

## My Playmates.

BY EUGENE FIELD.

The wind comes whispering to me of the country green and cool,  
Of redwing blackbirds chattering beside a reedy pool;  
It brings me soothing fancies of the homestead on the hill,  
And I hear the thrush's evening song, and the robin's morning trill;  
So I fall to thinking tenderly of those I used to know,  
Where the saffras and snakeroot and checkerberries grow.

What has become of Ezra Marsh, who lived on Baker's hill?  
And what has become of Noble Pratt, whose father kept the mill?  
And what's become of Lizzie Crum, and Anastasia Snell,  
And of Roxie Root, who tended school in Boston for a spell?  
They were the boys, and they the girls who shared my youthful play;  
They do not answer to my call. My playmates, where are they?

What has become of Levi and his little brother Joe,  
Who lived next door to where we lived some forty years ago?  
I'd like to see the Newton boys, and Quincy Adams Brown,  
And Hepsey Hall, and Ella Cowles, who spelled the whole school down!  
And Gracie Smith, the Cutler boys, Leander Snow, and all  
Who, I am sure, would answer could they only hear my call.

I'd like to see Bill Warner, and the Conkey boys again,  
And talk about the times we used to wish that we were men!  
And one—I shall not name her—could I see her gentle face,  
And hear her girlish treble in this distant, lonely place!  
The flowers and hopes of springtime, they perished long ago,  
And the garden where they blossomed is white with winter snow.

Oh, cottage 'neath the maples, have you seen those girls and boys,  
That but a little while ago made, oh, such pleasant noise?  
O trees, and hills, and brooks, and lanes, and meadows, do you know  
Where I shall find my little friends of forty years ago?  
You see, I'm old and weary, and I've travelled long and far;  
I am looking for my playmates—I wonder where they are?

—Chicago Record.

## THE BOTTLE-TREE.

There is a tree in Australia which grows in the shape of a bottle, and puts out its branches broadly from the part which seems like the neck. This tree would appear very curious to our American children, as we have nothing like it in this country. God has made each land to differ from every other, and each has beauties and dangers peculiar to itself; yet over them all he watches as Father and Friend, and his children have his loving care in whatever land their lot may have fallen.

"Cousin Annie" sends us an interesting story about another curious tree, and we will give it place just here, where it seems to belong:

## THE RAINING-TREE.

At first thought it really did seem quite impossible. There must surely be some mistake. But then Uncle Colin had said he had seen it—yes, really and truly seen it with his own eyes; and whatever Uncle Colin said he had seen, that had he seen beyond a doubt. Why, this little niece and nephew of his, Charlotte and Wilbur Hayes, would as soon have disbelieved the preacher as Uncle Colin.

But what could it all be about? Why, simply that Uncle Colin had told them that on his recent trip to Africa, he had seen a tree that rained water.

"Oh, uncle!" exclaimed Wilbur. "Where could that have been?" and "Oh, uncle, dear," chimed in Charlotte, "how could such a thing be?"

"One question at a time," warned

Uncle Colin, shaking his finger vigorously at each in turn.

"Now, which one of you," he continued, "can tell me where the Canary Islands are?"

"On the north-west coast of Africa," came the answer from both simultaneously.

"Quite correctly replied to, geography class of two," declared Uncle Colin, with one of his funniest looks. "Well," he went on, "if you have heard of the Canary Islands, and can locate them so readily, you must have heard something, too, of the famous Peak of Teneriffe."

"That we have, uncle!" declared Miss Charlotte, ere Wilbur could open his lips. "It is the great mountain peak of the Canary Islands, and towers over twelve thousand feet above the level of the sea. What makes it all the more conspicuous still, is that it seems to rise right out of

not last long. If the people had to depend upon these pools entirely they would surely perish of thirst. But there is another source to which they can go—a source that is all the more wonderful, as it seems to have been placed there by God's own hand. There is really no natural law governing it after all, if we look at it in one way.

"Near the centre of the Ferro there grows a large and magnificently proportioned tree. Just to what species this tree belongs, the natives have never been able to discover. It seems of its own particular variety, and stands alone into the air, the branches being most luxuriant, while the leaves are long, narrow, and pointed. They remain green all the year round.

"The strangest part of this wonderful tree is that its branches, even those

law, but all have alike failed. It is true that the clouds drop moisture down upon the leaves—that is all clear enough, and quite natural, too. But how do the clouds get there? and why do they stay there so constantly? and why is it, also, that they hover over no other part of the island as they do over this?"—S. S. Visitor.

## THE EXACT TRUTH.

Two young masons were building a brick wall—the front wall of a high house. One of them, in placing a brick, discovered that it was a little thicker on one side than on the other.

His companion advised him to throw it out. "It will make your wall untrue," Ben," said he.

"Pooh!" answered Ben; "what difference will such a trifle as that make? You're too particular."

"My mother," replied he, "taught me that 'truth is truth,' and ever so little an untruth is a lie, and a lie is no trifle."

"Oh," said Ben, "that's all very well; but I am not lying, and have no intention of doing so."

"Very true, but you make your wall tell a lie; and I have somewhere read that a lie in one's work is like a lie in his character, it will show itself sooner or later, and bring harm, if not ruin."

