

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## From the Sittin'-Room Window.

(By 'Calypso.')

### I.

'Come to the sittin'-room window, quick, Ephraim. There goes neighbor Brown and his team of grays. They're just gittin' home from town, I guess. I wonder who's in the rig? There's Brown himself and Sarah, an' 'pears to me there's a little youngster in between 'em. I wonder who it can be? They're bin talkin' this long while 'bout adoptin' a child from the home, seein' 's they niver had none o' their own. I'll bet a penny that's what they've gone and done. Well, I wish 'em joy o' their bargain; it's a purty resky game. They think he'll be a sight o' help, I s'pose; but he's as likely to bring disgrace on their heads as to bring any comfort to their hearth and home. You kin niver tell how these Home boys 'll turn out. Most o' 'em's as bad as bad kin be. It's in the blood, and no bringin' up 'ill git rid o' it.'

'I guess I'll go across this afternoon and see what he's like. One thing sure, he's a purty lucky lad if he only knows it, a-gittin' into such a home. If he goes to the bad 'twon't be for want o' trainin', for you couldn't find better nor kinder folks if you searched Canada through from Vancouver to Cape Breton. Sarah and Jack's good Presbyterians of the old-fashioned kind, and they'll bring him up right. They're purty well fixed in this world's goods, too, an' he'll never want fer anything.'

The foregoing remarks came from a sony little woman, the wife of a fairly prosperous farmer in one of the older settled districts of Canada. She was a kindly but garrulous soul, and possessed a full share of woman's curiosity. To satisfy this, when the dinner dishes were washed, and the sittin'-room tidied, Maria smoothed her hair, put on her best white apron and her lilac sun-bonnet, and started for her neighbor's across the way.

She sauntered slowly down the garden-path, sweet and gay on either side with old-fashioned flowers, through the little garden-gate across and up the road into her neighbor's domains.

On her way down the long lane that led to Farmer Brown's house, she passed the field where the farmer himself was hoeing turnips. As she came up, Jack stopped for a moment, leaned on his hoe, took off his wide-brimmed straw hat, and mopped his forehead with his large red and white handkerchief.

'Good-afternoon, Maria. It's a purty warm spell o' weather we've bin havin' lately, but things are growin' fine. There'll be a great harvest this year if the weather's good, I'm thinkin'.'

'That there will, Jack. How's Sarah?'

'She's feelin' purty spry to-day.'

'Bin to town, hain't ye? I saw ye drivin' home with a youngster in the rig.'

'Yes, me and Sarah's gittin' up in years purty well, and sometimes we're kind o' lonesome like. We've bin talkin' of gettin' a child from the Home in the city. So we druv in to-day and picked out one we tuk a fancy to, kind o' thought he'd be a help and a comfort to us when we got old. Go right into the house and see him. Sarah sets great store by him. She's gone clean daft over him; and I'm kind o' soft like over him myself.'

When Maria entered the kitchen she found

Sarah sitting on the old lounge with her arm round Bennie, who was sitting beside her eating a doughnut.

The child's appearance justified the fancy the old-folks had taken to him. He had pretty blue eyes, just now filled with wonder at his new surroundings, golden curls and rosy cheeks; but the wide white brow, the open look and innocent expression of the face made the observer turn to look at him more than once.

'Well, Ephraim, I've got back. That's quite a likely child over yonder. He's as pretty as a picture. You can't help but fall in love with him. And they do take on so 'bout him, both on 'em. They well-nigh worship him, and I shouldn't wonder but what he would turn out well; but, then, as I said before, you niver kin tell how they'll turn out.'

### II.

'Ephraim, come here, quick! Here's Bennie Brown just startin' off. He's of age to-day. My, how time does fly! It's just thirteen years ago since we stood at this very window and watched Farmer Brown drivin' home from town with the youngster, and to-day he's a tall young man goin' West to make his fortune. Well, I hope he'll do well, Ephraim. He's been a good son to them all through these years. Couldn't hev bin better if he'd bin their own kith and kin. He's turned out well. I was kind o' dubious 'bout him at the start, but after I'd seen him I kind o' thought he might turn out all right. Brown's givin' him a purse o' gold, five hundred dollars, I heard. It'll be a pretty sad partin' atween Sarah and him, for they're just that fond of each other. Poor Ben looks pretty well cut up, doesn't he, and Brown looks as if he's feelin' bad, too. That trunk's a purty heavy load for two of 'em to lift into the rig. Look, Ephraim! There's Sarah shakin' hands with him now. See, she's puttin' her arms round him and kissin' him. Let's go down to the gate to say good-bye.'

