

BOYS AND GIRLS

Home.

(Will Ward Mitchell, in the 'Homestead.')

Home, after all is said and done,
Is just about the best
Of places underneath the sun,
Where hearts are happiest.
The wanderer in countries far,
Or on the ocean foam,
Has memories of a beacon star—
The distant light of home.
In many a foreign place,
Go wander as you will the earth
The smile on mother's face.
You'll find no other treasure worth.

Amid rare Alpine glories you,
With soul enrapt may roam,
But when your journeying is through,
You'll wander back to home.

For home it is the dearest place
Beneath the bending skies!
And mother's is the dearest face,
Her eyes the dearest eyes!
Her little kingdom is the best;
Her heart the purest to me,
The soul may know! The happiest,
The sweetest place, is home!

Our Tommy.

(Grace Dale, in the 'Standard.')

I had been to make a call where two tiger kittens greatly amused me. On expressing delight at their antics my friend said, 'Well, if you'll take them both you may have them, but we don't want them parted. As we have a new family of five kittens, we can well spare them, you see.'

We lived alone, my husband and I, in a snug cozy home, where the lawn to the left, fringed off to the river. There were no children to make home merry, and although my husband rather enjoyed the enforced quiet, I longed oftentimes for something upon which to lavish my over abundant fund of companionship. That evening I recounted the antics of the kittens; my husband seemed interested in the account of how, when held erect on their hind legs, they would spar and spit like veritable prize fighters. We agreed we might have one cat, but two seemed out of the question. Still we went together to see them. The result? Why we brought them both home, of course. The doctor, my husband, grew as fond and foolish over them as ever I could desire; he thought nothing too good to buy for them.

We called them 'Tommy' and 'Lady,' but the dainty little 'Lady' did not seem thrifty; so a few months of fits, and she filled a grave in the garden. Tommy would ride about on the doctor's shoulder, march up to bed when we did, in spite of the cold room, for we found above everything else, cats love companionship. Later we discovered the name had been mischosen, as to sex, but she knew it perfectly so no change was made.

When I arose in the morning she would escort me through the intricacies of a cold bath, toilet, generating and lighting the gasoline stove, grinding the coffee, and the numerous other details, in the preparation of the morning meal. I was quite methodical and Tommy would precede me in my route, never making a mistake. You should have seen her sit up on her hind legs and beg, with fore paws drooped, silently waiting for something she wished. Then too she had the fashion of going with the doctor for a boat ride; indeed she deemed it a rare privilege. When her baby came it looked like a big black bear. I am sure you never saw so large a kitten, and Tommy found difficulty in carrying it about.

If doctor started for the boat-house with his gun, Tommy would come sit up and beg, then look toward the nest, seeming to say, 'Now, please, you take care of the baby, I am going with my master,' and off she would start. Just once did she show anxiety about it. Soon after the baby came we had planned a boat ride. Tommy went as usual. I plac-

ed the baby inside my blouse; when Tommy discovered her offspring's presence, she seemed worried, as though she did not see why I brought it along, or if it could not be left alone, why I did not remain at home with it. When homeward bound, and in sight of the place, she would take her place on the stern of the boat, and at the earliest opportunity Tommy was on terra firma. On this occasion she stood in her favorite place with the baby in her mouth; all of a sudden she dropped it overboard, and seemed distressed when she saw it struggling in the water; from which we rescued it.

Best of all she loved to go with her master, with the rifle to get a bird. Tommy would watch the place aimed at and run and bring the bird when it fell. In many such ways she seemed more like a dog than a cat.

Then too, she was trusty; no blood of thief ran in her veins. She would never touch the most tempting morsel, if not given to her, but would sit and beg for favors. Neither would she allow her kittens to steal, although they had no compunctions in such matters. She would mount guard over the table in my absence and cuff them for misdeameanors, and she would not leave her post until I returned.

Tommy was as interested as any child, over the water in the bath room. After much apparent study, and some urging from her master; she at last would reach her paw, down through the water in the bowl, catch the ring, pull out the plug; and watch with triumph her victory as the water gurgled out of sight. She tried in vain to turn the faucets, for she seemed to understand what caused the water to flow. Then she used to jump at the closet chain and hang on too; but her weight was not sufficient to make the water run; so after weeks of effort she gave that up in despair.

This observant feline did not mew to get out at a door, but would jump at the knob, hanging on with her paws until she dropped. Never did she give up the idea, but that perhaps after all, she would sometime succeed in opening a door, swaying her body each time as she held on. One or two doors whose knobs were weak would succumb to her attempts, and the delight she would show over her success was really infectious. Yes, indeed Tommy had her place and plate at the table; and would keep her place well, too; and well she seemed to figure the mealtime hour. If I were dilatory in the matter she would promptly advise me. I needed no clock in such respects if I paid heed to Tommy's suggestions.