"I'll risk it, in this case," answered Ben; and he worked away, laying more bricks, and carrying the wall up higher, till the close of the day, when they quit work and went home.

The next morning they went to resume their work, when, behold, the lie had wrought out the result of all lies! The wall getting a little slant from the untrue brick, had got more and more untrue as it got higher, and at last, in the night, had toppled over, obliging the masons to do all their work over again.

Just so with ever so little an untruth in your character; it grows more and more untrue if you permit it to remain, till it brings sorrow and ruin. Tell, act, and live the exact truth always.

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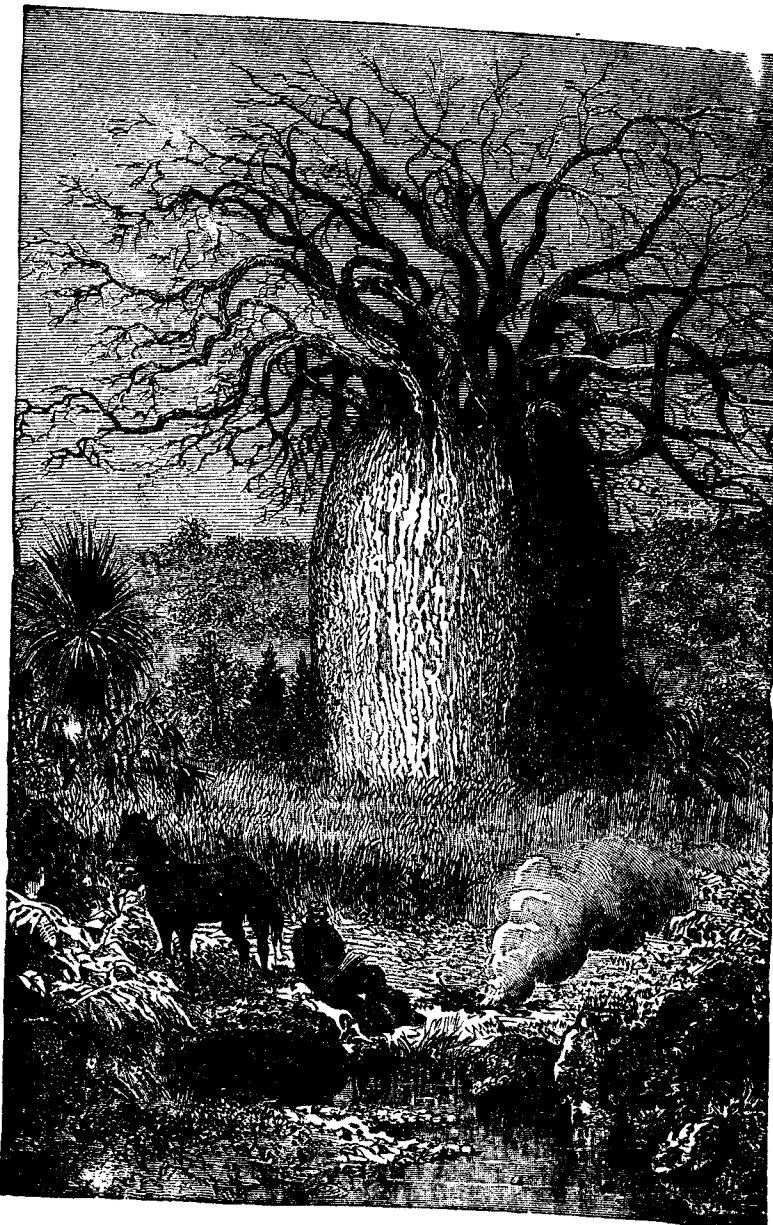
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THE BOTTLE-TREE.

the ocean when viewed by approaching vessels."

"It is truly a wonderful mountain in more respects than one," added Uncle Colin. "The name Teneriffe means in the native language tender, snow, effe, a hill; hence, in full, snow-hill. It is most appropriately named, as its summit is covered with snow nearly all the year round. This is all the more noticeable, as the climate of the islands is quite tropical. But as wonderful as this mountain is, there is something more wonderful still among the group of islands. One of these islands is called the Ferro Island, which means the Iron Island. It is so called because it has a soil so hard that it is almost impossible to dig any distance into it. As might be supposed, there are no channels through it, not even a tiny stream trickling its way along; yet there are a few wells, or rather shallow cisterns, which have at length been hollowed in the earth only by the most persistent effort of the natives. When it rains the water collects in these depressions, but as they are so shallow the supply does

nearer the earth, are constantly enveloped in clouds, which drip moisture down upon the leaves. The leaves in turn let the drops of water, which are as clear as crystal, glide undisturbed along the smooth and satin-like surface, when arriving at the pointed ends the globules drop one by one into the shallow pools the natives have dug all about the tree. Although these pools are, as I have already intimated, necessarily shallow on account of the hardness of the soil, yet it is said they are never empty, for as fast as the natives relieve them of their contents more is dropped into them by the leaves of the wonderful tree which go on dripping, dripping, day and night.

"Now, mark the incomprehensible power of God and his all-wise provision for his people. But for this wonderful raining-tree the Island of Ferro would be rendered uninhabitable, and man and beast would alike perish if forced to remain on it.

"Naturalists have tried again and again to solve the mystery of the raining-tree, and to assign to it some natural