened. Then she pulled on the other one, but it wouldn't move at first, so she braced her little feet against the dashboard and pulled again as hard as ever she could. That lever came back then too, and, much to Marjorie's surprise, the big red automobile began to move ahead.

Marjorie was delighted at first, because now she was really having a ride in an automobile, and she thought how nice it would be to run back to her house when the thing stopped, as she was sure it would in a minute, and tell her father about her nice little automobile ride all alone. She sat as still as a mouse, holding tight to the big steering wheel, and in some way her hand touched the lever that regulates the speed and the automobile began to go faster. Marjorie grew very much excited and terribly scared, because she didn't know how she had started the automobile, and so, of course, she didn't know how to stop it.

It went faster and faster, and Marjorie's best hat was blown off and her hair was blown in her eyes. She was so frightened that she hung on tight to the big steering wheel. That was lucky for her, because she hung on so tight that the steering wheel never moved and the automobile went straight along in the middle of the road.

Now it was going like fury and Marjorie was tempted to jump out, when she saw a lot of chickens and four or five tiny pigs in the road, right ahead of her, but before she could even make up her mind what was going to happen they scattered and scampered in every direction just in time to escape. Frightened as she was, Marjorie felt glad they hadn't been killed.

She hadn't got over thinking about the chickens and little pigs when she and her flying automobile, that went so fast now that she almost believed it had wings, met Farmer Brown and his wife out in a buggy for a ride behind the old gray mare. Farmer Brown shouted, his wife screamed, Marjorie yelled and the old gray mare woke up just in time to be knocked down. The farmer and his wife were thrown out of the buggy as it turned over and they landed sputtering in a mud puddle. But Marjorie and her automobile went right on.

Then more things began to happen to poor frightened little Marjorie and her first automobile ride, one after another.

Si Barkins, the constable, chased her on his rickety old bicycle and threatened to arrest her for going so fast, but the big red automobile whizzed by and the constable was soon left behind in a cloud of dust.

Poor Marjorie was now both laughing and crying. She laughed because she was so excited and enjoyed her ride when she was not awfully frightened, and she cried when she thought the automobile might go on and on and on forever and never stop, and that she would never see her father or her mother or her big sister Bessie again. And then she wished she had never seen the automobile or, anyway, that she hadn't climbed into it, but had stayed swinging on the gate and just looked at it from there.

Then Marjorie heard another automobile puffing and chug-chugging, and her little heart leaped with joy because she thought that it was coming up behind her and would catch up to her and make her stop, and then she could go home and tell them all she was sorry, but just when she thought it was catching up to her, it sounded so near, it came around a little turn in the road right toward her instead of behind her. She screamed and the man in the other automobile shouted to her to turn to the side of the road, and she heard him, but did not know how to do it, and the man had to turn all of a sudden into the ditch and stop with two wheels in the road and two wheels on the hill. Marjorie flew by, and in a minute she was in sight of the end of the straight road. There was a farm at the end of the straight part where it turned toward the next village, and a lot of haystacks were in the field.

Marjorie wondered what would happen when she got to the place where the road turned because she knew the big red automobile would go straight ahead and she wondered if it would jump over the fence and go right on across the fields and into the lake she could see at the foot of the wide meadow.

She didn't have long to wait to find out what would happen, but she simply never could have guessed it in the world.

The big red automobile went right up to the fence as if it was mad at something and went bang into it and stopped so suddenly that Marjorie was thrown out and up in the air like a skyrocket, and where do you suppose she landed?

You will never guess. She went up and up and up in the air and landed right on the top of the tallest haystack!

