OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Jerry.

Surely Ireland must contain more humorously eccentric characters than the rest of the world can count, else why so many Irish stories of the nature of the following from a recent volume of memoirs?

Jerry McCartie was often the guest of friends who, on account of his pleasant ways extended to him that sort of old Irish hospitality which enabled a visitor in my own family who came for a fortnight to stay for six years.

In McCartie's case, the visit stretched to nearly double that time. After eight or nine years, however, his kinsman got a little tired of his guest, and let him know of his old mansion's proposed renovation, and that he had signed a contract for having it repainted from garret to cellar.

"By George," said Jerry, "it's fortunate that I don't object to the smell of paint, and it will be well to have some one to keep an eye on the painters, now that the Wall fruit is ripening!"

Some months passed. Then his host informed him that he was going to be married, adding: "I thought I'd tell you in good time, so that you could make leisurely preparations to go, as the lady and you may not hit it off as well as you and I do."

With tearful eyes Jerry grasped his cousin's hand, saying:

"O, Dan, dear, you have my hearty thanks for your consideration; but, dear, dear boy, surely if you can put up with her, I can."

Singing Away Trouble.

"A merry heart goes all the way,
A sad heart tires in a mile—a!"

Cheeriness is the conqueror of all trouble. Here in Philadelphia there is a young girl who has undergone more terrible suffering within the past year than falls to the lot of half a dozen soldiers wounded with shot and shell "on the firing line." She smiled through it all, and has come out of her year of torture with never a cloud on her happy face. Half her suffering would have darkened forever the life of a patient less blithesome.

A similar experience is told by a writer in "Christian Life." On the way to the Lakes of Killarney a party of tourists heard a sound of singing in a little farmhouse by the roadside. It was a man's voice in a tenor so marvelously sweet that the strangers halted some time to listen. The strains traversed the whole compass of feeling, from soaring triumph to the murmur of a mother's lullaby.

"Oh, if I could hope ever to sing like that!" said one of the company, a young student of music.

A girl came out of the cottage with a basket on her arm, and as she passed the wagon with a courtesy, a wish to know what vocal genius the south of Ireland had hidden away prompted a question from the same young man.

"Will you kindly tell us who it is that sings so beautifully?"

"Yes, sir, it's my Uncle Tim," said the girl. "He's after havin' a bad turn with his leg, and so he's just singin' away the pain the while."

For a moment the astonished tourists did not know what to say. Here was an example of the melody of patience

The anguish of the singer
Made the sweetness of the strain.

Then one asked tenderly: "Is he young? Will he ever get over the trouble?"

"No, he's gettin' a bit old now, and the doctors say he'll never be the better in this world; but," she added, softly, "he's that heavenly good it would near make you cry to see him, with the tears rollin' down his cheeks with the pain, and then it is that he sings the loudest."

Somehow the listeners thought of the Eternal City—and they drove on slowly as if their wheels were pressing its streets.

"God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," quoted one of the ladies, "and there shall be no more pain."—Philadelphia Standard and Times.

Ginger.

You'll never guess who or what Ginger is, so I'll tell you that he is the cutest little yellow dog that ever tried to catch his tail. I could hold him in one hand when father first brought him home, but he grew very fast, soon becoming quite a dog indeed. We tried several names, but none of them seemed to fit the droll little fellow. To tell the truth, his appearance was really quite comical. His hair was a bright snuff yellow, brindled in places, and his ears and tail were cut so short that they stood up like interrogation points at either end of his small body. But his eyes were the brightest, and his bark was the sharpest, and he was as brim full of snap and fun as any puppy could possibly be. And still he had no name.

At this time I was a schoolgirl, and every day I carried a luncheon to eat between the long sessions. One night mother said: "This is the last of the soft gingerbread you like so much. Put it in your basket for to-morrow's lunch." So the cake was laid in the basket, and both were put in the sideboard, and then I frolicked with my nameless puppy until my early bedtime.

When I prepared for school the next morning, my basket was empty. In surprise, I questioned Bridget.

"Sure an' yer dog must o' take your gingerbread, jumpin' and climbin' as he do into ev'rything, the mischief! Sure he's that lovin' o' the cake, he'll stand by the oven door when I'm a-bakin' of it an' cry fer some."

"Who ever knew a dog to eat ginger bread!" I said, incredulously.

"He seems to have eaten your share, anyway," said mother: "Why not name him Ginger?"

So that was the way he got his name; and, what is more, the name fits him to a T. He is as yellow and as fiery as any ginger was ever known to be.