### III.

'True, Ephraim, God does move in a mysterious way, and his ways are past findin' out. Here's you an' me a-sittin' in comfort in our rockin'-chairs, and there's our neighbors just as deservin' as we are, and to-day their farm's bein' sold by auction to pay off that mortgage. Who ever would have thought that Jack and Sarah would have come to this pass? I did hear that Jack mortgaged the farm to give that five hundred dollars to Ben when he started out for himself. And, now, they're havin' to leave the home they've lived in all these years an' they've no place to go so far as I kin tell. It brings the tears to think of such an endin' to their lives now, when they're old and there's that adopted son o' theirs they reckoned 'ud be such a heap o' comfort to them in their old age. Where's he, I wonder? Gone! an' furgot 'em, I guess. Livin' off in furrin' parts in comfort and plenty, with a stylish wife, like as not, and havin' a good time, and never thinkin' of the old folks as was so good to him wunst, an' mortgaged their farm to give him a good start in life. I allus thought 'twould end that way. These home children allus turn out just like that, grow up and git ungrateful, or else turn out regular rascals. I'm glad we never were so foolish, even if we have no children o' our own. Just look out the window, Ephraim, at the folks flocking to the sale. Poor old Brown! He's lookin' pretty thin and tremblin' to-day, and Sarah's just bowed down with grief. Ephraim, you just go over and get Sarah and fetch her over here to stay till the sale's over. I know she won't

feel so bad if she can't see what's goin' on. Perhaps we kin cheer her up a bit.'

### IV.

'Ephraim, Sarah, come here to the window, quick. What in the world has happened? They're takin' the auction flag down. The crowd of people are leavin' and the sale hasn't more'n half got started. And, Sarah, here's your husband comin' over here, and some tall stranger chap with him. I wonder who it is? Sure as life, if it ain't Bennie. Let 'em in quick, Ephraim.'

'Oh, Sarah, wife, here's Bennie. Hug him well. He's our own boy. He came and stopped the sale and paid the mortgage right down on the spot, and saved our home, and we can go right over now and call it our own again. God bless our noble boy. God only tried us to test our faith, as he did with Abraham, an' now in our old age he's given us back our boy again.'

Well, Ephraim, did you ever. Just watch those three goin' down the garden-path, Jack steps 'most as light as if he's as young as Bennie. A great load's been lifted from those two old hearts. God knows how to manage the affairs of this world, after all, and I guess some o' them Home boys do turn out well. I'll niver say again that they're all bad.'

## Lucinda's Silk Dress.

(Mary Joslyn Smith, in 'American Messenger.')

Lucinda Ayers could not remember when she had not wanted a silk dress more than any other article of wearing apparel. It was her one desire in the line of finery.

'Lucinda, I wish we could get you that silk dress for your birthday,' said her mother one day. 'You'll be sixteen now soon, but I do not see how we can. But you deserve it, for you are my right hand.'

'Never mind, mother. Sometime it may come right,' was the cheerful answer.

At her eighteenth birthday much the same conversation took place, for the dress seemed as far in the future as ever. One year Lucinda thought if she could buy the dress it should be a blue one, another year a green, and still another a plaid silk, according as the style changed, but the years with their styles passed without bringing the dress.

When Lucinda was about to marry David Doane, and was getting her wedding outfit, her father and mother had a serious conference about the dress. 'She has always wanted a silk dress,' said the mother, 'and I cannot bear to have her go away from home without it.' But when Lucinda heard of the family council between her father and mother, she said: 'No, I'll not get any silk dress now. Maybe David and I can buy it after a while. By that time I will be old enough for a black silk dress, and then it will last me always. You know when Grandma Ford hears any of us talk of silk dresses, if we are at her house, she opens her closet and shows us a black silk which has served her for wedding dress three times, and she says it is as good as new. She always recommends black silk to last. I am sure I only want one wedding dress and I do not want that black, so I prefer to get the black silk later.'

The years followed apace, and although Lucinda kept the thought hidden, she never ceased to want a silk dress. Her father and mother died, and her baby boy grew to manhood and still the dress seemed farther and farther away. Even with Lucinda's greatest care, David had never been able to do any more than earn just money enough to keep things going.