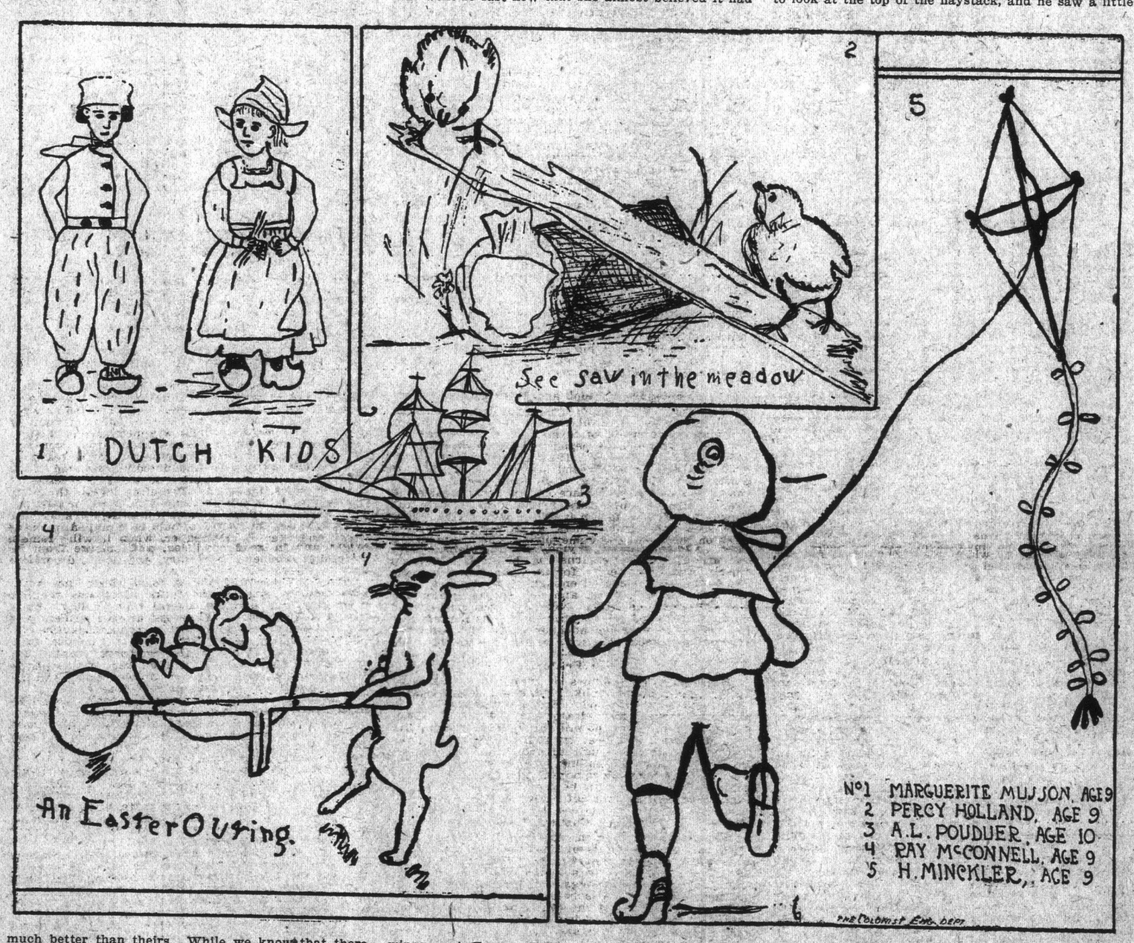
It did not hurt her a bit. The hay was so soft that Marjorie sank in like jumping on a feather bed. She was awfully frightened, but when she found she was not hurt she looked around for a way to get down so she could run home. She peeped over all sides, but there was no ladder and no way of getting down except by jumping, and the haystack was so high she was afraid to jump. She saw the big, red automobile jammed half way through the fence and as quiet as could be.

She called for help, but her voice was so little and the farmers were so far away in another part of the big field that nobody heard her, and after awhile she got tired out and fell asleep.

In the meantime her parents and the men who owned the big automobile and some of the neighbors were looking all over the countryside for her.

The farmer and his wife told them about seeing a little girl in a big red automobile going like the wind, and the people looking for Marjorie ran as fast as they could in the direction the farmer pointed out, and finally they came up to the big automobile stuck in the fence. Then they looked all around for Marjorie, but they couldn't find her. Her father happened to look at the top of the haystack, and he saw a little piece of red petticoat, and he thought it was hers, so he got a ladder from the farmer and climbed up to the top of the tall haystack, and there was Marjorie fast asleep with a smile on her face, as happy as you please.

So they took her home and gave her a nice big supper, and she told them all about her first automobile ride, and nobody scolded her, because she hadn't really meant to do anything wrong, and, anyway, they were all so very glad to have her back unhurt that she was allowed to stop up a full hour after her regular bedtime, and she was quite a heroine after her adventure.—E. Curtis.