Our little Ginger has many tricks that are an unfailing source of amusement. He is indefatigable in trying to catch the end of his stubby tail, and whirls around and around in vain to catch in his mouth that absurdly short member. When he fails he becomes enraged, especially if we laugh at his antics, and bites himself until his growl of anger change into a yelp of pain.

A long mirror is tilted over the parlor mantel, and every time that Ginger looks that way he sees a slender little dog looking down at him and imitating his movements. Ginger springs at the dog in the glass, and the dog springs at Ginger, but they never meet. When Ginger growls and snaps at the dog, the dog growls and snaps at Ginger, and, indeed, everything that Ginger does this teasing dog does too. It is exasperating to be mocked, and Ginger evidently means to subdue his enemy in time, for every day he returns to the charge and jumps and barks until some one drives him from the room. I wonder if he will ever be so wise as to know that the dog in the glass in his own shadow?

Ginger is useful in many ways besides giving warning of the approach of strangers. He keeps the hens out of the garden quite nicely. Our poultry are allowed to run at large all over the farm, so that it is sometimes difficult to keep the lettuce and peas out of their greedy bills. In one corner of the garden is a stump, and on that perch Ginger can overlook the entire space. If a hen is visible within the enclosure, he is after her in a trice, and it is nip and tuck to the fence.

Sometime I must tell you of Ginger's dear friend Tad Ragan, a very handsome tortoiseshell cat, and of his dislike for Polly, who lives next door, whose harsh voice is the only sound that he really fears and dreads.

We love little Ginger so much that we never remember that he is not handsome, or, if any one says, "What a homely dog!" we reply, "Handsome is that handsome does."

Brave Little Eddie.

"Now, Eddie," said mother, smoothing down the new jacket and polishing the brass buttons, "you'll have to quit being a baby, since you have taken off petticoats."

"I ain't a baby," said the small boy, looking with disdain at the little pile of ruffed petticoats out of which he had just stepped. "I helped to fight a bum' bee's nest yesterday."

"Ho" cried Fenton, the brother, who had been wearing trousers ever since Eddie was born, "they were white-faced bum' bees. They don't sting."

Eddie looked a little sheepish.

"I rode old Mac to water, too," he said

"And father held the bridle," mocked Fenton.

Eddie walked up and down the carpet to see what big steps he could take; and mother said in that soft little preaching way mothers have:

"When a boy puts on trousers he must do the hard things that come along, like going to bed at 8 o'clock and washing his face and hands for dinner, and—"

"But his curls ought to be cut off first," interrupted Eddie, who hated his beautiful yellow curls as much as his mother loved them.

"Very well," said mother, smiling, "as soon as you win a real sure enough victory you shall have your curls cut off."

For Eddie was a timid little chap, and very much inclined to hide behind mother's petticoats; and his father was beginning to shake his head, and to say that it was time he had some bones in his character.

Eddie hadn't an idea what father meant by having bones in his character. But he knew that when the beetles flew in the room at night, he felt like screaming, and so he screamed. When Mr. Ford's big Newfoundland came about he felt like running, and so he ran. When the lightening flashed he hid his eyes. He had never tried to do anything else. But this thing of being a man and wearing trousers was different, and Eddie thought that it was only his curls that hung between him and manhood now.

The trousers had been finished none too soon, for that very evening there was a lawn party at Aunt Ellen's—a whole yardful of children playing "come" and "prisoner's base," and eating ice cream, and spilling lemonade, and falling out of the hammock, and doing all the rest of the things that children usually do at a lawn party.

Eddie joined a party of little boys sitting on the big, square-top stone post at the gate. He felt very big-boyish sitting on a gate post.

"Yes, sir-ee," Tom Ross was saying, "that dog is certainly mad."

"What dog?" asked Eddie, his heart beating rather fast.

"Why, Mr. Ford's Rip." Didn't you know he was mad?"

"Is he, Tom? How do you know?"

"You're blind, ain't you? Did you see him run past here just now with his mouth open and his tongue lolling out and his eyes glaring?"

Now Eddie had promised to come home at 8 o'clock by himself; and he had to pass Mr. Ford's big yard for a long piece of the way. It seemed to him a very long piece. Would the open mouth and lolling tongue and glaring eyes meet him at that low wall? He might stay all night with Aunt Ellen, he thought; but then he had promised to come home. He might ask her to send John the butler, with him. No, he had said he would come by himself, because that would please papa.

Eddie lost interest in "I spy" and "King George and his men," while he was sitting on the grass behind the spruce-pine, and wishing that he had his petticoats on again, with leave to be a baby.

