

are covered all over with shingles nicely rounded at the end, which look like the scales of huge fish, and frequently the timber fronts are carved and painted with texts of Scripture. Very often the lower story of the house is used as a stable for cows or goats, and the people live in the second story.

The Swiss are a very kind-hearted and hospitable people, and in the Protestant cantons, notwithstanding the general poverty of the country, they are very thrifty and comfortable.

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TORONTO, FEBRUARY 11, 1899.

LITTLE HELPERS.

What do little people like best to do? to play? to make the funny figures 1, 2, 3 stand in straight rows on their slates? Yes; but isn't the best thing helping mother or father in their very own work? Edith had such a happy playtime because she had first wiped the breakfast dishes and shelled the peas for dinner. Charlie found father busy pulling morning-glories from among his tomato-vines, and went to work with a will. "I think this little workman deserves a blackberry dumpling for dinner," called father when mother came to the window. But little children and grown people too find that there is nothing so good as being helpers to Jesus. Everything kind you do is a help to him. A cup of cold water, a happy face, a kind word—these are little things, but Jesus will know about them, and be glad.

MAKING CALLS IN JAPAN.

A missionary of the Episcopal Church, now at work in Japan, gives the following amusing account of "society calls," as made in that country. She says:

"When a Japanese caller comes to see

me we both kneel down on the floor, leaning back on our heels, and I say, 'O-to-ki-nao-sai,' which literally translated, means, 'Hang your honourable hips' or in our words, 'Please be seated.' Then we each bow twice very low, so low that our foreheads nearly touch the floor. Then the Japanese says, 'Thank you,' and I say, 'No trouble at all,' and then we both touch our foreheads to the floor again, taking long breaths so that they can be distinctly heard. Then I say, 'O-mat-ri-ha-sha-ri-masu,' which is, 'Let me hang on your honourable eyelids;' or, in good English, 'I am glad to see you.' Then, as I understand so little of the language, I have an interpreter called in, and after going through all those bows again, she does the rest of the talking. I get pretty tired sometimes, sitting on my heels, and when I go to see a Japanese I have to remove my shoes before entering the house, and then my feet get pretty cold. But it has to be done, for it is a great insult to the Japanese host to keep the shoes on."

ACCOMMODATING FIREMEN.

A young man from the country was going along a street in Philadelphia the other day, a newspaper writer informs us, when he came to an engine house, and, with the usual interest—not to say curiosity—of country folks, stopped in front of it.

"Have many fires in this town?" he inquired of one of the firemen standing in the door.

"We have 'em pretty often," replied the other.

"Do you have to go to all of them?"

"No; not unless they're in our district, or there's a general alarm."

"Ever try to see how quick you can hitch up?"

"O yes."

At that instant there came an alarm. At the first stroke of the gong the men ran to their posts, the doors of the stalls opened, the horses ran out and were quickly hitched to the hose-cart, and within a few seconds men, horses, and cart were out of the door and speeding down the street.

The young man watched the performance with undisguised admiration.

"Well, now," he exclaimed, "that's something like! There ain't many towns in this country where they'd go to all that trouble to show a stranger what they could do."

THE SOLDIER BOYS.

BY MARY A. WINSTON.

Little Dennis had been to kindergarten and he loved to play "Soldier Boy." When the carpenters were building a new house near where Dennis lived, he picked up a short lath one day and began to march up and down with it, singing in his sweet little voice:

"Soldier boy, soldier boy, where are you going,
Bearing so proudly the red, white and blue?"

I go where my country and duty are calling.

If you'll be a soldier boy, you may come too."

Dennis was soon joined by Fritz, Pierre and Manuel, and when little Maggie and Gretchen saw the fun, they came running out too for a lath. Down one block marched the gay little band. Then they turned a corner and went on two or three blocks further.

Suddenly the soldier band met a baby carriage—such a baby carriage!—with a real silk flag waving over it, and in front, on tiny trucks, so he could 'go,' was the dearest hobby horse!

In the midst of all this elegance sat a little lonely boy. There was a discontented frown on his face and he held the reins as if he couldn't possibly 'make believe' that the hobby horse could go.

The soldier band started to march on, but the little boy jumped out of his carriage with his silk flag in his hand.

"I want to lead!" he cried. But the soldier band marched straight on with Dennis at their head, leaving him on the crossing looking after them.

He was still there when they came back. "Say," he said sheepishly, "don't you want a team and a real flag in your procession? One of you can ride in the carriage and drive and somebody can ride on the horse if they want to—and I'll push!"

The soldier band did want a team and a real flag in their procession, and they were all having the very happiest time imaginable when their respective mothers came around the corner, bareheaded, and scolding the runaways loudly.

The little boy sadly climbed back to his lonely seat. "What jolly fun!" he thought. "I wonder why they wouldn't play with me at first, though!"

But I think I know why—don't you, boys and girls?

THE THREE KITTENS.

Three little kittens, one stormy night,
Began to quarrel and then to fight.
One had a mouse, the others had none,
And that was the way the quarrel begun.

As we said before, 'twas a stormy night
When the three kittens began to fight;
The old cook seized her sweeping-broom,
And swept the kittens right out of the room.

The ground was covered with frost and snow,
And these three kittens had nowhere to go;
So they laid them down on the mat at the door,
While the old cook finished sweeping the floor.

Then they crept in as still as mice,
All wet with snow and cold as ice,
And found it better that stormy night,
To sleep in peace than to quarrel and fight.