EMPIRE DAY COMPETITION

Empire Day will soon be here and in all the schools the children will be talking and hearing about it. The editor invites the boys and girls to compete for a silver badge by writing a short Essay on Empire Day. The competitors must be under sixteen and the work must be their own composition. The name and age must accompany the manuscript.

Dialogue and Demonstration

"You smoke thirty cigarettes a day?"

"Yes, on the average."

"You don't blame them for your rundown condition?"

"Not in the least. I blame my hard work."

The physician shook his head. He smiled in a vexed way. Then he took a leech out of glass jar.

"Let me show you something," he said. "Bare your arm."

The cigarette fiend bared his pale arm, and the other laid the lean, black leech upon it. The leech fell to work busily. Its body began to swell. Then, all of a sudden, a kind of shudder convulsed it, and it fell to the floor, dead.

"That is what your blood did to that leech," said the physician. He took up the little corpse between his finger and thumb. "Look at it," he said. "Quite dead, you see. You poisoned it."

"I guess it wasn't a healthy leech, in the first place," said the cigarette smoker, sullenly.

"Wasn't healthy, eh? Well, we'll try again."

And the physician clapped two leeches on the young man's thin arm.

"If they both die," said the patient, "I'll swear off—or, at least, I'll cut down my daily allowance from thirty cigarettes to ten."

Even as he spoke the smaller leech shivered and dropped on his knee, dead, and a moment later the larger one fell beside it.

"This is ghastly," said the young man; "I am worse than the pestilence to these leeches."

"It is the empyreumatic oil in your blood," said the medical man. "All cigarette fiends have it."

"Doc," said the young man, regarding the three dead leeches, thoughtfully, "I half believe you're right."—West Virginia School Journal.

ABOUT ANIMALS

How the Water Spider Built Its House

On looking over my scrapbook, the last page attracts my attention the most, for it was here I finished my last note on insects. It was on a Saturday in August that I strolled out to a pond, commonly known as Lake Lisegar. Having selected a spot where the bank sloped rapidly into the pond, and the overhanging branches of the willow defending me from the intense rays of the sun, I stretched myself out at full length and waited for some unwary insect, so that, after learning as much as possible of its ways I would seize upon it and carry it away captive, in order that I might make a more minute study of its anatomy. I had not long to wait, for almost immediately, and scarcely three feet away, a dark brown spider, intensely hairy, crawled upon a floating willow leaf. It lay quite motionless for a few seconds, then dived, and as it plunged beneath the surface a bubble of air surrounded it, attached to its hairy body. After having discovered a suitable location, it set the bubble free by means of its feet, and in such a manner that it lodged amidst vegetation. It then spun around the upper part of the bubble a net to retain it, and anchored the net to the neighboring water plants. This thimble-shaped diving bell did not seem to contain enough air, for it made several trips to the surface, and, after obtaining sufficient air, the satisfied creature established itself within its aquatic domicile to either rest or seize upon unwary prey. After seeing the little creature labor so hard, I had not the heart to ensnare it and, therefore, left it to its own solitude.—Toronto Globe.

Arthur's Easter Bunny.

Arthur wanted a bunny, oh, so much! He'd always wanted a bunny, you know. Every time he asked, father would say: "Wait until Eastertime, and then catch the bunny that brings your Easter eggs."

But Arthur had tried three Easters now, and he hadn't caught Bunny. So he was beginnnig to believe that Bunny was most too sly to be caught. However, he made up his mind he'd try just this once, anyway.

Easter morning found Arthur astir ere morning had hardly dawned. Softly he sped down the stairs. Yes, there were all the gifts Bunny had brought—little baskets containing chocolate hens and rabbits; funny little toys that opened and showed many tiny eggs within, and 'most everything a little boy could wish. But Bunny himself had disappeared. In spite of all the presents, Arthur was disappointed.

"Do you know, Arthur," said father at the breakfast table, "I have an idea that perhaps Bunny hides his eggs among the grass and bushes outside, as well as in the house. If I were you, I'd look all the way to the barn, and maybe you'll find the Bunny hidden somewhere."

In breathless excitement Arthur ran out to search the garden. True enough, he found nicely colored eggs in several of the bushes. They seemed to lead in a direct line straight for the barn. Altogether he had gathered eight eggs by the time he stealthily entered the barn. A moment's search—and then, what do you think he found? 'Twas Bunny himself! And he was just as tame as any bunny could be; the nicest little bunny Arthur had ever seen.