But he got home on time, flushed with haste and excitement, his curls hanging damp and tangled about his face.

"I did it, mother, I did it!" he cried eagerly. "Now cut off my curls!"

And he told with many a big word the story of a mad dog, of the open mouth and glaring eyes; of how much afraid he had been to come alone; how he had actually seen the creature at the gate; now he had turned back in terror once, twice, but the third time had set his teeth, and determined to keep his word with papa if the dog "chawed him up."

"But I got away from him; and now, mamma, where are the scissors? Quick! I want to hear the old curls go snip, snip!"

"But little green-pea, Mr. Ford's dog isn't mad at all," said Fenton, cooly, "I've been playing with him all the evening. Tom Ross was just guying you. That's what he was doing."

Eddie looked dazed for a minute, and then burst into tears. Poor little soldier! All his trying to be brave had been for nothing. He had not earned papa's praise; and they would not cut off his curls if all he had done was to pass Mr. Ford's big good natured Rip.

But papa came and lifted him up from the floor, and himself cut off every golden brown ring of hair. He cut it so badly, too, and snagged it so that the barber had to do it all over again.

"That was just as much of a victory, my boy," said the big, kind voice "as if Rip had been foaming with hydrophobia. The enemy that you got the victory over was not curly and white-pawed and soft eyed like Rip. He is a cruel, crawling thing, and his name is Cowardice. You've got him down to-day, and please God, we'll make you a true knight *sans peur et sans tache*. Now go and kiss mamma, and ask her what that means."

But mamma was in such a hurry, between laughing and crying, to get the little head to look less as if a mad dog had mangled it, that it was a good while before Eddie found out that the queer words meant "without fear and without stain."

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN.

Mental Culture.

Knowledge perfects the mind. We should, therefore, aim at acquiring during life as much of it as lies within our reach. School and college education is for the most part a preparation for further mental culture; and it loses much of its utility if it do not inspire us with a determination to continue our studies in after-life as far as our duties will permit. Yet how very few, after leaving school, ever think of taking up a book of science, a history, a work of solid literary worth, and studying it at those odds and ends of time when they have no other serious occupation. How very few keep up even the elementary knowledge of useful subjects acquired in the class-room at a heavy sacrifice of time and labor and money. Ask a young man who started in business a few years ago some simple question in history or geography, and I fear he will admit with an ill grace that he has forgotten most of his school-book knowledge.

Young men fresh from school or college and starting in life could scarcely take a wiser resolution than to devote some little time every day to self-instruction in some useful branch of knowledge. When they will have once begun to do so they will find the practice so pleasant that they will be in no danger of leaving it off for any less worthy occupation. They need not, however, give all their free time to it; and perhaps it is better not to do so. Young people require fresh air and healthful bodily exercise; and if their business confine them indoors during the day they would act very imprudently to rush to their rooms when they come home in the evening and bury themselves in their books until bedtime.

Half an hour or, at most, an hour will be ample time to give every day to this work of self-improvement we recommend. Even a shorter period, indeed, will suffice, provided it be given regularly, and not by fits and starts. But here lies the great danger and stumpling-block to good resolutions. They are made in good faith and with a certain glow of pleasure and self-approbation. In carrying them out, however, we are apt to find them irksome, and to invert some excuse for setting them aside. The excuse in many cases is soon forthcomcoming, and the resolutions are thrown to the winds. To provide against this result, we ought to cultivate firmness of will until it becomes a distinctive feature of our character. We ought to be slow in binding ourselves to any self-imposed duty; and before doing so, we ought to weigh well all the obstacles that are likely to interfere with our fulfilment of it. But when we have once bound ourselves, we should allow no motive of convenience or interest to prevent us from carrying out to the letter the resolution we have taken.

Tippling.

A young man taking his first few drinks, when approached regarding it, will often say: "Look at Mr. So and So. He is eighty years of age and has used liquor all his life. If liquor is good enough for him it is good enough for me. If I live to be eighty years of age I shall be satisfied." My friend, how do you know you have as strong a constitution as this man? How much stronger would he be, and how much longer might he live, had he never indulged in alcohol and tobacco? Besides, when a man makes a habit of using a poison he is not living in the true sense of the word. Do you call it living to rise from your couch in the morning with an aching head, a foul stomach, unsteady nerves, and depression of spirits? I call it dragging out a miserable existence. If one could see the stomach, liver and other internal organs, before and after using liquor, and note the changed condition, no other warning be needed.

