

MY FIRST LETTER.

"Did you ever get a letter?

I did the other day.

It was in a *real* envelope,

And it came a long, long way.

"A stamp was in the corner

And some printing, when it came,

And the one that wrote the letter

Put 'Mr.' before my name.

"Then there came a lot more writin',

I forget now what it read,

But it told the office people

Where I lived, my mamma said.

"Don't you s'pose those letter-persons,

If they hadn't just been told,

Would have thought 'twas for a person

Who was awful, *awful* old?

"For it looked real big and heavy,

The outside was stuck with glue;

So they couldn't know I'm little,

I don't think they could. Do you?"

A LITTLE BURDEN-BEARER.

MAMMA had said "Good-night," and Ned and Joe were left alone in their little white beds.

"Joe," whispered Ned, "wasn't that a first-rate sermon the new minister preached this morning!"

"Yes, I guess so," Joe responded, sleepily.

"'Bear ye one another's burdens.' I'm glad I can remember the text, 'cause he said he hoped we would. I mean to try and live by it, too, just as he told us; don't you, Joe?"

But this time Joe was fast asleep, and only answered by a snore; so Ned lay thinking a few minutes longer, and then dropped asleep himself.

The next morning he woke bright and early. He had not forgotten his good resolution, and when he said his morning prayer he asked God to help him to be one of his little burden-bearers that day. Then he went to work with willing feet and eager hands. He brought mamma a pail of water from the well, and coal and wood from the cellar. He fed the chickens, and when baby Kate began to cry he put her into her carriage and rolled her about in the sunshine till breakfast was ready.

It was washing day, and mamma was so busy that when school-time came she said she could not spare both the boys, and asked which of them would stay home and take care of baby. Joe looked at Ned and Ned looked at Joe. Both loved their lessons, and were proud of the good reports they brought home.

"I don't want to stay," said Joe. "Baby is awful cross."

But Ned remembered his text, and looked up with a bright smile in his blue eyes.

"I'll stay and help you, mamma," he said, bravely.

It was not easy work, for Katie was teething, and the day was very warm; but Ned did his best, and succeeded pretty well on the whole.

At last mamma finished her work, and took the baby from his aching arms.

"Have I been a real burden-bearer to-day, mamma?" he asked, wistfully.

Mamma looked puzzled. "What do you mean, dear?" she asked.

"Why, mamma, the minister said that everybody ought to carry their own burdens—troubles, you know—and then they ought to help other people bear their burdens, too. He said even boys could do it; but I haven't any burdens of my own to carry, not one, so I'm trying to help other people."

Tears came into mamma's tired eyes, and she said: "Yes, Neddie, you have been mamma's little burden-bearer to-day."

Ned didn't see the tears, and he felt so very happy that he forgot how tired he was. By this time school was over, and he went with an approving conscience for an hour's play with the other boys.—*Selected.*

FAIR AND HONEST.

IDA and Susy were swinging.

"We'll take forty swings apiece," said Ida.

"Yes," said Susy.

"Now—one, two, three," said Ida as Susy got into the swing.

"One, two, three, up goes she," sang Susy.

"Oh, that isn't the way to count," said Ida. "You must count straight."

But Susy kept up such a merry little chirp with her laugh and song that Ida soon saw that she would do very little counting.

"Now it's forty, as nearly as I can count with the chattering you make," said Ida.

So Susy slipped out and Ida took her place in the swing.

Susy was the youngest, and I dare say she could not count forty very easily. Ida counted for herself as Susy swung her.

"It's more than forty, but Susy doesn't know it," said Ida to herself. "I'll let her keep on."

But better thoughts soon came to the little girl.

"It is cheating," she said. "Susy can't count, but God can; he knows it is cheating." She sprang from the swing.

"Get in, you dear little thing," she said to Susy. "You've swung me more than forty, and now I'll give you a good long swing."

BABY'S BIRTHDAY.

"It is baby's birthday," I said, this morning, and the elder children remembered that the year he was born they were out in the garden gathering late flowers, when the news came of the new brother. How they hurried in and looked with awe on his pink face, and wondering at the old Canadian woman who had presumably brought him! Then they counted up the days of the week, and found it was Saturday, and a wave of pity went through their hearts, for didn't the old couplet say,

"Saturday's bairn works hard for its living?"

"Poor wee fellow!" said Mary, touching his cheek, "I won't let him work too hard," and with confidence of five years old she wanted to take him in her arms then and there.

And yet it seems strange to call him "baby;" yet we all do, for his life did not meet the year—he spent his first birthday in heaven. But when the day comes round in chilly November, I sometimes wonder if he knows. Has he grown to be a fair ethereal boy without spot or blemish, and waits to welcome us on the other shore? He had only learned to call my name when he was taken away—surely among the blessed, the sacred name of mother is never forgotten.

Others grow up and grow old; the children have other loves, and form ties that give a stab to a jealous mother's heart, for who likes to be supplanted? Changes come, and our dear ones go out to battle with the world, meeting with dangers and temptations that we shrink from having them encounter, but the baby that died sixteen years ago is a baby still, and we say again as the year rolls around and brings its anniversaries, "This is baby's birthday."—*Christian at Work.*

ANGRY WORDS.

WE hear them sometimes, as we go along the streets, among the children on their way to school. How they grate upon our ear! They tell of angry feelings in the young hearts, where nothing but love and kindness ought to have a home. How quickly they are spoken! How sharply they sometimes sting! In a moment they may make a wound that years cannot heal. Another sad thing about them is, that when they have once been spoken they can never be called back. Like an arrow sent from the bow tightly strung, they go swiftly and straight to their target; or, if unaimed, they go all the same, sure to hit somewhere. We cannot be too careful about speaking angry words.