"I think he must have pitied you in your hunt," laughed father, "and so just waited for you to come up to him."

Be that as it may, Bunny never ran away. He remained with his little master, and became almost as fond of Arthur as Arthur was of him.

FOR THE LITTLE TOTS

How Jack Horner Helped

"Can't I help, too, grandma?" asked Ruth, as she sat down in the old-fashioned kitchen.

Grandma was making pudding for company, and Hannah was stuffing a big, fat goose. Aunt Kate and mamma were setting the long table, and everybody was busy.

"Yes, my dear, you can pick me a cup of raisins," said grandma.

Ruth went to work with a will and picked the raisins very fast, but somehow the cup didn't seem to get full.

Grandma looked up just as Ruth was putting a great, juicy raisin into her mouth, and then she discovered the reason.

"When you pick raisins, Ruth, you must always whistle," said grandma, solemnly.

"Why, grandma!" exclaimed Ruth, "mamma says it's not well bred for girls to whistle."

"If you whistle you can't eat my dear; and the cup will get full quicker, but singing is every bit as good, and I would like to hear you sing about Little Jack Horner."

And wasn't it queer? When Ruth began to sing that cup was full in a jiffy.

The Doctor's "Assistant."

He was only a small boy, and his mother was very very ill. What made it worse was that the kind nurse who looked after her said that he had better not go into her room for fear of disturbing her, and so he had to play about in the back yard and to feel sorry and lonely, for he had no company except his big white lop-eared rabbit, with the pink eyes. He wished very much to help his dear mother, so, of course, he prayed and asked God to make her better.

Then suddenly he thought of something that might perhaps, do her good, and would, at least, show that he felt for her. And that is what the tale is about. While the nurse was down in the kitchen attending to a saucepan, he got something out of the back yard, and very quietly he tiptoed up the stairs to his mother's room. He opened the door gently, and there was his mother looking so weak and white and ill in bed, and though she was ill, she managed to turn her head on the pillow and say, "Hello! little man."

The little man smiled back and said, "Hello! mother dear. I must whisper because of nurse. But I'm very, very sorry because you are ill, and I want to comfort you. And please, mother, dear, I've brought you my white rabbit, and you can have it to play with." And he pulled the white rabbit from behind him and held it up by its ears, and when it had kicked twice and screwed itself different ways, he put it on the counterpane and ran away, whilst it was trying to eat the flowers in the pattern.

Never mind what nurse said when she found the white rabbit in the bed. She said, "Bless the boy!" and then she said something else as well, but that doesn't matter.

Not long after the white rabbit was safe again in his hutch, the doctor called, and said to the little boy's mother, "Let me feel your pulse." When he had felt it, he said to nurse, "Why, your patient is better. She has been roused and pleased in some way. That was just what I wanted. She has taken the turn, and I think she'll do now. What has happened?"

Nurse told him about the rabbit, and he laughed; and when he went downstairs he called for the boy and patted him on the head harder than he liked, and said, "Well done, my boy! I wish I had you for an assistant." And he took him for a ride in his motor-car, which pleased both of them, and one day he promised to take the white rabbit as well.—London Christian World.

Flower Fancies

Once, when things went by contraries,
Goblins ruled the tiny fairies,
Who were whipped by these bad elves;
O'er discolored bruises crying
Fairies, in strange way replying,
One and all goblins defying,
Into violets changed themselves.

So that now this shrinking flower
Hides itself in leafy bower
From its foe;
And its blue and purple raiment
Warning is of future payment
For each blow.

'Fore the goblin babes went sleeping,
'Round their elders came a-peeping
In the nursery for prankings;
Entering, with evil hods,
They applied the golden-rods,
And the lady's-slipper pods
Served for spankings.

Once a goblin chef did wish
That he had a nice, big dish
For his butter;
When his eyes he lifted up,
He beheld a butter-cup.

—Seattle P. I.

A Morning Prayer

Father, we thank Thee for the night,
And for the pleasant morning light;
For rest and food, and loving care,
And all that makes the day so fair.
Help us to do the things we should,
To be to others kind and good.
In all our work and all our play,
To love Thee better every day.