When we adopted her, she had been fed exclusively on raw meat and water. It was some time before she cultivated a taste for cooked food and milk; when she did it was complete, and her delight was a dish of canned salmon and potatoes, though she would have raised no objection to the omission of the latter. Tommy seemed to know the salmon can by the cartoon upon it, for at sight of one she would stand erect and beg.

Once my husband was called out of town, on business which kept him until the following day. When night came Tommy showed such uneasiness, feeling no doubt the absence of her master, that I confess I grew a little apprehensive through the long evening hours. When bedtime came I securely locked up the house, then turned the electric light at each globe, in the house, on the front porch, and in the enclosed porch in the rear. I then felt quite safe, for in the hall upstairs we had a switch which controlled every light on the premises.

In the night I was awakened by Tommy's scratching at the covers, as was her habit when she wished to waken me. It was still night, so I thought she was lonely and tried to take her into bed; but no, she jumped down, ran to the rear window and struck a listening attitude. Then I listened; I could hear a low rasping noise, then a sound of a door being forced open. Tommy was distraught and my heart leaped to my throat, as I realized the back entry door had been forced open, and a sound of a file on the kitchen door was distinctly audible. I leaped

out of bed, turned the switch and the house was a flood of light. From the window I saw and heard a collision with the pump and then saw a form dash across the lawn and disappear down the river bank. It was three o'clock in the morning. Needless to say, the lights burned forth until daylight, for Tommy and I were fearful, and wide eyed. On her master's return she was praised and petted royally, and told she was better than any dog. She was certainly a darling, and so much company for both of us. The baby grew to be so, too; though she never showed the intelligence of her mother, yet she possessed a remarkably sweet disposition.

The doctor decided to move south, so the pretty home was sacrificed, and our cats promised to a friend in the country. I could never picture to you Tommy's distress as the dismantling process progressed. When a woman came to take up the carpets, Tommy's soul seemed stirred with ire, which she showed so plainly, that the woman insisted she was afraid of her; and truly there seemed cause for alarm, for Tommy showed by growls and attitude the combativeness of a watch dog. It was during this self imposed duty, that our friends drove to the door for their present,—the cats. A cracker box with slats nailed across had been prepared to send them in. So mute and questioning were the four big eyes which peered between those slats, that we felt conscience stricken. Quite overcome by the parting I sat down and gave way to a burst of tears. A loneliness filled my heart, which time has not healed, a longing for the loving attention and loyal companionship of 'Our Tommy.'

A Night at the Hospice of St. Bernard.

On we climbed, while Mr. Smith impelled our flagging footsteps by an explosive recitation of Longfellow's 'Excelsior,' the scene of which is here. Around a sharp, rocky bend, up an ascent as steep as a house roof, past an overhanging precipice, I went, leaving the gentlemen behind me in the enthusiasm of the approach, and then the gray, solemn, friendly walls of the Hospice, which had seemed to me as dim and distant as the moon's caverns, rose before me outlined upon the placid evening sky.

I stopped and listened eagerly as I approached its open door—no sound but the gurgle of a distant brook; no living object but two great St. Bernard dogs seated upon the broad, dark steps of stone.

A gentleman may be defined as a being always wisely and benignantly equal to the occasion. Such a character appeared upon the scene in the person of 'Reverend Besse,' the 'Hospitable Father,' and chief of the establishment.

Our party in committee of the whole (and on 'minority report') voted him the most delightful man we ever saw. All that is French in manner, united to all that is English in sturdiness of character, all that is winning in Italian tones, united to a German's ideality, a Yankee's keenness of perception, a Scotchman's heartiness, and an Irishman's wit—these qualities seemed blended in our 'none-such' of a host, and fused into harmony by the fire of a brother's love toward man and a saint's fidelity to God. Young, fair, blue-eyed, he stood among our chattering group like one who, from a region of perpetual calm, dispenses radiant smiles and overflowing bounty.

So quick was his discernment; and so sagacious was his decision, that almost without a question he assigned us, in detachments correctly arranged, to fitting domiciles, made each one feel that he or she had been especially expected and prepared for, and within five minutes had so won his way into the innermost recess of everybody's heart, that Mr. Jones expressed in his own idiomatic way the sense of fifty guests when he declared, 'To such a man as that even the Little Corporal might well have doffed his old chapeau.' Who shall do justice to the dinner at the L-shaped table, when the Father sat at the head and said grace, beaming upon his great cosmopol-