An athlete training for an event knows that if alcohol is used he can not make his muscles hard and vigorous, and therefore abstains from it in every form. It is true that some athletes, distinguished for great bodily power, are users of alcohol when out of training. But these men usually become diseased, and die young. When an athlete is training for any great event, he generally has a trainer that takes note of everything he eats. The trainer asually accompanies him everywhere he goes and he is not allowed to use liquor in any form. Observe how useless our noted ball players become when they acquire the alcohol habit. The same might be said of prize-fighters, wrestlers, football players, soldiers, anybody that depends on the muscle and vitality of the body.

It is often thought that wine and other spirits give strength and help one to endure hardships, but such is not the case. It stimulates like the whip stimulates a horse. Some horses will run until they drop dead from exhaustion if the whip is applied.

Read what some noted men say regarding alcoholic poison. Willard Parker, M. D, says: "Alcohol is poison. It is so regarded by the best writers and teachers on toxicology. Like arsenic, corrosive sublimate and prussic acid, when introduced into the system it is capable of destroying life without acting mechanically, and it induces a general disease as well marked as fever, smallpox or lead-poison." The disease of the drinker is well marked. The symptoms can readily be seen, and should be a warning to others. Who but a drunkard would lie down in the mud and filth and act like a hog? He carries the red flag of warning on his nose, in his general appearance. Says Sir William Gull, M. D.: "A very large number of people in society are dying day by day poisoned by alcoholic drinks without knowing it, without being supposed to be poisoned by them. I hardly know any more powerful source of disease than alcoholic drinks. I do not think it is known, but I know alcohol to be a most destructive poison. I say from my experience, that it is the *most destructive agent* that we are aware of in this country."

Many persons think they can take a little and leave it alone—being moderate they call it, but it is not so. All drunkards were at one time moderate. Says B. W. Richardson, M. D, F. R. S. "A man may be considered by his friends and neighbors, as well as by himself, to be a sober and a temperate man; he may say quite truthfully that he was never tipsy in the whole course of his life; and yet it is quite possible that such a man may die of disease caused by the alcohol he has taken, and by no other cause whatever. This is one of the most dreadful evils of alcohol, that it kills insidiously, as if it were doing no harm, or as if it were doing good, while it is destroying life."

Again a person drinks because he likes it, and the feeling it produces. He may say and really believe that he is doing nobody an injury but himself. What a terrible mistake he is making! He likely does not know that the most saddening and serious of the many evils inflicted by alcohol on the drinker, is the hereditary transmission of disease brought about by drinking. The drink curse is also inherited. Physicians claim that a large proportion of mental and brain afflictions can be traced to the drunkenness of parents. The drinker blunts all his finer feelings, clouds his intellect, is a bad example for others who are weak. He disgraces his wife, children, father, mother, brothers, sisters and himself.

We read, hear, and see so much of liquor, that we pay little or no attention to it, but it is playing havoc with the manhood and womanhood of our fair land. Let us then with a united effort cry down every form of intemperance and immorality and educate the succeeding generation to do likewise, and the time will come when this curse which is undermining our national life will be eradicated.—Physical Culture.

THAT OFFERTORY COLLECTION.

Says the Providence Visitor: "Father Ducey, the picturesque pastor of St. Leo's, New York, came out last Sunday with a vigorous statement of his views about the putting of pennies into the collection box. It makes him tired to count them and he thinks that the giving of them argues a disgracefully low degree of concern for religion. It is interesting to learn that his cultured flock took his remarks in the proper spirit and that coins of brighter hue, yea even bills, were forthcoming when the ushers began their rounds. We agree with Father Ducey, says the (Roman) Catholic Transcript, to a considerable extent. While well aware that the widow's mite has its reward before God, we have never been able to understand on what principles well to do Catholics who would be ashamed to hand pennies to a street car conductor, content themselves with restricting their contributions at the offertory to one solitary specimen of our smallest and meanest coin. But that is not our chief grievance. If every adult who comes to Mass would give even the beggarly copper, the aggregate—and we should not complain of the labor of counting it—would be most acceptable. As things are, collectors often canvass pew after pew of devout, well dressed worshipers without getting a single red cent. The subject is one about which the clergy dislike to speak. We can hardly protest against penuriousness in this matter without exposing ourselves to the unjust reproach of being over fond of the shekels. The offertory collection is as old as the Mass itself. It is a survival of the days when the faithful brought to the altar their gifts for the Holy Sacrifice, and for the maintenance of those who offered it. Every decent Catholic ought to familiarize himself with the facts in the case and decide accordingly.

The only way to get at what is right is to do what seems right. Even if we mistake there is no other way—George MacDonald.